SIR HERBERT READ'S THEORY OF POETRY

An Abstract of a Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Shrinivas Vasudeo Pradhan

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"Sir Herbert Read's Theory of Poetry"

by S. V. Pradhan

An Abstract

Herbert Read's theory of poetry operates on two levels: the scientific and the philosophical. Corresponding to these two levels are the two explanatory frameworks: the scientific and the philosophical. Freud, Jung and Marx constitute the corner-stone of the scientific framework. Unlike the scientific framework, the philosophical framework--or at least a large part of it--is not derivative. The original part of the philosophical framework consists of the concepts of reason and intuition that Read developed for himself as he responded to the writings of Whitehead, Santayana and Jung. He has, however, adopted various concepts from Cassirer, Heidegger and Sartre.

The two levels which are related to these two frameworks represent two different approaches to poetry. The philosophical level, which employs the concepts of reason, intuition and discursive consciousness, explains the uniqueness of poetry. The scientific level, which employs Freud's theory of dreams and Jung's theory of archetypes, explains the relatedness of poetry to universal human processes; it also explains by means of the

sociological approach how poetry is related to society. The philosophical level defines poetry by showing how it is different from non-poetic discourse. The scientific level takes cognizance of the larger human processes and social organization. Between them the two levels offer a theory which establishes the unique character of poetry, relates it to basic human processes and links it to the social structure.

This belief in the unique character of poetry is typically romantic. Read, incidentally, had the distinction of being a self-conscious and unabashed romanticist in an age which fancied itself to be classicist. The two inalienable aspects of his romanticism, it may be added, are his imagism and his doctrine of organic form, both of which serve to explain how the structure of poetic discourse is unique.

What one should bear in mind concerning Read's imagism is that it is not really of the same type as the Imagism, say, of H. D. As a matter of fact, Read is a symbolist. I maintain that he recovered the Hulmean doctrine of the symbol. His conception of the image as symbol explains how poetry is unique: Poetic images are moments of "original vision" and they bring about "an intuitive extension of consciousness". They serve, therefore, a unique function. It follows then, that poetry is unique.

Romantic critics from Coleridge onwards have maintined that poetry is characterized by organic form. Read is aware of the philosophical basis of the doctrine of organic form; he is also aware of the scientific basis of it. His attempt at scientific formulation of this doctrine in The True Voice of Feeling is misleading. But in spite of this it is clear that the chief characteristics of organic form for him are its inevitability, spontaneity and authenticity.

A consideration of Read's theory of poetry is followed by an examination of his poetry in the light of that theory. I have tried to demonstrate how acquaintance with the scientific and the philosophical levels of his theory helps us to understand some of his poems and see their significance. I have also tried to abstract from his theory a few criteria which could be applied to his poetry. The results of this application show that Read's theory of poetry is not too general to be critically useful. I go further and say that not only is his theory relevant to his poetry but that acquaintance with the former enhances one's appreciation of the latter.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an attempt at a systematic presentation and analysis of the poetic theory of a prolific writer who wrote over a period of forty years, and whose career as a critic spans the most vital decades in the intellectual history of our century. Sir Herbert Read, himself an unsparing critic of "academicism", made no attempt to provide a "manual" of his poetic theory. His views on poetry are scattered over a number of books and reviews. I have set myself the task of pulling together these views, mapping them out chronologically and registering the significant changes in them.

I have used the expression "poetic theory" to describe these views. I am using the singular form of the expression "poetic theory" in spite of the fact that Read's views did not remain the same over the years. I imagine that such a use of the term "theory" has the support of scholarly critical writing. The sub-title of Professor M. H. Abrams' The Mirror and the Lamp, for example, is "Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition".[1] He has used the expression "romantic theory" to cover the theories of various critics. Another instance of the use of the singular to convey diversity and plurality of views may be found

in the use of the expression "expressionist theory of poetry" under which heading one usually finds subsumed diverse theories like those of Croce, Carrit, Collingwood and Ducasse. I should also add that I frequently employ the term "poetics" as a synonym for "poetic theory".

Not only are the books in which Read's views are expressed numerous--the total number of his books on art and literature is a little under forty--but his areas of interest are numerous too. He was a champion of romanticism in art and literature, a practitioner of imagism in poetry, an advocate of surrealism in art and literature in the thirties, a defender of modern art, and a modern proponent of "organic form", besides being an anarchist and an educationist. Not only are his areas of interest numerous; the intellectual influences to which he responds are numerous too. These influences may be classified as (a) "scientific" and (b) "philosophical". The scientific influences come mainly from the field of psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology. To be more specific, they are Freud and Jung, the Gestaltists, and Marx respectively. The philosophical influences are those of Whitehead, Santayana, Croce, Cassirer and Heidegger--almost all of them "idealists". Truly, Read's writings represent the adventurous journey of a sensitive mind through a world of ideas.

These two groups of influences represent two explanatory frameworks within which his poetic theory operates; the

two explanatory frameworks give rise to two levels of his theory: the scientific and the philosophical. Recognition of this duality of framework is the first step towards understanding his poetics. In his early career science may sometimes seem to dominate over philosophy.[2] As a matter of fact, one does observe a conflict between science and philosophy in Read's thought. In 1924, for example, he rejected "transcendental reasoning", and said that physics should replace it,[3] which clearly suggests that he is committed to "the scientific spirit". Later in The Meaning of Art (1931),[4] he tries to determine the order of precedence between science and philosophy. He says that philosophy is based on science, that the philosopher "finds his facts in the scientist's laboratory". The implication of thie view is that philosophy is subordinate to science and is determined by it. That science did, as a matter of fact, determine his philosophy may be inferred from the fact that his espousal of scholasticism springs from his belief that science pointed in that direction.[5] However, the point that should be noted is that even in the days of the ascendency of science he does not reject philosophy. Indeed the concepts of reason and intuition are philosophical concepts. It should also be noted that his philosophy always attempts to maintain its contact with the sensational reality. Thus even when he speaks in metaphysical terms such as "essence", "transcendental", etc., he claims for them empirical validity.

The opinion on the question of the relationship between science and philosophy that Read expresses in The Forms of Things Unknown[6] (1960) is diametrically opposed to that expressed in 1931. He says now that philosophy is independent of science. The implication of this view for his poetics is that the philosophical level of his theory is as significant as the scientific level of it. The 1960 declaration is significant because implicitly it is an assertion of the importance of the philosophical level of his poetics in its own right. As a matter of fact we find this view clearly stated in his "The Creative Experience in Poetry"--one of the key essays published in The Forms of Things Unknown. On page 134 he states this view:

> Do we then end with a mystery, and a veto on psychological attempts [scientific level] to explain it? Not exactly. We end with the reality of being or existence, and the experience of poetry is a proof of its intrinsic originality.

This statement clearly implies that the "scientific level" has its limitations and that there is another level of response to poetry--the philosophical. But it may be noticed that he does not "veto" the "scientific" level. Both the levels are significant; they are not mutually exclusive.

However, between 1933 and 1960 Read's views on the question of the relationship between science and philosophy are in a confusing state of flux, which leads me to say that Read's mind was a battleground of two forces, science and

philosophy or metaphysics. There were times when he thought that the former was superior to the latter in critical endeavour. But it is equally true that there were times when he thought that the latter was more meaningful in such an endeavour. All the same a philosophical undercurrent is detectable in all his writings.

Therefore I take the view that Read's theory operates on two levels--the philosophical and the scientific. Inconsistencies or contradictions that may result from this peculiarity of Read's theory do not detract from its significance. For here is a man who does not rule out significant influences from his poetics in the interest of some notion of unity, consistency and coherence derived from the exact sciences. As a result, he might seem bewildering. But if we recognize that there are two levels to his poetic theory --the philosophical and the scientific--and that they are determined by the two explanatory framewords--philosophical and scientific--we have taken the first step towards reducing his poetics to an order.

The philosophical framework, which controls the philosophical level of his poetic theory, and the scientific framework, which controls the scientific level of it, do not coalesce. There are points of contact between them. For example, Read's theory of comprehensive reason (philosophical framework) is connected with his psychoanalytic theory ~~framework~~ of personality (scientific framework). Secondly,

it will be observed that his pronounced Jungianism in the fifties and sixties coincides with his allegiance to Cassirer, best evidenced in The Forms of Things Unknown. However, what I would like to suggest is that the two "explanatory frameworks" represent two different angles of approach to the questions of poetry. This duality of approach, as I said before, must be recognized in a study of Read. Whichever framework may seem to be predominant at a particular moment, it must be remembered that there is another which is equally valid. In other words, if we look at Read's theory as a whole, we find that Read's discourse is conducted on two levels of explanation, the scientific and the philosophical. They are related at times. At times they are not related.

It is this duality that has determined my expository and critical strategy. I have tried to separate and analyse these two levels of theory in separate chapters in an effort to understand them better. One must remember that his philosophical framework , to which the philosophical level of his theory of poetry is related, is a changing one. Since the philosophical framework is not static, I decided to analyse it chronologically. I deal with the original part of this framework in the first chapter. In the second chapter I discuss the philosophical level of his poetics with reference to that framework as well as the concepts he borrowed from Cassirer, Heidegger and Sartre.

Like the philosophical framework the psychoanalytico-sociological framework (or what I have been calling his scientific framework) is not static. But I have not devoted a separate chapter to it because it consists in views derived from various theorists in the field. The most significant aspect of the scientific framework, incidentally, is Read's greater allegiance towards the close of his career to Jung rather than to Freud. He ranges freely from one psychoanalyst to another in a manner which may seem eclectic to Freudians and rather puzzling to Jungians. He is more an appropriator of psychological theories than a creator of one. We shall, therefore, discuss the views he borrows, as we examine the use to which he puts them.

After having mapped out the baffling terrain of these two levels in the course of which operation I ask myself literally numerous questions and, hopefully, answer at least some, I go on to discuss a few recurrent topics in Read's poetics. I have singled out for separate treatment Read's romanticism, his imagism and his concept of organic form. His imagism and his doctrine of organic form are inalienable aspects of his romanticism.

The critical platitude of the past few decades is that the twentieth century in literature represents a romantic period. On the face of it, it may seem untenable. For, after all, two of the most influential figures of

twentieth century poetry, T. E. Hulme and T. S. Eliot, were self-proclaimed classicists. However, as Murray Krieger points out in an excellent analysis of the theories of Hulme and Eliot, there are romantic assumptions present in the views of both of them.[7] Read, on the other hand, is a self-confessed romanticist. And very ardently and consistently so, except for the first few years of his critical career when he considered himself to be a classicist. Perhaps one may say that Read showed a keener insight into himself and the "spirit of the age". I think that it could be advanced as his claim to greatness as a poetic theorist that in an age of self-proclaimed "classicists" he was a self-confessed "romanticist". The verdict of literary history has gathered them all under the rubric of romanticism. Read chose it.

I think that my fairly extensive examination of Read's romanticism eliminates the need for a discussion of the role of anarchism in his theory of poetry. For his anarchism is the political equivalent of his romanticism. The aims of anarchism in politics are the same as the aims of romanticism in literature. In politics one speaks of freedom of action, freedom of speech and thought, freedom from coercion, and individual liberty, etc. A romanticist in literature advocates freedom from outmoded, cramping conventions and freedom of the imagination. Similarly, romantic insistence on the self and reverence for it

parallels anarchist respect and concern for the self, respect and concern for it almost to the point of worship. Therefore I would say that when Read discusses poetry with reference to anarchism, he may be making a significant contribution to anarchism, which is applied romanticism. But he makes no new contribution to his critique of romanticism.

Imagism and the doctrine of organic form are two "inalienable aspects of romanticism". They are both manifestations of romanticism on the level of expression. Imagism for Read does not mean mere pictorial representation in vivid visual terms. It seems to me that his imagism is, strictly speaking, a strategy for a "raid on the inarticulate". His conception of the image as symbol, I shall argue, recovers Hulme's doctrine of the symbol, a doctrine expounded in "Bergson's Theory of Art", and in "The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds".[8] In this respect he is different from H. D. and Richard Aldington, whose conception of the image was circumscribed. Read was really a symbolist, which is another way of saying that his conception of the image was romantic. The objection of pure Imagists to Read's view would be that practice of such a doctrine would only succeed in "blurring" "hard", "clear" and "precise" expression. Now, Read's aim too is "hard", "clear" and "precise" expression. But such expression does not mean to him mere pictorialism. It means something more basic to him.

Imagism, among other things, is an ideal of expression in poetry for Read, an ideal which emphasizes that there be organic relationship between experience and expression. Now, this is precisely what organic form demands. In other words, imagism and organic form go hand in hand. That Read's imagism is a manifestation of his romanticism is a point I have already made. That the conception of organic form is romantic hardly needs to be pointed out. I may, however, mention that Read describes organic form as "the specifically romantic principle".

My examination of Read's imagism and organic form supplies me with criteria for discussing Read's poetry. My discussion of imagism provides the conception of "image as symbol" as a principle in the light of which to examine his poetry. I have elicited another critical criterion from my examination of his doctrine of organic form. After considering Read's views on organic form I pose this question: Is Read's doctrine capable of practical application? I think that it is not just a generalization stating the ideal nature of relationship between form and content. It supplies one with the means, though not exhaustively worked out by Read himself, of recognizing organic form. I have tried to describe these "means" or these "criteria" in some detail in my chapters on Organic Form and Imagery.

It will be seen then that the first three chapters constitute one stage in my exposition. They analyse the

two "levels of explanation". The second stage is represented by the chapters dealing with romanticism, imagism and organic form, imagism and organic form being manifestations of romanticism on the level of expression. One may ask: How is the first stage related to the second?

The two "levels of theory" of which I speak are not unrelated to his romanticism, though the connections between them have not been worked out by Read. Perhaps one may say that his romanticism chose his influences for him. It is not just a coincidence that Read was sympathetic to Croce, Cassirer and Heidegger, all of whom are in a sense romantic. It is not just a coincidence that in the end he became a Jungian. Jung's own theory of poetry, for example, as it is expounded in Modern Man in Search of a Soul, exhibits characteristics of romantic theory.[9] Incidentally, can one imagine Sir Herbert Read being influenced by Alfred J. Ayer (now Sir Alfred), the very opposite of the "romantic spirit"?

The last chapter tests the poetic theory in the light of Read's poetry and thus rounds off the whole discussion. It follows then that my primary interest is not in the development of Read's poetry. I use his poetry to test his theory, to illustrate it. I therefore abstract such principles and details from his poetics as can be applied to his poetry. The justification of this approach to poetry is that I am mainly concerned with Read's poetic theory. It would have been possible to discuss his poetry in close

correspondence to his "changing frameworks" and "changing views" had the following two criteria been fulfilled: (1) We should have possessed at least a modicum of psychoanalytic evidence in the form of personal diaries or journals, or in such form--and it is highly unsatisfactory--as is available in his discussion of his dream-poems.[10] (2) His poetry should have reflected the remarkable changes that his theory undergoes. But Read was reticent on personal matters; his autobiography, The Contrary Experience,[11] for example, is mainly a literary document. Secondly, the tenor and technique of his poetry are fairly constant all through his career. I have, therefore, made no attempt to impose an overall explanatory framework on his poetry.

Perhaps a word or two is in order about the chronological sequence that I have adopted in my exposition of Read's poetic theory. The most significant dates to which I refer frequently as well as the most significant writings of those years are as follows:

1918 - "Definitions Towards a Theory of Poetry"[12]

1923 - "The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry"[13]

1926 - Reason and Romanticism[14]

1928 - Phases of English Poetry and English Prose Style[15]

1929 - "Descartes"[16]

1932 - Form in Modern Poetry[17]

1936 - "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle"[18]

There is a considerable time lag before we come to the next significant work, The True Voice of Feeling (1953).[19] (In explanation of this time lag I may point out that during the forties Read was preoccupied with politics, education and the plastic arts). Perhaps his highest achievement in the field of poetic theory is represented by his The Forms of Things Unknown, a somewhat specialized and rather bewildering book. Of course, depending on the nature of the chapter, I refer to the relevant writings from among those mentioned above. I also refer to writings of other dates not mentioned above.

With this brief explanation of my aim and the structure of my dissertation, and a reminder to myself that Read is regarded by some critics as "a man of many contradictions" and a "confused" theorist, I shall proceed to my task of critical exposition, elucidation and systematization of Read's poetics.

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CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

> The best critics have, of course, a philosophical background: their criticism is an applied philosophy, but is not in itself a philosophical activity.[1]

> He [Bergson] gave validity to such terms as consciousness and intuition--terms upon which I already then [1918] perceived, any philosophy of art must rely.[2]

A study of the more important philosophical views of Sir Herbert Read is a pre-requisite for an understanding of his theory of poetry. It is true that he did not evolve an independent system of thought complete with its epistemology in the manner of a Kant or a Schopenhauer.[3] It is possible, however, that the conception of philosophy implied in my remark is too narrow and outmoded. But I do not think that on this conception of philosophy major philosophers of the world would be excluded from the class of philosophers. Be that as it may, Read did not claim to be a philosopher. "I am not writing for philosophers and, indeed, I do not claim to be a philosopher myself."[4] Nonetheless he did believe that the poet has a duty to perform by philosophy. The economic necessities forced on him by his environment make it impossible for the scientist or the philosopher to give years of solitude to the moulding of thought's expression. "For this reason it becomes more than ever necessary that

the poet should be attentive to the achievements of philosophy . . . and give to them a vivid and memorial form."[5] The poet is an inspired craftsman of philosophical expression.

But I won't claim it for Read that he has given in his critical writings "a vivid and memorial form" to the achievements of various philosophers who have influenced him. He seems to depend a little too much on copious quotations from his philosophers to do adequate justice to the task he has set himself, namely, that of moulding thought's expression. He does, however, range comfortably among, to name a few, Aquinas, Whitehead, Santayana, Croce, Cassirer, Langer and Sartre, giving assent (qualified or unqualified) or witholding it. Indeed he strikes one as a commentator on the philosophical scene. Not that a commentator cannot have his own philosophy. What I mean is that his various observations on philosophical questions represent to my mind the reactions of a perceptive, intelligent, versatile and lively mind rather than the summation of an intensely analytical and exhaustive study of them in all their implications. However, it is his views on matters philosophical (metaphysical) that I regard as his "philosophical framework".

Read's philosophical views provide the scaffolding for his theory of poetry. As the epigraphs to this chapter clearly indicate, his interest in philosophy was practically

oriented. What he was interested in was not pure philosophy so much as its application in the field of aesthetics and poetics. Therefore it is important to trace those philosophical views which are relevant to our purpose in an attempt to understand their bearing on his theory of poetry.

We find Read beginning his career with a rejection of metaphysics, against which there seems to exist in England a tradition of suspicion.[6] Rutter advised Read that he should be careful "to distinguish between Philosophy and Metaphysics and avoid the latter as the Devil."

> It [metaphysics] only leads to involutions and mental gymnastics of no permanent value, and though showing you to be a mighty clever fellow, damning the artistic interest of your work. A piece of advice which . . . I recognize as very true.[7]

He also rejected the spiritual nostrums which come from the East.

> And it may be suggested that our efforts, and especially the efforts of our philosophers, could with more profit be turned towards an elucidation of the content and interpretation of the system of scholasticism than idle 'adventures of the soul' among oriental mystics.[8]

I must say that this rejection of Oriental philosophy does Read credit because it bespeaks a mind which is aware of its own Western heritage and is unwilling to whore after strange gods. Read perceived that since Eastern philosophy is not worked out in terms of Western reality, it is not consonant with the deepest instincts of Westerners. He advocated a return to scholasticism. Rutter's "advice" was

obviously forgotten. " . . . we should turn to mediaeval philosophy and particularly to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas."[9]

But this demand for a return to scholasticism was dictated by a consideration of the achievements of modern science. Here is a good example of what I described in the Introduction as "points of contact" between the philosophical framework and the scientific framework. It seemed to him that the achievements of modern science pointed in the direction of scholasticism because he believed that the result of modern science has been to make an organic conception of the universe absolutely essential and that the state of mind which issues out of the positive achievements of science is marked in its intellectual aspects by a "desire to return to a point in the history of thought at which the evil principle [dualism] had not yet begun its work."[10] Scholasticism represented for him such a point when the universe was treated as a unity. He observed that the philosophy of Aquinas included "many aspects of the modern position". But even at the same time as he accepted Aquinas and advocated a return to him, he was aware of the fact that Aquinas believed that the act of creation need not necessarily have taken place and that therefore the link between God and the universe was not exactly organic. Such a belief is not in keeping with Read's firmly held belief in the organic nature of the universe. Indeed, as may be

expected, his sympathy went out to Johannes Scotus Erigena who believed that the act of creation is necessary and that therefore the connection between the creator and the creation is necessary and organic. Thus one sees that Read's overriding concern is for the organic unity of the universe. The literary counterpart or consequence of this philosophical conviction is the doctrine of organic form.

Is it possible that if Read had continued to develop along these lines, we would have had in him an English J. Maritain? Indeed T. S. Eliot thought that Read was passing into a metaphysical phase. " . . . the great weakness of Mr. Read's book (if I have read the essays correctly) is that it represents a period of transition from psychology to metaphysics."[11] This judgment of T. S. Eliot's may well be regarded as one of the curiosities of Read criticism. It seems to me that Eliot was influenced by the weight of Read's declarations of faith in making his judgment. It is true that the espousal of scholasticism usually indicates a metaphysical bent of mind. But, as we have seen above, it is scientific considerations that led Read to choose scholasticism. The empirical bent of mind and scholasticism may seem to be strange bed-fellows. However, strong, innate empiricism, his English virtue, saved him from abstractions of the type whose meaning is accessible only to the initiated. Consider his reaction to Croce's Aesthetic. "Croce's book was an essential stage in

my development, but I never became a Crocean--some innate empiricism left me indifferent or uncomprehending before his idealism."[12] The reason for this attitude towards a philosopher in the sense I have referred to in the beginning is not far to seek. " . . . my contention is that Science, philosophy and religion only serve an ontogenetic or evolutionary purpose in so far as they continue to be nurtured and invigorated by activities that are sensuous and aesthetic."[13] Read would like his theoretical explorations to be firmly anchored to the sensuous. Hence his indifference to Croce. Read, with his distrust of unverifiable abstractions, therefore, could never have ignored the developments in various empirical sciences. Hence his theory of poetry was moulded by philosophical convictions as well as by some empirical sciences. Surely, there was no danger of his evolving a purely metaphysical theory of poetry.

We have already seen above that what scholasticism and "the state of mind which issues out of the positive achievements of modern science" have in common is their conception of the organic nature of the universe. Both Maritain (who is regarded as a spokesman of neo-Scholasticism) and Whitehead (whom Read takes as a representative of modern science) find their common enemy in Descartes. If scholasticism be compared to the garden of Eden, Descartes' conception of thought can be compared to the serpent that

entered it. "M. Maritain goes so far as to say that the Cartesian reform is the one great sin committed by the French in the history of modern thought."[14] The sin was that of conceiving human thought as of the type of angelic thought and making it independent of things. Knowledge comes to be regarded as an individual experience: " . . . it [knowledge] cannot accumulate or be carried on from any given point. Tradition is discredited and learning as such is despised."[15] Thanks to Cartesian philosophy the world comes to be looked upon as a mere mechanism. And though it equips man to deal with his physical environment, this philosophy leaves him helpless before the spiritual world. This is the arraignment of Descartes according to Neo-Scholasticism. From the point of view of a modern scientist like Whitehead what is heinous about Descartes' philosophy is that the principle of dualism, the separation of the mind from the material world, effected a divorce between science and philosophy. The consequences of this divorce were disastrous for both. Science became "an uncritical and uncriticized theory of material mechanism" and philosophy "a baseless, structureless epistemology."[16] The doctrine of minds as independent substance led to private worlds of experience and private worlds of morals. Besides, " . . . the assumption of the bare valuelessness of mere matter led to a lack of reverence in the treatment of natural or artistic beauty."[17] Such is the arraignment of Descartes

according to Whitehead. Read, who accepted both Neo-Scholasticism and Whitehead, naturally took his stand against Descartes and contributed an insight or two to this great philosophical post-mortem. He says:

> The manifold errors of the system have always been obvious and freely criticized. But only now have we begun to see in this simple and direct philosophy the source of all the great intellectual sophisms of our age.[18]

His own objection to Cartesianism is that it is inimical to the existence of art. We find this objection clearly stated in the following statement:

> It was inevitable that the eighteenth century, with the gradual triumph of the Cartesian philosophy and the consequent degradation of instinct and imagination should outweigh the balance on the side of reason. And precisely that eventuality is fatal to the existence of art.[19]

Therefore Cartesian philosophy, as he had stated in an earlier volume, leads to a denial of aesthetic values. "Beauty can only be a mechanical harmony, devoid of spiritual animation, deficient in the sense of glory."[20]

It may well be asked as to what is the relevance of this review of the controversy centering round Descartes' philosophy to the present study if M. Maritain, Professor Whitehead and Herbert Read are unanimous in their rejection of Descartes. Since Descartes' dualism is the very antithesis of Read's organic conception of nature, an account of this controversy suggests by implication what the precise nature of Read's philosophical views will be. One would expect his key-concepts to be formed by opposition to Descartes.

Moreover, an organic conception of nature entails an organic conception of art. Such a conception of art avoids the Cartesian pitfalls referred to above. And I suppose one should know what the pitfalls are and how they come into existence in order to appreciate the strategy employed by Read to avoid them.

I shall, therefore, first of all indicate in broad terms the general nature of his philosophical views; then discuss his key-concepts and finally refer to his opinions on idealism and materialism. Let me, however, remind myself first that Read's philosophical speculations are anchored to his aesthetic experience--a fact which comes through as much in his comments on Descartes as in his comments on A. J. Ayer. "My philosophy is a direct product of my aesthetic experience. . . ."[21]

A broad description of the general nature of Read's philosophical views will take the form of a paradox. Read is an empiricist who is also an absolutist; he is an intuitionist who is also a pragmatist. "All our knowledge and judgment is referred back to absolutes."[22] He also says: " . . . my ultimate attitudes in poetry and criticism are based on an absolute for which I have only the warrant of individual intuition."[23] Is Read trying to make the best of both the worlds--of absolutism and empiricism? Perhaps many of us will find his position logically inconsistent. But he has attempted to defend himself.

> I am essentially a materialist. But as a materialist I find myself involved with certain intangible and imponderable elements which we call emotion and instinct, and to those elements I, as a materialist, must give my due attention. I cannot construct a credible world without making provision for their active play and satisfaction. In the end I find that emotion and instinct must be reconciled with their logical opposites, reason and understanding, and that the achievement of such a reconciliation takes the form of an intuition of values. I am not mystical about these absolute values: I submit them to the pragmatic and empirical tests to which I submit all hypotheses and beliefs. They are only absolute in so far as they are consonant with the world of facts, but our knowledge of this world is very limited, and we are therefore thrown back on our intuitions.[24]

Read attempts an empirical defence of his absolutes (values) and he finds that he is ultimately thrown back on his intuitions (instinctive consciousness of absolute values) because empiricism has its limits and pragmatism can go only so far and no further. What should be noted here is not the logical naivety of his argument which is obvious enough, but the significance of his attempt to reconcile absolutism and pragmatism--significance in the context of his rejection of Cartesianism. An uncharitable critic might say that in trying to prove that he believes in absolute values materialistically, he has only ended up by opening the door on mysticism by passing beyond empiricism and pragmatism to intuition as the ultimate criterion of validity. Consider the polarities in terms of which he thinks: intuition and empiricism, absolute values and pragmatism. Intuition and values relate to the realm of the mind or the spirit. Empiricism and pragmatism relate to the realm of matter.

But there is no dichotomy between mind and matter in Read's view. He justifies the realm of the mind (values) in terms of matter (facts). Values exist in the world of facts and must have reference to facts, though finally facts are inadequate and one must have recourse to intuitions. The wheel comes back full circle as it were. One has the satisfaction of knowing that one's absolutes are not divorced from facts and that one's facts are not uninformed by absolutes. The world of mind is not divorced from that of matter. Read has transcended "dualism" on the wings of Whitehead and Maritain by specifically relating intuition to fact.

To sum up, Read attempts to save values from utter subjectivity by introducing the criterion of objective reality which they must satisfy. But since objective reality is only partially known, one is finally forced back on one's intuitions. The attempt to reconcile emotions, instincts, reason and understanding leads to an attempt to reconcile subjective reality (values) and objective reality which, in its turn, reveals the supremacy of subjective reality (intuitions). Thus the most basic term in this structure of ideas is 'intuitions'.[25]

What does Read mean by 'intuition'? If we make a brief survey of his use of this term, we will see the concept of intuition emerging with increasing clarity. He writes in 1926:

> But people will be found to defend, under the shelter of this vague faculty [intuition], an emotional attitude which is not without its value. Literature is after all, mainly the control of them. But emotion is the original substance of all aesthetic forms, for even intellectual forms cannot have value as art until they have been emotionally apprehended.[26]

Read's description of intuition as "a vague faculty" is significant in view of the fact that it was going to occupy a central place in his philosophical views and poetics. He was a little less vague about this "vague faculty" in 1927 when he wrote: "Intuition, if we are to allow the term, is merely an aspect of intelligence, not a faculty that can be opposed to it. It is the consciousness of values in thought, a sensibility to quality."[27] The clause, "if we are to allow the term", suggests a certain degree of self-consciousness and caution on Read's part in the use of this term, a self-consciousness and caution uncharacteristic of him in his use of the same term after 1929, the year in which he wrote his essay on Descartes. However, here he has defined 'intuition' as 'consciousness of values'.[28]

Let us now turn to Read's essay on Descartes, which represents a turning point in his development. To understand Read's concept of intuition it is necessary for us to glance at Descartes' description of it. By intuition Descartes means

> . . . not the fluctuating testimony of the senses, nor the misleading judgment that proceeds from the blundering constructions of imagination, but the conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives us so readily and distinctly that we are wholly freed from doubt about that which we understand.[29]

Read gives a more condensed description of Cartesian intuition. "Or what comes to the same thing, intuition is the undoubting conception of an unclouded and attentive mind, and springs from the light of reason alone . . ."[30] Descartes thus made intuition independent of things, of matter; he degraded imagination and conferred on 'intuition' an 'absolute' status. Read raises a sound objection to Descartes' theory. Is not one in danger of accepting for "conceptions of an unclouded and attentive mind" "the promptings of a state of belief" or "the inspirations of faith"? He says:

> . . . it is possible that we need a new definition and a further limitation of the meaning of the word 'intuition'. This can be secured by limiting the sense of the process to objective apprehension, and this, in its turn, means identifying intuition with the poetic process. For poetry is the apprehension or verbalization of an objective world. The poet must even as Keats was the first to understand, objectify his own emotions before he can make poetic use of them. Perception is of things, not of abstractions, and intuition is a perceptive process--the only process that perceives things in nakedness rather than in a cloak of second-hand works.[31]

The obvious difference between Descartes and Read in this matter is that for Descartes 'intuition' is connected with "conception" whereas for Read it is connected with "perception". This difference arises from the fact that Descartes' intuition seems to be a "subjective affair"; Read's intuition has an objective basis. This difference in its turn arises from their respective attitudes towards the question of the relationship between mind and matter. Read's

stand in this controversy is clearly stated in the following sentence. "The mind no longer measured by things becomes irresponsible; reason has no criterion."[32] Thus the difference between the theories of Descartes and Read can be easily perceived if we juxtapose Descartes' definition of intuition as "conception of an unclouded and attentive mind" with Read's definition of intuition as "a perceptive process" with perception defined as follows: "We may visualize an object with 'an unclouded and attentive mind.' Such is perception."[33]

One could say that Read is really referring to "perception" when he uses the word "intuition" and that the term "intuition" has been used in philosophy to refer to the "testimony of the senses". But let us remember that Read restores to intuition the sensational status taken away from it by Descartes. Moreover, he goes on to say that intuition is a sudden perception of pattern in life.

> There is then a further process and a higher faculty, and there is at present no better way of describing it than by saying that it is the sudden perception of pattern in life: the sudden realization of the fact that an organic event, of which we are a part, is in its turn the part of a greater unity. . . . This further perception or realization is the process to which we might perhaps limit the term 'intuition'; and it is, under the aspect of expression, the process of poetry.[34]

It might be asked: "If intuition is a 'perceptive process', why should it be further described as a 'further perception'?" The answer Read gives is clear enough. It is a <u>further</u> perception because it is a <u>sudden</u> perception. (The

adjective 'sudden' implies the existence of a factor unknown to the perceiver till the moment of sudden perception. That factor is 'a pattern in life'). What he seems to be driving at is that "non-propositional apprehension" of 'intuition' is different from the non-propositional apprehension of perception (which we may call sensuous perception). To put it differently, when he speaks of intuition what he has in mind is the pattern, the gestalt. Yet realization of this pattern--and this is the important point--is not an abstract activity. It takes place in terms of the senses. (And intuition is defined as a "perceptive process".) We have to presume that perception which stops short of 'further perception' is not capable of attaining what 'intuition' can. 'Intuition' seems to be some kind of advanced perception--we may call it 'poetic perception'. Thus Read supplies intuition with a perceptive basis, but does not equate it with average perception. Unlike a professional philosopher, he ignores the philosophical implications of his position and offers no defence of it. He just proposes an innovation. Philosophers may dismiss it, but students of Read must accept it as an important stage in the development of his thought.

The next important date from the point of view of Read's development of his theory of intuition is 1932. Under Santayana's influence the 'realm of essence' begins to play an important role in Read's poetic speculations. "But

more than experience is necessary, for the mind must rise above the realm of existence to the realm of essence, and this can only be achieved by intellectual vision or invention."[35] This "intellectual vision" is the same as intuition. Read himself has identified the two. "All art originates in act of intuition, or vision."[36] This new concept of intuition can be described as the concept of 'intellectual intuition'. The description is not unjustified because Read himself has described the kind of 'vision' (intuition) he has in mind as "intellectual vision". But why should Read use the expression "intellectual vision"? Perhaps he wished to suggest that intuition, which is perception or vision of the realm of essence, is different from perception of the contingent. Anyway, one thing is certain that intuition has acquired a transcendental dimension in 1932. Intuition in 1929 was not transcendental as we can make out from his definition of pattern in the essay on Descartes: ". . . the sudden realization of the fact that an organic event, of which we are a part, is in its turn the part of a greater unity, of a unity limited in time and space, formal and harmonious."[37] (If intuition is related to the realm of essence, and the term "realm of essence" is properly understood, obviously it is above time and space!)

This view of intuition is stated in terms of absolute values (which belong to the realm of essence) in A Coat of Many Colors. We have already examined at some

length the statement expressing this view.[38] As we have already seen, in 1927 intuition meant "consciousness of values in thought" to Read. But the values were not absolute values. But in A Coat of Many Colours intuition is consciousness of absolute values.

It could be argued against this transcendental view that in so far as intuition is concerned with the realm of essence, which by its nature is above time and space, Read's concept of intuition under the influence of Santayana is not different from the Cartesian one which he rejected in his essay on Descartes. But what distinguishes him is the fact that he tries to preserve the erstwhile (1929) connection between intuition and perception by saying that mere intuition is not enough (that is, intellectual vision or 'perception' of the "realm of essence" is not enough). Intuition must be externalized, which brings in the senses or perception of the contingent to perception of the realm of essence. It seems that Read is not happy with unalloyed transcendentalism. Sensational reality is equally important to him.

A similar attempt to yoke the transcendental and the sensational is made in The Forms of Things Unknown. He tries to establish intuition--the final source of justification of values, "intellectual vision" or perception of the "realm of essence"--as a source of cognition. His strategy is very simple. He takes the meaning of the word 'cognition' given in The Dictionary of Philosophy and tries

to fit intuition into the structure of meaning proposed for 'cognition'. Cognition is defined there as "knowledge in its widest sense". It includes " (a) non-propositional apprehension (perception, memory, introspection, et cetera, as well as (b) propositions or judgments expressive of such apprehension". Read exploits the editorial indiscretion which allowed an et cetera to pass into the definition of a philosophical term and says: "What in this jargon is called non-propositional apprehension would include among its et cetera the intuitions of the artist."[39] Thus Read extends the concept of cognition. It may justly be objected that he merely extends the concept without offering philosophically sound grounds to justify this extension. He should have established that there is no difference between the "non-propositional apprehension" of memory and the "non-propositional apprehension" of intuition as far as their status as sources of knowledge is concerned. But he makes no such attempt. Read seems to have been somewhat hasty in his attempt to give the cognitive status of memory and perception to intuition.

We shall discuss the importance of these concepts of intuition for Read's theory of poetry in the next chapter. For the present I shall only refer to Professor Paul C. Ray's comment on Read's concept of intuition. "The fact of intuition was to have important consequences for Read's theory of the creative process and for his theory of form."[40]

Another significant concept in the structure of Read's poetics is that of reason. H. W. Hausermann is of the opinion that Read assigned a prominent role to reason in every field from 1925 to 1930.[41] One can find some evidence in support of this view. We are told in his essay on "The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry" that "science and metaphysical poetry have but one ideal which is the satisfaction of the reason."[42] We also learn that it is only at first sight that the ideal of logical method and the satisfaction of reason appears to be "paradoxical and detrimental for art". He asserts categorically: ". . . and such an ideal as scientific method in poetry must be accepted subject to the contingency of all ideals."[43] Reason continues to be triumphant in 1926.

> A significant mind is only significant by virtue of its organization and the intellect is the only organizing faculty known to man. It is the ultimate measure of values, and values are the only end of criticism.[44]

(Read has used the word 'intellect' in the sense of 'reason'). The triumphal march as it were of reason continues in 1928. He says in Phases of English Poetry:

> This is no less than the problem of art or no art--of whether the writer is to control his means of expression (keep his eye on the object, as we may say), or whether he is merely to abandon himself to the stream of feelings--to incantation, evocations, vague reveries, and false mysticism. In one case arduous effort, continuous self-criticism, and a definite ideal; in the other case, at the best, an inspired delirium, at the worst, the actual decomposition of intelligence.[45]

This view, which will command assent from any classicist,

is a far cry from the 'automatism' and the cult of the unconscious of the surrealistic late thirties. How did this radical shift in views come about? In order to answer this question it is necessary to answer another question first. What exactly does Read mean by 'reason'?

> Reason is a very difficult word to use without confusion. It is often used as a synonym for rationality, or even for a mechanistic logic. Reason should rather connote the widest evidence of the senses. It is the sum-total of awareness, ordained and ordered to some specific end or object of attention. But obviously this element of order implies duration--it is a system connected in time and operating in time.[46]

The view advanced here is not that of discursive reason. Moreover, the direct connection Read establishes between reason and the senses goes against the rationalistic conception of reason. By conceiving reason to be time-bound and consequently space-bound, he is setting aside the claims of reason to know truth by its own light. This can be seen as an attempt to get away from Cartesian dualism and relate mind and matter. The implication of the statements that (1) reason should connote the widest evidence of the senses and (2) that reason is the sum-total of awareness is that awareness is sensuous. In his attempt to give reason a perceptual basis he has come close to identifying it with perception. Let us call this view of reason "comprehensive conception of reason". The relationship between reason and intuition at this time could be said to be this: reason is directed towards "intuition", which he defined here as "instantaneous judgment".

But when the meaning of intuition changes as in his essay on "Descartes" (1929)--intuition is then a "perceptive process", it is a "perception of pattern in life"--the relationship between comprehensive reason and intuition presents some logical problems. Reason is related to perception in so far as it is the "widest evidence of the senses"; it is perception directed towards a goal or an aim which could very well be "pattern in life" (the "end" of intuition). But as we have already seen, intuition itself is a perceptive process too. How is reason so defined different from intuition, which is a "perceptive process" directed towards "perception of pattern in life"? It seems to me that the way Read has defined intuition in 1929 makes the concept of comprehensive reason superfluous! I would suggest that it is when 'intuition' acquires a transcendental character[47] that comprehensive reason has an independent role to play, which is that of supplying intuition's "perception of absolute values" with a sensational basis.

However, one should note that Read actually operates with two conceptions of reason: reason as "comprehensive reason" and reason as rationality. Middleton Murry says in his review of Reason and Romanticism: ". . . in his more general discussions his comprehensive and creative conception of reason tends steadily to narrow in scope and to become purely discursive and conceptual."[48] To give one example of this from Reason and Romanticism. After having

described intuitions as "instantaneous judgments" he says: "I will only state as my personal belief, that the quality of such judgments is determined by the previous rational training and equipment of the subject acting."[49] We have seen that he maintained that reason is not rationality. Yet he makes intuition dependent on rationality--discursive, logical reason!

The flaw that Murry detected in Reason and Romanticism is in a sense present in Phases of English Poetry. How? We have seen that Read propounded the view of "comprehensive reason" in 1926. But in Phases of English Poetry (1928) he states the "problem of art" [50] in such a way that one gets the impression that he assigns a very important role to rationality. And this after his repudiation of rationality as the meaning of reason! Another contradiction which comes to the surface in the same book is that after having stated that reasoning and feeling are suspended in the act of writing a poem and that "only intuition is operative",[51] he goes on to advocate control of the means of expression by the writer, which is the same as advocating rationality or reasoning.[52] Read is a little mixed up in his views on reason at this stage of his career. To sum up this part of our discussion: The definition of reason he proposes in 1926 asserts that reason has a sensuous basis. There is practically no difference between reason and intuition in 1929 when both are regarded as perceptive processes.

When intuition acquires a transcendental character in 1932, reason plays the role of supplying the sensational basis of intuition.

Reason is not used even tacitly or unconsciously in the sense of rationality from 1929 onwards. But this does not mean that it is used in the sense of "comprehensive reason" only. For comprehensive reason, it may be pointed out, is ideal consciousness. But can one speak of reason only as "widest evidence of the senses"? Does it not involve other mental functions besides the senses? These questions press themselves on Read when the concept of the unconscious comes to acquire a dominant role in his thinking on poetry. It is Jungian psychology, especially with its integrationist ideal, that causes Read to reformulate his concept of reason. This reformulation is necessary because he reformulates the role of art. "Only an art that rises above conscious reality, only a transcendental or super-real art, is adequate."[53] Reason in the sense of comprehensive reason is inadequate for this purpose. "It is the function of art to reconcile contradictions inherent in our experience, but obviously an art that keeps to the canons of reason cannot make the necessary synthesis."[54] Read realizes that reason either in the sense of rationality or in the sense of comprehensive reason is inadequate. What he proposes is an ideal of reason perfected in the light of Jung's integrationist psychology. It may be recalled

that he had suggested in his "Metaphysical Poetry," that reason and emotion be synthesized. But he had not worked out in detail the various factors that are involved in this process of synthesis. I have constructed below a detailed picture of it on the basis of his statements between 1936 and 1966.

He says: "The view which I shall try to advocate is that any true conception of reason must find a place for human emotions and for all that is determined by them."[55] One may recall that the customary opposition between reason and emotion was studied by Jung in his works, and Read seems to have at the back of his mind the former's view that if one "function" is stressed, its opposite suffers a repression. (Reason and emotion, intuition and sensation are the contrasted pairs of "functions" in Jung's scheme.) I am tempted to look upon this view of reason in which there is a place for emotions as an integrationist ideal. Read also believes that there is no contradiction between reason and imagination.

> . . . reason is not a wholly conceptual activity, a spinning of abstraction from mental vacuity: it is, in so far as it remains vital, a metaphorical activity <u>given energy and scope by the imagination</u>. In other words, reason is fed, as from an underground source, by metaphors and symbols grasped in their sensuous activity by a sensitive organism.[56]

This view of reason and imagination is in keeping with what Jung says about reason and sensation in his <u>Psychological Types</u>. He maintains there that sensation is not antagonistic

to reason; rather it is a function of perception and affords "welcome assistance to thought".[57] That Read uses the expression 'imagination' and Jung uses the expression 'sensation' need not blur the essential similarity between the views of Read and Jung. When Read speaks of imagination here what is important to him is metaphors and symbols in their sensuous activity. Read is aware of the sensational aspect of the imagination.

We have considered so far how Read has defined the relationship between reason and emotions and the imagination. Let us see what he has to say about the relationship between reason and intuition.

> The reconciliation of intuition and intellect can only take place . . . creatively. It is only by projecting the two sides of our nature into a concrete construction that we can realize and contemplate the process of reconciliation. That is precisely the function of the work of art and that has been its function throughout the ages . . .[58]

I suppose what Read is saying is that reason and intuition are necessary for each other, that each supplements the other in a work of art. A work so produced has the wholeness, unity and complexity of the human mind.

A certain pattern seems to emerge from the above considerations. Read operates with the Jungian pairs of opposites: reason and emotion, sensation and intuition. He confronts reason with emotion and decides that reason should include emotion. He confronts reason with imagination and arrives at the conclusion that reason is fed by

the imagination. He confronts reason with intuition and the confrontation leads to a declaration of the supremacy of art as the reconciler of the two. The concept of reason in the sense of rationality undergoes a "sea-change" by the inclusion of emotion and "evidence of the senses". It is a sea-change rich and strange because reason and intuition are seen as being supplementary. This modified reason is not the reason of philosophical rationalists. Nor is it the kind of reason referred to in the follwoing remark.

> The notion that man's impulses can be controlled by his reason is the Faustian illusion, and has again and again in the history of the world involved mankind in the bitterest disillusion.[59]

It is an ideal of reason worked out in the light of the ideal of integrated personality.

Are the philosophical views we have been considering those of an idealist, if at all the terms idealism and materialism can be used meaningfully in connection with one whose ideological eccentricity may puzzle many? But I suppose one way of establishing his eccentricity is to survey his attitude towards idealism. In 1933 he wrote:

> Philosophers have in general ignored the possibility of a science of art and have proceeded blissfully on a priori assumptions as to its nature. That is why I think we are entitled boldly to ignore the aesthetics of idealism.[60]

If this is his view of idealist aesthetics, his view of idealism on which it is based cannot be favourable. Indeed he said in 1923:

> We have become more empirical, and the general effect of the growth of science has been to discredit transcendental reasoning altogether. Traditional criticism . . . is a structure whose very foundations have perished, and if we are to save it from becoming the province of emotional dictators, we must hasten to relate it to those systems of knowledge which have to a great extent replaced transcendental philosophy.[61]

He goes on to mention physics and psychology as such systems of knowledge. It seems to me that this is a repudiation of idealism. It is true that he admits that aprioristic processes cannot be dispensed with, but is he not in that case making a "concession" to transcendental reasoning at the same time as he declares that it has been "discredited altogether"? This is a curiously ambivalent attitude towards transcendentalism as if he did not know his own mind or felt that there was much to be said for it and yet was repulsed from it. In 1960, however, Read strikes a different note. "It has <u>always</u> seemed to me that the reduction of science to indeterminancy, and philosophy to a game with counters, far from discrediting idealism, has made it all the more necessary."[62] Isn't this a radical reversal of his earlier position? In 1926 he believed that physics had replaced transcendental philosophy. In 1960 he thought that idealism (transcendental philosophy) was "all the more necessary".

I sometimes suspect that this change of attitude from hostility to hospitality towards idealism is a result of his changing attitude towards science. In 1933 he wrote:

". . . but science is prior to philosophy; science must establish its facts before philosophers can make use of them."[63] This would seem to suggest that philosophy is tied as it were to the apron-strings of science. But compare with this remark the one he made nearly three decades later. In 1960 he wrote: "I do not intend to propagate the vulgar error that philosophy is based on science . . ."[64] It is obvious that he is rectifying the "vulgar error" he did make in 1933. I shall quote one more remark from the same book which shows his changed attitude towards science. "But the philosopher does not necessarily choose his facts in the scientist's laboratory."[65] Should one conclude then that Read has travelled from an emphatically empiricist position to a position critical of empiricism and leaning towards idealism? Perhaps this dissatisfaction with science or empiricism is "the expression of the will to truth that reaches out beyond the fulfillment that science can provide"?[66]

I would say that Read was torn between two worlds: empiricism and philosophy. He shared his loyalties with both. Taking an overview of his works one can say that not all his pro-science declarations prevented him from holding views that would not be acceptable to the strictly scientific spirit. To give only one example: His transcendental conception of intuition is contemporary with his allegiance to Freud! He himself must have been vaguely

aware of the dual pull of his mind in the directions of empiricism and philosophy or metaphysics. He must have been troubled by it. He himself must have had doubts about the compatibility of empirical and philosophical predilections. The early Read sometimes sought to justify his philosophical predilection on the ground that philosophy was based on science. The later Read sought to justify it on the ground that science was not adequate. "The will to truth" does not necessarily run in scientific grooves.

Far be it from me to seek to impose a false pattern of neatness on the fluid course of Read's changing views on philosophy or metaphysics and science. But I think they represent the inner struggle of a man who doubts if one can serve two masters. He admits the inadequacy of the scientific framework in 1940. He says:

> But like religious philosophy, it [aesthetic philosophy] cannot be included within such a rational framework. There is a limit to rationality, an 'instant' in which the spirit leaps out of the logical framework of thought, and is creative.[67]

Let "rational framework", and "logical framework" be taken to mean the empirical disciplines and you have here a defence of Read's metaphysical predilection. It is also an explanation of how a follower of Freud and other psychoanalysts could also be a follower of Coleridge, Cassirer and Heidegger. The necessity of an explanation which goes beyond the sciences is expressed in uncompromising terms in "The Forms of Things Unknown", to which we shall have

occasion to refer in the next chapter.

Admittedly, Read's thinking on the question of science and philosophy vis a vis poetics is not translucent. But we must remember that he was groping his way towards a personal synthesis in a period characterized by intense creative activity in the sciences and in philosophy. This was the period dominated in philosophy by Whitehead, Croce, Collingwood, Cassirer, not to mention the existentialists. His literary training brought with it a few more influences, Coleridge and Schelling. In the sciences this period was dominated for him by the psychoanalysts and the Gestaltists, not to mention his acquaintance with Henry Focillon. If a man is open to all these influences, a certain amount of "eclecticism" is bound to creep into his thinking giving rise to contradictions that tidy and intellectually orthodox minds do not have patience with. The question that we are considering bristles with contradictions. I do not propose to go hunting after these contradictions for that is the surest way of losing the quarry. What I keep on reminding myself of is this: Yes, there were times when Read attached more to importance to the sciences than to philosophy. But there are none too rare moments when he doubted the scope of empiricism. It was a little late in his career that he consciously and firmly accepted what he seems to have been aware of unconsciously for a long time, namely, that empiricism and philosophy cannot be presented as

irreconcilable opposites out of which you choose one. So in Read we have a theorist who takes cognizance of the sciences as well as of philosophy or metaphysics. The sciences represent one level, philosophy another. Both these levels are equally significant. They may be looked upon as allies in a common pursuit, namely, understanding poetry. We shall discuss the philosophical level in the next chapter and the scientific in the third.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS AND THEORY OF POETRY: 1918-1966

> Art . . . is one of those vague spheres of human activity which escape any very precise definition. Criticism is merely an approximation towards that unattainable end, an endless multiplication of distinctions.[1]

> Academic critics have done little but obscure the real nature of poetry . . .[2]

Middleton Murry, who reviewed Read's Phases of English Poetry in The Times Literary Supplement, says that poets "inevitably have a theory, often one of great interest in that, alike with their choice of poets, it springs immediately from their own needs."[3] If we substitute the expression "philosophical views" for the expression "needs", we arrive at the proposition that the poetic theory and philosophical convictions of poets must necessarily be of a piece. A consideration of Read's philosophical convictions and his poetics (which term I take to mean the views he expressed on the nature and function of poetry, poetic process, poetic diction and other related topics) will reveal that the latter has been shaped and influenced by the former. It may be noted at this stage that Read's is not a "static" poetics.[4] What I mean is that the nature of his poetics is

"fluid". We shall see how it changes over the years, and relate it to the changes in the structure of his concepts we have already acquainted ourselves with.

We may ask ourselves at the outset as to what importance Read attaches to poetic theory or to statements of a theoretical nature on the subject of poetry. He says in his "American Bards and British Reviewers":

> I think we should respect [Hart] Crane's brief excursion into the definition of modern poetry because even if it does not measure up to the logician's standards of consistency or profundity, it does indicate the poet's own intention more nearly than any critical analysis from the outside.[5]

It is obvious from this remark that Read is prepared to admit such 'external evidence' in his critical procedure as is tendered by the artist himself. From the point of view of the New Critical orthodoxy, Read is guilty of the critical heresy of the 'Intentional Fallacy'. But one can deduce from his remark the conclusion that as far as he is concerned, the critical utterance of the poet should be given adequate importance in any criticism of him. In other words, Read is saying that the poet be examined in the light of his poetics. It would appear then that for Read theory of poetry is a significant endeavour even from the point of view of the poet.

It is possible to counter the above argument with a quotation from another work of Read. In <u>The True Voice of Feeling</u>, after giving an account of Shelley's theory of poetry, he says: "Such a clear conception of the nature of

poetry does not necessarily imply an ability to put precept into practice ...?"[6] This earlier statement of Read's and that made in "American Bards and British Reviewers" may be read together. And when read together, they yield the following meaning: That the poet's intention may become clear from his theory or definition or view of the nature of poetry but that since the precepts (which must be connected with the 'intention') are not, on his own admission, necessarily put into practice, the intention may not necessarily be realized. The question that arises then is this: How much importance should we attach to Read's 'intention' in so far as we can judge it from his poetics, and to what extent is it fair to him if we judge his 'practice' in the light of his 'precepts'?

It is possible to interpret the above statements of 1936 and 1963 in a different way. Read is convinced of the importance of 'intention', but he would not recommend an unimaginative approach to the question of intention because the realization of 'intention' is governed by several factors. One should recognize the complexity of the process of poetic creation, and "endless" distinctions (and, we may add, qualifications,) are necessary to help achieve a theory which is least dogmatic.

But we may justly demand that if 'poetic practice' and the poet's 'intention' bear no relationship to each other, the poetic theory should be able to account for this

in concrete terms. Now, the discrepancy between 'intention' and 'practice' is only one of the many problems in poetics. What one expects of a theory of poetry, therefore, is that it work out various aspects of the nature of poetry and poetic creation and their inter-relationship. Is this too much to expect of a poetic theorist? Read's answer to this question may, perhaps, be inferred from the comment he made while discussing the view that Wordsworth's theory of poetry is vindicated by some poems and contradicted by others. "The mistake is to imagine that any theory of poetry, which descends to accidentals of diction and metre, can be universal in its scope."[7] The implication of this remark seems to be that in order to attain universality of scope, the theory should be maintained at the level of generality. In other words, in order to be universal in scope, it should deal with universal aspects. The question that one may ask is whether it should not be capable of devising a 'strategy' for dealing with 'accidentals'. It appears that according to Solomon Fishman, Read has not devised such a strategy. He says that Read's system cannot really test adequately the "authenticity of the verbal elements". He says:

> Read's system tests the authenticity of the verbal elements--the poetic essence--by the quality of the metre, but is incapable of discussing metre and meaning as functions of one another except as a generalization.[8]

It is true that not all aspects of Read's theory are capable of practical application. But I hope to demonstrate in my

last chapter that certain aspects of his theory are capable of practical application and that they provide us with means for appreciating certain elements of poetry.

Now that we have considered some of Read's more important utterances on the subject of the theory of poetry, we may begin to inquire into his theory itself. As we inquire into it chronologically, we shall see how the changes in his views are related to the changes in the structure of his basic concepts. We may begin with a consideration of his "Definitions Towards a Theory of Poetry", his first 'excursion' into the field of poetic theory. While commenting on this article, Read says: "What surprises me now (1963) is to find the views I expressed at the age of twenty-five are substantially the same as the views I still hold."[9] Hence it could be considered as providing us with a convenient point of departure. Let us see what those views are and to what extent they presage what were to become his major themes for the next half century.

This is a closely argued essay, written with all the confidence of a brilliant young man who finds the contemporary creative and critical scene a little depressing. ". . . we moderns as a whole grope blindly in our fog."[10] The reason for this predicament, apparently, is that "the principles of creation and criticism" have not reached an "intelligible definition". He sets out to rectify the situation by suggesting some "axioms" as "necessary dogmas". In

a manner reminiscent of Leibniz, he states his "axioms" and their "corollaries". I shall quote Read's thesis:

> I. Form is determined by the emotion which requires expression. Corollary: Form is not an unchanging mould into which any emotion can be poured.
>
> II. The poem is an artistic whole demanding strict unity.
>
> III. The criterion of the poem is the quality of the vision expressed, granted that the expression is adequate.
>
> Corollary: Rhyme, metre, cadence, alliteration, are various decorative devices to be used as the vision demands and are not formal quantities pre-ordained.[11]

He defines the terms used in the axioms and finally offers the following definition of the poem: "The poem is the expression in words of the mind's vision, and expression, to be effective, must possess significant form, which significant form is achieved by unity, vitality, concentration and decoration."[12] The phrase 'significant form', which has come to be associated with Read as far as literary criticism is concerned, makes its first appearance in this article. Clive Bell used this very phrase with reference to painting, and one may notice that Read's concept of 'significant form' as it stands at this time is remarkably similar to Bell's. Bell defined 'significant form' as that which has "aesthetic emotion". When Read says that "the poem is the expression in words . . . and expression, to be effective, must possess significant form . . ." what he means is that the poem is the expression in significant verbal form. He connects 'significant verbal form' (one may use this awkward

phrase to indicate that it refers to poetry) with 'aesthetic emotion' exactly as Bell connected 'significant form' and 'aesthetic emotion'. This connection is established in his definition of "vision". He defines "vision" as "the recognition of emotions possessing an aesthetic value", which is not really different from saying that vision is the recognition of aesthetic emotions. There is, however, one difference between Bell and Read. Bell speaks of 'aesthetic emotion', whereas Read speaks of "emotions possessing aesthetic value" (which expression we have summarized as 'aesthetic emotions'). Bell seems to have in mind the aesthetic concept of 'aesthetic emotion', the end of 'significant form'. Read seems to have in mind not the end so much as the 'materials' (emotions) which emerge as significant form, though, of course, the end (recognition of aesthetic value) is present in the beginning (emotions). Read has not yet worked out the 'mechanics' of how the significant form is "determined by aesthetic emotions" besides laying down certain requirements for achieving significant form, namely, unity, vitality, exactness, concentration and decoration. It may also be noted that his views are not supported by any well-thought-out framework of philosophical beliefs, that the subject matter of poetry is confined to "emotions possessing an aesthetic value" and that ideas and thought per se seem to be excluded from the subject matter of poetry.

Besides the concept of 'significant form', some of Read's major themes have found their first expression in this youthful essay. "Beauty is experienced by the senses--is the fulfilment of an aesthetic lust for colour and fragrance . . ."[13] He does not, at this point, make any significant use of this belief in the development of his theory. But it will not be an exaggeration to say that the seed of the theory of the sensational basis of art is present here. Secondly, and significantly enough, he does not attach great importance to the intellect. One may infer this from his description of "vision". He says: "Vision, resulting from emotion, is obviously not an intellectual quantity."[14] But he is no irrationalist to deny its existence altogether in the act of aesthetic creation. "The only way in which intellect does enter into the visionary process is in a selective way, e.g., rejecting emotions that are of no aesthetic value, or the expression of which would be too imitative."[15] However, the intellect cannot carry out the only task assigned to it in the aesthetic creation, namely, that of selecting and rejecting emotions, in a 'philosophical vacuum'. "Yet the artist who lacks a high philosophic basis is doomed to damnation, largely because he is precluded from that intellectual selection which is so necessary to artistic perfection."[16] The role of the intellect, as compared with that of the emotions, is secondary. But the intellectual operation involved in

'selection' is dependent on philosophy. It is significant that Read should express himself in favour of philosophy in his first important statement on the subject of poetic theory. It shows an analytical bent of mind. Unfortunately, however, he does not tell us what he considers to be a "high philosophic basis". Surely, he would have agreed that the doom he predicted of the artist without a 'philosophy', could as well be predicted of the poetic theorist without a philosophy. To overcome that possibility as it were, he will acquire philosophical views; and shaped by them, his theory of poetry will undergo an elaborate development. 'Significant form', for example, is a relatively simple phrase at this stage of Read's development. But it will take on a complex meaning as his philosophical and scientific preoccupations come to bear on it. Read's Reason and Romanticism is his first critical volume in which a "philosophic basis" is seen in operation.

II

We may begin our study of how Read's theory of poetry is shaped by his philosophical views with an analysis of his views on this subject during the period of the ascendancy of reason, or what I called the period of Reason Triumphant in the first chapter. These views are expressed in his Reason and Romanticism. It is his firm belief that art--and the greatest art for him is poetry--cannot succeed where science has failed. Let us see the implications of

this belief for his views on poetry. I should make clear in what sense science has failed. Read is his best commentator here.

> It is necessary to be quite plain on this issue: modern science, dissociating itself from nineteenth century science, has undoubtedly declared its disability to 'enter the domain of the noumenal: the disqualification of positive science from any contact with the causes'.[17]

It may well be asked as to what the relevance of Read's belief concerning modern science is to his theory of poetry. The answer is simple. That science cannot enter the world of the noumenal does not mean that art can. He says that

> . . . it is mere superstition to imagine that what cannot be known in the mind and by intellectual symbols may be comprehended in some other indefinite way. It is mysticism in its most illogical form--mysticism which pretends to be, not merely an alternative to scientific truth . . . but something more inclusive of reality than the scientific method.[18]

Poetry cannot step in where science has failed.

The concept of reason implied in the remarks quoted above seems to me to be that of <u>rationality</u>. Otherwise he would not have said that what cannot be known by <u>intellectual</u> symbols cannot be known at all. At the same time, however, the concept of reason in the sense of comprehensive reason is also operative in this book. The joint operation of these two concepts manifests itself in his theory. How?

Consider this statement on art:

> Art must conquer new forms of life, and for this purpose art will need new symbols. . . . But these forms and symbols will emerge parallel with the general development of human thought. It is not likely that this

> development will take the form of a mystical divorce from reason, or that it will be independent of a continuance of the traditional or 'formed phenomenon of intellect and sense'.[19]

The conception of reason implied here is that of comprehensive reason, as the reference to the word "sense" clearly suggests. But it may be noted that the role poetry is called upon to play makes it subordinate to "reason". This becomes more clear in the following remark:

> . . . I prefer to believe in art which is the incorporation and enlightening of ground gained by intelligence . . . . Art is not an invention in vacuo; it is rather a selection from chaos, a definition from the amorphous, a concretion within the terrible fluidity of life.[20]

Art <u>incorporates the ground gained by</u> "<u>intelligence</u>" or comprehensive reason. (Read seems to use "intelligence" and "reason" as synonyms). Intelligence is, so to speak, the path-finder, and art sets up 'sign-posts' as it were, along the ground gained by intelligence. Poetry is, therefore, subordinate to reason. It is tied to the apron strings of reason.

This notion of <u>subordinating</u> art to reason is, we believe, an unconscious manifestation of the concept of reason in the sense of rationality lurking somewhere at the back of Read's mind. For comprehensive reason does not subordinate art to reason. As a matter of fact, the idea of "subordination" or "control" goes well with rationality rather than with comprehensive reason. I shall substantiate my point further.

Read holds the view that not only is art controlled by reason but that art controls emotions. He says:

"Literature is, after all, an expression of emotional states. I should say that it is mainly the control of them."[21] If he thinks of literature as "the control" of emotions, the ideal of reason controlling his views on poetry must be that of rationality. However, we cannot assert that because he has given evidence of using the word "reason" in the sense of "comprehensive reason". It is safer to say that both the concepts of reason operate in his theory at this time and give it an ambivalent tone.

Another observation that could be made on this theory as a whole is this: It resists all transcendental conceptions of art. For according to it, art works within the context of intelligence. But we may ask: If art works within such a context, in what sense is it "a selection from chaos", "a definition from the amorphous", "a concretion within the terrible fludity of life"? We suppose what Read means is that in so far as art incorporates and enlightens the ground covered by intelligence, and seeks exactitude and concreteness of expression, it orders, moulds and shapes the raw-material supplied by intelligence. But it has nothing whatever to do with nescience. As he puts it: "It is better to sacrifice art altogether than to make it a mere anomalous groping into the void of Nescience."[22] Obviously, Read's concept of comprehensive reason, which is an ideal of consciousness, has no place for what surpasses the level of consciousness.

We have seen above that according to Read, literature is an "expression of emotional states". But what is expression and what are its actual mechanics? He deals with these questions in his English Prose Style. He tries to establish the unique character of poetry by comparing it with prose. He says: "Poetry is the expression of one form of mental activity, Prose the expression of another form."[23] The difference between the two is that "Poetry is creative expression, Prose is constructive expression."[24] The key term in these definitions is "creative expression" of which he gives us a detailed description.

> In poetry the words are born or re-born in the act of thinking. The words are, in Bergsonian phraseology, a becoming; they develop in the mind pari passu with the development of the thought. There is no time interval between the words and the thought. The thought is the word and the word is thought, and both the thought and the word are poetry.[25]

We imagine that Read is distinguishing here between the "act of thinking" and "thought"--the process and the product. He seems to be saying that the process determines not only thoughts but also words. In the act of thinking words develop along with thought. And it is precisely this simultaneity of the two elements of thought and words which makes Read say that "the thought is the word and the word is thought". Moreover, it is this very identity between the two which is considered by Read to be the essence of poetry. 'Expression' is described as being creative precisely because words develop as thought develops. In other words, 'thought'

and 'words' are not found ready-made. Therefore poetry is 'original', 'creative' expression as opposed to prose which is described as a "structure of ready-made words".[26]

Since according to the theory of poetry as 'creative expression', the thought is the word and the word is thought, and both the thought and the word are 'Poetry', it is but logical to conclude that poetry can reside even in one expressive word or one expressive syllable. Read says:

> Does it follow that poetry is solely an affair of words? Yes: an affair of words adequate to the thought involved. An affair of one word, like Shakespeare's 'incarnadine', or of two or three words, like 'shady sadness', 'incense-breathing Morn', 'a peak in Darien', 'soft Lydian airs', 'Mount Abora', 'starinwrought', or of all the words necessary for a thought like the Divine Comedy.[27]

Another startling conclusion he arrives at on the basis of his theory is that since poetry may inhere in a single word, in a single syllable, it may be without rhythm but prose, which does not exist except in the phrase, has some kind of rhythm. Both the conclusions sound preposterous. They may even be regarded as unintentional reductio ad absurdum of his basic theory. Moreover, this theory raises certain questions which Read has not answered. How does one know when words are adequate to the thought involved? How does the poet know that? I shall return to these questions when I discuss I. A. Richards' criticism of Read.

Philip Littell has politely dismissed the theory and I. A. Richards has torn it to pieces. Littell says:

> He [Read] is haunted by a distinction between poetry and prose--'the real distinction', he calls it--which is anything but clear: 'Poetry is creative expression: Prose is constructive expression.' He repeats this in many forms without persuading me that such a distinction will work.[28]

The verb 'haunt' describes correctly Read's abiding concern with the distinction between prose and poetry, the critical significance of which is that he is interested in establishing the unique character of poetry. Incidentally, Littell does not explain why the distinction does not 'persuade' him. Richards, however, subjects the whole theory to a critical scrutiny. He detects the "influence of Italian speculation" on Read in this theory and describes the influence as being "unfortunate". I shall quote him at some length.

> When Mr. Read says, 'The thought is the word and the word is the thought, and both the thought and the word are poetry' he is talking in the idiom of Croce, an idiom fatal to profitable reflection on these matters. For either he is loosely affirming a close interdependence, or he is giving away a trick to the behaviorists. . . . The whole prospect of a clearer understanding of Poetry depends upon distinguishing the words from the 'thought' and investigating their relations; and phraseology such as this (it recurs occasionally later in the book, e.g., p. 164) produces either a dead stop in the mind or a fuddled (or ecstatic) feeling of ultimate truth, according to one's antecedents. In neither case is the result fruitful, for if this <u>were</u> all that could be said in the matter it might as <u>well</u> not have been said.[29]

I think that the charge of "giving away a trick to the behaviorists where those naive theorists least deserve one" is not justified. It would have been justified if it could be shown that according to Read's theory, thought is a

function of words in the same manner in which for the behaviorists signs of fear signify the emotion of fear. I do not think this could be shown because for Read the act of thinking is the matrix in which words are born or reborn. When it is understood that an act of thinking is necessary for the 'birth' of words, it is not fair to Read to say that he means that thought is a function of words. Besides, the Croce-like-idiom of "The Thought is the word and the word is the thought" does not really seem to be fatal to "profitable reflection". I believe that what Read means is that the act of thinking determines not only thought but words too in which thought is expressed. But words and thought are born and reborn till there is a complete correspondence between the two. When there is such a correspondence between the two, words are thoughts and thoughts words. It is true that Read sounds mystical, or mystical enough to arouse Richards to withering scorn. But Read is not "loosely affirming a close inter-dependence". He is examining how the poetic equation between thought and words is established. In attempting to establish this equation he says that "In poetry there is no time-interval between the words and the thought . . ." Richards objects to this on the ground that one must think a word through before using it. Indeed, one must. But when Read says that there is no time-interval etc., should he be taken literally? If the answer is "Yes", Richards' objection is valid. He says:

> Plainly it is not the physical or even psychological conditions of composition that decide whether a passage is poetry but the relation of the words to a state of mind and the qualities of that state of mind itself.[30]

But I must register a protest against Richards' objection. None of Read's statements give the impression that "conditions of composition", physical or psychological, determine whether a given passage is poetry or not. Besides, Read does discuss the relation between words and thought. Now, if thoughts are any indication of the "state of mind", is not Read in discussing the relation of words and thoughts saying that words are related to a state of mind in poetry?

What makes this theory significant is the note of organicism it introduces in the discussion of poetic composition. According to it words develop at the same pace as thought and in close harmony with it, and therefore the word is thought and the thought is the word. In other words, the relation between thoughts and words is organic. It does not believe that the poet's thoughts are fully worked out in advance, and that expression comes later. If it were so, words would express a pre-determined thought, attain a pre-determined goal, and the relationship of words to thought would be that of subservience. There would be a certain element of passivity in the words, they would be treated as counters and there would be no sense of inevitability about the poetic equation between 'thought' and 'words'. In other words, the relationship between them would not be organic.

Perhaps I have overstressed the element of thought in Read's theory of poetry at this time. There are other elements which complicate and modify thought. Those elements are 'emotion' and 'sensation'. The sensational aspect of thought in poetry is brought out in the following remark: ". . . if the thought is of an immediate or intuitive origin, if it is essentially vital, but nevertheless assumes order and harmony, then the form of expression is poetic."[31] So we learn that thought in poetry has a sensational basis, as the phrase "immediate origin" suggests. And that it is coloured by emotion follows from the fact that for Read poetry implies priority of emotion. In other words, the thought is not exact, which it would have been if it were discursive. The difference between exact thought and thought coloured by emotion and sansation is the difference between rationality and comprehensive reason. The former is abstract but the latter is coloured by the senses.

This creative conception of expression in poetry (according to which thoughts and words develop together), is opposed to T. E. Hulme's view regarding the relationship between words and thought--at least as it stands expressed in his "Classicism and Romanticism". Hulme says that words are 'bent' to convey the exact contours of thought. It seems to us that this particular view implies that thought or content is a 'given constant' to Hulme and that there is no dialectical relationship between the two, that is, thought

itself is not acted upon by words. (We shall discuss in our chapter on Imagism that this is not Hulme's true critical position). Read's theory of poetry, on the other hand, emphasizes the dialectical nature of the creative process.

It may seem to one that Read has deviated from this theory of creative expression in his Phases of English Poetry. Consider, for instance, the following description of the process of expression.

> Emotion is not rendered by emotion; there are events, emotions, states of soul . . . on the one side, and on the other side are certain symbols, namely, words, which in themselves are objective facts, and the process of expression, poetic or otherwise, is nothing but the translation of the one category into terms of the other.[32]

This description may give one the impression that the process of expression is one of mechanical conversion. As if the poet is given two 'constants' and his task is to express the one in terms of the other! Of course, the process is far from being mechanical, and Read's explanation of the differences between prose and poetic translations of one category into terms of the other brings into sharp focus, as we shall try to demonstrate presently, the difference between comprehensive reason and rationality we have already touched on very briefly.

It also becomes clear from the above quotation that Read rejects 'emotionalism' ("Emotion is not rendered by emotion"). This is consistent with his ideal of comprehensive reason. And consistent with his rejection of

'emotionalism' is his rejection of 'incantation' as he understands it at this time.

> . . . what precisely Abbé Bremond means by 'an incantation' which gives '<u>unconscious</u> expression' to the state of soul in which the poet exists before he expresses himself in ideas or sentiments, I do not know . . . but unconscious expression seems to me to be a contradiction in terms, and if by 'incantation' is meant merely an emotional evocation of an emotional state, then that seems to me to be a poor substitute for exact expression.[33]

Plainly, he is reacting against some of the sins of pure poetry at its worst.

One aspect of the theory suggested in <u>Phases of English Poetry</u> contradicts what he said in <u>English Prose Style</u>. In <u>Phases of English Poetry</u> he says:

> I have already admitted that between the idea and the expression there may be, and often is, a gap. In the art of prose (and this is the only valuable distinction) the thought is exact and the expression is exact; there is identity. In poetry the thought is emotional (I use the phrase in full consciousness of the paradox), and there is only an attempt at <u>equivalence</u>.[34]

Mark the word "equivalence". But in <u>English Prose Style</u> he said that "the thought is the word and word thought and both the thought and the word are poetry", which suggests that expression is <u>exact</u> in poetry. Now he says that there is identity (that is, <u>exactness</u>, we may add) between thought and expression in prose but not in poetry. Another contradiction may be found in <u>Phases of English Poetry</u>. On p. 122 he seems to ask for exact expression in poetry. But on p. 123 we learn that there is exact expression only in prose. I suspect that he is using the word 'exact' in more senses

than one, though he has not made them clear. However, what he is suggesting in this theory could be spelled out a little more clearly.

What I would like to point out is the antithesis set up between 'exact thought' and 'emotional thought'. This antithesis is parallel to the two conceptions of reason we have found to be operating in Reason and Romanticism. Reason conceived as rationality can be related to 'exact thought' and reason conceived as 'comprehensive reason' can be related to 'emotional thought'. And the difference between two types of thought is the difference between two types of reason. 'Emotional thought' is more complex and difficult to apprehend because it represents interaction of thought not only with emotion but also with the senses.

> If the thought is of a discursive or speculative origin, with creation or feeling subsumed or induced within its framework, the form of expression is prosaic; if the thought is of an immediate or intuitive origin, if it is 'essentially vital' . . . then the form of expression is poetic.[35]

Mark the phrase "immediate or intuitive origin". It suggests the 'quality' of 'emotional thought' to which he is referring here. This quality of 'immediacy' springs from the fact that 'emotional thought' is based on the "evidence of the senses". And because it is based on the "widest evidence of the senses", it is connected with reason in the sense of comprehensive reason, rather than with rationality. To sum up, emotions and intuition complicate and colour thought to give us 'emotional thought'. But 'exact thought'

is unalloyed with emotion and the senses. Read seems to believe that it is the very nature of 'exact thought' and 'emotional thought' which makes 'exact' expression--'identity'--possible in the former and 'equivalence--not identity--in the latter. This interpretation of what Read is saying is supported by what he says about the poet's strategy of expression: "The poet resorts to emotional analogies--to words which give, not meaning which cannot be given, but an equivalence of tone, of colour, an equivalence of the pattern and contour of thought."[36] 'Tone' and 'colour' refer to the senses. And the reference to 'emotion' is explicit. Thus it will be found that Read's description of the process of 'poetic expression' includes all the elements which he, as we have seen in the first chapter, later synthesized in what I have described as the integrationist conception of reason.

We have been considering so far Read's description of the process of 'poetic expression' of 'emotional thought'. He also comments on the process of poetic expression of 'emotion'. It may seem a little surprising that he should distinguish between expression of emotion in prose and in poetry. But he must have felt that if one distinguished between 'exact thought' (the province of prose, according to him, but it could also be considered to be the province of the poetry which aims at exact expression of exact thought) and 'emotional thought', one should also distinguish between

the expression of emotion in prose and the expression of emotion in poetry. He says:

> . . . the emotion is organized either by an immediate apprehension of an appropriate form, or by a deliberate disposition of its elements or forces. The intuitive organization of emotion is generally poetic in kind.. . . The discursive organization of emotion, however, has effect in prose style alone: it is a translation of the emotion, not into immediacy of expression, but into an explanation. In one case the expression is the emotion--the immediate projection of it, but projection into instinctive form or shapeliness; in the other case the expression recreates the emotion, builds up an ordered structure of words which is the equivalent of the emotion.[37]

If we read his remark in Phases of English Poetry about the expression of thought in prose and poetry together with this remark, we are led to this conclusion: That poetry gives 'equivalence' of emotional thought, but when it deals with emotion there is identity between expression and emotion. Prose gives equivalence of emotion, but when it deals with thought there is 'identity' between 'expression' and 'thought'.

What exactly does "the expression is the emotion" mean? It is possible to subject the above quotation from English Prose Style to a minute linguistic analysis and charge Read with logical imprecision, inexactness, and use of confusing and confused nomenclature. But we are dealing with a very sensitive poet-aesthetician who is groping his way with admirable resoluteness in a field not too popular with English poets. His very poetic theory could be described as a long process of discovery. We should hesitate, therefore,

to allow ourselves to be bogged down by his inconsistencies and contradictions. It would be preferable to recognize the general drift of his argument and interpret his particular utterances in its light. The general drift of his argument is 'expressionist'. (The influence of Croce's doctrine of expressionism on him is obvious here). Now, a consideration of the implications of the contrasted pairs of opposites such as "immediate apprehension" and "deliberate disposition" ('translation' or 'explanation'), 'intuitive' and 'discursive', and "immediate form" and "ordered structure", suggests the following as an interpretation of Read's observation quoted above. Expression of emotion properly so called, is not translation or explanation or recreation of emotion because the 'immediacy' and 'individuality' unique to it are lost in the process of description, etc. 'Expression of emotion' in the proper sense of the term does not take place in prose, for prose '<u>recreates</u>' 'emotion' but recreation is not 'expression'--not any more than 'copying' is 'expression'. Read seems to believe that when one 'recreates' emotion (as in prose), one does not capture its 'immediacy' and 'individuality', and that therefore recreated emotion is the <u>equivalent</u> of the emotion. Hence prose gives us the "<u>equivalent</u> of the emotion". (We have already seen that according to Read, poetry gives <u>equivalence</u> of <u>emotional</u> <u>thought</u>. But we should note that the reasons why expression of emotion in prose attains

'equivalence' are not the same as the reasons for which poetry achieves equivalence of 'emotional thought'. In the former, lack of "directness" and "immediacy"--qualities of comprehensive reason--make for equivalence; in the latter, presence of complicating factors like emotion, sensation makes for equivalence). Expression of emotion in poetry, on the other hand, is direct, immediate and it has instinctive form. Therefore the expression is the emotion in poetry.

To summarize very briefly this part of our discussion. We have seen how Read formulates the ideal of comprehensive reason; and how, as a matter of fact, he operates with two concepts of reason, one, of comprehensive reason and another, of rationality. Some of his views on expression in poetry seem to be determined by the view of reason as rationality, whereas the theory of expression of thought and emotion in poetry is determined by his view of reason as comprehensive reason. As a matter of fact, this view of reason enables him to explain why thought and emotion are expressed in poetry differently than in prose and why poetic expression is unique. Another important factor which explains the unique character of poetry is intuition, which makes its weight felt in his theory around 1929.

III

We saw in the last chapter that the year 1929 is of great significance in Read's career as a poetic theorist

since he defined clearly in that year his concept of intuition. How does this theory of intuition influence his theory of poetry? Let us turn to his essay on Descartes. I shall quote again the remark which I quoted in the first chapter.

> There is then a further process and a higher faculty, and there is at present no better way of describing it than by saying that it is the sudden perception of pattern in life: the sudden realization of the fact that an organic event, of which we are a part, is in its turn the part of a greater unity. . . . This further perception or realization is the process to which we might perhaps limit the term 'intuition'; and *it is, under the aspect of expression, the process of poetry*.[38]

Poetry is, then, expression of the process and faculty of intuition. Does this not amount to saying that poetry originates in intuition? (We have already commented in the first chapter on the view of intuition Read presents in this essay). And though he does not explicitly comment on the 'mechanics of expression' of intuition, one can guess from his account of intuition that expression of it is characterized by concreteness and immediacy--the qualities that one associates with comprehensive reason.

We have already seen that intuition acquires a transcendental character in 1932.[39] How does his transcendental view of intuition affect his theory of poetry? Read describes poetry as a "transcendental quality" now. He says, for instance, "Poetry is properly speaking a transcendental quality . . ."[40] He believes that all art "originates in an act of intuition or vision."[41] It may be observed that the view expressed here is similar to the one

he expressed in 1929 when he said that the "process" of "further perception" (intuition) is, "under the aspect of expression, the process of poetry". The difference between the two views, however, is that intuition did not have a transcendental character in 1929.

But it should be realized that that intuition acquires a transcendental character and that it is related to the "realm of essence" does not mean that the poet need not have a sense of the "realm of existence". Indeed, the sense of 'existence' is necessary because without this sense, without experience, the poet would be lost in utter subjectivity, and poetry would become the direct expression of "sentiment". One may observe here how "intuition" and "comprehensive reason" are closely related. The latter supplies the sense of existence to the former. And Read is opposed to any theory which presupposes the "primacy of sentiment".[42]

> I do not think there is anything in this essay to countenance such a theory. It is contradicted by my insistence on the objective equivalence of the poetic word; contradicted it is also by the implication, everywhere present, of the objective nature of the poet's material--of the worthlessness of sentiments which are not guaranteed by experience.[43]

So we see that the sense of existence, experience is important for him even when he believes in the 'realm of essence'. This sense of existence makes for objectivity of material and diction. The demand for "<u>objective equivalence of the poetic word</u>" is voiced in the following remark: "All art

originates in act of intuition, or vision. But such intuition or vision must be identified with knowledge, being fully present only when consciously objectified."[44] 'Conscious objectification' is a condition not only of the transformation of intuition into knowledge, but also of the "full presence" of the former. Starting from this premise, he works out a theory of expression in poetry which could be contrasted with the one he put forward in Phases of English Poetry.

> This act of vision or intuition is, physically a state of concentration or tension in the mind. The process of poetry consists firstly in maintaining this vision in its integrity, and secondly in expressing this vision in words. Words are generally (that is to say, in prose) the analysis of a mental state. But in the process of poetic composition words rise into the conscious mind as isolated objective 'things' with a definite equivalence in the poet's state of mental intensity. They are arranged or composed in a sequence or rhythm which is sustained until the mental state of tension in the poet is exhausted or released by this objective equivalence.[45]

Read offers here a psychological theory of poetic expression. What I mean is that he has tried to explain the process of poetic expression with reference to psychological concepts. 'Vision' or 'intuition' is described in psychological terms as 'a state of mental tension or concentration'. Completion of the process of expression of vision or intuition is described in terms of exhaustion of tension. Objective equivalence which is necessary to the process of expression is looked upon as what releases or exhausts the tension. By giving his theory a psychological orientation Read makes it

look more convincing than the simple assertion that it really is: vision is expressed objectively. One may still ask the question: "How does the poet determine his diction?" Read tries to answer this question, but once again he gets involved in the problem of how expression in poetry is different from expression in prose. According to him, the function of words in prose is analytic, whereas their function in poetry is synthetic. What he means by synthetic function of words is that they recreate for objective apprehension the subjective state of intensity of the poet. This recreation is possible because there is a relation of "definite equivalence" between words and the state of intensity. So one may say the poet chooses such words as have "definite equivalence" with "states of intensity". But one may ask: "How is this 'recreation' different from the recreation of emotion in prose?"[46] The important difference to notice between 'recreation of emotion' in prose and 'recreation of the state of subjective intensity' (intuition or vision) is that there is an element of 'deliberateness' in the former whereas in the latter, "words rise into consciousness" (which suggests that poetic expression is "inevitable"). Another question that could be asked is this. "If in the expression of emotion in poetry 'the expression is the emotion'--if, that is, the relationship of poetic expression to emotion is that of identity, why should not the same relation of identity exist between expression and

intuition?" One may suggest this answer: "The relationship is that of 'equivalence' and not that of 'identity' for the same reason for which there is in poetry 'equivalence' of 'emotional thought' and 'expression'."[47] 'Emotional thought' has a sensational aspect. And so does intuition in its conscious objectification. Hence the relationship between 'expression' and 'intuition' is that of equivalence. Finally, Read has suggested how the poet knows that the 'process of expression' is complete. The poet knows he has achieved 'complete expression' when the 'given tension' is exhausted.

Let us pull together some of the results of our investigation so far. In Phases of English Poetry Read spoke of the process of expression as a 'translation' of one category--"states of soul"--into terms of the other--words. In the light of his theory of "creative expression" advanced in English Prose Style[48] I argued that his conception of the process of translation was, unlike that of Hulme, dynamic. But he had not worked out the "psychological co-ordinates" of this process of translation, which he now attempts in Form in Modern Poetry. That the process of "translation" is not "rational" is borne out by Read when in the 1938 version of the fifth section of Form in Modern Poetry, published as "The Poetic Experience" in Collected Essays, he adds these lines: "I have shown to what extent poetry is spontaneous and intuitive rather than deliberate

and ratiocinative."[49]

We have already noted the emergence of the concept of 'tension' in Read's poetic theory in 1932. He employs this concept to distinguish between prose and poetry.

> There is no choice for the particular state of mind in which poetry originates. It must either seek poetic expression, or it must simply not be expressed; for an altogether lower tension, involving a different kind of mentality, must be substituted before the activity of prose experience can intervene.[50]

He does not, however, comment on the factors that determine "lower tension". Besides, one may ask if there is a necessary connection between the tension and the form of expression. (I am using the phrase "form of expression" to mean either prose or poetry). I think Read is oversimplifying his case. Can we confidently say that the tension underlying one of Wordsworth's sonnets on the river Duddon is higher than the tension implicit in that letter of Keats' where he speaks of the "Valley of Mourning"? How would Read describe that part of the Ithaca episode in Ulysses which is in the form of questions and answers? (By the way, if the 'tension' is 'high' in poetry and 'low' in prose, it could be said to be 'medium' in 'poetic prose'?) In the first place, it is doubtful if one can know anything about the tension in the writer's mind except from the literary product of that tension. Yes, one may, with some justification, argue from the product to the tension. But to argue from the 'tension' (which, I believe, cannot be known except from the 'quality' of the 'product of that

tension') to the prose or poetic nature of its literary product is about as safe as pronouncing on the quality of steak on the basis of the time taken to cook it. The fact is that tension is moulded by several factors, which alone would explain why Wordsworth's sonnets on the river Duddon are trivial whereas the catechism-part of the Ithaca episode is poetic. But we would not like to give the impression that Read is very vague on the question of the poet's state of mind. Let us turn to his Wordsworth.

> Poetry is a divine Ichor, a distinct essence, and it differs from prose, not in mechanical structure, but in a quality derived from the presence, within the poet, of a different state of mind, determining a different approach to life, to the universe, to language, to every accent of existence.[51]

The emphasis on "different state of mind" is significant. For it can be seen as an attempt to establish the unique character of poetry. For, as he tells us, the "different state of mind" gives rise to other differences. It is implied then that the poet's approach to life, to the universe and to language is unique.

In both Wordsworth and Form in Modern Poetry Read relates the defining quality of poetry to the poet's state of mind, and this distinguishes his theory of poetry in these books from the one outlined in his previous books. Previously, he defined poetry with opposition to prose, but he was concerned with distinguishing between the techniques employed by prose and the techniques employed by poetry. Even now he tries to define poetry with opposition to prose,

but he tries to explain the difference between the two with reference to some 'essence' or 'quality' which eludes definition. As he himself says:

> Poetry is properly speaking a transcendental quality--a sudden transformation which words assume under a particular influence--and we can no more define this quality than we can define a state of grace.[52]

This "transcendental" note, we may add, was absent in his previous works.

In spite of his new found transcendentalism, Read's attempts to understand the 'essence' of poetry lead him into the field of empirical sciences, especially that of psycho-analysis. The result is of great significance to his theory of poetry. What I have in mind is his application of the concepts of 'personality' and 'character' to poetry. It is possible to show how his acceptance of these concepts to explain the nature of poetry is related to what I have been calling his 'philosophical views'. I shall explain his theory first before making such an attempt. He says:

> I have tried to define the essential nature of poetry. I have shown how its very existence depends on the 'negative capability' of the personality, and how incompatible it is with the 'positive capability' of character.[53]

Obviously, what Keats called 'negative capability' seems to Read to be a good description of the psycho-analytic concept of 'personality'. Let us first examine how he understands the concepts of 'personality' and 'character' so that we can understand his explanation of how the two of them affect poetry differently.

As his preliminary definition of personality he accepts Freud's definition of 'ego': "a coherent organization of mental processes".[54] This raises the question of how the 'coherence' of personality is different from the coherence of 'character', since character also implies a 'coherent' organization of mental processes. Read derives his conception of the coherence of personality from Ramon Fernandez.

> To be coherent does not mean that one feels oneself the same, nor that one acts in the same way in all the circumstances, but rather that one is ready to meet every circumstance when once a certain inward perspective has been established; it does not mean that one never changes, but that the changes of the world always find you ready to select your own point of view . . .[55]

Coherence, therefore, does not imply rigidity or singleness of response-pattern. It implies an ability to face life with greater freedom than a pre-conceived standard of ego-ideal would allow. It also implies that one's responses are not pre-determined by an abstract ideal but that they are shaped in the concreteness of a given situation.

As opposed to personality, character, in the words of Fernandez, is "the tragic conformity of a man to his definition".[56] Read translates 'definition' into psychoanalytic terms as 'ego-ideal'.

> Character can be explained as a disposition in the individual due to the repression of certain impulses which would otherwise be present in the personality; it is therefore something more restricted than personality. Character, which always has such a positive aspect, is really the result of certain fixities or regulations imposed on the flow of consciousness.[57]

What this definition does not make clear is that character has its source in an 'enduring disposition'. Secondly, 'certain impulses' is an attempt to particularize impulses, but in the absence of any precise definition of them, what those certain impulses are remains uncertain. But he gives us a clearer definition of character. He starts with Dr. Roback's definition of character as the "result of an enduring psycho-physical disposition to inhibit instinctive impulses in accordance with a regulative principle".[58] But he does not accept 'inhibition' in its psycho-analytic sense. He regards the "disposition to inhibit" as the "will to hold in check" in what he calls the "ordinary moralistic sense".[59] The phrase "instinctive impulses" is given "its normal meaning" on the ground that there are "many instincts besides the sex instinct".[60] By interpreting one key-phrase in Dr. Roback's definition moralistically, and assigning another its "normal meaning", Read has treated Dr. Roback's definition as a point of departure for evolving his own conception of character.[61] Read's description of 'character' is couched in psycho-analytic terms, but when one describes it as being Freudian, one should remember how he qualifies the meaning of some of the Freudian terms.

These two concepts of 'personality' and 'character' are, I believe, related to the concepts of 'comprehensive reason' and 'rationality' respectively. Consider, for

example, his description of the state of mind involved in personality as "an organic coherence intuitively based on the actual world of sensation".[62] When Read stresses 'sensation' as an important factor for personality, the connection of personality with reason as he explained it in Reason and Romanticism becomes clear. ("Reason is the widest evidence of the senses" etc.). 'Character', on the other hand, is marked by rigidity and it is unaffected by experience. It does not respond to the flow of consciousness; it only channels it. "Character is in fact armour against experience; it is not in itself deflected by experience."[63] Indifference to experience, lack of concreteness, and ruthless following of one ideal to the total exclusion of everything else make character look like an embodiment of rationality.

How do personality and character which we have seen to be related to 'comprehensive reason' and 'rationality' respectively, affect poetry? This is what Read says:

> . . . and when I have said that all poetry, in which I include all lyrical impulses whatsoever, is the product of personality, and therefore inhibited in a character, I have stated the main theme of my essay.[64]

So it appears that Read would deny the name of poetry to the productions of 'character'. This, however, is not true. When he applied his theory of 'personality' and 'character' to Wordsworth, he distinguished two Wordsworths, one, a poet of personality and two, a 'poet' of character. The qualities of the poetry of personality and of the poetry of character

can be derived from the attributes of personality and character respectively. The poetry of personality would be characterized by spontaneity, flexibility, openness to experience and concreteness (which is the result of its not being divorced from the senses and experience). The poetry of character would be marked by rigidity, and it would be unfit for presenting the life of emotions. As Read puts it:

> A character is 'set', 'hard-boiled' as the slang phrase vividly expresses it. Not even the emotions will dissolve it, or move it. The emotions indeed are irrelevant to character; they are waves which break themselves in vain against its base.[65]

Besides, it would lack the concrete and sensational base of the poetry of personality.

But there is no doubt in his mind that the poetry of character is inferior to that of personality. That true poetry (poetry of personality) rejects rationality as such becomes clear from his essay "Obscurity in Poetry,". He says:

> The emotional unity which is the raison d'etre of every poem cannot be measured by the instruments of reason. Otherwise it would be simpler to express it in prose . . . it [the poem] is impervious to reason . . .[66]

The word 'reason' is used here in the sense of 'rationality' as becomes obvious from the context. The rejection of rationality, however, raises some questions. Read himself poses one of them. According to him, concepts are connected with the intellect or 'rationality'. This becomes clear

from the fact that he believes that the artist "reclothes" them.

> . . . he [artist] must now reclothe the concept in visible and vital raiment. He must accept the orderly universe of philosophy, the pigeon-holes of science. But he must make them real and vivid.[67]

As long as concepts remain concepts, they have no place in art.

> This incompatibility between art and intellect does exist; art cannot become conceptual, an affair of symbols, an activity conducted without relation to objects. Art is always a perceptual activity, an activity of the senses in relation to plastic materials.[68]

So rejection of rationality involves rejection of pure concepts. To provide them with their sensational base, one may say, is the activity of reason in the sense of comprehensive reason.

In so far as comprehensive reason (which is related to the "realm of existence") helps to body forth intuition (which refers to the "realm of essence") in which art has its origin, Read's theory of poetry refuses to confine itself to just a fragment of reality. On the contrary, it attempts to establish an organic, meaningful and coherent relationship between the empirical and the transcendent.

As a result of its unique concern with both the realms, art is regarded by Read as mode of knowledge in its own right. He says:

> In all its essential activities art is trying to tell us something: something about the universe, something about man, or about the artist himself. Art is a mode

> of knowledge, and the world of art is a system of knowledge as valuable to man as the world of philosophy or the world of science. Indeed, it is only when we have clearly recognized art as a mode of knowledge parallel to but distinct from other modes by which man arrives at an understanding of his environment that we can begin to appreciate its significance in the history of mankind.[69]

This view of art as a distinct mode of response to reality reminds one of Ernst Cassirer, and it looks forward to Icon and Idea. A more directly philosophical justification of this view may be found in a later book, The Forms of Things Unknown (1960) where he argues for a new definition of the concept of cognition and says that just as 'non-propositional apprehension' of memory and introspection is admitted as a source of 'cognition', one may allow 'non-propositional apprehension' of 'intuition' too to be a source of cognition.[70] We are aware of the intimate relationship between art and intuition in Read's theory. To say that art is a source of cognition is but a logical extension of the view that intuition is a source of cognition. And art is a distinct mode of knowledge in as much as it has its origin in intuition, which is considered to be a distinct mode of cognition.

Read's explicit and emphatic rejection of 'rationality', and his conviction that art is a distinct mode of knowledge, "parallel to but distinct from other modes" ("other modes" mentioned by him being science and philosophy) and in no way inferior to them, have an interesting consequence for his theory of poetry. If it is a unique mode of

knowledge, its scope is unique too. He comes to believe that art is not to be regarded as a reflection of one part only of one's mental experience--that part which we call 'conscious'. "If reality is to be our aim, then we must include all aspects of human experience, not excluding those elements of sub-conscious life which are revealed in dreams, day-dreams, trances and hallucinations."[71] It does not appear to me that the theory of intuition as he had developed it so far, took cognizance of the 'unconscious' in its psychoanalytic sense. The concept of the 'unconscious' now comes to assume the same importance in his theory of poetry that 'intuition' has so far had. In 1936 he writes in "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle":

> . . . and what he [artist] offers to society is not a bagful of tricks, his idiosyncracies, but rather some knowledge of the secrets to which he has had access, the secrets of the self which are buried in every man alike, but which only the sensibility of the artist can reveal to us in all their actuality. This 'self' is not the personal possession we imagine it to be; it is largely made up of elements from the unconscious, and the more we learn about the unconscious, the more collective it appears to be . . .[72]

A truly exalted view this of the function of the poet. But one may ask: "How does the 'unconscious' become accessible to the poet?" It becomes accessible thanks to 'dreams' and 'automatism'. "But now we turn to the dream with the same confidence that formerly men placed in the objective world of sensation, and weave its reality into the synthesis of our art."[73] We have already seen how important it has always been to Read that art (poetry) have a sensational

basis. This statement of his, however, can be looked upon as a declaration of his confidence in the new element of poetic theory not stressed before--the unconscious. But it should be noted that the sensational basis does not cease to be important on account of the introduction of the new element.

> In an early essay I described metaphysical poetry as 'felt thought', and I still think that no thought can become poetic unless it is apprehended in its mental configuration--we lack the equivalent of the more exact German word Gestalt.[74]

The phrase "mental configuration" suggests the importance of the sensational basis for it refers to the total psychological setting of thought--setting which includes emotions, the senses, etc. (One is reminded of his discussion of 'emotional thought'.[75]) There is a more direct assertion of the sensational basis when he says that in poetry thoughts or ideas "evoke" "a sensuous identification with visual images, thought transmuted into dream".[76]

We shall discuss in the next chapter the precise role of the dream and automatism in his theory of poetry. But we may well raise the following question at this stage: How do his views on poetry based on the psychoanalytic theory relate to his previous poetic theories? Rayner Heppenstall says: "I know what Mr. Read is getting at. It is negative capability."[77] I am not quite sure of that. It appears to me that 'negative capability' is an ideal of conscious personality. ('Negative capability' does not imply "any irritable reaching" after the unconscious! I

have already tried to show that the 'negative capability' of personality is connected with the concept of comprehensive reason). Read has now transcended the concept of reason and intuition by incorporating the unconscious in his poetic theory. This new element has a direct impact on some of his old beliefs. For example, Read made much of the 'concreteness' of 'reason', 'intuition', and 'personality' and regarded this concreteness of 'intuition', etc. (as opposed to the abstractness of rationality) as a desirable thing in poetry. Read now feels that this concreteness has an unconscious origin. He writes:

> But what is still necessary is some explanation of why thoughts or ideas should evoke, not merely a metaphorical imagery, but a sensuous identification with visual images: thought transmuted into dream. Obviously it is some extension of the 'association of ideas' upon which psycho-analysis relies; the poet passes from the idea to the image unconsciously, and for reasons which might be revealed in analysis.[78]

"Sensuous identification with visual images"--if that is all that "concreteness of expression" were to mean to Read, we could have said that Read was merely repeating himself. But now he says that it comes about unconsciously. And that is a new idea in Read. And it is on account of his importation of the 'unconscious' into his poetic theory to explain some aspects of poetic creation that I feel that this phase in Read's aesthetic career may be described as "Beyond Comprehensive Reason".

To sum up this part of our discussion very briefly.

The concept of intuition did not have any transcendental aspect for Read in the 1929 essay on Descartes. It came to have such significance in Form in Modern Poetry in 1932 under the influence of Santayana. I imagine that it is partly owing to this development that art began to move in the direction of autonomy. Read came to look upon it as a "mode of knowledge", a "system of knowledge" as valuable as philosophy or science. This trend was encouraged by psychoanalysis because it revealed that man does not live on the conscious level alone.

As we shall see in the next chapter, this truth was brought home to him by various psychoanalytic doctrines, the most important among them being Jung's theory of archetypes. It came to acquire a central place in his thinking on poetry and established for him the exploratory value of symbols. Jung's influence was reinforced by that of Cassirer and Heidegger. He came to define poetry as "establishment of being", "expression of pre-reflective consciousness". It is to the books which expound this view that we may now turn. The first such book is The True Voice of Feeling. In the intervening sixteen years between Art and Society and The True Voice of Feeling, Read did not concern himself with the theory of poetry. He was far too busy with anarchism, "education through art" and "education for peace".

IV

One of the most significant of philosophical influences on Herbert Read was that of the German philosopher, Ernst Cassirer. He found Cassirer's philosophy germane to the views he had been advocating in his theory of poetry. Not only did he find a confirmation of his views in Cassirer's philosophy but he also found a few concepts in it which he could bring to bear on his theory of poetry. Consider, for example, Read's rejection of Coleridge's view favouring 'abstraction'. Coleridge writes:

> To emancipate the mind from the despotism of the eye is the first step towards its emancipation from the influences and intrusions of the senses, sensations and passions generally. Thus most effectually is the power of abstraction to be called forth, strengthened and familiarized and it is the power of understanding that chiefly distinguishes the human understanding from that of the higher animals.[79]

Nothing could be more antithetical to Read's views that we have considered so far than Coleridge's rejection of the senses and sensations. Now, in his <u>The True Voice of Feeling</u> he makes Cassirer's distinction between discursive and non-discursive modes of expression the basis of his rejection of Coleridge's view just referred to[80]. Coleridge's view, we learn, ignores the distinction between discursive and non-discursive modes of expression. Indeed, it recognizes only the former, and it is precisely in this fact that Read sees "an explanation of why Coleridge ceased to be a poet."[81] "There can be no reconciliation of the opposed

modes of expression indicated by the terms 'abstraction' and 'imagination . . .'."[82] 'Abstraction' refers to the discursive and 'imagination' to the non-discursive mode of expression.

Are the two modes of consciousness represented by the expression "discursive and non-discursive modes of consciousness", related to Read's concepts of comprehensive reason and rationality? Discursive mode of consciousness is, of course, the same as rationality. But comprehensive reason cannot be identified with Cassirer's 'non-discursive consciousness' from which the 'non-discursive mode of expression' springs, because 'non-discursive consciousness' not only implies a rejection of rationality but <u>it also signifies contact with what Cassirer calls 'primitive consciousness'</u>. Comprehensive reason, on the other hand, is ideal <u>consciousness</u>. Read's acceptance of Cassirer's concept of 'non-discursive consciousness' was possible precisely because the 'unconscious' and the 'collective unconscious' had come to assume a central place in his own poetic theory in the late thirties. (One can see how closely 'primitive consciousness' and the 'collective unconscious' are related to each other).

Read utilizes in his theory the concepts he derived from the kindred spirit of Cassirer. He accepts Cassirer's distinction between 'signs' and 'symbols'. Cassirer connects 'signs' with the discursive and 'symbols' with the

non-discursive mode of expression. Commenting on the distinction between signs and symbols, Read says that symbols are "determined by feeling (or intuition)", that they are not "logically analysable" and that they "'read' only as complete expressive units (the-poem-as-a-whole, for example)."[83] The emphasis on intuition and the non-rational character of symbols is in keeping with the aesthetic position Read himself had reached.

Employing the new concept of 'symbol', Read defines poetry as "the true representation, in verbal symbols, of a unique mental situation".[84] Let us recall that in the late twenties Read first expressed the opinion that the poet creates imagistic equivalence of a state of mind. What did he mean by 'image'? A sign or a symbol? I would say that what he had in his mind was something which could be analogous only to 'symbol' and not to 'sign'. If poetry for him were just a translation of the category of thoughts, emotions, etc. in terms of the category of words, images, then one could have said that for him image meant sign. But the implications of such a view are that the process of creation of imagistic equivalence involves 'rationality', discursive reason, and that in so far as images are rationally conceived, their significance can be exhausted by rational understanding. But we have seen that Read believed in "creative expression".[85] His conception of poetic creation was not mechanistic. One may say then that

he regarded the image as a "non-discursive mode of expression", in short, as a symbol. (I shall maintain in the chapter on Imagism that this view of the images was held by Hulme the romanticist, though not by Hulme the classicist. I shall test the validity of this contention in the last chapter with reference to Read's poetry).

It is the latter part of the definition of poetry given above, or to be more precise, it is the words 'unique mental situation' that are very significant. We may recall that the theories of comprehensive reason and intuition helped establish the unique character of poetry. The theory of "non-discursive consciousness", it may be pointed out, achieves the same end. How? The distinction between discursive and non-discursive consciousness gives rise to the distinction between "signs and symbols". Non-discursive consciousness is characterized by its 'inclusiveness', 'spontaneity' and 'expansiveness'. It is "mythical" and "pre-reflective". All these adjectives suggest to my mind that it is unique. The symbol, which springs from it, has the same qualities. (It is "logically unanalysable" and it operates as a unit, besides being determined by feeling). Poetry employing these symbols, it follows then, has those very qualities of non-discursive consciousness. It is but logical then for Read to distinguish between poetry which makes contact with this consciousness, and poetry which does not. He distinguishes between two types of poetry,

one the elaboration of the given reality, the other "an extension of the given reality, an extension of experience, an exercise of consciousness."[85]

These two types of poetry are related to the two types of poetry--'advertive' or 'transitive' poetry and "poetry in the stricter sense"--that he distinguishes in The Forms of Things Unknown. We may even say that the poetry which elaborates the given reality is 'advertive' or 'transitive' poetry and the one which is an extension of reality is 'poetry in the stricter sense'. We shall see how the influences of Cassirer, Vico and Heidegger merge here and 'reinforce' each other. According to Vico, poetry is not a "faculty developed by already cultured people for their delectation, or for the effective expression of ideas already rationally formulated"; it is rather "the primary act of apprehension and formulation, 'the expression of the pre-reflective or spontaneous consciousness of man'."[87] What Read calls the "poetry that elaborates" would not be considered by Vico to be poetry. Cassirer, whose distinction between two types of consciousness (and consequently of expression) Read accepted, could be seen as being related to Vico in as much as Cassirer's 'non-discursive consciousness' not only implies a rejection of rationality, but it also signifies contact with what Vico called 'pre-reflective consciousness'. Vico's conception of poetry as "the primary act of apprehension and formulation" informs Read's

discussion of the type of poetry he described as "an extension of the given reality, an extension of experience, an exercise of consciousness". (The term 'consciousness', it goes without saying, should be understood here in the sense of 'non-discursive consciousness' and not 'discursive consciousness').

I have said above that Heidegger's influence merges with that of Vico and Cassirer. (To be more accurate, I should say that Read finds in Heidegger's interpretation and explanation of Hölderlin further evidence in support of his views which we have found to be related to those of Vico and Cassirer). Heidegger says that "Poetry is the establishment of being by means of the word." What Heidegger means is that it is not something <u>already known</u> that is supplied with a name by the poet. The poet speaks the essential word. Thanks to this act, the 'existent' is nominated as being what it is and becomes known as existent. The conclusion that Read draws from this view of Heidegger's is that "poetry is not the use of a ready-made language".[88] As Heidegger puts it: " . . . rather it is poetry which first makes language possible."[89] Is not this view remarkably similar to Vico's, according to which poetry is the "primary act of apprehension and formulation" and not a faculty developed for the "effective expression of ideas already rationally formulated"? To speak metaphorically, various currents of thought represented by Vico, Cassirer,

Heidegger and Jung unite in Read. To drop the metaphor, if Read's theoretical endeavours smack of eclecticism, one should remember that there is a method in his eclecticism as the affinities between the views of Vico, Cassirer and Heidegger, and the affinities between their views and Read's indicate.

How does one explain this "method in his eclecticism"? It will be seen that Read responds to those philosophers who believe in a consciousness which transcends rationality. Cassirer's "mythical" or "non-discursive" consciousness is, really speaking, pan-consciousness in so far as it is consciousness informed by the unconscious. The ideal of consciousness of both Vico and Heidegger is similar to Cassirer's. Thus these three philosophers, in spite of their diverging views on other questions, unanimously believe in a consciousness which is of a different order from rational consciousness. Read accepts their views, and thus secures his theory of poetry their philosophical support. He may seem eclectic. But his eclecticism is really a search for support for his theory of poetry.

One may also note that his theoretical drive has been in the direction of expanding consciousness. He swung between rationality and comprehensive reason in 1926. In 1932 he settled for comprehensive reason. He swung away from it in the direction of the unconscious in 1936. And in the '50's he embraced Cassirer's concept of "mythical consciousness". This drive in the direction of expanding consciousness is typically romantic. One may then say that Read arrived at

his romanticism. He responded to various manifestations of it and utilized the insights of Vico, Cassirer and Heidegger to refine and elaborate his poetic theory.

We have seen that in 1936 Read stated that poetry is a mode of knowledge.[90] In 1960 he has come to believe that poetry is "the primary act of apprehension and formulation". He believes with Vico that there is no distinction between "primary poetic expression" and the "first consciousness of some new aspects of reality."[91] This poetic consciousness (pre-reflective or spontaneous or "first consciousness") develops a 'form', a 'structure' (but it is still not a reflective form) and we get the myth. It is only after the myth is established that ~~we get~~ such "spiritual activities" as 'integration', 'unification', 'reflection' and 'intellection' develop. One can see then that Read believes that poetry is the 'bed-rock' of man's "spiritual activities". But he also notes that in passing from 'spontaneous consciousness' to the "formal articulation of a myth" or "passionate advertence" ("formal articulation of a myth" and "passionate advertence" seem to be two descriptions of the same phenomenon) we have passed from the "intensive aspects" of poetry to its "extensive aspects".

What is meant by "intensive aspects"?

> The intensive aspects of poetry are due to the particular character of the words used in the spontaneous act of naming or advertence, and to the syntactical structure, or wholeness or unity which these words assume as they are used.[92]

By "intensive aspects" Read means the metre, magic character of words (a concept derived from Cassirer), the "visual image"[93] and the gestalt which words form. The only new concept introduced here is that of "magic character of words". Cassirer believes--and Read agrees with him--that at the level of "mythic consciousness" words have a magic character since at that level there is no divorce between the 'word' and the 'thing'. At this level words not only describe but they also contain within them the object and its real powers. As Cassirer has put it: "Word and name do not designate and signify, they are and act."[94]

One may ask: "Cannot prose have the same intensive aspects as poetry?" Let us remember that the 'intensive aspects' of poetry are connected with the fact that poetry 'in the stricter sense' expresses "the pre-reflective or spontaneous consciousness of man". (Cassirer used the term "mythical consciousness" to describe this consciousness. The phrase "non-discursive consciousness" also refers to the same type of consciousness). But prose, according to Read, is "reflective" and "explanatory of a given situation": ". . . it may state ideas that are already precise or it may crystallize diffuse ideas or unravel ideas that are too imprecise, too vaguely conceived."[95] The term "reflective" clearly indicates that Read believes that prose is not concerned with 'pre-reflective' or 'mythical' or 'non-discursive' consciousness. If this is so, Read must

explain how the aspects which he has described as 'intensive' and which are, as a matter of fact, found in prose, differ from those very aspects found in poetry. In other words, Read must explain how the metre of poetry is different from the metre of prose (Read uses the phrase "metre of prose") and how the images used in poetry are different from the images used in prose. We may grant it that from the view that prose has its origin in a reflective consciousness, he can deduce that words used in prose do not have the magic character which words in poetry have. But one would like to know how the gestalt of poetry differs from the gestalt of prose.

Commenting on the difference between the metre of prose and the metre of poetry, he says that "poetic metre tends towards regularity, and may always have a regular pattern as a kind of sounding board" but that prose metre must, if it is to retain its separate identity "avoid any suggestion of regular or repetitive rhythm".[96] He is not saying anything more profound than this: that prose is not written like verse, if it must retain its identity as prose. Read makes another attempt at expressing the distinction between the two metres.

> We might express this distinction, therefore, by saying that the rhythms of prose are syntactical, and subordinate to grammatical structure, which is in its turn subordinate to some ideal of clarity or consistency; whereas the rhythms of poetry are sensuous (aesthetic), and determined by internal necessity, by the need to find some vocal correlative for a state of consciousness. What is vocal in such a situation is not necessarily logical or even comprehensible.[97]

The "state of consciousness" that Read is referring to is obviously 'pre-reflective consciousness'. (Let us recall that with Vico he has defined poetry as "expression of pre-reflective or spontaneous consciousness"). Therefore the rhythm of poetry is not determined by the external standard of clarity or consistency. (Clarity and consistency are, after all, ideals of reflective consciousness). But prose, which is explanatory and concerned with reflective consciousness, accepts the ideal of clarity or consistency. Thus the difference between the rhythm of prose and the rhythm of poetry arises from the fact that prose expresses 'discursive' or 'reflective' consciousness whereas poetry expresses 'pre-reflective' or 'non-discursive' consciousness. Thus it may be seen that Read does not just assert that prose and poetry express different types of consciousness. He also points out how the consciousness affects the rhythm in which it is expressed. To put it differently, he has begun to work out, however inadequately, the bearing of 'pre-reflective' or 'non-discursive' consciousness on poetry.

The second question that Read must answer is regarding the nature of images in prose and poetry. He does try to answer it. After admitting that poetry has "the visual image" in common with prose and the plastic arts, he goes on to say:

> But in poetry and the uncorrupted plastic arts the image has an essential function. It exists in its own right, in its presentational immediacy, as an indissoluble expressive formula and not as an extension of logical discourse, not as illustration or signification. The poetic image is received and felt, but it is not observed and reflected on; it is a moment of original vision, an intuitive extension of consciousness, an act of apprehension but not yet of comprehension.[98]

The phrases "presentational immediacy" and "indissoluble expressive formula", and the view that the poetic image is not used in an illustrative or significative or logical manner remind one of Cassirer's distinction between 'signs' and 'symbols'. Read's meaning is clear. The poetic image is a symbol. The image used in prose is a 'sign'. Image as sign is logically analysable, it is reflected on and comprehended. Image as symbol is not logically analysable ("indissoluble expressive formula"), it is not reflected on but it is apprehended. The difference between 'sign' and 'symbol' springs from the fact that the former is connected with the discursive mode of consciousness and the latter with the non-discursive mode of consciousness. But it would be wrong to imagine that in his discussion of the difference between images in poetry and prose, Read has fallen back entirely on the views developed in The True Voice of Feeling. For instance, he stated in The True Voice that symbols are "determined by feeling (intuition)" (see above, page 77). In The Forms of Things Unknown he brings the concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypes to bear on the feeling-value of a symbol as may be seen from the following remark:

". . . the poetic image may be identical with or symbolize . . . a feeling value--the feeling value of the archetype, of the numinous whatever-it-is that demands a naming."[99] The symbol is thus seen as being related both to the archetype and to the transcendental.

The third question that one would expect Read to discuss refers to the concept of gestalt in prose and poetry. Read tries to determine the question of the gestalt of prose and poetry with reference to the two modes of consciousness. This part of his discussion is somewhat hazy. I shall summarize his argument briefly. Each line of a poem is a gestalt in the sense that it is a rhythmic form and the poem as a whole is a unity of such gestalts. The rhythmic forms are "sympathetically related" to the images they convey, "simple images being expressed in simple rhythms, complex images needing and inducing elaborate rhythms".[100] ('Rhythm' here means 'rhythmic form'). The gestalt which a poem has is in itself significant. "It is even plastically significant; the visual impact of a page of poetry is quite distinct from that of a page of prose."[101] Apparently, Read believes that this is self-evident. It is self-evident if he is referring only to the appearance of printed prose and poetry. But I assume that he means something much more significant. His explanation of his meaning is as cryptic as the meaning is hard to perceive. "Prose has a functional façade; poetry a symbolic one."[102]

Perhaps what he means is that the gestalt of prose is functional in keeping with the discursive consciousness which it expresses and that the gestalt of poetry is symbolic in keeping with the non-discursive consciousness which it expresses. But what precisely is meant by functional and symbolic gestalt? Whatever the limitations of Read's argument, it is clear that he is trying to pull the diverse threads of his theory together. We have seen that he has tried to relate the metre of poetry, the magic character of words used in it and its symbols to the pre-reflective consciousness. It seems to me that he also tries to relate the remaining intensive character of poetry, namely, closed form or gestalt (rhythmic form) to it. This is achieved indirectly by stating that there is an organic relationship between rhythmic form and symbols, symbols being expressive of, as we have seen before, non-discursive consciousness. (Read obviously implies a distinction between 'metre' and 'rhythmic form'. 'Metre' refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables; 'rhythmic form' refers to the configuration of words or the gestalt).

Read does not have much to say about the 'extensive aspects of poetry. "The extensive aspects are due to the images, fantasies and reflections which these words convey, first to the poet in the act of advertence, then to the poet's audience, at the moment of understanding."[103] (Should we take this statement to mean that Read looks upon 'images'

as an 'extensive' aspect? But as I have already pointed out, it is quite clear from his discussion of the 'intensive' aspects of poetry that he looks upon images as an 'intensive' aspect. (Unless he is using 'image' in a special sense which he has not made clear). One begins to see the significance of the distinction between intensive and extensive aspects when one reads that philosophers and psychologists "neglect the essential aspects of poetry", that is, the 'intensive' aspects, "in favour of the extensive aspects". It seems to me that 'extensive' aspects refer to the content of poetry as it is interpreted by psychologists and philosophers. (These two classes of critics are suggested by the terms 'fantasies' and 'reflection' used in the definition of 'extensive' aspects of poetry quoted above). So it would seem that Read is saying that philosophers are interested in the prose-meaning of poetry, and that psychologists are interested in its 'manifest' and 'latent' content. But to neglect the intensive aspects in favour of extensive aspects "is to introduce a fundamental fallacy into our discussions."[104] Why is it a fallacy? To concentrate on meaning, content, extensive aspects, amounts to believing that poetry is just a versification of reflections or fantasies. Such a view of poetry is not true of "poetry in the stricter sense", that is, "originative type of poetry", "the poetry of self-revelation", "the poetry created by Shakespeare and Donne,

by Goethe and Hölderlin, by Beaudelaire and Rimbaud--the poetry described by Keats as 'the true voice of feeling'".[105] It is not true because poetry in the stricter sense is "the primary act of apprehension and formulation" or, to put it differently, it is "the expression of the pre-reflective or spontaneous consciousness of man", which is much more significant than poetry conceived as metrical expression of ideas or fantasies.

So neglect of 'intensive' aspects of poetry in favour of its 'extensive' aspects, whether by critics or by poets, could be said to be characteristic of the 'advertive' or 'transitive' conception of poetry. Read also comments on the nature of expression in advertive poetry.

> An advertive or transitive use of poetic form becomes possible when a separation occurs between the state of poetic consciousness and the act of expression; when the poet is conscious of form in the act of expression; when expression is no longer spontaneous and immediate, that is to say, when sensibility and thought are dissociated."[106]

What Read means is that in an advertive use of "poetic form" (that is, poetry), there is no organic connection between poetic consciousness and expression. Some external ideals or external demands determine the expression of poetic consciousness. For example, when the poet is conscious of form in the act of expression, he has allowed the external ideal of shape (as opposed to organic form) to determine his expression. But let us ask ourselves the question: "Why does a split occur between "poetic consciousness" and the

"act of expression"? Is not there a more basic reason than the poet's acceptance of some external ideal? On the basis of Read's theory one may suggest that the separation between 'consciousness' and 'expression' occurs because the poet comes to look upon 'consciousness' as a 'given' and not as something to be explored. Therefore he merely tries to express it as a given something. In other words, he merely elaborates the 'given'. This is precisely what is done by the type of poetry Read described as "elaboration of given reality" in The True Voice of Feeling.[107] We may then say that "advertive" or "transitive" poetry is another name for this type of poetry.

Read's emphasis on 'intensive' aspects may give one the impression that he is against 'meaning' in poetry. If this be true, 'concepts' would be clearly irrelevant to poetry. Let us turn to his "Art as a Symbolic Language" and "Poetic Experience" (published in The Forms of Things Unknown) for further elucidation of the poetic theory we have been considering so far. He says:

> A poem, like a picture or a musical composition, has its unique form, which is a complex of images and cadences, and this form is an embodiment of the artist's feelings and conveys a meaning not necessarily co-extensive with the discursive or rational meaning of the words employed. A poem not only is different but means more, than its prose-paraphrase. It has a physical shape (the black words as they lie on the white page); it has a musical configuration that in itself, as sound is expressive.[108]

One may make the following observation on this crucial

statement: (1) He refers here to all the 'intensive' aspects of poetry--images, metre ('cadences') and form (gestalt or 'symbolic form'). But it should be noted that he defines form as a complex of images and metre. The element of form is not independent of, but functionally dependent on the two 'intensive' aspects of poetry. (2) He does not rule out 'discursive' meaning from poetry. That the meaning a poem conveys is not necessarily "co-extensive with the discursive or rational meaning of the words employed" means that poetry conveys something more than 'discursive' meaning. This "something more", as it becomes clear from the context, has to do with feelings, with pre-reflective consciousness.

How can poetry convey this? We are told that "form comes in aid of feeling", form being defined as a "complex of sound-pattern and images". He tells us that "the sound is responsive to an unconscious need for expression, emphasis".[109] He grants the sound-pattern (metre) evocative qualities. He believes that the abstract sound-pattern in itself has "expressive significance". But one may ask if the sound-pattern does not come to have the quality of expressing "pre-reflective consciousness" because it is super-imposed on words. Now, it is true that the visual composition of a painting has an expressive function even when it is abstracted from its figurative content. But we wonder if an abstract sound-pattern (that is, sound-pattern

in itself) is analogous to abstract composition. We believe that it is significant that the abstract sound-pattern, which is supposed by Read to have an expressive significance in itself, is not imposed on any "literal meaning". This only means that the sound-pattern has an expressive significance which owes something to the words on which the former is super-imposed. Read does not tell us how the sound-pattern has expressive significance when it is abstracted from words. He is aware that he has run into serious difficulties here. He seems to admit it himself since he terminates this part of his discussion with this piece of disarming candidness: "But let us avoid the formal ambiguities of linguistic art and confine ourselves to the visual arts."[110]

We have seen above that Read does not eliminate discursive or rational meaning from poetry. Therefore, I think, it would follow logically that 'concepts' are not irrelevant to poetry. "Poetry is not necessarily visual; it can and does deal with concepts . . ."[111] But it does not deal with concepts as concepts. It 'realizes' them, the process of realization being a sensational one. Poetry reaches concepts or thought in the flesh. This is only appropriate since in Read's view, concepts are themselves sensational in origin. "Thought in its deepest recesses is a sensuous, formative process . . ." He explains what he means: ". . . the thought of the poet is originally

sensuous because it has its origins in physical perception and flows along the organs of sensation . . ."[112] We have already seen in the first chapter that reason and intuition have, according to him, a sensational basis. We have also seen that he emphasizes the sensational aspect of the imagination.[113] In the remark quoted above we find him emphasizing the sensational aspect of thought. All this leads to but one conclusion which is that Read's thinking on poetry is governed by his basic conviction, reiterated at various stages of his career, regarding the supreme importance of the sensuous or sensational (he uses these words as synonyms) basis of one's mental functions.

We imagine that this rather protracted discussion of the theory of poetry developed in The Forms of Things Unknown is not unjustified. Consider the sub-title of the book: "Essays Towards An Aesthetic Philosophy". One may infer from the sub-title and especially from the preposition 'towards' that Read considered himself to be making advances in the direction of a coherent philosophy of art in this book. We have seen how discursive and non-discursive consciousness are related to the transitive conception of poetry and "poetry in the stricter sense" respectively. We have also seen how those who advocate "advertive" or "transitive" poetry tend to emphasize extensive aspects to the exclusion of 'intensive' aspects. Read does not rule out discursive meaning nor does he consider concepts to be

irrelevant to poetry. But he also insists that poetry is expression of pre-reflective consciousness and points out the role of form in the process of this expression. His abiding conviction regarding the importance of the sensational basis of mental functions—and this conviction gives his poetic theory an imagistic bias—finds its expression here. Thus thought, feeling, sensation, pre-reflective or non-discursive consciousness besides metre, imagery, the magic character of words and gestalt are shown to be the diverse elements of "poetry in the stricter sense". And one may say that this analysis of those diverse elements, indubitably influenced as it is by Vico and Cassirer, lays before the reader the complex anatomy of poetry.

Forms of Things Unknown represents the highest water-mark in Read's speculations on poetry. The view that poetry is a distinct and separate mode of cognition--distinct and separate from science--has firmly established itself. In the remaining six years' work we are going to review, he attempts further clarifications and restatement of this theoretical position.

V

There are no new developments in Read's poetic theory in 1961. He repeats in his essay, "The Style of Criticism", some of the principal ideas developed in The Forms of Things Unknown. Not only is art a mode of cognition but as a mode of cognition it ranks with science.

"There is only one situation: man in the midst of incomprehensible universe; and art and science as his surveying instruments."[114] However, the two modes of cognition represented by art and science are different from each other. "What is a mode of visual or poetic cognition cannot also be a mode of rational cognition."[115] (The distinction made here is the same as the distinction between non-discursive and discursive modes of consciousness). His description of the "poet's activity" suggests clearly the differences between poetic or non-discursive cognition and rational or discursive cognition.

> Fiedler would say the same of the poet's activity--namely that its primary purpose is not to convey information, which can be done adequately in prose, but that it also is a mode of thought, a direct apprehension, by means of image and metaphor, of the nature of reality. There is a similar conception of the poem in Hölderlin, and in Heidegger.[116]

He is repeating here the views expressed in The Forms of Things Unknown. As non-discursive mode of consciousness, poetry apprehends reality in concrete, sensational terms. ('Comprehension' is the function of discursive consciousness.)

In the expression of this "direct apprehension of reality" rhythm has a very important role to play because, as Read has stated in The Forms of Things Unknown, it is determined by the necessity to find a "vocal correlative of a state of consciousness". Now, one may ask if this rhythm is related to speech-rhythm or if it is different from it. Read answers this question in his "American Bards and British

Reviewers," (Selected Writings) where he says that the rhythm of poetry is based on a "heightened", "intensified", "regularized modification of speech rhythm". This is a welcome clarification of his position vis-a-vis rhythm in The Forms of Things Unknown. I shall explain why it is a "welcome clarification".

Let us state briefly his theoretical position in The Forms of Things Unknown. Both Read's belief in the magic character of words, and his view that the 'sound-pattern' has "unconscious expressive significance" and that rhythm is a "vocal correlative" of a "state of consciousness", lead to the conclusion that poetry has the evocative quality of an incantation. His discussion of Aeriel's song from The Tempest, for example, clearly reveals that for Read the incantatory quality of that song is connected with the "magic character" of its words and its rhythmic evocation of a certain state of consciousness. According to him the "vocal correlative", of which rhythm is a basic factor, is not governed by considerations of logicality or comprehensibility. I imagine that such concepts as "magic character of words", "vocal correlative" which is not governed by concern for "comprehensibility", and "incantation" would seem to give poetry a "mysterious", almost "esoteric" quality. One may perhaps legitimately wonder if Read is withdrawing into a world of pure art. One may also wonder if the "vocal correlative" that is independent of concerns of logicality and comprehensibility is above the modern poet's concern for

bringing poetry in close relation to contemporary speech-rhythm. Read's "American Bards and British Reviewers" sets our doubts at rest. His discussion of the question of rhythm there is a "welcome clarification".

It becomes clear from this essay that for Read the rhythm of poetry is related to "speech-rhythm". It is not therefore something esoteric in nature though the use of words like "incantation" and "magic character of words" in his discussion of poetry may perhaps lead one to think so. He says:

> . . . in so far as we make a distinction between prose and poetry, we are making a distinction between two kinds of rhythm, a natural rhythm which is the rhythm of prose and is based on the rhythm of speech; and an abnormal rhythm which is the rhythm of poetry and is based on a heightened, an intensified or if you like, a regularized modification of speech-rhythm.[117]

The point to be noted about this remark is that it does not distinguish two <u>fundamentally</u> <u>different</u> rhythms as the source of rhythm in prose and poetry. The <u>basic</u> rhythm which both prose and poetry start from is the same: speech-rhythm. Rhythm in poetry is a modification or intensification of the basic rhythm. If Read were to say that "rhythm" is determined by the need to find "vocal correlative", irrespective of whether the vocal correlative is comprehensible or not, and if he were not to add later that speech-rhythm is a starting-point for rhythm in poetry, the danger of his lapsing into solipsism and preciosity would have seemed real. But the fact that he should insist on

speech-rhythm at the same time as he demands that rhythm be determined by the state of consciousness to be expressed, no matter how illogical or incomprehensible the "vocal correlative", is significant. In our opinion the significance of this two-fold demand is that it is a recognition of the fact that the poet, who is concerned with "direct apprehension" of the "nature of reality", with expression of "pre-reflective" or "non-discursive" or "mythical" consciousness, has his feet planted on earth.

What we mean is that the poet, who tries to apprehend the "nature of reality" directly and to express his apprehension faithfully, comes to this enterprise as one who is steeped in contemporary speech-rhythm. It is true this rhythm is heightened in poetry, but if the poet were to cut himself off from it, he would necessarily end up by being contrived and artificial. This is not to deny that there is a struggle going on in the poet's mind so that, to put it in Read's words, the rhythm may find a "vocal correlative" of the poet's "apprehension" of the nature of reality. But if this rhythm is the contemporary speech rhythm, it will make for sincerity, genuineness, authenticity and naturalness--the qualities that are always prominent in any romantic programme. To conclude, Read's is a demand for expression of the metaphysical--and we use this word because it adequately describes the true nature of Read's concern for "direct apprehension" of the "nature

of reality." Furthermore, it is a demand for expression of the metaphysical in a rhythm which is contemporary and, therefore, natural and not forced.

It would be appropriate to close our discussion of Read's theory of poetry and the role of his philosophical views in it with a consideration of his short essay, "What is a Poem?", appended to the 1966 edition of his Collected Poems. It is, in my opinion, a brilliantly condensed statement of his views on poetry developed over the years. We shall discuss it in some detail.

Read says:

> True poetry was never speech, but always song. Modern poetry, in so far as it aspires to establish the integral form of a poem, is a refinement of song--a containment of our symbols of discourse in a singular melody.[118]

He could mean two things by his remark "True poetry was never speech . . .": (a) True poetry does not employ prose speech-rhythm. It employs heightened speech-rhythm. This fits in well with his view we have discussed so far. (b) True poetry employs words as symbols. He points out that words in a poem must not be confused with modalities of speech. In other words, words are not used as signs in poetry. We have already encountered the distinction between signs and symbols and I may recall that it goes back to the days of Cassirer's influence. To turn to the latter part of Read's remark. He explains what he means by establishing form. "We often, in all the arts, speak of the

fitness of a form of its content, and the fitness of a form in verse is the conformity of its rhythmical structure to the poem's content."[119] To establish a form is to achieve a rhythmical structure (vocal correlative) which is appropriate to the content, or corresponds with it. But by content he does not mean "a verifiable meaning" or an "intellectual, moral or social communication". And this was precisely the idea he expressed in his The Forms of Things Unknown in which he maintained that poetry is more than its prose-meaning. It is a certain "intangible essence", the "pattern of a feeling", the "inner feeling" that constitutes content. Once again I may point out that this very idea was expressed in The Forms of Things Unknown. But how is the correspondence of the rhythmical structure and content secured? It is secured by rhythmical pattern. "The rhythmical pattern corresponds in some mysterious way with the inner feeling, its virtue."[120] This again, takes us back to The Forms of Things Unknown in which he expounded the view that rhythmical pattern in itself has "expressive significance". The process by which "correspondence" is established may be mysterious, but Read is convinced that there does exist a correspondence between sound and feeling. This comes out clearly in his definition of poetry.

> A poem is therefore to be defined as a structure of words whose sound constitutes a rhythmical unity, complete in itself, irrefragible, unanalyzable, completing its symbolic references within the ambit of its sound-effect.[121]

The phrase "completing its symbolic references" refers to the "structure of words" which achieves expression of "inner feeling", the expression being achieved as a result of the conformity of the rhythm to the "state of being", "state of consciousness", etc.

I have commented on the similarities between the views expressed in this essay and the views expressed in The Forms of Things Unknown. I should remark on a further point of resemblance between the two. We may recall that in The Forms of Things Unknown he did not rule out discursive meaning from the field of poetry.[122] What is his stand on meaning in poetry in 1966? He says:

> It may be that some poems are enhanced by a meaning, but I have never been able to discover what difference the inclusion of verifiable meaning made to any poem that spontaneously suggests itself to the mind as archetypal, such as one of Shakespeare's songs.[123]

Now, as long as one uses words, there is bound to be some meaning (which we may call literal meaning) however inchoate, incoherent and incomprehensible it may be. So Read could not possibly mean 'literal meaning' by 'verifiable meaning'. Perhaps he means by "verifiable meaning", "rationally communicable meaning". What Read is really saying is that a poem is more than its rationally communicable meaning. And this view, I may add, was expressed in The Forms of Things Unknown.

Read's statement could be taken to mean that he doubts whether rationally communicable meaning makes any

difference to an archetypal poem. I suppose that by archetypal poem he means a poem which expresses "mythical" or "non-discursive" consciousness. So what Read is really saying is that the evocation of a state of consciousness does not depend on rationally communicable meaning. Now, this view becomes more clear in the retrospective light of his comments on Ariel's song which could be examined to see what is meant by saying that "rationally communicable" meaning is not necessary to poetry.

> It is an incantation, a dirge celebrating death and mortality, comparable to that earliest poetry that has survived from remote antiquity, the Egyptian Book of the Dead. We are in the presence of the fundamental mystery and it is the consciousness of this mystery, and the blind emotion with which the poet confronts this mystery, that creates a desire not to 'designate and signify', but to affirm the triumph of life in death, the enduringness of a poetic transformation. The very words that celebrate death are magical, 'something rich and strange', vital images with which the poet confronts death and oblivion.[124]

It may be said that the phrase "to affirm the triumph of life in death" indicates that the song has a rationally communicable meaning. But Read's comments make it clear that the song is <u>much more than this</u> "<u>rationally communicable meaning</u>" one may extract from it. Moreover, the fact that the rationally communicable meaning is not communicated rationally is significant. What the song communicates is the mystery of being, "the consciousness of this mystery, and the blind emotion with which the poet confronts this mystery". The "magic character of words" and the symbolic character of images convey more than mere discursive

meaning; they convey the poet's intuition of the mystery of being. Clearly, we are not in the region of "discursive consciousness", of rationally communicable meaning. Read's poetic theory is not anti-meaning. It is not meaning-oriented in the conventional sense of the word "meaning".

Read's views regarding the magic character of words, the importance assigned to the sound-pattern and incantation, his statement that the vocal correlative may be incomprehensible though it could be "apprehended", may give one the impression that Read is propounding a theory of pure poetry. But I wonder if this impression could be said to be correct. In the first place he does not regard discursive meaning as something irrelevant to poetry; the fact that he recognizes extensive aspects of poetry is sufficient proof of this. It is equally true that he does not consider 'meaning' to be the 'be-all and end-all' of poetry as holders of the advertive conception of poetry seem to do. The fact he recognizes is very simple. Discursive meaning does not exhaust one's state of consciousness. Poetry, as a "vocal correlative" of a state of consciousness, is more than communication of meaning. I think that he is steering clear of both the theory of pure poetry and the advertive conception of poetry; he is steering clear of both the extremes.

How would Read have reacted to the suggestion that he had formulated a theory of pure poetry? We know what he

understood by pure poetry and what he thought of it from one of his statements made in 1932.

> These theories [of pure poetry] imply that the intuition or vision of the poet is expressed simply by a musical equivalence in the words. This I think may be possible in isolated words and phrases . . . but poetry in general disproves the theory of pure poetry. Words, their sound and even their appearance, are of course, everything to the poet: the sense of words is the sense of poetry, but words have associations carrying the mind beyond sound to visual images and abstract idea. . . . Poetry depends not only on the sound of words, but even more on their mental reverberations.[125]

Read believes that pure poetry is musical equivalence of intuition and that it has no use for "reverberations of words", reverberation of words being visual image and abstract idea. But, as we have already seen, Read does not rule out concepts from poetry. Besides, the image occupies a central place in his poetic theory. In short, Read's theory is alive to "reverberations" of words. We may conclude that Read's is not a theory of pure poetry at least in the sense in which he understands pure poetry.

I have attempted a survey of some aspects of Read's poetic theory from 1918 to 1966. It becomes clear from this survey that with the passage of time Read's theory gained in depth, underwent refinement and elaboration, and that it profited from the insights of Vico, Cassirer and Jung, to name a few influences. It also becomes clear that it is free from those features which would have facilitated the rise of an aesthetic orthodoxy based on his writings. What I mean is that his system is free from rigid dogmas,

is fluid, and that it is open to new currents of thought. In other words, it is open-ended. One cannot say of his poetic theory what he said of twentieth century criticism while commenting on Professor Wellek's remark that Herder left to others "the task of formulating a new, coherent, systematic theory of poetry and literature".

> This new, coherent, systematic theory of poetry was surely not formulated by Schiller or the Schlegels, certainly not by Goethe or Coleridge, not by Arnold or Bagehot. It is a creation of our own uncreative age, and there is more than a suspicion that it is in some sense a cautious substitute for the activity of the imagination.[126]

It seems to me that Read equates this kind of critical activity with scholarship. And he is suspicious of scholarship.

> Criticism is comparative and evaluative; scholarship is accumulative and impartial. Criticism can bring order into confusion and clarity into obscurity, but it cannot impose on a vital and spontaneous process the rigid categories of a system. It remains from its historical beginnings to its present manifestations, fluid, penetrating and yet constructive; whereas scholarship is, or should be, external, impassive, and even unmotivated. That much of it is pathologically obsessive may be recognized, but not necessarily regretted. <u>There are more dangerous forms of lunacy</u>.[127]

One is inclined to protest against this manifestly unjust criticism of scholarship. But the fact that Read has been a disciple to one of the most consummate scholars of our time--Ernst Cassirer, tempers one's initial hostility to Read's condescension. The real butt of his withering sarcasm, I believe, is those academic critics who are strangers to the creative imagination. Does Read's theory

of poetry have the qualities he has predicated of criticism? Does it bring order into confusion and clarity into obscurity? Does it bring order and clarity without imposing on a "vital and spontaneous process the rigid categories of a system"?

Read's method of attacking the questions of poetic theory is to urge "endless multiplication of distinctions". Here are some of the distinctions he has made in the course of fifty years: shape and organic form, creative and constructive expression, personality and character, signs and symbols, and poetry in the strict sense and advertive conception of poetry. These distinctions are related to what I have been calling his philosophical views reflected in the distinctions between reason and rationality, and discursive consciousness and non-discursive consciousness.

Consider, for instance, the distinction between comprehensive reason and rationality. The important difference between the two is that the former implies a consciousness which is not restricted in as much reason is the "widest evidence of the senses". It is intimately related to intuition, and as we have already seen, intuition is closely related to thought and emotion. Rationality, on the other hand, imposes restrictions on one's consciousness in as much as it operates in isolation from the sensational basis of various psychological processes. To give a simple example of how this distinction operates in Read's theory:

comprehensive reason has no place for concepts as concepts in poetry, it reaches them in the flesh; rationality, on the other hand, operates with concepts as concepts without reaching them in the flesh. Now, this basic distinction between comprehensive reason and rationality, between recognizing the sensational basis of psychological processes, and working without reference to this sensational basis, explains why poetry expresses equivalence of emotional thought and why prose expresses exact thought. Poetry, whether it is dealing with thought or emotion, recognizes their sensational basis, which explains why expression of them in poetry has the qualities of immediacy and concreteness. Even when intuition comes to be defined as "perception of pattern in life", it retains its connection with various psychological processes--with thought, emotion and sensations. The next avatara of intuition takes place under the influence of Santayana. It assumes a transcendental character and is related to the realm of essence, that is, to the realm of pure being.[128] However, as we have already seen, intuition even in this sense must be expressed concretely. I think that it is this view of intuition which accounts for Read's sympathetic reception in 1960 of Heidegger's definition of poetry as the "establishment of being".

We have also seen how the distinction between personality and character is related to the distinction between

comprehensive reason and rationality. If comprehensive reason is ideal consciousness, so is personality. Rationality, on the other hand, implies restricted consciousness. So does character. "Character is in fact armour against experience: it is not in itself deflected by experience."[129]

Read moves beyond comprehensive reason--ideal consciousness--when the concept of the unconscious comes to be stressed in his poetic theory. The distinction between comprehensive reason and discursive reason is replaced by the distinction between non-discursive and discursive consciousness. (Discursive reason or discursive consciousness is the same as rationality). As we have already seen, from this distinction follow the distinctions between signs and symbols, poetry that elaborates and poetry that extends reality, and apprehension and comprehension. (The last pair reflects the duality between these two modes of consciousness on the plane of response. Discursive consciousness comprehends. Non-discursive comprehension apprehends).

Does Read bring order and clarity into what was alleged to be dark and obscure? The merit of his theory is that it does not impose rigid categories of thought on a "spontaneous and vital process". Rather he deduces them in the light of the nature of consciousness--discursive and

non-discursive. His distinction between the rhythm of poetry (sings and symbols), gestalts of prose and gestalts of poetry, and the concept of the magic character of words are instances of categories so derived. This approach to the theory of poetry succeeds in casting doubt on categories that may seem to be somewhat arbitrary and inorganically derived. If one believes with Coleridge, as Read does, that poetry follows the laws of its own being, one's theory of poetry must necessarily reflect that belief. Read's poetic theory, I submit, is an arduous effort to determine and understand those laws.

CHAPTER III

THE SCIENTIFIC LEVEL OF READ'S POETICS

> The quality of art is fairly constant, like the quality of all human products: that is why it is such a vulgar error to imagine that art in any essential sense is economically determined.[1]
>
> Whatever art we examine we are driven to the conclusion: that the underlying faculty or impulse is relatively constant; that the variations are due to the accidents of time and circumstance which release this faculty.[2]
>
> If reality is to be our aim, then we must include all aspects of human experience, not excluding those elements of subconscious life which are revealed in dreams, day-dreams, trances and hallucinations.[3]
>
> But vitalizing all the arts (even when most abstract) is the sustaining myth of the unconscious.[4]

"We have become more empirical", Read declared confidently in 1924, and he went on to add: "and the general effect of the growth of science has been to discredit transcendental reasoning altogether."[5] But in order that "emotional dictators" may not expropriate the province of criticism, Read suggested that "we must hasten to relate it to those systems of knowledge which have to a great extent replaced transcendental philosophy". He looked upon Physics as providing "the most general background for all subsidiary efforts". It is indeed ironic that Read should have believed that physics had replaced transcendental philosophy

when as a matter of fact Cassirer claimed that it is precisely the modern developments in physics which lent support to Neo-Kantianism.[6] However, what interested him most was not physics but psychology. He said that "for the literary critics psychology gains an intimate importance because it is so directly concerned with the material origins of art."[7] The phrase "material origins of art" is significant. It suggests that Read would not consider art in vacuo or in the abstract but that he would approach it from those points of view which could be said to throw light on its material origins. Read considers art not only from the point of view of psychology but also from that of social and cultural milieu. As a matter of fact the ideal of "ontogenetic criticism" evolved by Read is an affirmation of the relevance to criticism of psychology and what one may call 'sociology' (what I have in mind is social and cultural milieu). Commenting on Eliot's view that literary criticism should be completed by "criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint", Read says: "

> I do not deny that such criticism may have its interest; but the only kind of criticism which is basic, and therefore complementary not only to technical exegesis but also to ethical, theological, philosophical and every other kind of ideological criticism, is ontogenetic criticism, by which I mean criticism which traces the origins of the work of art in the psychology of the individual and in the economic structure of society.[8]

"Economic structure of society" suggests the relevance of a sociological approach to literary criticism. (In the following discussion I have looked upon Marxist literary criticism

as a special modification of that approach). And what is true of criticism is true of poetic theory.

We shall try to determine the place of sociological approach in his poetic theory first, and then go on to consider the role that psychology (to be more specific, psychoanalysis) plays in it.

II

In 1926 Read believed that it is a "fallacious mode of approach" to investigate the social foundations of literature. He points out, for example, that the evolution of the novel as a literary form cannot be explained by an "analysis in economic terms" (obviously, he has Marxist criticism in mind) though its rise may have been "conditioned by the growth of social democracy". "Art transcends those conditions which create it, and cannot therefore be explained by those conditions . . ."[9] The sociological or Marxian approach to literature does not therefore play a vital role in Read's poetic theory at this stage. Nevertheless, he does not dismiss it as being irrelevant to the true critical activity. He admits the possibility that one could throw bridges from criticism to history with the result that "a good deal of enlightenment may pass that way". (And 'history' could be interpreted broadly to include social history). But he warns us that "it is vain to imagine that the two systems of knowledge can be completely fused and correlated". His denial of the

possibility of fusion between these two systems of knowledge may be taken to mean that he thinks that sociological or historical criticism would always remain external to true criticism. What he is questioning here is the critical status of that approach and not its usefulness. But why should he grant that a critical approach is useful and at the same time doubt its critical status? I think that his answer may be gathered from the comment he made in 1934 on the Marxist view that the character of art is the outcome of the mode of material production. He said that he is prepared to accept this view if 'character' is taken to mean "external features rather than an inner form".[10] As far as Read is concerned, "inner form" is independent of the mode of material production. What is this "inner form"? It is something directly connected with the underlying artistic impulse, aesthetic sensibility, which is always constant and which has remained so from the days of cave-painting to those of action-painting or Dadaist poetry. This "inner form", this "aesthetic sensibility", is not economically determined. Indeed it is "a vulgar error" to imagine so. In so far as the historical or Marxist approach has nothing to say about this sensibility <u>per se</u>, the former is not integral to criticism or to poetic theory. Comments on the industrial system or the mode of production leave the "heart of the matter"--sensibility--untouched. As he put it in 1943: ". . . there is no necessary connection between

the economic and even the ethical characteristics of an industrial system and the aesthetic merits of the products of that system."[11] Since Read is firmly convinced that there is no correspondence between artistic merit (which, it would appear, is connected with 'sensibility') and the type of society, any approach which concentrates on the latter to explain the former really misses the central point of aesthetic creation.

It is characteristic of Read's undogmatic and unprejudiced approach to literary theory that he should explore this very problem further and try to establish the relevance of the sociological approach. He attempts to do this in his Art and Society. And the views he expresses here with reference to literary criticism could be considered to be applicable by extension to the theory of poetry. He points out that not enough attention has been paid to the sociological approach to literature. "Still less attention has been given to the social genesis of art, and to the nature of the relations which subsist between society and the individuals who are responsible for the creation of works of art."[12] (The word 'art' here could be taken to mean not only plastic arts but poetry also). But what would such a study establish? Read believes that it would throw light on the ideological aspects of art. Ideological aspects of art are a reflection of the relations between society and the artist, and these relations are

determined by the economic structure. Or as he puts it in Marxist terms: "That the ideological aspects of art are also in some sense a reflection of the prevailing methods of economic production is a general proposition to which I give full assent."[13] The terse phrase "prevailing methods of economic production" is Marxist short-hand for "economic and social relations determined by forces of production".

For a further commentary on this view we should turn to his "The Modern Epoch in Painting". He says that economic and social trends determine and give their fluctuating shades to movements of thought in every epoch. "The work of art cannot escape the ambience of such intangible effluences (the philosophies and theologies of the period)."[14] We already know that the ideological aspect of art and "inner form" or "sensibility" are two separate things. So we may be justified in concluding that "intangible effluences", which constitute part of the ideological aspect, are independent of sensibility. But there is no such thing as pure sensibility in literature. What we come across in literature is sensibility as it is expressed. "Sensibility is not the only value in art--as successive civilizations develop their cultures they invariably dilute this basic sensibility with other values of a magical or logical nature--they use sensibility in social contexts, and it is the variations of context that seem to explain whatever changes occur in the history of art."[15] One may say, therefore,

that the expression of sensibility, taking place as it does in the social context, is determined by it. That this is what Read means becomes more clear when he says that to the extent that a work of art is classical or romantic, realist or symbolic, "it will certainly be beyond the personal control of the artist". (It seems to me that what he has in mind is the social context). If he were not to hold this view, in order to explain the existence of romantic and classical literature he would have had to speak of "romantic sensibility" and "classical sensibility". And such multiplications of sensibility would be endless. He also says that the structure of a work of art (the style of composition) may be a matter of taste "determined by social contacts". Now, "structure" and "style" clearly refer to the expression of sensibility. One may, therefore, say that what Read is pointing out is that certain aspects of expression are determined by the social structure.

What Read is arguing for is a vital relationship between sensibility and social factors. What is necessary in an act of aesthetic expression or creation is the synthesis of an "untrammelled sensibility" and contemporary social context. "The vitality of art would seem to depend on the maintenance of a delicate balance between sensibility and whatever intellectual or emotional accretions it derives from the social element in which it is embedded."[16] Superficially this account may seem to be Marxist. But it is not Marxist in so far as he does not look upon "sensibility"

as a product of the given historical situation. The dualism between "sensibility" and the "social element" inherent in Read's account goes against the grain of a monist philosophy like Marxism. Besides, even when he says that there is a relationship between the expression of sensibility and the social conditions, he does not adopt the determinist Marxist position which would seek to establish a definite relationship between them. He writes:

> But there comes a point in the evolution of art at which all these imponderable forces are but external pressures which result, not in a consequential 'line of force', but in a leap into creative originality of a quite incalculable kind. The dialectical materialist may still claim that social factors have determined that anamorphosis, but the quantum in art, as in physics, may be discontinuous.[17]

The expressions "not in a consequential line of force", "incalculable kind" and "discontinuous" clearly indicate how Read's stand on the question of aesthetic expression is far from being deterministic in the Marxist fashion. And finally, Read does not interpret "social conditions" like a Marxist theoretician. He says:

> We must guard against interpreting 'social conditions' in a sense narrowly economic or political. The artist's awareness of these conditions rarely assumes a politically conscious form, and certainly there is no correlation to be made between such consciousness in the artist and his degree of originality.[18]

Originality for Read consists in synthesizing sensibility and contemporary social conditions; but such originality has nothing to do with the kind of consciousness (that is, class-consciousness) advocated by Marxist critics. This view of

originality, following as it does from Read's belief that sensibility is independent of the state of civilization, implies that a consciousness of the latter in the economic or political terms of a Marxist critic is not really a sine qua non of sensibility, nor is it necessary for the expression of it. Thus Read challenges the central core of the Marxist approach to literature.

However, he does not reject it completely. He is prepared to grant that it is a "secondary activity". ". . . criticism proper must be dissociated from sociological criticism of the Marxist type. Again one cannot object to such criticism as a secondary activity . . ."[19] One can see that Read is thinking here in terms of a duality between the aesthetic aspect of a work of art and its non-aesthetic or ideological aspect. Incidentally, one may note that this view of "criticism proper" explains why Read's poetic theory is concerned specifically with the intensive rather than the extensive aspects of poetry: a fact which has already been noted in the second chapter.[20] Intensive aspects are specifically poetic but extensive aspects are not. However, I must say that unlike other extensive aspects, the ideological aspect of art is not, as is evident from his cautious and discriminating approach to sociological criticism, dismissed with a broad generalization. I cannot resist adding that contrary to the widely held notion of him as one who is easily carried away by contemporary

enthusiasms,[21] Read did not succumb to the Marxist enthusiasm, but instead responded to that mode of approach critically, and assigned to it the place he thought it deserved in his poetic theory.

To recapitulate my argument so far. It may seem that there is a contradiction between the 1926 statement that art cannot be "explained" by "those conditions which create it" (see above, footnote 8) and the 1938 remark that art has its origin in the social structure. But if we take the latter remark to refer to "expression of sensibility" rather than to the sensibility itself, it would seem that the two remarks are not contradictory. Read should be understood to mean that it is the style, the general literary trend and ideological aspects that are determined by the social structure but not the sensibility itself. But what is this "sensibility"? (It seems to me that it refers to "feeling". But the word "feeling" is a linguistic chameleon in Read's writings. Sometimes it means "sensation"; sometimes it means "sentiment". And at times it means "intuition"). We have seen that intuition occupies a central place in his philosophical convictions and poetic theory. Therefore we may say that when Read speaks of the sensibility that does not change and the "inner form", he has most probably intuition in particular in mind. So what Read is saying is that expression of sensibility (intuition) is influenced by social factors but that sensibility itself

~~has~~ remained constant throughout human history.

In criticism of this theory of Read's it may be said that if Read had explained with references to specific poets how the social structure affected their expression, his generalizations would had more compelling force. Perhaps he thought that it was obvious as to how the social structure determined the ideological content of poetry. But the situation that this vast generalization describes has a number of variable factors in it: the social class of the poet, his upbringing, his convictions, the national and the international situations, his response to them, psychological factors governing his response, the literary traditions of the poet's country, the poetic situation and foreign influences, cultural as well as political. I have not by any means exhausted the list of variables one could make. And unless the poetic theorist tries to establish a "vast generalization" with proper attention to these factors, I am not sure that the generation that has "grown more empirical" is going to be impressed. Secondly, when Read says that the social structure affects expression, does he have in mind the general pattern of expression in a particular period? It is possible, for example, to maintain that broadly speaking, the heroic couplet as practised in the early eighteenth century reflects the age. But if it is this kind of generalization that Read has in mind when he says that the social structure affects expression, then it

is not a very original idea. If on the other hand, it is the style of the individual artist that he has in mind when he makes the generalization that the social structure affects expression, then I should imagine that in order to substantiate it, he would have to show more concretely how the individual style responds to social reality. It seems to me that Read has not exploited the sociological approach to poetic theory as well as it could have been. In conclusion I would like to quote one remark of his which expresses his ideal of poetic theory.

> This latter type of criticism I have called genetic [he means "analysis of the circumstances" in which a work of art comes into existence], and it may, if so desired, be separated from aesthetic criticism. But an adequate criticism must include both methods, for we must understand, not only form, rhythm, harmony, composition, texture, handling, etc., but also imagery, allegory, analogy, motivation, social significance and many other aspects of the work of art to which psychology alone can offer the right approach.[22]

Read is not satisfied with mere aesthetic approach and therefore his poetic theory is not formalistic. However, Read could have tested his brilliantly speculative and well-reasoned sociological approach with more frequent references to poetry. Be that as it may, after this consideration of the sociological strand of the scientific level of his theory, we may now turn to the psychological strand of it, which, incidentally, will sometimes be referred to as the "psychological approach".

III

> I began to read Freud as soon as the translations of his work appeared in this country, and it at once became evident to me that my own particular sphere of aesthetic criticism was to revolve on a new axis.[23]

But Read was not Freud's uncritical disciple. As a matter of fact, as the science of the unconscious progressed, Read enlisted the support of many lesser lights, irrespective of whether they belonged to the school of psycho-analysis (Freud) or Analytical psychology (Jung) or Individual psychology (Adler). As a "mere expropriator" in this field, he took the liberty of lifting his material from whatever quarter suited him best. Read had the courage of his eclecticism, and he ranged far and wide in search of his psychological freebooty.

That Read's acceptance of psycho-analysis was not that of a mere enthusiast is seen from the critical nature of his response to it. He writes:

> To anyone who sees the immense importance and utility of Freud's general theory, nothing is so dismaying as the utter futility of all the psycho-analysts in the presence of art. They cannot understand that art is a triumph over neurosis, and that the symbolistic and mystical imaginings which they ask us to consider are the very denial of art, lacking order, form and discipline.[24]

The generic term 'art' could be taken to refer to poetry. (Throughout the following discussion the term 'art' is so interpreted). Poetry is not an expression of neurosis; it is a conquest of it. Also note his emphasis on 'order', 'form' and 'discipline'. Poetry is far from being

non-conscious. Such a view of poetry is consistent with the ideal of conscious comprehensive reason he held at this time, an ideal of ideal consciousness which we examined in the second chapter. And this view of poetry, coloured by the ideal of 'comprehensive reason', is reflected in the following remark:

> . . . for nothing ever comes out of the unconscious mind that has not previously been consciously elaborated or sensibly felt: the product of the unconscious mind will always strictly correspond with the quality of the conscious mind, and dull or undisciplined intellects will find as ever that there is no short cut to genius.[25]

It would seem as if what comes "out of the unconscious mind" is significant because it has previously been elaborated or felt. The unconscious is significant because it has once been in the conscious! It seems to me that Read is confusing the "preconscious" with the "unconscious". Or to use Jungian equivalents, he is confusing the "personal unconscious" with the "collective unconscious". According to both Freud and Jung, the pre-conscious or the "personal unconscious" originates in the conscious. But they do not believe that the unconscious itself has such an origin.[26] Now, Read uses the word unconscious, but seems to understand the preconscious by it. What possibly could be the explanation of this egregious blunder?

Read is trying to maintain the importance of certain values such as order, discipline, precision and intelligibility in poetic creation at the same time as he is

assigning the unconscious a role in his theory. Between the fascination for both the conscious and the unconscious, he settles for the preconcious, which is accessible to the conscious. This is the explanation one is tempted to give of Read's remark about the relation between the conscious and the 'unconscious'.

But I wonder if Read is right in implying that Freud does not understand that art is a triumph over neurosis. Did not Freud make it clear that art is a "way back from neurosis to reality"? However, Freud's view that art is a "way back" from neurosis receives strong corroboration and emphatic expression from Jung, who believes that art is a triumph over neurosis. Indeed, I may say that in "Psychoanalysis and Criticism", Read argues more like a Jungian than like a Freudian. "Perhaps in this matter of the general function of literature Jung is the only one of the three [Freud and Adler being the other two] to work out a theory in any detail."[27] And Read makes Jung's theory the basis of his views on the "poetic function", and of his theory of poetic creation.

What is Jung's theory? Let Read speak for Jung:

> Now Jung's theory is that living reality is never the exclusive product of one or the other of these contrasted attitudes [the contrasted attitudes are 'introversion' and 'extraversion' and they may be traced in every activity], but only of a specific vital activity which unites them, bridges the gulf between them, giving intensity to sense-perception and effective force to the idea.[28]

Living reality is the product of a unifying activity which is called phantasy. Phantasy could be active or passive. Read, who is concerned only with active phantasy, quotes Jung as saying that active phantasy is "the principal attribute of artistic mentality". Applying this remark to poetry he says that "the poetic function is nothing else but this active phantasy in its more-than-individual aspects." It is the modus operandi of active phantasy that has significance for Read's poetic theory. Active phantasy, which owes its existence to "the propensity of the conscious attitude for taking up the indications or fragments of relatively light-toned unconscious associations", develops the latter into "complete plasticity by association with parallel elements".[29] What springs from the unconscious unites with what springs from actuality and thus there is "one uniform flow of life". The two are as it were integrated. The integration of the 'unconscious' and the 'conscious' has a "more-than-individual" aspect in the sense that the integration achieved by the artist, though born of his need, is valid for all "who come to participate in his imaginative work".

But Read's peculiar view of the unconscious, which regards the latter as originating in the conscious, detracts from the significance of the concept of integration. Why? It follows logically from Read's view of the unconscious that the integration he has in mind would take place not

between the unconscious and the conscious but rather between the preconscious and the conscious. But what is significant for Jung is integration between the unconscious and the conscious. He says in the course of his discussion of active phantasy:

> For here, in a converging stream, flow the conscious and the unconscious personality of the subject into a common and reconciling product. A phantasy thus framed may be the supreme expression of the unity of an individual . . .[30]

It may be observed that Jung uses the word "unconscious" here and that he does not mean "pre-conscious" by it. However, we may note that it is the integrationist aspect of Jung's theory which appeals to Read. As compared with Jung's account, Freud's theory, which looks upon art as the creation of the artist's wishes in phantasy with a view to securing "honour, power, riches, fame and the love of woman", may seem cheap, crude and rather naive. Significantly enough, Read has observed: "I believe that some of Freud's errant disciples, particularly Jung and Trigant Burrow are nearer than their master to certain aspects of the truth."[31] Perhaps what Read had in mind was the fact that Jung is more thorough-going than Freud in his discussion of art. For example, Freud believes that artistic creation is phantasy made universal and impersonal. But he does not distinguish between artistic phantasy and average phantasy except in terms of expression. But as Jung distinguishes active from passive phantasy and makes it clear

that the latter is morbid, has some trace of abnormality in it and that it springs from dissociation of the psyche. He relates artistic creation to active phantasy, which takes its origin from the unity of the psyche. This view of art is congenial to Read's according to which art is a triumph over neurosis. He writes:

> What is now necessary to emphasize strongly, in concluding this psychological excursus, is that art is a triumph over neurosis; that though it originates in a neurotic tendency, it is a coming-out-against this tendency; . . . Their [the Bronte sisters] art is not neurotic in kind; no art is. It is only when we search for causes and origins (as we have a perfect right to do) that we discover the neurosis; in the final effect, according to the measure of its success, all art is health and harmony.[32]

What Read is saying here is that the neurotic tendency which could give rise to passive phantasy is present in the artists. But the difference between an artist and a patient is that the latter succumbs to it and is powerless before it. But the artist is able to experience the unity of psyche (which is how one may interpret the remark that art is a "coming-out-against this tendency"). Art springs from this united psyche and therefore it is "health and harmony". Thus we see that even in his earliest period (1924 to 1932) Read's poetic theory is open to Jung's influence and that it revolves on Jungian as well as Freudian axis. We shall consider separately in the following sections the 'revolutions' of Read's theory on Freudian and Jungian axis.

IV

In 1932 Read brings the Freudian concepts of the ego and the superego to bear on his discussion of poetry. He sees poetry exclusively as a product either of the ego or of the superego. As we have already seen in the last chapter, he regards poetry with organic form as a product of personality, which is identified with the ego. Poetry with abstract form is regarded as being a product of character, which is identified with the superego. The unconscious is not quite put out. (He connects the fancy with the unconscious and the imagination with the preconscious in an unconvincing attempt to provide literary concepts with psychological basis). But as we saw in the last chapter the personality is an ideal of consciousness.

To turn to Read's use of the concepts of the ego and the superego. It seems that Read looks upon them as discrete entities. As Professor Ray has pointed out, Read "rather freely uses Freud's concepts of the ego and superego". He goes on to add: "In Freud these terms do not denote discrete entities in the psychic topography; in Read they are made to do so."[33] The absolute opposition, therefore, between abstract form and organic form, poetry of personality and poetry of character does not have the psychological foundation which could be described as being true to Freud.

A number of questions spring into one's mind as one thinks of this theory in the light of Freud's account of the

topography of the psyche. Does the poetry of personality, which is expression of the coherent organization of the ego, have an ideological aspect? If it does, is this aspect supplied by the ego or the superego? How does the poetry of character come to possess 'formal unity'? Which region of the mind is responsible for that unity? Does poetry of character have an ideological aspect? Which region of the mind is responsible for that aspect? Or would Read say that the ego supplies unity and ideological aspect to the poetry of personality and that the superego supplies unity and the ideological aspect to the poetry of character? He would have to say this if he looks upon the ego and the superego as discrete entities which give rise to two types of poetry. But he would find himself on the horns of a dilemma. How?

Read makes it clear that the "formal unity" of the poem is a manifestation of the organic coherence of <u>personality</u>. (Let us remember that he identifies personality with the <u>ego</u>). Now, one wonders if he would be prepared to say that poetry of character (which is supposed to spring from the superego) has its unity supplied by the ego? If he says 'yes', he would be theoretically inconsistent since poetry of character takes its rise only from the superego. If he says 'no' (that is, the unity of poetry of character is supplied by the superego), he would again be theoretically inconsistent since formal unity is by definition a

manifestation of the ego. This dilemma arises because Read has not in his theory made allowance for the interplay of various regions of the mind. It is because he regards only one level of the mind as the source of poetry of personality, and another level as the source of poetry of character, that a simplistic picture of the process of poetic creation emerges which does not do justice to the interplay of the various regions of the mind. Read's view of the origin of formal unity, as we shall soon see, undergoes a change in 1936. He comes to look upon formal unity as something that is a result of the ego operating on the contents of the Id. This change in Read's view is a direct result of the unconscious assuming a major role in his poetic theory after 1932--a point I have tried to make in the second chapter.

The concept of personality has an interesting consequence for Read's attitude towards the question of the relationship between art and neurosis. We have already seen that Read did not see any virtue in neurosis as such for artistic production. But it may seem that Read contradicts himself in his essay on Shelley in which he establishes a connection between Shelley's poetry and his neurosis. (Read insists on using the word 'psychosis'. But later in the essay he himself refers to Shelley's personality as 'neurotic personality'). In Auden's words, Read shows that "his [Shelley's] very neurosis was the source of his insight."[34] We are told that the neurotic personality does

not resist the organic wholeness of life. The social adaptation which 'normal' persons undergo is "really a pretence". "Under the cover of our conventions we remain disparate, dissociated, resisting the organic wholeness of life." The words "disparate" and "dissociated" suggest that normality is achieved at the expense of "organic coherence of personality". "Only the neurotic refuses the compromise." Which means, I suppose, that he does not sacrifice the "organic wholeness of life" for the sake of normality. Read makes the same point in greater detail:

> Disparate as he may seem from the point of view of the normality we have achieved, actually he is nearer the source of life, the organic reality; his separateness is really an integrity of personality, an agreement of all the instinctive and affective life of the individual with the organic processes of life in general (the natural unity of our common life).[35]

The antithesis between 'normality' and 'neurotic personality' explained here by Read could be said to be parallel to the antithesis between character and personality. First, both 'personality' and 'neurotic personality' are said to possess 'organic coherence'. Second, just as 'character' <u>controls</u> the organic processes in the light of ego-ideal and is thus a denial of organic wholeness, normality also, in Read's view, spells a retreat from the organic wholeness of life. It seems to me, however, that Read is romanticizing neurosis. If neurotic personality is as close to the organic processes of life as personality, what is the difference between the two?

We have seen above what kind of difficulties Read runs into when he looks upon the ego and the superego as discrete entities and considers them to be sources of poetry of personality and character respectively. Read puts forward a new theory of the process of poetic creation in 1936. The publication of Freud's New Introductory Lectures (1932) influenced Read's poetic theory as can be seen from his Art and Society, first published in 1936. Here we have a significant departure from the earlier view according to which the ego and the superego are discrete entities. Read recognizes that the id, the ego and the superego shade off into one another.

> These divisions [into ego, super-ego, and id] can only be schematically represented as definite; actually they shade off into one another. The super-ego in particular is not to be imagined as something separated from the ego; some of its characteristics are derived directly from the id.[36]

The theory advanced here avoids the limitations of the one suggested in 1932.

Read finds some of Freud's observations regarding the anatomy of the mental personality suggestive and attempts to do what Freud himself did not attempt. He brings out the implications of Freud's theory of mental personality for art, and explains how the id, the ego and the super-ego manifest themselves in a work of art. To state his view in his own words:

> It derives its energy, its irrationality and its mysterious power from the id, which is to be regarded

> as the source of what we usually call inspiration. It is given formal synthesis and unity by the ego; and finally it may be assimilated to those ideologies or spiritual aspirations which are the peculiar creation of the super-ego.[37]

Consider the aspects of a work of art mentioned here: (1) energy and irrationality, (2) formal synthesis and unity, and (3) ideological aspect. Now, as for the first aspect, the glorification of irrationality is an aspect of the heavy stress laid on the unconscious in his theory in 1936. One would be hard put to it to find anything like the following observations in Read's writings before 1936. "But those works of art which are irrational and dreamlike--legendary myths and folk tales and the poems which embody them--these survive all economic and political changes . . .", or ". . . the works of art which survive are those which most nearly approach to the illogical order of the dream."[38] As for the emphasis on unity and synthesis, there is nothing new in it. He stressed the formal aspects of art before 1936 too. But the point to be noted is that he does not discount them even when he insists that art is irrational. As for the ideological aspect of art, our discussion of his sociological approach has shown us that he was always aware of it. It is precisely these three aspects of art that he relates to the three regions of the mind distinguished by Freud. The "energy" of a work of art springs from the Id. Its unity is supplied by the ego. Finally, its ideological aspect is related to the superego. Read has in effect

proposed his theory concerning the psychological sources of various aspects of art. Let us consider this theory in greater detail:

Freud says in his New Introductory Lectures that the "repressed remains unaltered by the passage of time". Read says that this region, this cauldron, the "id" is a region of "timeless entities", a source of the vital energy "transmitted to the artist's creative impulse". Thanks to the energy of which this region is a source, the appeal of what the artist is inspired to express is universal. But the artist must make contact with this region in order to tap the energy. "We imagine the artist, then, as dipping into a cauldron of timeless and intensely vital entities." But such a direct contact with the deeper layers of the mind would be "too much for us". We might tolerate it in a few cases. "But in general the artist has to tame the entities of his vision before he retails them to the visionless public." It is at this stage that the ego comes into action. "It is the ego which mediates between the artist's id and the external world--which makes him, so to speak the conscious agent that he is."[39] But there is a distinction between the functioning of the ego in the case of a normal individual and that of the ego in the case of the artist. What is that distinction?

"The ego", says Freud, "has taken over the task of representing the external world for the id . . ."[40] It,

therefore, receives "excitation" from without as well as from the interior of the mind. But in performing the task of representing the external world, the ego of the normal person must eliminate any element in its picture of the external world which is a "contribution from internal sources of excitation".[41] Therefore the ego "interpolates between desire and action the procrastinating factor of thought" and secures "dethronement of the pleasure-principle" and substitutes for it the "reality-principle". But "in the case of the artist there is an exception": "He does not eliminate any element 'which is a contribution from internal sources of excitation'." (By the way, for the sake of uniformity of nomenclature Read could have used the expression "the artist's ego" rather than "he"). His purpose is to "evade the procrastinating factor of thought" and to introduce such elements as are contributed by internal sources of excitation. The former secures immediacy and vitality of presentation, the latter disturbs "the even and orderly surface of the conventional conception of reality".[42] It may seem that in saying that the artist's purpose is to "disturb" the even surface of the conventional conception of reality, Read is contradicting his earlier remark that the entries from the id have to be "tamed". As a matter of fact, he is suggesting a compromise. Yes, the conventional conception must be disturbed, but not unduly disturbed. The "normal reader" should not be "unduly"

alarmed or antagonized. But how does an artist do this aesthetic rope-trick?

In order to "disguise" his "lawless images" (proceeding from the id) the artist gives them form and proportion. How? The ego gives form and physical harmony to the "impersonal and unchanging experiences" which issue "forceful but amorphous and perhaps terrifying from the id"; and then the superego gives to these "impersonal and unchanging experiences" "treated" by the ego, the "ideological tendencies and aspirations of religion, morality and social realism". It seems to me that Read has at the back of his mind a Freudian model in proposing this theory of artistic creation. By Freudian model I mean Freud's account of the dream-work. Freud speaks of "secondary elaboration" in connection with dream-activity and explains how the latent content is disguised by manifest content. Something analogous to this dream-work is seen as occurring in artistic creation. On the one hand you have "forceful but amorphous and perhaps terrifying" contents of the id; then there is the need to make these contents, entities, lawless images "acceptable to the public at large". The ego plays the role of the ambiguous censor in that this censor is not averse to disturbing "the even and orderly surface of the conventional conception of reality", though it does not want to "unduly alarm or antagonize the normal individual". So the id provides unchanging experiences. The ego provides

"secondary elaboration". Thus the artistic process is analogous to the dream-process. Read says:

> Thus the artistic process in general may be said to consist of two processes: the immediate and essential one which has always been known as inspiration, and which psychologically we describe as an access to the deeper layers of the unconscious; and a secondary process of elaboration, in which the essential perceptions and intuitions of the artist are woven into a fabric which can take its place in the organized life of conscious reality.[43]

In the light of this comment it may justly be said that Read accepted Freud's dream-process (dream-work) as a working model in developing his own theory of artistic creation. We may call this theory the "dream-theory of art". Before we go on to consider this theory (developed in "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle") let us see how he explains poetic inspiration (which, incidentally, he identifies with poetic creation) in terms of the Freudian regions of the mind.

Read explains the phenomenon of inspiration in terms of Freudian concepts. The theory of inspiration he proposes is a brilliant exploitation of one "casual statement" (Read's phrase) Freud makes at the end of his chapter on the anatomy of the mental personality. Freud writes:

> It can be easily imagined too that certain practices of mystics may succeed in upsetting the normal relations between the different regions of the mind, so that, for example, the perceptual system becomes able to grasp relations in the deeper layers of the ego and in the id which would otherwise be inaccessible to it.[44]

Read provides a lucid exposition of what happens when the "normal relations between the different regions of the mind" are upset.

> That is to say, the sensational awareness of the ego is brought into direct contact with the id, and from that 'seething cauldron' snatches some archetypal form, some instinctive association of words, images or sounds, which constitute the basis of the work of art.[45]

Thus the perceptual conscious system, which makes for sensational awareness, turns inward, away from the external world, to the deeper layers of the ego and the id. This hypothesis, Read thinks, explains "that lyrical intuition", which is known as "inspiration". The sensational awareness of the ego, its drive for 'form' and 'harmony' are trained as it were on the contents of the id. Art therefore has the energy, mysteriousness and irrationality of the id, and the plasticity which the ego could be said to provide. Now, these are the very qualities of dreams. What is the relationship between poetry and dream then? Read devotes himself to this problem in his "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle".

Read notes that "poetic inspiration has an exact parallel in dream-formation".[46]

> An unconscious impulse creates the poem no less than the dream; it provides, that is to say, the mental energy required for its formation. The impulse seeks in the poem, no less and no otherwise than in the dream, its desired satisfaction.[47]

Besides the common origin in the unconscious, dream-formation and poem-formation have a few other features in common. Since the path to motor-discharge is closed to the impulse in the dream, it travels "in the retrograde direction to perception" and contents itself with "an hallucinatory satisfaction". In other words, the latent dream-thoughts

(connected with the impulse) are "turned into a collection of images and visual scenes". Read observes the same process in poetry. He says that "the latent ideas or thoughts are turned into visual images, are dramatized and illustrated, are finally liberated in the hallucinatory reality of the poem."[48] The latent significance of these dream-thoughts that have been condensed into "images or symbols" resists analysis and perhaps precisely on that account they have "extreme poetic force". This is an important fact for Read's poetic theory because his distinction between images and symbols is grounded on the analysability or otherwise of the images. Images that are analysable are conceived in the unconscious; he calls them metaphors. Images whose counterpart is not manifest are called 'symbols'.[49] They are conceived in the unconscious. They bring into relation without comparison two distant realities which cohere--realities between which there is a hidden connecting link in the unconscious. Read calls it a "repressed connection". He says: ". . . the poetic reality lies in the evident power of the image, and is not stronger --indeed, may be much weaker--if its latent meaning is made manifest."[50]

So the poem is equivalent to the <u>manifest content</u> of the dream. The latent thoughts (connected with the impulse, the dream) are turned into images or symbols which are strong precisely because (a) their significance resists analysis

(since the thoughts are latent) and (b) the connections between the realities which images bring together are repressed. But the conscious mind of the poet works over the poem in order to disguise gaps or incoherency, and gives it a smooth facade which is demanded by the literary conventions of the age, and which makes for "ease of communication".

From the expressions "connections between realities are repressed" and "significance resists analysis", it would appear that repression is a significant factor in art. We are first told that repression of instincts entails a feeble art. But Read goes on to qualify his remark by saying that repressed instincts may find a disguised outlet, the implication of which qualification is that if they do find such an outlet, the resultant art is not feeble. Does this mean that repression as such of instincts is not detrimental to art provided that they find a disguised outlet? It would seem that this is what he means. "Without subscribing to the view that art is in every respect a sublimation of repressed instincts . . . one must nevertheless recognize . . . that art is closely linked with these same instincts."[51] But there is an important proviso to this. We do not produce art "if we are conscious of our instincts and repress them". What Read means is that if we are conscious of repression--we do not produce art. We produce only "intellectual reactions"--intellectual reactions to the fact of repression. "But if we are not conscious of our

instincts, and at the same time allow them to be expressed in a disguised form, then the result may well be interesting."[52] In view of the fact that he has said that art is closely linked with repressed instincts, the expression "if we are not conscious of our instincts" could be taken to mean: "if we are not conscious of repression". The "result" may well be interesting because such works would have "unconscious significance", that is, psychoanalytic significance. Read's meaning becomes more clear if we bear in mind his examples of this kind of art: the Prophetic Books of Blake, the nonsense verse and tales of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. He says that such significance "only adds to the value of literature". "From our point of view Lear is a better poet than Tennyson, Lewis Carroll has affinities with Shakespeare."[53] This judgment may seem preposterous and perhaps no one would have been more shocked by it than Lear himself. However, the clause "if we are not conscious of our instincts" would seem to indicate that the kind of art Read has in mind could be produced only in the days of our "innocence", which preceded the advance of psychoanalysis! Secondly, "if we are not conscious of our instincts", of our repression that is, how could we be said to "<u>allow</u> them to be expressed" in a "disguised form"? Does not the very expression "allow them . . . form" imply a consciousness of repression of instincts on our part? Read's position on the question of repression of instincts

and "disguised" expression is certainly not free from contradictions.

It is interesting to speculate on why the dream occupies such an important place in Read's poetic theory. We have already seen that it is a source of access to the unconscious. But are there any other reasons? Let us remember that he looked upon art as a synthesis of the imagination and reality. He says, for example, that art projects the imaginative faculty outside the mind and seeks "in the world of reality objective equivalents of its fantasies". He expresses this idea more simply in "Surrealism--the Dialectic of Art", where he defines art as "reality transformed by the imagination".[54] Now, just as there is a synthesis between imagination and reality in art, there takes place in the dream also a synthesis between reality and phantasy (imagination) in as much as our day-world emerges peculiarly metamorphosed in it. As Read himself puts it:

> In most dreams we find elements that are merely the casual residues of the day's anxieties; but we find also the day-world transformed, and occasionally this new reality presents itself to us as a poetic unity.[55]

The idea of "synthesis" between reality and phantasy (imagination) is clearly implied by the phrase "new reality". So one may say that Read's interest in the dream springs from the fact that it presents a pattern of the synthesis of reality and imagination. Indeed, he goes so far as to

say: "It is tempting to identify poetry and the dream; or shall we say, to avoid qualifications of technical nature, the imagination and the dream."[56] The theory of dream-composition is a logical consequence of this identification.

Read gives one example of his dream composition to test his dream-theory of art. He analyses it and concludes that his hyposthesis is valid though he would not have dared to publish the poem on its own merits. However, the point I wish to make is that dream-composition of 1936 is mere transcription of dream-experience. And as we shall soon see, transcription of dream-experience is not the same as expression of it. Automatism, which makes the latter possible, does not have a significant place in his dream theory in 1936. His attitude towards it is cautious then.[57] But it acquires an important place in it in 1938. I have in mind his essay "Myth, Dream and Poem". Whereas in "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle" Read was concerned with discussing poetry in terms of the dream-technique, in this essay he establishes a relationship between dream and automatism. What is this relationship?

Dreams are our window on the "mythical mind"; they are a source of access to the "collective unconscious" or "racial memory". They release images and symbols from this mythical mind. And these images and symbols are organized by the poet into a myth. And then the myth receives its articulation. He achieves this with the help of automatism, which

secures "immediate and instinctive expression" of images and symbols. Read says: "And this mythical mind is the mind we all know in our dreams, partially, incoherently; but the poet knows it with a penetrating and selective validity."[58] It appears that Read believes that the images and symbols released by the mythical mind (which the poet knows with a "penetrating validity") are organized at the unconscious level into a myth for he says that the "myth is precipitated into the individual mind of the poet".

But how does the myth which is precipitated into the individual mind come to be expressed in a poem? Before we answer the question we must note that Read says that whereas myth persists by virtue of its imagery, a poem persists by virtue of its language. It is possible to translate a myth into any language since the imagery can be expressed in the "verbal symbols" of any language. But a poem is scarcely translatable. However, Read goes on to say, "a poem is more than essence of language"; it is this essence allied to imagery. Read's answer to the question raised above is this: "Its [i.e. of the image] vivid eidetic energy acts like a catalyst among the suspended verbal molecules and precipitates just those which clothe the image in the brightest sheath of words."[59] The translatable element--myth, which persists by virtue of its imagery--comes to be allied with the untranslatable element--language--and precipitates the right "verbal molecules". The chemical metaphor gives one the

impression that there is a certain inevitability about the process of expression of imagery in language. Now, one may wonder if Read means that the imagery selects its "bright sheath" when the poet is in a dream-state. That Read does not mean this becomes clear when he says that the gulf between experience (myth, images) and expression can be crossed only "in a state of trance or automatism". So dream, which provides images and the myth, depends on automatism for expression. But how does automatism help? We are told that the gulf between experience and expression can be crossed only "in a state of trance or automatism, in which state the images of the dream draw words from the memory very much as a magnet might draw needles from a haystack."[60] This time Read has drawn his analogy from physics in order to explain the process of expression. And what it makes clear is that there is a certain inevitable relationship between images and words. This becomes clear in the description he gives of automatism. "But by automatism in the present context we mean a state of mind in which expression is immediate and instinctive--where there is no time-gap between the image and its verbal equivalent."[61] (Incidentally, we encountered in English Prose Style this view that there is no time-gap between experience and expression in poetry.[62])

It could be argued that Read's reasoning here on the question of experience and expression is not free from

a certain circularity. We first learn that images "draw" words in a state of trance or automatism. But what is automatism? We are told that it is a state of mind in which there is no time-gap between the image and the word since images "draw" words! However, it is possible to take the view that his definition of automatism quoted above spells out the meaning which his scientific analogies strive to express, namely, that it is a state of mind in which expression is "immediate and instinctive". Circularity or no circularity, the point Read is making is that expression should be spontaneous and immediate, and that in a state of trance or automatism it is so. The two important pre-requisites then for achieving "immediate and instinctive expression" are automatism and the "eidetic energy" of images.

Poetry of this instantaneous kind--poetry in which there is no "time-gap" between experience and expression--has a rhythm which is dictated by the unconscious. "The rhythm is found just as the words are found: by the law of attraction which seems to operate in the unconscious mind . . ."[63] But I do not know what exactly Read means by "law of attraction" or how it operates in the unconscious. He seems to be exploring some idea or some concept which he has not realized adequately for himself. And once again he resorts to an analogy, this time from the field of photography. "There is the image like a photograph film and there is at the same time an automatically selected and

adjusted sound-track, perfectly expressing and faultlessly accompanying the imagery."[64] The analogy is certainly ingenious but it only restates concretely what he has asserted before: "the rhythm is found just as the words are found".

It will be noticed that dream-experience continues to occupy an important place in his theory in 1938 and that automatism is introduced into it for the first time. The dream-experience provides the myth and the images, and automatism secures their instinctive and immediate expression in which there is no time-gap between experience and expression: "the words are found just as the rhythm is found". But let us remember that in 1936 Read did not devote himself to the question of how words and rhythm are found for translating dream-experience into poetry, and that poetic creation seemed to consist in transcription of dream experience. What I am trying to suggest is that transcription of dreams is 'reportage' and that reportage as such cannot be identified with expression.

Since automatism is the doctrine advocated by the surrealists, it would be interesting to compare Read's view of automatism with that of Breton, the chief Surrealist aesthetician. Breton said that pure psychic automatism was intended to express, "verbally, in writing or by any other means, the real process of thought". He described it thus: "It is thoughts dictation, all exercise of reason and every

aesthetic or moral preoccupation being absent."[65] Read could not have accepted Breton's 'embargo' on the aesthetic aspect of art. Why? It becomes clear from Read's account of the parallel between dream-formation and poem-formation that the ego plays an important part in the latter: it is responsible for form, harmony, balance and proportion in poetry. It is clear then that Breton's 'embargo' would have conflicted with Read's psychoanalytic view of poetic creation which assigned different functions to the three levels of the psyche.

It seems to me that what is interesting about automatism to Read is its rejection of "arts of poetry" and rational control. He objects to the will or rational control since it distorts or inhibits the free play of the imagination. And in so far as automatism lifts the control of the will, automatism is necessary, acceptable, desirable and justifiable. It may not be irrelevant to point out that psychoanalytical justification of automatism based on the concept of the withdrawal of energy from the conscious into the unconscious has been provided by Anton Ehrenzweig.[66] But Read does not indicate anywhere whether this explanation is acceptable to him or not. Unless, of course, the following comment of his on the view of some action painters that the automatism of their paintings endows the latter with a psychic energy proceeding from the unconscious, and that the embodiment of this energy creates an object of mysterious

potency, is taken to mean that he is not convinced of the psychoanalytic explanation: "I am too much of a sceptic myself to believe in an individual artist's ability to practise magic in our midst."[67] However we may interpret his attitude towards the psychoanalytic explanation of automatism, we can be certain of one thing. Automatism was for Read an ideal of an organic expression. His acceptance of the surrealist doctrine of automatism was qualified by the fact that he did not ignore the aesthetic aspects of art--a point which becomes very clear in his "Art in Europe at the End of the Second War".

As a matter of fact Read seems to have become more critical of automatism. "I believe that from the beginning an exclusive devotion to a theory of automatism was a mistake."[68] But as we have seen before, Read himself was not guilty of "exclusive devotion" to automatism. We have also seen that such a devotion would have been inconsistent with his psychoanalytic theory, which assigned to the ego a significant role in poetic creation. He spells out his objection to automatism more clearly now--automatism as understood and practised by the surrealists. He says that there is nothing creative about a purely automatic projection of images. All that it involves is a transfer from one sphere to another: ". . . it is merely the transfer of an existing object from one sphere to another, from the material sphere, for example, to the verbal or plastic

sphere."[69] This transfer is not essentially artistic. But in 1938 Read said that automatism secures instinctive and immediate expression and that it helps to cross the gulf between experience and expression, and that in the psychological state of automatism "the rhythm is found just as the words are found". (See above, p. 146, and footnote 63.) On the basis of these remarks I argued that whereas in 1936, translation of dream into poetry was mere transcription, in 1938 it was "expression". But now Read himself says that automatism involves mere mechanical transfer! But it may be pointed out that in his 1948 essay Read is speaking of 'pure psychic automatism'. And 'pure psychic automatism' is not the same as the Readian automatism which he defined as a "state of mind" in which alone the gulf between experience and expression can be crossed. However inadequate his definition of it may be, it helps us to see that his conception of automatism was not the same as that of the surrealists.

But is another criticism of automatism which Read makes in this essay applicable to his 1938 conception of it? He says that mere proliferation of unconscious images or symbols is not art and that automatism encourages precisely such proliferation. What is important in art is organization of these images or symbols. "The art is in the pattern . . . and not in the imagery."[70] So the images must be given expressive form. Now, if the "myth" could be

called such a form, one may say that Read was always firmly opposed to mere proliferation of images even in 1938. For he pointed out even then that poetry is essence of language allied to imagery and that images are organized into a myth in a poem. He seems to have had two types of myth in mind then: collective myth and personal myth, the latter being broadly regarded as a presentation in visual form of abstract concepts. Thus we see that he did demand "expressive form" (if "myth" could be called one) in 1938. So one must say that if myth (personal or collective) is not an "expressive form", Read's criticism of surrealist automatism is true of his own conception of it.

But what is "expressive form"? Read does not tell us in the above essay what exactly he means by "expressive form". Let us turn to his next and final observations on the question of automatism. These observations are contained in his essay, "The Cult of Sincerity". Let us see if his remarks shed any light on what he means when he says that the images released by the unconscious must be given "expressive form".

He says that automatism is a "physical reflex" rather than a "state of mind". The remark that automatism is a "physical reflex" is applicable to surrealist automatism. In as much as the automatism he advances in 1938 is a "state of mind" in which the gulf between experience and expression is crossed, Read's automatism is not a

"physical reflex". Surrealist automatism may be said to be mechanical and free from aesthetic discipline, at least as far as the theory of automatism is concerned. But Surrealist poetry, as Read points out, is not always automatic "in any mechanical sense". The images in Eluard's poetry, for example, are "effectively organized". "They may rise automatically to the surface of consciousness, but they then assume a functional coherence (the 'composition' of the poem or painting)."[71] So we may say that it is quite likely that when Read demands that images be given "expressive form" what he is insisting on is that they be "effectively organized". And effective organization is to be understood with reference to the "functional coherence" of the images. The necessity of the criterion of functional coherence may well have been suggested to him by the contrast between Eluard's poetry and the ranting incoherence which issued from many a surrealist pen. Thus one may draw upon the 1968 essay in order to explain what Read might have meant when he said that images released by the unconscious must be given "expressive form". But we may point out that if "effective organization" and "functional coherence" were all he meant by "expressive form", one could say that the demand for "effective organization" and "functional coherence" was made as far back as 1938 when he said that poetry is imagery allied to the essence of language. It is quite clear that such an alliance could not take place unless the images or

symbols were articulated into a structure. And "articulation" implies both "effective organization" and "functional coherence".

To recapitulate the fortunes of automatism in Read's theory, automatism is treated with caution in 1936. In 1938 he offers a conception of it which is different from that of the surrealists. Surrealist automatism seems to be mechanical at least in theory if not in practice; it encourages "proliferation of disconnected images or symbols". Read connects automatism with dream and thus brings the former within the scope of the organizing action of the ego. Hence it is not anarchic like surrealist automatism and, therefore, it does not encourage "proliferation of disconnected images". He also connects automatism with "expression", and describes it as a "state of mind" in which there is no gap between experience and expression. That there is no time-gap does not mean that Read's automatism encourages sloppy expression. What he seems to suggest is that there is a certain inevitability and immediacy about automatic expression dictated by automatism of his type. One does not meet with such a stress on organization and on aesthetic criteria of immediacy and inevitability of expression in the surrealist theory of automatism.

In summing up this part of our discussion we may say that Read employed the Freudian concepts imaginatively to explain the process of poetic creation. His use of the

dream-work and the Freudian model of psychic topography--the most fertile concepts for Read's speculations--to explain various aspects of art and their psychological sources gave the right direction to psycho-analytic explorations in art. By "right direction" I mean the exploitation of Freudian concepts from the angle of a literary critic. As far back as 1925 Read observed: "To anyone who sees the immense importance and utility of Freud's general theory, nothing is so dismaying as the utter futility of all the psycho-analysts in the presence of art."[72] Read's own theoretical writings show that he pressed the immensely important general theory of Freud into the service of his poetics. We have seen where he departs from Freud or misunderstands him. For instance, when he looks upon the ego and the superego as discrete entities in 1932, he does not have Freud's support. (Such a mistake, however, does not invalidate his insight into the distinction between poetry of personality and poetry of character.) Nor does his early account of the unconscious as being composed of what was once in the personal conscious, have the support either of Freud or of Jung--the twin supports of the scientific level of his poetic theory. And of the two, Jung acquired the greater importance in Read's theory.

V

There lurks a strain of psychological relativism in Read's views on poetry developed in the light of Jungian Type-Psychology. What I mean is that the belief that the

nature of poetry is determined by the psychological make-up of the poet is present in his writings of the thirties and forties. Stated boldly like this, the remark may sound platitudinous. But if one substitutes for that vague phrase "psychological make-up" the whole paraphernalia of Jungian Psychology, one realizes that what sounds like a platitude is really a sophisticated application of psychological concepts. To give a few instances of the operation of this belief of Read's.

(1) He views romanticism and classicism in the light of Jungian psychology and looks upon romanticism as expression of some function of the introverted attitude, and classicism as expression of the extraverted attitude. Classicism and romanticism are described as expression of a "biological opposition in human nature" and, therefore, a matter of "natural necessity" for the individual concerned. "It is not sufficient to treat the matter one way or the other as a question of intellectual fallacy."[73] In short, diversity of psychological types creates diversity of artistic expression.

(2) He determines the psychological type to which Shelley belonged. (The type is determined in Freudian rather than Jungian terms). It is a type characterized by "incomplete objectification of consciousness", and consequently narcissistic, and unconsciously homosexual. His unconscious homosexuality gives rise to psychosis described

as "the paranoid type of dementia praecox". He maintains that this psychosis determined "a quality of imagery and verbal expression which is present in Shelley's verse".

Now, if a critic accepts type-psychology as a guide in his study of poetry, one may expect him to apply it in his study of all the aspects of poetry. If one can discuss the psychological type of the artist, one may also determine 'types' of poetry written by various 'types', types of imagery and types of diction. Read does not carry his relativism that far. But there is no reason why the following remark made about plastic arts should not apply to poetry:

> . . . there is not one type of art to which all types of men should conform, but as many types of art as there are types of men; and that the categories into which we divide art should naturally correspond to the categories into which we divide men.[74]

The reason for saying that this remark may be applied to poetry as well is that he has accepted for poetry the basic assumption of this remark, the basic assumption being: Art is a reflection of one's type. Or as Read himself has put it: "The artist finds the level of his psychological type."[75] But it should become clear from the last chapter that Read theorizes about poetry, and not about types of poetry based on psychological types. The conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that Read seems to believe that one can speak of poetry in general and theorize about Poetry, but one must all the same recognize that the psychological

type of the poet determines or affects or influences various elements of his poetry. Read does not offer a systematic and theoretical formulation of the nature of the relationship between various 'types' and the poetry they write--an attempt not altogether inconceivable (though somewhat quixotic) in one committed to 'type-psychology'. He offers, as in the case of Shelley, broad generalizations implying a necessary connection between the 'characteristics' of a type and the characteristics of the poetry written by that 'type'. However, the fact that this deterministic tendency of Read's, as well as the relativism it goes hand in hand with, does not occupy a central place in his speculations, is, I believe, significant. It suggests that aware as he is of the relationship that may be said to exist between personality traits and characteristics of poetry, and of the psychological factors affecting poetic creation, he thinks that the essence of poetry is neither circumscribed nor exhausted by the psychological observations one may make about the poet. It is not irrelevant to point out that Jung's own theory of poetry as it is expounded in his essay "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art" (Contributions to Analytical Psychology) dwells on the level of what is universally significant.

Jung's influence on Read's theory of poetry becomes more obvious than ever in the fifties and sixties. It is guided by Jung's process of individuation. The aim of the

process of individuation, stated simply, is to achieve "psychic wholeness" by bringing the characteristic elements of the unconscious into harmony with consciousness. This idea receives different expression in his essays. We may consider two of them.

In his "The Lost Leader" Read distinguishes two 'voices'--the voice of the deep which comes from the unconscious and the objective voice which is directed to the outer world. The normal person stills the voice of the deep and orientates himself to the outer world. The psychotic person surrenders to his subjective self.

> But a few people are conscious of both tendencies within the self, and can hold them in a precarious balance. It is a view I have long held that most great art and literature proceeds from this condition of precarious mental equilibrium--the great artist is a tight-rope walker.[76]

The objective voice which is directed to the outer world is the voice of the conscious. The artist harmonizes it with the unconscious. In other words, what Read is saying is that 'harmony' between the conscious and the unconscious is a condition of great art. The process he is referring to here in terms of 'two voices' is that of 'individuation'.

To give one more instance of his expression of the same idea:

> All art, as Otto Rank has suggested, is an expression of the will to immortality. Negatively, it is an expression of the fear of death. Superficially the poet may hope to overcome death and oblivion by the creation of immortal works, but that is not the deepest sense of the process. In the deepest sense the poet is not

> 'hoping' or acting consciously in any manner, but attaining, by concentration and inward withdrawal, a state of consciousness which--whether it is illusion or not--overflows the bounds of personality, makes contact with racial memories, with group feeling, with what Jung calls the archetypal symbols of the unconscious.[77]

It becomes clear from this remark that Read does not reject psycho-analytic explanations, which argue from personal factors like the will to immortality. He does not, it may be pointed out, reject Freud's view that the artist is motivated by the love of "wealth, power, fame and women". But he points out that such explanations do not capture the essence, the "deepest sense" of the process. In the deepest sense the poet achieves a contact between the conscious and the unconscious. Achieving a state of consciousness that makes contact with the unconscious--that is achieving psychic wholeness by the "process of individuation". (It is true that Read does not speak here specifically of 'harmony' or 'equilibrium' or 'balance' between the conscious and the unconscious. But the "process of individuation" implies them, as becomes clear from our consideration of the statement from "The Lost Leader" above.)

This Jungian concept receives a clear formulation in Read's "Art and the Development of the Personality". He says:

> Jungian psychologists might claim that this is precisely the way in which they have conceived the integration of the personality. Realization of the self, wholeness of the personality, they say, is attained when the conscious logical mind is brought into conjunction with

> the symbolizing processes of the unconscious and a reconciliation is effected. Such is the way of psychic individuation, leading to psychic equilibrium, to wholeness of being . . .[78]

As a result of harmonizing the elements of the unconscious with consciousness, the self is reconstructed. The reconstructed self, "redefined and deepened in significance," comprises much more than the ego, but it is not dominated by unconscious elements integrated with it. Read refers to these elements as "archetypes".

The concept of the archetype is central to Read's Jungian account of poetry proposed in The Forms of Things Unknown. So we must examine what Read understands by the term "archetype". Let us first consider the descriptions of the archetype offered in his essay on Jung published in The Tenth Muse.

The archetype is "a pre-determined stress in the unconscious". It is important to remember that it is not a "ready-made image". But it determines imagery. On page 206 he says: "It is merely an inherited predisposition to fabricate different types of imagery." He also says that the opposition between various levels of the mind is expressed in "recognizable ways", such ways being the archetypes. Archetypes become known "in as much as they determine the form taken by events in consciousness". Otherwise they are unknown and perhaps unknowable in their unconscious existence. It should be clear from these descriptions that it is not accurate to speak of archetypes as symbols.

Archetypes are known through the symbols determined by them. They are the 'moulds' as it were that determine the latter. One may speak of symbols that are "archetypal" in so far as they are so formed. To give one example of the distinction between archetypes and symbols: Jung tells us that there is the archetype of 'shadow'; it finds expression in such symbols as Satan, Caliban or Hitler. Moreover, it should become clear from this account that archetypes are "super-personal", that they are not formed by classes or individuals and that they proceed from the collective unconscious. However, it may be pointed out that Read does not always maintain this distinction between "archetypes" and "symbols" in his actual use of the two terms.

There is another aspect of archetypes which must be examined. In Read's words "The archetype predicts a pattern of social behaviour; it is a predilection of forms of action that are latent in the human organism".[79] "Archetype" may then be understood as referring to a "pattern of behaviour" or a "form of action". Now, these patterns (archetypes), Read goes on to say, are the patterns of instincts. What he means is that just as every instinct has its "pattern" in the case of animals, every human instinct has its pattern, which he identifies with archetype. The difference between instincts of animals and instincts of man, we are told, is that the former cannot operate without patterns but the latter can. Read concludes then that

human instincts may be suppressed but that the patterns (archetypes) persist. Now, this conclusion Read arrives at is significant for his theory of poetry. Why?

For it is into these patterns that our "psychic energy" which is withdrawn from instincts flows spontaneously. "The mind of a poet in a state of pure consciousness, free from external causality, from preoccupations of any kind, is invisibly guided into its archaic moulds."[80] The significance of this process is that the conscious ("the mind of the poet" in the above statement) is brought into conjunction with the unconscious ("archaic moulds"). The harmonization of the conscious and the unconscious is not significant for personal psyche only; for "it is at the same time a socialization of what would be introspectively unique and isolated". It is significant for personal psyche for it leads to equilibrium and integrated personality. But how is it a "socialization" of "what would be introspectively unique and isolated"? Read says that since the original function of the archetypes as "patterns of instincts" was social, the new content, which is the result of our "psychic energy" flowing into "archaic moulds", is likely to have <u>social significance</u>. And thus it is a "socialization" of "what would be introspectively unique and isolated". He says that there are many varieties of "such spontaneous activity" of the flowing of our "psychic energy" into "archaic moulds", but "the most effective on the symbolic

level is the work of art". He says that it is the social significance of this process--the process of "psychic energy" flowing into "archaic moulds"--which secures for a work of art its "representative status".

We shall point out some of the difficult questions that arise in connection with this Jungian account of poetry. It is possible that some of the difficult questions arise from the fact that despite the customary lucidity of expression, Read's account outlined above may give one the impression of slight conceptual incoherence.[81] First, one wonders if it is valid from the Jungian point of view to relate archetypes to instincts as Read has done and suggest that the former is the pattern of the latter. Jung himself does not establish such a connection between them. As a matter of fact he says--and Read quotes this remark in a footnote--that archetypes and instincts are the "most polar opposites imaginable".[82] Secondly, we are told that if the energy of suppressed instincts is "moulded" into "archaic channels", the resulting content is new. The metaphor of "pouring" or "moulding" is vivid, but I am afraid that the process Read has in mind could bear a little more explanation. How exactly does such a process result in "new content"? Read does not provide the answer. Nor does he provide any clue to it.

Read says that the "moulding of energy into archaic channels" is most effective on the "symbolic level of art".

He makes it clear that there are many varieties of the "moulding of energy" into "archaic channels". The question that immediately springs into one's mind is this: What is the difference between non-artistic and artistic "moulding of energy" into "archaic channels"? Read's answer to the question may be inferred from the distinction he suggests between the "psychic symbol" and the "aesthetic symbol". (I say "suggests" because Read does not state it explicitly). He says: "I prefer to keep to the evolutionary myth, and to see in art the test, the exercise of an expanding consciousness."[83] One may suggest that the aesthetic symbol has a certain impact on consciousness; it expands consciousness. But I imagine one cannot attribute the same value to a psychic symbol. One may say then that the value of a psychic symbol is relative to the particular mental organization that conceived it. (Indeed, the fact that art has been used successfully in psycho-therapy only confirms this view). So one may safely assert that according to Read, the difference between artistic and non-artistic "moulding of energy" into "archaic channels" is that the former has a certain value with regard to the evolution of consciousness, but the latter does not.[84]

This account of the place of the principle of individuation and archetypes in Read's theory of poetry may give one the impression that Read accepted Jung uncritically which is, of course, not true. He has reservations about

Jung's account of the creative process. Jung suggests that the creative process is an autonomous complex--

> . . . a detached portion of the psyche that leads an independent psychic life withdrawn from the hierarchy of consciousness, and in proportion to its energic value of force, may appear as a mere disturbance of the voluntarily directed process of consciousness, or as a superordinated authority which may take the ego bodily into its service.[85]

Read objects to this view on Jungian grounds.

> The notion of a detached portion of the psyche, capable of independent activity, is difficult to accept since we are so prejudiced in favour of the unity or integrity of the personality.[86]

It is possible for a Jungian critic to advance another reason for rejecting Jung's view. If art is a reconciling activity, integrating the conscious and the unconscious, what would be the process of 'integration' on the basis of Jung's idea of art as an activity determined by "a detached portion of the psyche"? Jung says that the detached portion "take[s] the ego bodily into its service", which would suggest that integration (represented by art) is an activity dictated by the unconscious, that it is a result of the invasion of the ego (conscious) by the detached portion of the psyche withdrawn from consciousness (and therefore unconscious). What takes place then is not a reconciliation of the conscious with the unconscious, but a conquest of the former by the latter. Such being the implications of Jung's view quoted above, it could not be accepted by Read, who has defined the process of reconciliation in terms of integration, harmonizing or balancing of the conscious and the unconscious.

VI

We have seen how Read employs Freudian and Jungian concepts in his analysis of various aspects of poetry. But he makes it clear that he does not think that psychological concepts throw light on the sources of poetry.

> But I think he [psychologist] would claim that the concept of the unconscious, and more particularly the concept of the archetypes, have thrown much light, if not into the sources of poetry, at least on the mechanism of poetic experience, the formative process in the imagination.[87]

Read distinguishes "sources of poetry" from "mechanism of poetic experience" and the "formative process". What he is saying here is that psychoanalytic explorations can help one to understand only the mechanics of the imagination and poetic experience but not the sources of poetry. But one may point out that Read's examination of "the mechanism of poetic experience" is conducted with references to the sources of poetic experience--dream-experience and archetypes. Be that as it may, Read has in mind different kind of sources when he makes the remark quoted above. I shall explain my meaning.

Read says: "There is no discernible reality, spiritual or otherwise, behind the process, no 'definite intellectual actuation' prompting the poetic flow. There is within the total psyche a state of 'intrinsic indeterminacy'." [88] This "intrinsic indeterminacy" is one of the "sources" of poetry. (One could possibly relate it to

"non-discursive consciousness".) It goes hand in hand with what Read calls the "inexhaustible depth of subjectivity". Read offers this description of the "inexhaustible depth": " . . . but deep within man's subjectivity there is an effect which has no discernible cause, which is a process of discovery, of self-realization, a rending of the numinous veil of consciousness."[89] It should be clear from the accounts given above of "intrinsic indeterminacy" and "inexhaustible depth" that as "sources" of poetry they are different in kind from the Freudian or Jungian sources mentioned by Read. Unlike the former, the latter have been subjected to scientific investigation.

What may be pointed out about Read's account of the metaphysical sources of poetry--I am using the term metaphysical to describe "intrinsic state of indeterminacy" and "inexhaustible depth of subjectivity"--is that it points out the uniqueness of poetry. Poetry, we are told, is not prompted by "extraneous considerations". Nor is it prompted by "definite intellectual actuation". It is a process of discovery. Read thus indicates that poetry, related as it is to basic human processes, is also unique.

One may ask as to what the points of contact are between this theory and Read's psychoanalytic explorations of poetry over the years. If poetry is an exploration of the "inexhaustible depth of subjectivity", what bearing, if any, does the "psychological type" have on it. What is the

place of "archetypes" in this exploration? How does the fact of whether one has "personality" or "character" affect it, if it does? It is possible to suggest a broad answer to these questions. Indeed, it cannot be denied that all these psychological factors we have mentioned above have their relevance in the act of expression of the "inexhaustible depth of subjectivity". But they also suggest how poetry is related to certain deep, basic, human processes which have formed the subject of scientific investigations. As I have pointed out before, there are two levels in Read's poetics: the philosophical and the scientific. The philosophical level, among other things, points out the unique character of poetry and its various aspects. The psychological strand of the scientific level points out among other things how poetry is related to certain basic human processes which have been investigated by certain sciences. The two levels are not contradictory or mutually exclusive. They represent to my mind a joint attack on a difficult question.

It is true that at times in his theoretical psychological discussions Read offers only broad generalizations, leaving a number of questions unanswered. To give only one example, We are told that Shelley's suppressed homosexuality is a factor determining the vagueness of his imagery. Read is open to two questions here. First, why does suppressed homosexuality give rise to this particular effect rather

than to any other? Shelley is not the only poet who exhibits symptoms of suppressed homosexuality. C. Day Lewis detects Hopkins' feelings of homosexual attraction in his Harry Ploughman[90]. Assuming that Day Lewis is right, one would have to explain why Shelley's imagery is vague and that of Hopkins concrete. The point here is not whether Day Lewis is right or not. The point here is that it is conceivable that there could be poets exhibiting this syndrome, but displaying no vagueness in their imagery. Read's theory is not equipped to deal with such contingencies. Second, the assumption underlying Read's theory is that personality traits determine various aspects of expression, but it needs to be established with reference to poetry. (However, it must be added that Read has established this assumption with reference to painting in his Education Through Art).

But it cannot be said that Read is not aware of the failings of the psycho-analytic approach. He says that a great deal of attention has been paid to words and symbols rendered up in dream-analysis:

> But this attention has been almost exclusively analytical, and the idea that words and symbols could be used positively, as synthetic structures that constitute effective modes of communication, does not seem to have occurred to our leading psychologists.[91]

Poetry seems to be just so much grist for the analytical mill. The emphasis he wishes to see introduced is different. Art (poetry) is a means by which mankind has kept itself "mentally alert" and therefore "biologically vital". We may

ask: "How exactly does art keep us "mentally alert"?" Read could be said to have answered this question on the basis of both Jungian and Freudian psychology. As we have already seen, Read believes with Jung that art makes psychic integration and wholeness possible. It could be said that psychic integration makes for mental alertness. Similarly, the Freudian conception of art advanced in the following statement could be said to make for mental alertness. "So long as the inner drives, motives, passions involved in a conflict (and thereby constituting a psychosis) remain undefined, it is not possible to resolve the conflict."[92] But the forces are defined in art and thus the conflict is resolved. "The conflict is, however, resolved by means of a symbolic form, a unitary structure in which conflicting forces are reconciled."[93] Thus the phrase "mentally alert" used by Read to describe the function of art becomes more illuminating if we understand "mental alertness" as a consequence of the activities described by the phrases "psychic integration" and "resolution through definition".

In conclusion it may be said that Read's Freudian approach is an attempt to understand the psychological sources of poetry. With the help of Freudian conceptual machinery--the ego, the superego, the id and dream-work--he demonstrates how poetry is expression of the deeper levels of the personality and how it is beyond rational control. But there is one important difference between this approach

and the Jungian approach. Unlike the Jungian, the Freudian approach does not envisage the artistic activity as achieving psychic integration or psychic wholeness by reconciling the conscious with the unconscious. Of course, Read's account of poetic creation in Freudian terms shows how three regions of the mind enter into relation with each other. But this Freudian description of the process is not 'integration'-oriented. Read's Jungian approach, on the other hand, is an attempt to discuss poetry from the point of view of its significance for psychic integration. I am not trying to suggest that Read has made a neat dichotomy in his mind between form and content--or to be more precise, between the formal structure of art and the significance of its content--and that his Freudian approach (or the Freudian strand of the scientific level of his theory) deals with the former and that the Jungian approach deals with the latter. That Read is aware of the significance of the Freudian approach from the point of view of content can be realized from the fact that in his interpretation of poetic creation in terms of dream-work he points out the significance of the content of his dream-poems in terms of Freudian psychology.[94] However, it is Read's structural analysis of poetry in Freudian terms that seems to be a genuine contribution to an understanding of poetry. That Read is aware of the significance of Jungian psychology from the point of view of the formal aspects of art can be

realized from the fact that in his Education Through Art he makes use of Jungian typology to analyse such formal aspects of painting as composition and colouring. Nevertheless, it must be said that he does not make a comparable use of type-psychology to elucidate the formal aspects of poetry. The final impression one is left with is that the Freudian part of his poetic theory is more form-oriented than the Jungian, and that the latter is more integration-oriented than the former. Read is aware of the limitations of both the Freudian and Jungian strands of the scientific level of his theory. And he recognizes the necessity of an "aesthetic-artistic" approach. What he offers us as such as an approach[95] could be considered as being 'philosophical'. But the significance of the scientific level of Read's poetics consists in its demonstration that though poetry is unique in character, it is nevertheless rooted in deep, basic, human processes, and that it is also related to the social structure.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMANTIC IMPULSE

> The Romantic Movement in art and literature was a profound change, and has not yet exhausted itself.[1]

A study of Read's theory of poetry must take cognizance of the fact that Read sought to "rehabilitate" romanticism. He examined it closely from different angles over a period of about thirty five years. One must remember that Read did not start his career as a theorist with a firm faith in romanticism. As a matter of fact he began as a classicist by "temporarily" embracing the classicism of T. E. Hulme and Sorel. It may seem to be a false start to some. But Read has an interesting explanation to offer of this "temporary" alliance. He says that he accepted Hulme's classicism "because it seemed to me to be more romantic than romanticism itself--rather like Goethe's classicism."[2] However, after such a start he did arrive at his romanticism. A critical examination of Reason and Romanticism, English Prose Style and Form in Modern Poetry shows how this "journey" was accomplished.

Read's romanticism is central to his thinking. As Fishman puts it:

> From the first, the classic-romantic distinction has been central to his thinking, and his critical ideas have continued to be regulated by it. On the whole, this preoccupation has been as much a hindrance as a help in the articulation of his poetic theory.[3]

It was a help in the sense that it provided Read with an angle of vision, a point of view from which to survey literary history as well as the contemporary literary scene. To give only one example, it is this point of view which enables him to suggest in "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle" the upgrading of Lewis Carrol, Edward Lear and the downgrading of Tennyson. In what way the two-category system of romanticism and classicism was a hindrance becomes clear from the following remark made by Professor M. H. Abrams in his review of Read's <u>The True Voice of Feeling</u>:

> The defect of such a formula is not that it does not apply but that it is all too easily applied. Its categories, because they are too few, are too capacious; and its paradoxical regroupings of literary figures are really the product of its inability to discriminate differences which are of cardinal importance.[4]

Whatever the defect of Read's romantic formula may be, we must recognize that Read's writings are a record of his almost interminable debate or dialogue with himself on the question of romanticism. Read has certainly earned the right to say: "No critic of experience will return to a discussion of the terms 'romanticism' and 'classicism' with anything but extreme reluctance . . ."[5] Nevertheless the tenacity with which he returns time and again to this subject which has "provoked so much weary logomachy" compels

admiration. Beginning from his early career till nearly the end of it, he contributed to the discussion of what he calls "the central problem of literary criticism". As far as one can judge by his literary criticism, when he started practising as a literary critic his loyalties were not on the romantic side. Nevertheless he made attempts to reconcile classicism and romanticism. Later he abandoned this attempt and announced the "liquidation" (the expression was very much in the air in Europe at that time) of classicism. After the period of active partisanship (which involved periodic 'sniping' at classicism) is over, he settles down to a careful discussion of the philosophical principles of romanticism. We shall begin by reviewing the phases of his lifelong attachment to romanticism.

Herbert Read was an impressionable young man when T. E. Hulme revived the classicism vs. romanticism controversy. Read recalls those days in these words:

> Great battles were being fought between classicism and romanticism, between humanism and religion, between authority and freedom, and one found oneself swayed first to one side, then to the other.[6]

This remark describes accurately the changes in Read's critical stance on the question of classicism and romanticism. Under the influence of T. E. Hulme, whose writings he edited, Read became an anti-humanist and an anti-romanticist. For instance, his anti-humanism and anti-romanticism find expression in the letter he wrote to the editor of Yorkshire Post in which he criticized the reviewer

of Sorel's Reflections on Violence and defended the author.

> It is hopeless for anyone to attempt to understand or accept this new social doctrine unless he rid himself of every post-Renaissance humanistic prejudice in his thought. Syndicalism is not the babblings of a lot of ignorant workmen. It is the political equivalent of anti-Romanticism in literature. It is the social manifestation of anti-humanistic revolt--of a return to a classical and a pessimistic conception of the universe.[7]

Commenting on this letter Read says: "I have no doubt that at the time I did genuinely profess anti-humanistic and anti-romantic opinions, but they were based on the historical ambiguity of these words."[8] This comment made in 1963 may be read as Read's apology for his Hulme-inspired classicism. The phrase "historical ambiguity of those words" is not very illuminating. But one can see that Read is pleading the extenuating circumstance of "historical ambiguity" in order to explain how he came to be an advocate of classicism when it was going to be his mission in life to be an apostle of romanticism.

In 1923 Read refers to what he calls "the eternal opposition of the classic and the romantic". He says that classicism and romanticism are "the natural expression of a biological opposition in human nature",[9] that they represent in the end "temperamental attitudes, a contradiction which no argument can resolve".[10] Note the terms "opposition", "contradiction" and "resolve". Twelve years later he is going to deny that there is any "opposition" or "contradiction" between romanticism and classicism, which

attitude will indicate how far he has moved away from his youthful position on this question. But that there is a contradiction or opposition between the two does not mean that they cannot be found in the same person. That, at any rate, is André Gide's view, which Read refers to with obvious approval. Read says that there is a "peculiar echo of reality" in the following words of Gide: "It is important to remember that the struggle between classicism and romanticism also exists inside each mind. And it is from this very struggle that the work is born . . ."[11]

In accepting Gide's remark Read ~~would~~ seem to agree with the view that the opposed, contradictory temperamental attitudes can be held by the same person. However, the psychological explanation of the opposition between classicism and romanticism which he offers does not make room for the intra-personal conflict between the two that Gide refers to. Why? The psychological explanation Read offers relies heavily on Jung's concepts of introversion and extraversion:

> You will find, for example, that the romantic artist always expresses some function of the introverted attitude, whilst the classic artist always expresses some function of the extraverted attitude.[12]

But he does not say that the same artist exhibits both the "attitudes". Read's hypothesis must say this if he takes Gide seriously.

Springing as they do from two different attitudes,

romanticism and classicism express the "biological opposition in human nature", and, therefore, as Read puts it, "It is not sufficient to treat the matter one way or the other as a question of intellectual fallacy . . ."[13] This is a tolerant attitude towards romanticism--an attitude based on the fact that romanticism, as he has said, "can now claim a scientific basis in the findings of psychoanalysis".[14] It may seem a little ironic that one who was destined to be the conscious rehabilitator of romanticism from the thirties onwards, should try to establish a '<u>scientific</u>' basis for it in the twenties. I say it is a little ironic because the names he invokes later in defence of romanticism are those of philosophers and not scientists. Nevertheless, one must admit that he "put in a word" on behalf of romanticism when this 'service' was most vitally needed. The literary tendency in those days was "classicist". Or that is what the most influential critic of the period thought. "I believe that the modern tendency is toward something which, for want of a better name, we may call classicism".[15] An attempt to give romanticism a respectable literary status when it had "earned a certain disrepute in philosophy and the science of art"[16] and when it was not the "modern tendency", was certainly critically useful. Of course, one cannot say that Read has "resolved" the opposition between romanticism and classicism. But one must grant that he has explained it in the light of contemporary psychology.

One may note that in the course of this psychological explanation he mentions that romanticism evokes "that state of wonder which is the state of the mind induced by the immediacy of the inexplicable".[17] Mark the phrase "state of wonder". The romanticist is supposed to experience that "state" in the presence of the inexplicable. Does he mean by "inexplicable" only the "strange"? If he does, his explanation of romantic wonder is only partially true. The familiar also never ceases to excite wonder in a romanticist. If it did, he could say with Dr. Johnson: "We cease to wonder at what we understand." And it is precisely this view that romanticism rejects. Read takes up this point twelve years later in his "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle" and also rejects classicism. (And as we shall see, he states the principle of romantic wonder more clearly in that essay.) In the meanwhile he persists in his attempts to resolve the conflict between classicism and romanticism.

II

Read made an attempt to resolve the conflict between classicism and romanticism in Reason and Romanticism. He refers to that attempt in his "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle": "But what in effect surrealism claims to do is to resolve the conflict--not, as I formerly hoped, by establishing a synthesis which I was prepared to call 'reason or 'humanism' . . ."[18] We discussed in the first chapter this conception of reason. According to this view

of reason, reason is not the same as discursive reason or rationality. It is the "widest evidence of the senses", of "all processes and instincts"; it is "the sum-total of awareness, ordained and ordered to some specific end". Reason in this sense not only includes "thought" but it also includes all the mental processes which are not implied in the usual meaning of reason, namely, rationality. One usually associates rationality with classicism, and emotion and intuition with romanticism.[19] But by suggesting a more comprehensive conception of reason, Read tries to bring within its scope all the mental processes so that thought does not exist apart from emotion and emotion apart from thought. In this sense Read's higher conception of reason could be considered to be a "synthesis" of classicism and romanticism. It could be seen as a plea for "emotional apprehension of thought" as opposed to "emotionalization of thought" or "thought as the product of emotion". It is obvious that Read's "synthesis" of romanticism and classicism attempts to overcome "dissociation of sensibility". In other words it could be seen as a plea for "integrated personality"--an ideal central to Read's thinking as we have already tried to demonstrate.

Fishman accurately points out that "The romantic-classical synthesis formulated in Reason and Romanticism was realized in the idea of 'metaphysical poetry' . . ."[20] Read's definition of metaphysical poetry makes clear as to how it

is a synthesis. "Metaphysical poetry is determined logically: its emotion is a joy that comes with the triumph of reason, and is not a simple instinctive ecstasy."[21] The phrase "a joy that comes with the triumph of reason" suggests that the mental process at work in metaphysical poetry does not treat thought as something which exists on a level separate from that of emotion. If it did, rationality could be said to have triumphed. But since the "pulleys" of thought and emotion (Read's metaphor) are "connected by the operation of a lever", "immediately thought is accelerated to the intensity of emotion".[22] In short, all the mental processes--thought, emotion and the senses--come into operation in the process of the composition of metaphysical poetry. One could therefore say that its "emotion is a joy that comes with the triumph of reason", reason being understood in its comprehensive sense.

Read's "synthesis" of classicism and romanticism can be worked out in terms of the "dialectical triad". Classicism (equated with rationality) may be looked upon as the "thesis", and romanticism (equated with emotion) as the "antithesis", the "synthesis" being exemplified in Metaphysical poetry. The "synthesis", while exhibiting characteristics of both the "thesis" and the "antithesis", is different from either the "thesis" or the "antithesis": it is neither pure rationality nor is it pure emotion. Metaphysical poetry, the supreme example of the romantic-classical

synthesis, is both "emotional" and "logically determined". Its emotion is related to concepts--it is "felt thought". To put it differently, the content of the emotion is "abstract". (On the other hand the content of lyrical poetry, presumably identified with romanticism, is, according to Read, concrete).

So what Read seems to be suggesting is that to resolve the opposition between romanticism and classicism, it is necessary to overcome "dissociation of sensibility". For an undissociated sensibility there is no conflict between thought and emotion. It does not attach emotion to the idea; for it the emotion arises from the idea, and abstract thought and feeling for thought co-exist.

Let us examine this notion of "synthesis" more carefully. If one speaks of "synthesis" between classicism and romanticism, one is assuming that there is a "contradiction" between the two. If the word "synthesis" is used strictly, one is also assuming that there is a contradiction between the psychological processes of rationality and emotion traditionally associated with classicism and romanticism respectively. But are these assumptions valid? Evidence of psychology, as Read himself has pointed out, shows that classicism and romanticism are "temperamental attitudes". And I am not sure that one can maintain that there is a "contradiction" between rationality or pure thought and emotion. There is most certainly a difference between the

two. But can one erect a difference into a contradiction? However, the significance of Read's "synthesis" lies in the fact that it is an ideal of integrated personality which does not suppress one psychological function at the expense of another.

The formulation of this "synthesis" in 1923 is followed in 1926 by a discussion of the "distinction" between classicism and romanticism. Read makes this distinction in his review of Whitehead's Science and the Modern World. The reason for considering it in detail is that he considers it to be "perhaps the most useful distinction that can be made between classicism and romanticism". Let me state it in his own words:

> But the poet is only capable of his intuitive experiences so long as he receives some sort of sanction from the procedure of thought. A positive poetry is possible when the aesthetic intuitions of the poet co-operate with the thought of the philosopher (as in the case of Lucretius and Dante). When a great poet has to work in opposition to the formulations of current philosophy (as Wordsworth did) the result is a negative protest. This is perhaps the most useful distinction that can be made between classicism and romanticism, and it is a distinction, it should be noted, between modes of operation, and not of aesthetic values.[23]

The distinction seems to consist in the nature of the poet's response to the "formulations of current philosophy". If it is positive (I take the verb "co-operate" to suggest this) the poetry is classical. If it is negative (I take the phrase "to work in opposition" to suggest this), the poetry is romantic. One can say then that Read regards Dante and Lucretius as classicists, and Wordsworth as a romanticist.

I shall first point out the contradiction between his 1923 and 1926 views. In his "Nature of Metaphysical Poetry" (1923) Dante and Lucretius are looked upon as metaphysical poets. And so is Wordsworth. ("With Wordsworth the metaphysical tradition in English poetry for the time being ends.")[24] If according to the 1926 review the distinction between Lucretius, Dante, and Wordsworth is that between classicists and a romanticist, if their "modes of operation" are different--the poetry of the Italians being 'positive' and that of the Englishman 'negative'--could they all be said to belong to the same tradition of metaphysical poetry? I suppose they could, only if one makes the following assumption: One can be a metaphysical poet irrespective of whether one's approach to the "formulations of current philosophy" is positive or negative. But the corollary of such an assumption is that one can be a romanticist and a metaphysical poet or a classicist and a metaphysical poet! What happens then to Read's idea of romantic-classical synthesis in metaphysical poetry?

Before attempting to answer this question I would like to point out that the distinction made by Read is a restatement in intellectual terms of a view which could not be said to have been unknown to those who have followed the romanticism-classicism controversy. The classicist is receptive to the "formulations of current philosophy". He does not challenge, it follows, the contemporary ethos. The

romanticist works in opposition to current philosophy. It is clear from the examples Read gives of Dante, Lucretius and Wordsworth that current philosophy means to him what we may call "philosophy of the Establishment". So what Read is really saying is that a classicist is conservative but a romanticist is not. Incidentally, Read is going to state the same view in 1936, but couched in Marxist terms: Classicism is the ideology of the ruling class, of the Establishment.

To return to the question of "synthesis" between classicism and romanticism. If classicism represents one type of approach to thought ("formulations of current philosophy") and romanticism another, how does one synthesize classicism and romanticism? What can the "synthesis" of "acceptance" of current formulations of philosophy and their "rejection" be? It is clear that such a "synthesis"--synthesis of content (thought)--is impossible. Does this mean that Read has abandoned the notion of synthesis in 1926?

I maintained ~~above~~ that Read's romantic-classical <u>synthesis</u> is "process-oriented". We should recognize that his 1926 "distinction" between the two, since it is made with reference to thought, is <u>content-oriented</u>. When he speaks of "synthesis", he is speaking of the "synthesis" of psychological processes involved in classicism and romanticism. What is meant by "synthesis" of processes is

that they are brought into play simultaneously. Thus thought (equated with classicism) is geared to emotion (equated with romanticism) so that there is "felt thought". This kind of "synthesis" can "devour" any kind of thought. Everything is grist that comes to its mill. Therefore, whatever the approaches to thought may be--positive or negative--it could be expressed as "felt thought", and the lopsidedness either of unmitigated intellection or of unrestrained emotion could be avoided. One may conclude then that the fact that there is a "distinction" between romancticism and classicism need not mean that there can be no synthesis of them. The apparent contradiction between the views of 1923 and 1926 can be resolved if we remember that the "synthesis" (1923) is process-oriented and that the "distinction" (1926) is content-oriented. Diversity of attitudes to thought can exist within the unity of synthesized or integrated psychological processes. Dante may be conservative and Wordsworth revolutionary, but both of them, according to Read, exemplify the romantic-classical synthesis.

III

The distinction between classicism and romanticism which, as we have already seen, was related in 1923 to the distinction between extraversion and introversion, comes to be related in 1932 to the distinction between character and personality. We have considered in Chapters II and III the

implications of the distinction between character and personality for Read's theory of poetry. What we may notice here is that he identifies classicism with character and romanticism with personality:

> Finally--to repeat a suggestion I have already made--may we not perhaps explain the dreary quarrel of romantic and classic as an opposition between two kinds of art, springing respectively from personality and character? It is an explanation that would work out well in practice. We have only to think of Dryden and of Dr. Johnson, and to compare them with Shakespeare and Keats.[25]

Personality is characterized by a principle of "inward coherence". It is based on the "widest evidence of the senses". (In other words, it is based on what I have called 'comprehensive reason'). Romanticism, which springs from personality, satisfies the ideal of comprehensive reason, which is, as we have already seen, an ideal of consciousness. Character signifies a certain fixity, and classicism, which springs from it, does not satisfy the ideal of comprehensive reason. One cannot synthesize character and personality! Personality is clearly a superior ideal, free from the limitations of character. The "dreary quarrel" between classicism and romanticism cannot be "compounded". Read has realized this. He says: "In the circumstances the poet has no alternative but to rely on "a certain inward perspective", a coherence of the personality based on the widest evidence of the senses."[26] What Read is advocating here is romanticism. It is significant that in 1938 he should add these sentences after the one I have quoted:

> I am aware that I shall be accused of merely dressing up the old romanticism in new phrases; but forced [sic] into this academic discussion I might then accept 'the rehabilitation of romanticism' as an adequate description of my aims.[27]

In 1932 Read was still on the defensive. In 1938 he is defiant about this romanticism. What made the gentle, superbly controlled baiter of academic critics raise his critical voice above its accustomed pitch? The answer is: the spirit of 1936, the year of the opening of the International Surrealist Exhibition in London. Before we turn to his "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle", which was a contribution to the volume on Surrealism published in that year by Faber, I would like to draw attention to one remark of his which sounds curious in the light of the foregoing discussion. He writes in 1934:

> . . . romanticism and classicism, as I have attempted to show in other connections, are to be regarded as two inevitable or inescapable aspects of human nature, and the greatest art is precisely that which reconciles these tendencies in a complex unity.[28]

To ask for a reconciliation of these two tendencies is, on the basis of Read's analysis, tantamount to asking for a reconciliation of character with personality which, by their very nature, could be said to be irreconcilable. Read seems to have reverted to his old hypothesis of the classicism-romanticism synthesis which, as we have seen above, is valid if it is regarded as a synthesis of psychological processes and if thought or rationality is identified with classicism and emotion with romanticism. But two years later Read

abandons his notion of synthesis altogether; indeed, he denies the possibility of it. This significant change occurs in his "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle", a "polemical essay" of which he said that "this is not the only occasion . . . when the critic abdicates his responsibility and the poet takes over."[29]

He refers to his effort to "resolve" the "conflict" between classicism and romanticism. From the point of view of his present position, what was wrong with this attempt was that it admitted the existence of "alternative attitudes". What if the classicist attitude was irrelevant to art? This possibility was raised by surrealism. To quote Read at some length:

> So long as romanticism and classicism were considered as alternative attitudes, rival camps, professions of faith, an interminable struggle was in prospect, with the critics as profiteers. But what in effect surrealism claims to do is to resolve the conflict--not, as I formerly hoped, by establishing a synthesis which I was prepared to call 'reason' or 'humanism' but by liquidating classicism, by showing its complete irrelevance, its anaesthetic effect, its contradiction of the creative impulse.[30]

Perhaps one may say that up till this time Read was a "profiteer" with a conscience, the conscience being manifested in his attempts at a synthesis. But one may ask: "Why did he dismiss classicism and thus deny what he had once affirmed, namely, that a synthesis was possible?" Let us remember that Surrealism as a movement considered itself to be Marxist.[31] One of the cornerstones of Marxist philosophy is what is called the "economic interpretation of history."

Read applies the Marxist method of "economic interpretation" to an understanding of literary values and comes to this conclusion:

> Classicism, let it be stated without further preface, represents for us now, and has always represented, the forces of oppression. Classicism is the intellectual counterpart of political tyranny.[32]

Classicism, which controls or represses the "vital instincts on which growth and therefore change depend",[33] has been the ideology of the dominant class in the ancient world, in the mediaeval empires and in the capitalist world since the Renaissance. As a determined opponent of capitalism, surrealism has no use for its literary ideology--classicism. It is no wonder then that classicism should have no place in the scheme of values dictated by surrealism.

If there is an ideological reason for abandoning classicism, there is a philosophical reason for abandoning the notion of 'synthesis' between classicism and romanticism. He now realizes that a synthesis is possible when the "thesis and the anti-thesis are both objective facts" and that the necessity for a synthesis is "due to the real existence of a contradiction".[34] But classicism and romanticism do not represent such a contradiction:

> They correspond rather to the husk and the seed, the shell and the kernel. There is a principle of life, of creation, of liberation and that is the romantic spirit; there is a principle of order, of control and of repression, and that is the classical spirit.[35]

On the basis of this remark it would seem that Read has now

come to believe that though there is not a dialectical contradiction between classicism and romanticism, there is absolute opposition between them. In Reason and Romanticism, as we have already seen, he assumed a contradiction between them.[36] It may be recalled that we questioned the validity of this assumption, and pointed out that it seemed curious in view of the fact that he regarded classicism and romanticism as "temperamental attitudes" on the basis of the Jungian concepts of introversion and extraversion.

It is interesting to observe that Read returns to these Jungian concepts in this essay; but he does not believe now that extraversion is related to art. He refers in an impersonal manner to his own theory expounded in Reason and Romanticism:

> . . . there is one further interpretation of the classic-romantic antithesis which is worth referring to, especially as it finds its justification in modern psychology--I mean the theory that the two terms correspond to the general distinction between 'extravert' and 'introvert' types of personality.[37]

We are told that this theory is valid if one is referring to the personalities involved. But if one is speaking of artists and not their personalities, it is invalid:

> The comparison [between extravert and classicist, and introvert and romanticist] is valid enough if it has reference to the personalities involved; what is questionable is the very existence of such a type as an extravert artist. To the degree in which he becomes extravert the artist, we would say, ceases to be, in any essential sense of the word, an artist.[38]

Read, who is described by one critic as "a confirmed practitioner of the dialectical method",[39] thus rejects the

old application of his theory but invents for it a new one!

The true artist is an introvert, according to Read. An introvert by definition (Read's definition) is a romanticist. It follows then that a true artist is a romanticist. And this is precisely what Read says: "It would be much nearer the truth to identify romanticism with the artist and classicism with society . . ."[40] He also says a little later in the essay: "Some recognition of the truth I am affirming--the identity of art and romanticism--has been given by the philosophers of art; . . ."[41] All these remarks prove conclusively that Read identifies art and the artist. It looks as if according to him the dancer and the dance are one. Such an identification makes the artist the centre of an aesthetic transaction. And this, as Professor M. H. Abrams has pointed out, is a typically romantic idea.[42]

One may pause here for a while to review the series of relationships established by Read in this essay. Art is identified with romanticism. Romanticism is identified with the artist. Thus art is identified with the artist. An artist qua artist is an introvert. Thus introversion is related to romanticism. We have already pointed out that the identification between art and the artist is in the romantic tradition. The concept of relationship between introversion and romanticism is in the romantic tradition too. (Carlyle's "Everlasting No", which is an analysis of

romanticism, is essentially a recognition of the connection between romanticism and introversion). It is significant that for his definition of romanticism Read should turn to Theodore Watts-Dunton, a Victorian critic in the romantic tradition. I have in mind Watts-Dunton's famous phrase, "renascence of wonder". By insisting on romanticism Read is insisting on the necessity for wonder, on the need for liberating oneself from the ruts of routine responses and goal-oriented utilitarian perception. The phrase "renascence of wonder" should not give one the impression that romanticism is a search for sensations. It is most certainly not, according to Read. For him it is related to the understanding. He does not believe with Dr. Johnson that we cease to wonder at what we understand. Rather, we cease to understand if we cease to wonder.

The fact that Read falls back on Watts-Dunton for a definition of romanticism may give one the impression that he does not add anything substantially new to our understanding of the romantic principle. But one may point out that he brings his knowledge of psychoanalysis and his sociological approach to bear on it in an attempt to demonstrate its significance and its relevance. I have in mind his application of the psycho-analytic concepts to the question of classicism and romanticism, and his analysis of classicism as a "class-phenomenon". We may, however, ask ourselves if his psycho-analytic and sociological approaches

to this particular question are completely above criticism.

Let us recall that Read identifies classicism with society and romanticism with the artist. He makes it clear that the artist tries to reconcile himself with society. It appears that Read believes that the attempt at reconciliation takes the form of offering "the secrets of the self which are buried in every man alike", this self being "largely made up of the elements from the unconscious"[43] which appears the more collective the more we learn about it. Romanticism is thus rooted in the unconscious; classicism by implication is rooted in the super-ego. Now, it could be maintained that since the super-ego and the unconscious are component parts of a psychic whole, it is doubtful if one can set up a hierarchy among these components. As Professor P. C. Ray puts it:

> If the dictates of the super-ego must be granted the same validity as those of the unconscious, then classicism, which presumably is one of them, can be established on as firm a scientific foundation as romanticism.[44]

In other words, to prefer one to the other amounts to ascribing more value to the one than to the other. This is perfectly legitimate. But is it legitimate to erect this preference into an absolute value and claim for it a scientific basis? To quote Professor Ray again: "He is free to prefer the romantic to the classical, but not to invoke scientific sanction from Freud for his preference."[45] Secondly, if introversion and extraversion are "temperamental

attitudes", manifestations of both in the form of romanticism and classicism respectively should be equally legitimate. But when Read says that though personalities may be introverted or extraverted, true art is always introverted, he is expressing a preference for romanticism and calling into question the claim of classical art to be art because it is classical and not romantic! It may be objected by some that Read is carrying his partisanship too far.

Read's Marxist analysis of classicism would warm the heart of any Marxist theoretician. But it is significant that he does not have a comparable analysis to offer of the class-basis of romanticism. The traditional Marxist view is that romanticism is the movement of the "rising bourgeoisie". Read does not espouse this view. His romantic artist is a supreme individualist. He may be in conflict with society but at the same time he tries to reconcile himself with it by offering it "secrets of the self". He is not an apologist or a propagandist or a defender or an upholder of the Establishment (that is, the class in power). He is a seer. Those who accept Read's analysis of classicism may wonder why he stopped short of subjecting romanticism to the same kind of analysis.

Viviene Koch maintains that the romantic principle as defined in this essay undergoes a sea-change in his next significant discussion of romanticism:

> . . . if we compare the romantic principle defined in this essay with its definition almost two decades later in The True Voice of Feeling, we find it has suffered a sea-change. For example, "the renascence of wonder", a phrase which Mr. Read was once content to borrow from Watts-Dunton to describe the romantic principle, is seen now as only a partial and over-exclusive tag.[46]

While it is true that the idea of "renascence of wonder" does not recur explicitly in this book, it is implied in the Schellengian analysis of the poetic process he refers to here. To summarize it briefly: Man, a specimen of natura naturata, becomes aware of natura naturans through art. The artist experiences the essence when he penetrates through the realm of existence. How is it possible? We are told that the artist possesses or is possessed by the power which enables him to experience the essence and to perceive the form which belongs to the essence. And he endeavours to reproduce this essence along with its form. Before I go on to show how "wonder" is implied in this account, I may anticipate an objection. Does Read accept this account?

I must admit that Read does not tell us explicitly what exactly he thinks of this account. He asks:

> . . . are we in the realm of metaphysical speculations, of merely idealistic distinctions? Is this fundamental distinction of Schelling's one for which there is empirical evidence, and one on which we can base a criticism of poetry?[47]

These questions may or may not be rhetorical. But Read points out that Coleridge accepted the general Schellingian principle.

> Coleridge himself had no doubt about the possibility [of basing a criticism of poetry on this process]. I

> think we can show that all his major critical decisions are based on the application of this general principle . . .[48]

I would say that one has strong reasons to believe that Read, following in the footsteps of his master, Coleridge, accepted this principle. The language of "essence" and "existence" is not meaningless to him. (Indeed he himself speaks of the "realm of essence" in his Form in Modern Poetry). But this is not to deny that he has his reservations about Schelling. He says that Schelling's view that the artist is endowed with special powers of revelation "must be treated as metaphysical speculation". The conclusion that one may rightly draw is this: Read accepts Schelling's principle of art as a mediator between existence and essence. But he does not accept Schelling's account of the process whereby this is achieved. However, we must remember that Read's artist is a seer too, offering "secrets of the self" from the realm of the "collective unconscious". Read's ostensible distrust of metaphysics cannot be taken at its face-value.

We may now turn to Miss Koch's observation regarding the place of wonder in the romantic principle as it is expounded in The True Voice of Feeling. I would suggest that the sense of wonder is implied in it. It is not too fanciful to suggest that there is a parallel between the romantic slogan enshrining the sense of wonder--"to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar"--and the romantic principle

as understood by Schelling, Coleridge, Wordsworth and described here by Read. The "familiar" could be compared to the world of existence, and the "strange" could be compared to the world of essence. To make the familiar strange is to reveal the essence underlying existence. To make the strange familiar is to reveal the essence under the aspect of existence. It seems to me, therefore, that wonder is undoubtedly implied in Read's metaphysical account of the romantic principle, and that Miss Koch's comment is a little hasty.

Read continues his speculation in his essay "The Romantic Revolution". He says that "what is essential to romanticism is not its content but its form."[49] This remark should not be taken to mean that content is not important to romanticism. What Read is really asserting is that romanticism permits catholicity of content. What is therefore significant to it is the expression of content. Read is emphasizing here an ideal of expression--unity of form and content. What is important is integral organic expression of content. Literature to Read is a "formative activity". It follows then from this position that the "content-oriented" "distinction" between romanticism and classicism that Read made in 1926 (classicist response to thought is positive, romantic negative) is not significant to him in 1953.

What we have seen so far is romanticism according to Coleridge and Schelling. Read also trains a few other

philosophical lights on this concept, namely Descartes as interpreted by Sartre. We are told that "I think, therefore I am" is the philosophical principle underlying romanticism. I do not know how far Read is right in making this claim. One usually hears it affirmed that Cartesian philosophy is the philosophical source of neo-classicism. However, Read accepts Sartrean interpretation of "I think, therefore I am". He writes:

> But as Sartre has said 'the subjectivity we thus postulate . . . is no narrowly individual subjectivism, for . . . it is not only one's self that one discovers in the cogito, but the self of others too. . . . When we say 'I think' we are attaining to ourselves in the presence of others and we are just as certain of the others as we are of ourselves.'[50]

This explanation of the Cartesian dictum enables Read to claim value for romantic works. For it is in romantic works that we are in contact with a state of pure subjectivity, and it is within this state of subjectivity that "an archimedean point", "a sense of subjectivity" is found.

IV

We have considered so far the development of the concept of romanticism in the writings of Read. We have discussed in detail his attempts at a "synthesis" between classicism and romanticism. We have also noted that in 1932 he related romanticism to personality, that in 1936 he related it to the unconscious and that, in keeping with the shift from psychology to philosophy in his thinking on poetry, which we have already discussed in the earlier

chapters, in 1953 and 1955 he gave a philosophical explanation of romanticism. Now, all these views suggest a certain theory of poetry, certain essential features of it. It may be objected that they suggest features of romantic poetry. But since he announced the liquidation of classicism, romantic poetry and Poetry would seem to be more or less synonymous to him. It is on the basis of this assumption that we shall discuss what features of poetry his views on romanticism imply.

If romanticism is regarded as a manifestation of introversion, it follows that poetry must be introverted. To give this view a certain historical perspective, one may point out that the connection between poetry, romanticism and introversion was made much before Read by Shelley and Arnold. Shelley said in his "A Defence of Poetry", that "A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude . . ."[51] This remark is, I believe, a metaphorical statement of the connection between poetry and introversion. Arnold reacted against Empedocles on Etna and disowned it because it presented unrelieved suffering that found "no vent in action". To project Arnold's objection in psychological terms, what he was impatient with was the introversion of Empedocles. This impatience, coupled with his sedulous cultivation of classicism in reaction against his own dangerous romanticism as it were, suggests that he had come to associate

introversion with romanticism. It is obvious that introversion and introspection go hand in hand. David Daiches, to quote a contemporary critic, says that contemporary romanticism "consigns man to perpetual introspection".[52] Thus Daiches also establishes a connection between romanticism and introspection. It is clear then that Read's assertion of a connection between romanticism and introversion is not without support in the critical utterances of Shelley and Arnold.

Read's attempt to synthesize classicism and romanticism may seem to be in the nature of intellectual acrobatics. But I have already tried to show that the real significance of the attempted synthesis lies in the fact that it states an ideal of poetic expression, an ideal which demands that thought and emotion be related to each other; it is also an ideal of poetic personality in so far as what it asks for is a unified sensibility. What Read expects then from the poet is a unified sensibility; and what he expects from poetry is evidence of this sensibility.

This demand for unified sensibility is expressed in psychoanalytic terms in Form in Modern Poetry in 1932. Personality does not restrict the flow of sensibility, but character does. Character is a dam that channels sensibility along a certain line, in the light of a certain dictate of the superego (which represents society). Poetry of unified sensibility is poetry of personality. In fact Read reduces the distinction between romanticism and classicism to that

between personality and character. By identifying romanticism with personality what he is saying is that romantic poetry is poetry of personality, of ideal consciousness, of comprehensive reason. Since he prefers personality to character, poetry of personality is for him preferable to poetry of character. In other words according to Read romantic poetry is Poetry.

When in 1936 Read defines romanticism as "renascence of wonder", the quality he could be said to demand of poetry is that it be imaginative. This is precisely what Wordsworth demanded when he declared it to be his aim, inter alia, "to throw over them [incidents and situations from common life] a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect." By exercising his imagination he was to direct our attention to, in Coleridge's phrase, "the wonders of the world before us". The ability never to cease to wonder is characteristic of the romantic temperament. Indeed Read says that if we "cease to wonder", we "cease to understand". And this ability, it goes without saying, presupposes the imagination. It removes the "film of familiarity", in consequence of which removal we have eyes that see, ears that hear and hearts that feel and understand. In keeping with the spirit of the romantic tradition, Read says that the poet should have, to use his own phrase, the "faculty of wonder".

In 1936 the idea of poetry as self-revelation--a necessary part of the complex of ideas known as romanticism --is present in his theory, though in a despiritualized form. What I mean is that though he does not speak of "revelation" in the spiritual sense, the idea of revelation is present in his theory in a psychological garb. Romanticism, we learn, is rooted in the unconscious. Romantic poetry, it follows then, springs from the unconscious and reveals secrets of the self. Read maintains as much.

The idea of revelation is present in his theory in 1953, when he accepts the philosophical ground of romanticism as stated by Schelling and accepted by Coleridge. We have called the ground the "romantic principle" in contradistinction to the process whereby the essence is expressed by the artist. (Read dismisses the process as "metaphysical speculation"). But does not the very ability Read grants the poet--the ability to perceive "essence"--presuppose special powers of perception on the part of the poet? Can Read grant the artist these powers when he is not prepared to grant "special powers of revelation"? Perhaps one could draw the line between the two. But even if one could, it must be very thin.

Read returns to the theory of poetry as self-revelation in his 1955 essay, "The Romantic Revolution". He says that an immediate sense of one's self "opens up a completely new range of human consciousness".[53] This kind

of sense is "romantic". Thus romanticism makes "expansion of consciousness" possible. It follows from this that poetry has new realms of sensibility available to it for exploration. The self it deals with is not a static given. It has unlimited possibilities. For Read poetry is a conquest and mapping out of this new territory.

In conclusion it may be said that on the basis of this discussion one would feel that for Herbert Read romanticism is a question of psychological disposition and metaphysical inclination. Romanticism does not mean to him only one particular literary movement which took place in Europe towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to him, the romantic principle has manifested itself at different times in artistic endeavour. As a matter of fact, Read used the term "superrealism" to cover pre-surrealist manifestations of the romantic principle, reserving the word "surrealism" to denote the contemporary movement in painting which he looked upon as a manifestation of romanticism.[54] Indeed he says that an approach to romanticism that does not proceed on the assumption that romanticism is a psychological disposition and a metaphysical inclination is "inevitably of limited interest".[55] But Read's approach or assumption has not found favour in academic quarters. According to Dr. Rodway, for example, what is wrong with this kind of approach is that "there is nothing in it to prevent the assumption that men with such

propensities existed in every age and produced characteristic works of art."[56] Read makes precisely this assumption. He says: "There is no essential sense in which Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats are romantic in which Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne and Milton are not also romantic."[57]

One may recall Professor M. H. Abrams' remark that Read's is a two-term theory and that he fails to make proper discriminations. He may well ask in what sense Keats and Milton are fellow-romantics. Read may very well be open to objections here. Be that as it may, it is clear that for him romanticism implies a certain attitude towards artistic creation and a certain kind of consciousness, a certain kind of sensibility. This attitude towards artistic creation involves belief in the "immediacy of expression", and also the belief that the act of poetic creation is creative, formative or, to use a more adequate and less ambiguous expression, esemplastic. The kind of sensibility romanticism involves is untrammelled by custom or convention, literary or social. Romantic consciousness, as Read has come to see it in the '50's, is more than the ideal consciousness of comprehensive reason of 1932: it includes the unconscious as well as the transcendental realms of experience; it is an "expansion of consciousness", an expansion into realms of sensibility not accessible to classicism. Rightly did Read observe in 1963 that romanticism "is not essentially a formal question, but something much more profound."[58]

"Renascence of wonder", which Read regards as one of the essential qualities of romanticism, liberates one, as I said above, from the ruts of routine responses and strictly goal-oriented perception. The modern poetic movement which could be said to have made an attempt to recover the sense of wonder, to free perception from stock responses and to recover "immediacy of expression", is Imagism. There is an unmistakable connection between romanticism and Imagism. We shall now turn to Imagism.

CHAPTER V

IMAGISM AND READ'S THEORY OF POETRY

> Together, these two influences [Donne and Browning on the one hand and the Imagists on the other] may be said to have completed my poetic education. The years to follow held such surprises as Rimbaud and Apollinaire, Hölderlin and Rilke, but though such poets have deepened my conception of the content of poetry, they have not altered the attitude to the problems of technique which I formed under the influence of the Imagists.[1]

It becomes clear from the epigraph that Herbert Read's theory of poetry was founded upon his sympathy with the aims of Imagism. I am using the term "Imagism" to refer to the principles of the Imagist movement.[2] The "rationale" of imagism has been discussed in T. E. Hulme's Speculations, edited by Herbert Read. Ezra Pound stated the principles of Imagism in a somewhat aggressive manner in "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste", published in Poetry in March, 1913. Then there are the Prefaces to the 1915 and 1916 anthologies of Some Imagist Poets. Whose formulation of principles then is accepted as Imagism? The verdict of literary history is clear. Stanley K. Coffman writes:

> In the development, Pound's Poetry manifesto was forgotten, and Imagism became known as the poetry of Some Imagist Poets volumes and the doctrine of their prefaces.[3]

Read would certainly accept the view that the Preface

to the 1915 anthology of Some Imagist Poets came to represent the doctrine of Imagism. He says: "That preface [of 1915] still remains the locus classicus for the doctrines of the imagist school . . ."[4] It must be added however that the 1915 Preface differs in two respects from T. E. Hulme's theory, and Pound's 1913 manifesto. First, Hulme did not regard free verse as essential to Imagism. Nor did Pound, though he insisted on the importance of "the musical phrase" as a unit in composition. But free verse is given central importance in the Preface.[5] Second, Hulme had a theory of the image which tied in with his metaphysical speculations inspired by Bergson's philosophy, which he expounded with remarkable clarity and precision in "The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds". Pound also had a certain theory of the image which he described briefly in the 1913 manifesto. But there is no explicit reference to the nature of the image in the 1915 Imagist Preface.[6]

It is significant that Read should not refer to the Preface to the 1916 anthology of Some Imagist Poets. I am inclined to believe that it speaks for his opposition to some of the views expressed in that Preface. My evidence for this contention is drawn from his early essay, "Definitions Towards a Modern Theory of Poetry", published in 1918. He writes:

> So these Imagists may be accused of expressing a 'slice' of their emotions, and of not discriminating between the vision of purely aesthetic value and the vision of emotional value only.[7]

Aesthetic value or aesthetic selection is more important to Read than mere presentation of emotional effect. And it is precisely the latter that the Preface of 1916 seems to encourage. It says:

> The 'exact' word does not mean the word which exactly describes the object in itself, it means the 'exact' word which brings the effect of that object before the reader as it presented itself to the poet's mind at the time of writing the poem.[8]

The phrase "effect of the object" emphasizes the poet's response, emotional or intellectual or both. But there is no reference to the process of aesthetic selection. The principle of the second Preface would seem to sanction impressionism in poetry. But Read does not accept presentation of effect for its own sake. "This, then, is the poet's duty and joy: To express the exquisite among his perceptions, achieving so a beauty as definite and indicative as the prints of Hokusai, or the cold grace of immaculate cameos."[9] The Preface of 1916 does not seem to be compatible with this aesthetic ideal.

But one may well ask: Is the Preface of 1915 compatible with the ideal of aesthetic selection? While one must admit that there is no explicit reference to this ideal in the Preface, it does mention "concentration" as an ideal. Second, it says that poetry should "render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities". (But unlike in the 1916 Preface, exactness here does not mean fidelity to effect). The aim is still "to present an image". What I am

saying is that since it does not propagate emotional impressionism, the Preface of 1915 is acceptable to Read who, as "Definitions Towards a Modern Theory of Poetry" shows, is suspicious of "emotional vision" alone.

Imagism then, especially as it is represented by the 1915 Preface, stood for an aesthetic ideal to Read. He says as much in his "The Present State of Modern Poetry," published in Kenyon Review:

> The new ideal, which we called Imagism, was what we can now recognize as the eternal aesthetic ideal--an ideal of form, indifferent to the nature of the subject-matter. It is true that on the whole a modernity of subject-matter was preferred . . .[10]

And this is exactly how Richard Aldington, a member of the original group of T. E. Hulme and a friend of Read, looked upon Imagism:

> What then is Imagism? Briefly, it is an ideal of style, an attempt to recreate in our language and for our time a poetry that shall have the qualities of the great poetry of old. . . .[11]

Read has called this "ideal of style" an "eternal aesthetic ideal". In saying this he is echoing the 1915 Preface, which says: "These principles [the principles listed in the Preface] are not new; they have fallen into desuetude. They are the essentials of all great poetry . . ."[12]

Read found in the 1915 Preface the "clearest statement" of a "new philosophy" that had been "generally" felt to be necessary. Of course, as the Imagists themselves realized, "the clearest statement" was a statement of

principles discovered, not devised by them. Read looked upon these principles as something which made for "aesthetic unity". He says:

> What was aimed at, by means of precision of expression and vitality of image, was above all an aesthetic unity --a poem, that is to say, which had a clear crystalline objectivity, due to sincerity of feeling, exactness of expression, and the consequent virtues of precision, economy and vividness.[13]

It should be noted that this statement preserves the earlier Imagist emphasis on the image. The 1916 Preface, on the other hand, considers the doctrine of the image to refer "more to the manner of presentation than to the thing presented." "It [Imagism] means a clear presentation of whatever the author wishes to convey." And as Coffman peremptorily puts it: "A theory which merely defines <u>image</u> as <u>clear presentation</u> has no legitimate claim to call itself Imagism."[14] The point I am trying to make is that Read did not depart from the original impulse of Imagism, the original impulse being that of T. E. Hulme. It remains to be considered what Read's conception of the image is and how it is related to Hulme's theory of it.

It may be said that from his early critical writings Read has shown an awareness of the importance of imagery in poetry, an awareness which was awakened by the Imagist movement, which was, in Read's words, "a violent reaction"[15] against Georgian poetry. In his discussion of imagination in <u>English Prose Style</u> he says: "The maker of imagery is

the poet."[16] He also says that imagination is "creative" in that "it bodies forth 'images'".[17] But what does he understand by the word "image"? For his first clear and precise discussion of the concept of the image one must turn to his "Obscurity in Poetry". He refers to the image as a "new figure of speech". How does he come to this conclusion? A consideration of the process of expression leads him to the conclusion that for absolute precision of language and thought, the poet has to invent metaphors. Metaphor is "the discovery of an illuminating correspondence between two objects".[18] But he feels that this definition of metaphor does not adequately describe the creative process in poetry. A metaphor compares two known things in order to express one of them better by covering it with the other. The image, on the other hand, "discovers one thing with the help of another, and by their resemblance makes the unknown known."[19] The assumption underlying this distinction between image and metaphor is that the creative process is one of exploration. Metaphors, which deal with known 'quantities', do not have exploratory value. But the image, which deals with an 'unknown', has such a value.

It seems to me that what Read is really urging here is that there are two distinct uses of metaphor. What he calls "metaphor" represents what may be termed the "illustrative" use of metaphor. It consists in utilizing the associations of one of its terms for strengthening or

illuminating the associations of its other term. It bases itself on resemblances between the two terms. It is not used for exploring relations between distant realities. Its use is not "heuristic". But, on the other hand, what Read calls "image" is essentially a heuristic, exploratory or interpretative use of metaphor. (I may add that we shall use the phrase "exploratory metaphor" as a short-hand for "exploratory use of metaphor"). But what exactly does he mean by the image? He quotes with approval Paul Reverdy's definition of the image:

> It [the image] cannot emerge from a comparison but only from the bringing together of two more or less distant realities. . . . No image is produced by comparing (always inadequately) two disproportionate realities. A striking image, on the contrary, one new to the mind, is produced by bringing into relation without comparison the distant realities whose relations <u>the mind alone</u> has seized.[20]

From this description it would appear that the image is not a metaphor to Reverdy. Now, Read says that the image "discovers one thing with the help of another, and by their resemblance makes the unknown known". So the "relation" between "two distant realities" is, to Read, that of <u>resemblance</u>, though not of logical resemblance. And since metaphor depends on "resemblance", I am led to say that the image is a <u>particular</u> use of metaphor.

To give one concrete example to illustrate this discussion; T. E. Hulme has the following lines in his poem "The Embankment":

Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.[21]

The metaphor in the second line brings together the two realities of the starry sky and a moth-eaten blanket. The point of resemblance between the two consists in this: there are 'holes' in the sky in the form of stars, and holes in the blanket. But the point of the metaphor is not to illustrate one term (starry sky) with the help of another (moth-eaten blanket). The association of the two in a metaphorical relationship opens up a whole range of interpretive possibilities. The poem is the "fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night". His fallen condition projects on to the sky the same impoverishment--the sky is "moth-eaten"--and it is also reflected in his desire for making the sky "small". The phrase "blanket of the sky" indicates not only lack of protection, but more important still, it also suggest's the man's death-wish, his weariness of the cosmos. In other words, the metaphor is richly suggestive; it could bear further exploration. Read would call such a metaphor an "image". A merely illustrative metaphor would not have had such an intellectual and emotional complexity. However, what is significant is the concept, whether it is called image or exploratory metaphor.

This theory of the image is given a psychoanalytic dimension in "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle". Read

says that the distinction between metaphor and the image is that the former proceeds from the conscious whereas the latter emanates from the unconscious. As we have seen, in his "Obscurity in Poetry", he argues for a distinction between metaphor and the image, and the distinction is grounded on Reverdy's definition of the image. But he does not, it may be noted, try to assign the image and metaphor to their respective psychological source. In "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle" he says that the metaphor is a conscious image. Speaking of his imagery in the dream-poem that he analyses in this essay, he says:

> . . . the image of the baffled bird--the fluttering shadow like a bird beating against a window-pane--occurred to me in my dream. In this it differs from the wave-image I used to describe the shadows of our bodies on the walls of the labyrinth, which is a conscious image produced in the process of writing the poem; I would on that account call it a metaphor rather than an image.[22]

He does not mean to say that metaphors do not give accurate description. What he maintains is that metaphors do not have the same force as images. The force of the images is ascribed to their origin in the unconscious. Reverdy said that a metaphor is a conscious comparison whereas the image relates without comparison two distant realities whose relations the mind alone has seized. Read has localized in the unconscious the mind's activity of seizing relations without comparison. Because they originate in the unconscious, the "counterpart" of images is not manifest. And therefore the images have a latent meaning. And it is

this latent meaning which accounts for the force of the images. To quote Read again at some length:

> . . . every authentic image is conceived in the unconscious; that is to say, the two realities of which Reverdy speaks, though more or less distantly separated, cohere as an image and gain their emotive power from the presence in the unconscious of a hidden connecting link. There is no need in any poetic analysis, to reveal that repressed connection; the poetic reality lies in the evident power of the image, and is no stronger--indeed, may be much weaker--if its latent meaning is made manifest.[23]

It should be clear from this statement how Read has given a psychoanalytic direction to Reverdy's distinction.

It may also be noted that in this essay he calls "images" (in Reverdy's sense of the term) "symbols". But one may justly ask: "Is not the term 'image' a generic one, and does it not, therefore, refer both to metaphors and to symbols?" Now, in order to preserve the distinction between metaphor and symbol, and to remind ourselves that they have a common sensational basis, we may speak of "images as symbols" and "images as metaphors". The former represent exploratory use of metaphor; we may call them "exploratory metaphors". The latter are "illustrative metaphors". This distinction is derived from Read and it can serve as a useful literary tool.

It is clear then that when Read says "essential poetry" resides in images, he has in mind exploratory metaphors and not mere metaphors. But a poem cannot be all symbols. It cannot be all "images". Read says that the

"essential imagery" must be clouded over with metaphors and similes. He writes:

> A poem that is pure imagery would be like a statue of crystal. . . . We therefore cloud the poem with metaphors and similes, which are our personal and human associations; we add to its sentiments and ideas, until finally the essential imagery is completely obscured and we are left with verbal rhetoric.[24]

Thus the "essence" of poetry is "diluted". But he does not allow us to forget what "essential poetry" consists in. It consists in "essential imagery". It may be remarked that this account of clouding the essential imagery with metaphors, etc. follows logically from his psychological theory of poetry at this time--a theory we have already examined (see above, pp.133-38) and according to which all the regions of the mind contribute towards the creation of poetry.

There is one more point to be made in connection with this psychoanalytic theory of the image. I have already touched on it in the second chapter. However, I shall restate it here. According to Read, the vivid eidetic energy of the image precipitates just those verbal molecules that clothe the image. In other words, the image is expressed in its accurate verbal equivalents. What aids this process? It seems that words are found "by the law of attraction which seems to operate in the unconscious mind, a law which selects equivalents in visual image, verbal expression . . ."[25] So the unconscious is not only a source of images but it is also a source of their verbal equivalents. It should be

observed that the unconscious, which is a factor of central importance in Read's theory of the image, is conspicuously absent in Hulme's.

Besides the unconscious, another factor of singular importance in Read's theory of the image is the notion of form. I shall first state Read's views of form in relation to the image, and then go on to consider if Read's theory of the image registered any changes as a result of the waning of his surrealist enthusiasm with its insistence on the unconscious.

In 1932 he says that metaphors are the "blood-stream" of poetry. Nevertheless what is equally important is "an intuition of form", which he defines as "an emotion about fitness, size, appropriateness, tension, tautness".[26] There can be no images with their "visual immediacy" unless there is this intuition of form. Again in 1948, in "Art in Europe at the End of the Second World War", Read asserts the importance of form for imagery. But now he seems to have become critical of his own previous view that poetry consists in "essential imagery" (that is, symbols or images from the unconscious). He says that the projection of "a symbol or image from the unconscious is not an act of creation". Why? The transfer of an existing object (say, an image) from the mental sphere to the verbal sphere is not an original act of creation. It is merely a transfer. Read has struck a new note in his theory. Here is how he

expresses himself:

> The essential function of art is revealed in a co-ordination of images (whether unconscious or perceptual does not matter) into an effective pattern. The art is in the pattern, which is a personal intuition of the artist, and not in the imagery. Imagery can be released by hypnosis, by intoxication, and in dreams: but it does not constitute aesthetic expression or art, unless it has been given expressive form.[27]

It would seem then that poetry is more than "essential imagery". He also asserts the importance of form as in 1932. (As a matter of fact in both the statements quoted above, he speaks of form as an "intuition"). Let it be noted,however, that he does not minimize the importance of imagery. Imagery is the blood-stream of poetry. What he demands is that the blood-stream be regulated by form, by pattern.

Not only does Read demand that images, unconscious or perceptual, be co-ordinated into an effective pattern, but he also subjects them to a more acute criticism. In his "The Drift of Modern Poetry", he says that automatic images are effective when they are personal to the poet. But if they are consciously imitated or invented and if they do not proceed from the depth of the poet's mind, they are ineffective. "One might even go further and say that even when such images are projected automatically, nothing proves to be so dreary as the furniture of an inferior mind."[28] So Read has come to believe that there is no virtue in an automatic projection as such of images--a fallacy that Surrealistic poetic practice encouraged and that Read's

theoretical discussion of poetry in the Surrealistic phase certainly did not expose. Read would not so readily say now that the essence of poetry resides in "essential imagery". He has become aware of the qualifications that need to be made to such a view.

Let me attempt a statement of Read's position at this time. "Images" (symbols) originate in the unconscious; metaphors originate in the conscious. Images have exploratory value, but metaphors do not. (It goes without saying that both images and metaphors have a sensational basis). One may well raise this question: What is the status of the Imagist image on the basis of this theory? The answer is that in so far as the Imagist image does not originate in the unconscious, it is a metaphor. (But Imagism as a movement did not subscribe to the belief in the unconscious origin of the image). But I would say that <u>in so far as</u> it has exploratory value, it cannot be denied the name of "symbol". The fact that many Imagist poems have exploratory value cannot be denied. (Consider, for example, Hulme's poem discussed above). And that many of their poems do not have such "exploratory value" cannot be denied either.

Read comes to emphasize the creative nature of the image after the decline of his surrealist enthusiasm. In 1956, for example, he writes in his "The Lost Leader":

> The artist's images are above all formative--that is to say, they give defined shape to what was amorphous; they are crystallizations of fluid mental intuitions;

> they materialize the immaterial, the immature, the merely sensed and located directions of significant experience.[29]

"Amorphous", "fluid", "immaterial"--the very adjectives suggest the elusive nature of the poet's experience or his subject-matter. That is what experience is like if we do not look at it from the spectacles of habit, of stock-perception. The artist shapes, crystallizes, materializes it into images which are "formative" precisely because they capture the experience, realize it so that it exists almost as if it were an object. Images are, therefore, creative too. It should be remembered that this "creative theory" of the image is related to the theory of the exploratory nature of the image. The theory of the unconscious origin of the image has more or less been dropped. The image acquires a metaphysical function.

Read expresses this view in 1960. Commenting on the image as an intensive aspect of poetry--and we have already discussed this comment in the second chapter in another context--he says:

> It exists in its own right, in its presentational immediacy, as an indissoluble expressive formula and not as an extension of logical discourse, not as illustration or signification. The poetic image is received and felt, but it is not observed and reflected on; it is a moment of original vision, an intuitive extension of consciousness, an act of apprehension but not yet of comprehension.[30]

He is saying that the image is <u>expressive</u> and not <u>imitative</u>. It is not logical. (One is reminded of Reverdy's remark I

have already referred to). It explores the poet's consciousness; and I think that because it is an exploration, Read describes it as an "act of apprehension but not yet of comprehension". And precisely because it is an exploration that the image is not illustrative; one can illustrate that which is known. Just as it is not logically conceived, it is not responded to logically. For a logical response is out of the question when what is being responded to does pretend to be logical. The reader embarks on his exploratory adventure thanks to the image. It is an instrument of discovery of the "immaterial", of "fluid intuitions", of the "merely sensed directions of significant experience". To look upon it as an aid to the understanding is to misconceive its role.

This conception of the image is in the tradition of Hulme. It may be objected that Hulme did not hold such a romantic view of the image. How else could he maintain that poetry is no more than "accurate, precise, and definite description"? Consider some of his own utterances:

(1) Each word must be an image seen, not a counter.

(2) A man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification before his eyes. It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm.[31]

These remarks may be interpreted to mean that Hulme meant "hard", "clear", "vivid", "precise" realization of an impression when he used the word "image". It seems to me that this is the view that has come to be associated with

the Imagist movement. But it represents inadequately the view that Hulme's writings as a whole suggest. The remarks quoted above should not be understood without reference to Bergson's philosophy. I submit that "Romanticism and Classicism", "A Lecture on Modern Poetry", and "Notes on Language and Style", need for their proper understanding and interpretation the background of "The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds",--an exposition of Bergson's philosophy, and of "Bergson's Theory of Art",--a study of the implications of Bergson's philosophy for art.

The importance of the image for Hulme springs from the fact that it helps to seize the "original intuition" of the artist. It is the strategy employed by the poet to convey his "intuition" accurately. Bergson believed that an intuition could be expressed only in terms of imagery. Hulme accepts this view. Hence the insistence on the image in Hulme's writings. It was certainly not Hulme's aim to exalt "visual description" for its own sake. He says:

> I exaggerate the place of (visual) imagery simply because I want to use it as an illustration . . . the important thing is, of course, not the fact of the visual representation, but the communication over of the actual contact with reality.[32]

It seems that the "fact of visual representation" acquired a disproportionate emphasis in the Imagist movement as it developed. And I may venture to assert that in the fifties', Read recovered the original emphasis of Hulme's theory of the image. It may be asked: What is the distinction

between "visual representation" and "actual contact with reality"? Does not the former imply the latter? No, not necessarily. The significance of the phrase "actual contact with reality" can be realized if one is acquainted with Bergson's distinction between the intellect and intuition. I shall summarize it briefly in support of my argument that Hulme's theory of the image is romantic.

The intellect is action-oriented; it presents objects to the mind so that they can be acted upon; its specific function, analysis, reduces objects to elements already known. It cannot therefore cope with reality, which is a "flux of interpenetrated elements". Intuition, on the other hand, is a "kind of intellectual sympathy"; it enables one to "place oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible". The artist, who is detached from the necessities of action, possesses this faculty, and therefore he is in contact with reality. It will now be clear why I said "visual representation" does not necessarily mean "contact with reality". I may also add that Hulme, who complained in "Romanticism and Classicism" that the romantic belief in the power of the imagination attributes to man the ability to create absolutely and thus raises him to the status of God, has by accepting Bergson, himself claimed visionary powers for the poet and accorded him an exalted status--undoubtedly romantic ideas. Hulme's concept

of the image is linked with the theory of intuition which justifies these romantic ideas. Hence I have described Hulme's doctrine of the image as being romantic.

Read's theory of the image is clearly related to Hulme's. Read says that the artist's images are formative, they give shape to what is amorphous, they crystallize intuitions. Hulme also says that images are an aid to seizing an intuition. He says:

> . . . many diverse images borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized.[33]

Another point of similarity between Read's theory and Hulme's is the insistence of both of them that images are not logical. According to Hulme, the images prevent one from lapsing into an abstract process, which is characteristic of the intellect. The intellect treats words as counters and passes from concept to concept without reference to reality. Images hold reality before us. According to Read, images help to apprehend reality, not comprehend it. This is, I suppose, a way of saying that by not being logical or rational, images help seize reality--something that mere intellect by its very nature cannot do. The assumption that both Hulme and Read are making is that there does exist a consciousness, a reality not accessible to rationality. The image for Read is an "intuitive extension of consciousness". For Hulme it is an expression of a reality which is accessible only to intuition.

I have tried to show that there is a remarkable similarity between Hulme's doctrine of the image and Read's. My interpretation of the former makes it out to be symbolist. And Read's discussion of the image from 1936 onwards leaves no doubt whatever that the image to him is a symbol since it captures something unstated, goes beyond mere reference, and embodies a complex of feeling and thought. That Read considered Hulme to hold the same conception of the image becomes clear from the following comment he makes in his discussion of Hulme's theory of poetry:

> It is not merely a question of importing images into the stream of discourse, to make it more vivid. Poetry is rather a crystallization of the discourse into symbolic images. . . . What is there first, said Hulme, is the world in its concreteness, evident to the senses; the physical phenomena. The poet seizes these, finds their verbal equivalence, and the rest--beauty, significance, metaphysical reverberations--is there as an intrinsic grace.[34]

Mark the phrase "symbolic images". The poet is more than a purveyor of hard, clear and precise pictures. If this was the official Imagist view of the poet's function, it was clearly a travesty of Hulme's ideas. On Read's interpretation of Hulme, the images are symbolic images. Of course, the world in its concreteness is significant to the poet, and poetry should be anchored to it. But Hulme did not rule out "significance", "metaphysical reverberations".[35] Rather he believed that they are present as an "intrinsic grace". The image is more than a mere word-picture, clear, sharp and precise, both to Read and to Hulme. I must say,

however, that Read expounds his Hulmean doctrine of the image in his critical writings in the '50's, though one can see it reflected in his poetic practice right from the beginning.

Prior to his recovery of Hulme's doctrine of the image, Read may seem to have held the Imagistic view of the image when he stated in "English Prose" (1926):

> This is to say that in the creative act of writing there are two elements--the visual image and the emotions associated with this image. The good writer . . . sees the image clearly, and is driven by the mere emotive charge of the image to find for it a fit mating of words. The image is there, stark, visible and real; to find the right words, and only the right words, to body forth that image, becomes in the writer an actual passion.[36]

This may be said to be reminiscent of Hulme. (But it must be remembered that it is reminiscent of the Hulme of "Romanticism and Classicism". And that essay, in spite of the critical reputation it has acquired, does not represent Hulme's theory of poetry adequately). It looks upon the image as a given, static entity. But in <u>English Prose Style</u> (1928) he puts forward, as we have already seen in the second chapter, the theory of creative expression in poetry according to which words and thought are born and reborn in the act of expression. This theory would suggest that his view of the image is not static in 1928. However, it may be pointed out that he does not show any awareness at this time of the metaphysical significance of the image, or of its ability for extending consciousness.

He shows this awareness from the '50's onwards. The image is more than a picture, description,or vivid, exact and precise realization, which is what the image was to the strict, orthodox Imagist. It is more than an objective correlative or an analogue for a state of mind. For now it is an "intuitive extension of consciousness". As a matter of fact, he is outspokenly critical of the Imagist theory, as distinct from Hulme. In his "The Poet and the Muse", he writes:

> It is true that there was a school of poets which strove to hold on to the image in all its pristine precision--they were called the Imagists and I belonged to it. But the attempt was vain because, as [William] James says, 'every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations. . . . The significance, the value of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it . . .[37]

The image has acquired a significance which reaches beyond the psychoanalytic significance of the '30's. Whereas it was a symbol for psychoanalytic reasons in the '30's, now it is almost a metaphysical symbol. It has acquired the status of a strategy for an assault on consciousness in all its fluidity: it is a means for "extension of consciousness". This metaphysical theory of the image may be expected to make some difference to the content of Read's poetry.

Read said that the "content" of poetry "deepened" for him over the years. The various phases of his theory of the image bear out his view of his own development. But the very fact that his theory has passed through various stages

should prevent us from hastily endorsing Read's view, expressed in the epigraph to this chapter, that his attitude towards the problems of technique never changed and that it was always imagistic. I would take this to mean that his ideal of poetic expression never changed. The ideal of expression, among other things, emphasized such imagistic poetic virtues as "precision", "economy", "immediacy of expression" and "hardness of line". And last, but not the least, his ideal of poetic expression insisted on organic form.

We have already referred to Read's awareness both in 1932 and subsequently, of the connection between the image and the form. The image--"bloodstream of poetry"--is part of a total whole which evolves according to the "laws of its own origination". And when we speak of "evolution" in conformity with "laws of origination", we are speaking of organic form.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIC FORM IN READ'S THEORY OF POETRY

> But the pattern once perceiv'd and held
> Is then viable; . . .[1]
>
> Herbert Read

We have traced the development of the concepts of romanticism and Imagism in Read's theory of poetry. Both romanticism and Imagism are linked with the principle of organic form. Read tells us in his The True Voice of Feeling that the principle of organic form is "the specifically romantic principle".[2] His Imagism, as we have already seen, is an ideal of "exploration" of experience as well as of expression of it. Hence this emphasis on the organic relation between experience and expression, the image and the medium. In other words, the Imagistic ideal implies the principle of organic form. We shall attempt in this chapter a brief examination of the concept of organic form and its development in Read's writings. I shall confine myself primarily to his discussion of organic form in the context of poetry. His speculations on form in the context of fine arts, richly suggestive as they may be, do not come within the scope of this study except in so far as they bear

on the problem we are concerned with here, namely, organic form in poetry.

It may be observed here that the metaphor of 'growth' underlies the concept of organic form. Organic form is dynamic and not static. It is characterized by growth and not fixity, fixity being the very opposite of growth. It is easily illustrated in natural phenomena such as the beehive or fungi-formation. It is the product of a process unhindered by externally imposed conditions but, as it follows the laws of its own nature, it is characterized by a sense of scale, proportion, balance and symmetry. Read asserts of form in poetry what he perceives as true of natural forms, namely, that they follow the law of their own being. Organic form in the context of poetry is the form that grows in the process of composition. When form departs from this organic ideal, and follows extraneously imposed dictates, it is called geometric or abstract form, or shape.

Read points out that it is this feeling for organic form which possessed Goethe, Schelling and Coleridge. The concept of organic growth, or organic evolution invaded the field of aesthetics from the Romantic period onwards. If in this period, as Read tells us, "man also became more aware of his own evolutionary process, and of his place in the evolution of the cosmos",[3] it is but natural that the concept of evolution should make its appearance in the field

of poetics. The demand for organic form can be seen as a demand for the evolutionary principle in artistic creation. Coleridge's phrase "to follow the laws of its [of art] own origination" may be regarded as a statement of the evolutionary principle. This brief excursus into literary history should make it clear that with his theory of organic form Read is only reasserting the theory advanced by Coleridge and Schelling.

It must be realized, however, that the analogy between natural form and organic form cannot be pressed too hard. Organic form in poetry is not anything as palpable as natural form. Metre or rhythm alone is not that form. Images or diction alone could not be said to constitute it. But all these elements have their place in whatever is called "organic form". On the other hand, a natural form such as, say, a seashell or a beehive is something definite; one is aware of the forces which go into making it. In short, a natural form is susceptible to scientific analysis. Organic form, it goes without saying, does not lend itself to that kind of analysis. What I wish to point out is that this is so because the expression "organic form" is a metaphor. The metaphor is significant because it states an ideal of expression: that expression in poetry be natural and determined by internal forces like the form of a beehive. It seems to me that "organic form" in poetry is a term which covers a number of poetic virtues. It may be said to refer to that collocation

of words--and words are expressive of thoughts, feelings, images, etc.--which emerges in response to the need to present 'experience' faithfully, precisely and authentically, and which makes no concession to pre-determined modes of expression, every act of expression, like the experience which calls it forth, being unique. And, of course, it does not rule out rhythm.

With these preliminary explanatory remarks on "organic form" in mind we can turn to a consideration of how Read understands it. In his study of Wordsworth, published in 1931, he takes "organic form" to mean "expression of an emotional state of mind" in words which are an "exact equivalence" of this state. The account of poetic composition which he gives in this study may be looked upon as an account of how "organic form" is achieved. He says:

> Having succeeded in maintaining the state of emotional tension, which is a more exact or psychological description of the poet's mind during the process of composition, how does he represent this state in words? . . . In the process of poetic composition, words spring into consciousness as isolated objective things of a definite emotional equivalence. They are arranged or composed in a sequence or rhythm sustained until the mental state of the poet is exhausted by this objective equivalence.[4]

Note that words are said to "spring" into consciousness. This is another way of saying that words emerge spontaneously into consciousness. The process of this spontaneous emergence of words seems mysterious. Anyway, it is clearly implied that these are the right words. The poet's task is to arrange them rhythmically. Organic form may then be

defined as the rhythmical arrangement of words of a definite emotional equivalence. Read explains the basic feature of this kind of form. "All expression has form: emotion dictates its own rhythm, and rhythm is form. Yet a fixed form is external . . ."[5] Organic form is internal; it is internal to the emotion sought to be expressed. As opposed to organic form, geometric form is external since it does not follow the rhythm of the emotion; it is the result of the poet's adoption of a rhythm which is dictated from outside. To put it differently, for organic form what is important is following the rhythm of the emotion, and for geometric form what is important is subjecting the expression of emotion to some externally imposed rhythm. This distinction is significant in Read's theory because the difference between organic form and geometric form is the difference between romanticism and classicism--a difference which shows itself in the process of expression:

> It is in this process that art becomes differentiated into the typical extremes known as classic and romantic. And those extremes are determined by whether you are going to make the expression of emotion an end in itself; or whether you are going to make that process subservient to some external code.[6]

The same view will be encountered in his Form in Modern Poetry, published in 1932.

Read had earlier pointed out in his Phases of English Poetry that according to Coleridge, "priority of emotion" is a causative factor involved in organic form.

He said that Coleridge's principle of organic form "depends on priority of emotion in poetry--emotional or intuitional immediacy . . ."[7] This is precisely what Read says in his The Meaning of Art. Form, though it can be analysed into intellectual terms like measure, balance, rhythm and harmony, is really "intuitive in origin"; it is not in the actual practice of artists an intellectual product. It is rather "emotion directed and defined".[8] I think what this statement makes clear is the result of assigning priority to emotional immediacy, of following the rhythm of emotion in poetic composition: the result is that emotion comes to be "directed and defined". Organic form is, therefore, creative.

In his Form in Modern Poetry he offers precise definitions of organic and abstract form and examines how the latter is related to the former. His examination of the relationship between the two forms constitutes a distinct improvement on Coleridge's distinction between "organic form" and "mechanical regularity". Read perceives that the distinction is not just formalistic. It has an evolutionary and historical basis to it, of which Coleridge did not show any awareness. His argument here is that abstract form is evolved from the organic. In Read's words "it represents a fixation of the organic in a particular mode".[9] He offers a convincing illustration of this process

from Scythian art. An illustration from poetry, however, would have been more helpful. But he offers none. Before commenting further on the supposed relationship between abstract and organic form, let me quote his definitions of them:

> Organic form: when a work of art has its own inherent laws, originating with its very invention and fusing in one vital unity both structure and content, then the resulting form may be described as organic.
>
> Abstract form: When an organic form is stabilised and repeated as a pattern, and the intention of the artist is no longer related to the inherent dynamism of an inventive act, but seeks to adapt content to predetermined structure, then the resulting form may be described as abstract.[10]

The definition of abstract form makes it clear that abstract form is a result of using organic form as a "pattern", as a "structure" in poetic expression. To find examples of this kind of use of "organic form" we may turn to the history of English poetry. If we look upon Shakespeare's sonnet form as being organic, we may say that this form became a meaningless convention in the eighteenth century. (Johnson's contempt for the sonnet form may perhaps be looked upon as healthy contempt for an abstract form).

It seems to me that these definitions do not support the view that the traditional metrical form is abstract because it is metrical. What could make it abstract, however, is artifice in diction and in rhythm, and rigidity. But if it responds to the needs of the content (which implies that the diction and the rhythm are natural and inevitable and

determined by the subject-matter) so that the form and the content are fused, is it not organic? Indeed, it seems as if Read is advocating that traditional metrical forms are "abstract". He says on page 11: "It [organic form] is the form imposed on poetry by the laws of its own origination, without consideration for the given forms of traditional poetry." But Read himself said that "abstract form" is organic form "stabilised and repeated as a pattern", thus becoming rigid, unimaginative and mechanical. On the basis of the historical relationship between the two forms that Read reports, may not one say that what are now "traditional metrical patterns" may have been organic forms once? And if so, could not one recover the organic nature of forms now deadened into mechanical patterns? Is it not possible to use blank verse today without being convicted of employing "abstract form"? (Read returns to this problem in 1953.)

If Read were to hold the view that a metrical form by its very nature is abstract, he would in effect be maintaining that Shakespeare, Donne and Wordsworth were not acquainted with the "dynamism of an inventive act" and that they did not fuse in "a vital unity" their content and structure. Of course, he does not hold any such preposterous view. It is clear then that Read is really distinguishing between organic and abstract use of form. To repeat myself, the definitions I have quoted above do not support the view that metrical forms are not organic form and that free verse

alone is organic form. One may certainly say that free verse rightly understood is organic form. But the logic of Read's definitions forces this conclusion on us that free verse also can be used as abstract form. But why do forms that were used or could be used organically, come to be used in an abstract manner?

Read offers a very brief sociological explanation of this phenomenon. He says: "The transition from the organic type to the abstract always coincides with the transition from a period of stress and energy to a period of satiety and solidity . . ."[11] (Incidentally, Read derives this thesis from Wilhelm Worringer, "my esteemed master in the philosophy of art".) The implication of Read's explanation is that a period of "solidity and satiety" loses its creative vitality and depends on forms evolved and used for a particular purpose in the past. And one may add that this is what happened in the eighteenth century, in which "every warbler had his tune by heart". This is a large generalization, and as in the case of any sweeping generalization, its validity is not above question. But what I mean is that as compared with the poetry of the Elizabethan and Romantic periods, eighteenth century poetry is not remarkable for its technical innovation and experimentation. And technical innovation, it need hardly be said, is an index to one's struggle for achieving authentic expression. Organic form, as I have said before, is an ideal of authentic expression.

Use of abstract form shows lack of concern for such an ideal. Perhaps a period of "satiety and solidity" does not breed such a concern!

After having related the distinction between organic form and abstract form to the distinction between a period of "stress and energy" and a period of "satiety and solidity", he goes on to assert that this is precisely the "historical distinction" between romantic and classical periods. The romantic period is one of stress and energy, and the classical period is one of "satiety and solidity". This is a well-known historical connection and it is not this perception of the obvious that is significant in Read's discussion of organic form. It is his discussion of the psychological ramifications of the concept that is original and penetrating.

On page 11 of Form in Modern Poetry, Read says that "upon the nature of his [poet's] personality depends the form of his poetry". Read is using the word "personality" loosely here in the sense of "psychological make-up". What he means is that whether the form is organic or abstract depends on whether the poet has "personality" or "character". This is what he implies when he makes the following remark:

> That is, indeed, the opposition [between personality and character]. I wish to emphasise; and when I have said further that all poetry . . . is the product of the personality, and therefore inhibited in a character, I have stated the main theme of my essay.[12]

He does not mean that character is not capable of producing

poetry entirely. What he means is that the poetry of character does not have organic form. As the opposite of poetry of personality, which has organic form, the poetry of character, it follows, has abstract form. The significance of these "psychological ramifications" is that organic form is not just an aesthetic ideal. It also implies a psychological ideal--the ideal of personality. Recovery of organic form is nothing less than a recovery of personality. Read's ideal of integrated personality, which we have discussed in one of the previous chapters, ties in with his aesthetic ideal.

When we turn to the next most significant discussion of organic form, which occurs in The True Voice of Feeling, we discover that he has acquainted himself with the metaphysical dimension of the romantic theory of organic form. In the intervening twenty-one years he had analysed the scientific and psychoanalytic aspects of form in the fine arts. (I have in mind mainly his essay on Surrealism (1936) and Education Through Art (1942). But these analyses need not detain us since they are not relevant to the topic under consideration, namely, organic form in poetry. It has emerged from our analysis of Read's discussion so far that the phrase "organic form" is really speaking a short-hand for "organic use of form (metre or free verse) which secures a fusion of form and content and eliminates artifice in rhythm and diction". It would be interesting to see how this

aesthetic ideal had metaphysical significance for romantic critics.

Read says:

> The principle of organic form, the specifically romantic principle as I shall call it, rests on one of the most fundamental distinctions known to philosophy--variously expressed as the distinction between essence and existence, universals and particulars natura naturans and natura naturata.[13]

Previously, he had understood "organic form" in terms of "fusion" of various elements. But he had not shown awareness of the fact that for romantic critics organic form is much more than an aesthetic ideal. Organic form is to them, in a manner of speaking, a "raid on the "absolute", an "assault" on the unknown, a thrust beyond the realm of existence into that of essence. He had said in the '30's that organic form is directed by emotion and intuition. He finds support for this view in Schelling. But the intuitive origin of organic form has for Schelling a metaphysical significance: such an origin makes the "essence" available to the poet. As Read puts it:

> . . . the romantic principle asserts that form is an organic event, proceeding from the intuitive experience of the artist. The form is realized by the artist in the act of intuition: in the moment of his penetration of the veil of appearances that separates man from the realm of essence.[14]

As opposed to organic form, which belongs to the realm of essence, abstract or geometric form or shape belongs to the realm of appearances. What belongs to the realm of existence cannot express essence without deforming it. How is it

expressed then?

> Form belongs to the realm of essence and is abstracted from it by the mediating genius of the artist--genius, in this sense, being not the artist himself, but an unconscious power which he possesses (or which possesses him) and which enables him for a moment to identify himself with the formative energy of the universe, with natura naturans.[15]

Read does not accept the notion that artists have "special powers of revelation". Though he accepts the concept of essence, he is not prepared to go all the way with Schelling. As a matter of fact, he is a little apologetic about the whole metaphysical thesis.

He is apologetic about the thesis because it involves so much "metaphysical speculation". This sounds strange because he himself is inclined to move in that direction quite often. However, making a concession to the empiricist in him, he seeks to "disengage the speculative element" from the theory. He scrubs the metaphysical mist and states the hypothesis in these terms:

> The form of a work of art is inherent in the emotional situation of the artist; it proceeds from his apprehension of situation (a situation that may involve either external objective phenomena or internal states of mind) and is the creation of a formal equivalence (i.e. a symbol) for that situation. It resists or rejects all attempts to fit the situation to a ready-made formula of expression, believing that to impose such a general shape on a unique emotion or intuition results in insincerity of feeling and artificiality of form.[16]

Stated in these terms, the "hypothesis" is substantially the same as the one he formulated in Form in Modern Poetry. Organic form is the "creation of a symbol" for the situation

the poet is treating of. This almost sounds like saying that it is the creation of an objective correlative. In the creation of this symbol the poet does not harbour any kind of artifice--artifice in diction or rhythm, for example. Thus he secures precise, authentic and sincere expression. The only difference--and it is a minor one--between this particular formulation of Read's hypothesis and his 1932 formulation is that the latter, while it stresses emotion and intuition, does not refer to "external objective phenomena" explicitly.

However, since the "scientific formulation" does not take cognizance of the metaphysical aspect of the romantic theory of form, it loses in profundity what it gains in intelligibility. It simply does away with the view that form is a projection or revelation of "essence"; form is looked upon as the creation of an "equivalence for a situation". The very use of the word "situation" is significant. It refers more to the realm of appearances than to the realm of essence! In short, the "scientific formulation" is totally inadequate to describe the complexities of poetic composition as envisaged by romantic critics. It does not, moreover, reflect the views that Read had evolved in his theory by this time. It ignores his view (first stated in his critical writings in 1938) that the image as symbol is "exploratory" and therefore more than an "objective correlative". But this eruption of the "scientific

spirit" should only remind us of the fact that Read's mind was a battleground of two forces, science and metaphysics. As a matter of fact, as I shall point out soon, half-way through the book we find him thinking in terms that are not strictly scientific.

However, most of the previous strands of his speculation on organic form are gathered together in the "scientific" formulation quoted above. He asserts the priority of emotion. When he advocates rejection of "ready-made forms of expression" he is harking back to the idea of "fusion of structure and content" and the idea that poetry follows the laws of its "own being", both of which ideas he had expressed in 1932. Besides, in 1953 he gives the same sociological explanation of abstract form that he offered in 1932. Commenting on the tendency to geometric form he says:

> The tendency to geometric and symmetric form in art is universal and always ends, unless checked, in academic clichés. The process, historically, is generally parallel to a development of social structures of an equally rigid and mortal character.[17]

"Rigid social structures" could be said to be characteristic more of a "period of satiety and solidity" than of a period of "stress and energy". So one may say that Read is reiterating here the view he expressed in 1932 that there is a relationship between goemetric form and a period of stability, satiety and solidity. He had also said that organic form--the diametrical opposite of the abstract--is

characteristic of a period of "stress and energy". He continues to hold this view in 1953, though he does not express it directly. This is how he suggests it indirectly: "A relationship may perhaps be established between the capacity for transformation and the possibility, under stress, of further evolution in human consciousness".[18] "Capacity for transformation" would seem to indicate a period of "stress and energy" of which organic form is characteristic. But now organic form acquires what I may call a "metaphysical" function. Why? For expressing the new evolving consciousness of this period, organic form is necessary. By its very nature the former would be too elusive and fluid for the "container" of abstract form to capture. Organic form alone can express this consciousness faithfully, and precisely. This does not mean, however, that abstract form is good enough for expressing the consciousness of a period of solidity. Unconcern for organic form is a part of the solidity-syndrome. Abstract form is always a deadly sin in Read's universe.

There is one more point in respect of which we can compare the 1932 account of organic form with the one given in 1953: Is free verse the only vehicle of organic form according to Read? At least one critic thinks so. In his review of <u>The True Voice of Feeling</u>, Donald Davie writes: "Greater difficulties arise from Sir Herbert Read's identification of 'organic form' with 'free verse'."[19]

Some of the views expressed in The True Voice of Feeling may seem to justify Davie's charge against Read. For instance, Read tries to demonstrate that the metre of "Christabel" is irregular, "even more irregular than Coleridge had forewarned us in his Preface".[20] He does not go so far as to say that it is free verse but his contention is that it does not have a fixed metrical pattern and that its rhythm is free in order to meet the needs of expression. It is possible that Davie took this to mean that according to Read organic form and metre are antithetical to each other. The comment which is more likely, however, to have given occasion for Davie's accusation is the one Read makes in the course of his discussion of blank verse. Read says: "My contention is that blank verse is virtually free verse, and that precisely at its most poetic, is most irregular."[21] So it may seem as if according to Read the merit of blank verse is that it is free verse, that the supreme merit of a metrical form is to approximate to free verse, and that free verse alone is the vehicle of organic form.

I think Read overstates his case. If blank verse is "virtually free verse", free verse must be freer verse. Free verse is not a product of irregularities. Its metrics are accentual rather than quantitative. But surely Read could not be unaware of the nature of free verse. Himself a practitioner of free verse, he has discussed the theory of free verse in The True Voice of Feeling. How is it that he

overstates his case then? It seems to me that he overstates it because he operates with a peculiar notion of traditional metrical forms which becomes clear in the course of his discussion of "Christabel" and Wordsworth's blank verse. (See pages 27, 28 and 47-49 of The True Voice of Feeling.) He points out, for example, that a large proportion of Wordsworth's verses are not regular iambic pentameters, that a large proportion of them have more than ten syllables each, that the stresses are unevenly distributed and that many lines have less than five stresses each. That is the "irregularity" of Wordsworth's blank verse! Read starts with a very mechanical notion of blank verse, discovers that it is not really applicable to the blank verse as written by Shakespeare, Milton or Wordsworth, and instead of realizing that such a mechanical conception of blank verse was never held by anyone except perhaps pedants and poetasters, he comes to the conclusion that because blank verse is not mechanically regular, it is therefore free verse. However, the significance of his willingness to describe the experimental metre of "Christabel" and Wordsworth's blank verse as "free verse" is that Read does not dismiss metrical form per se as being incapable of expressing organic form. In so far as these metrical forms are not mechanical, regular patterns, and in so far as they are capable of responding to the needs of expression, they can convey organic form. What he describes as "irregularities" are the result of

attempts on the poet's part to make the metre correspond with the transitions of the imagery or feeling or thought. Read has pointed out such "irregularities" in Wordsworth and Coleridge. One could point them out in many more poets who have employed metrical forms with imagination, skill and sensitivity. While it is true that Read believes that free verse is eminently suited to express organic form, one could say that his discussion of "Christabel" and Wordsworth's blank verse demonstrates that metrical forms can achieve the same end provided that they are capable of admitting "irregularities", irregularities being an indication of how "free" the metrical forms are and, also, how resilient to follow the contours of experience.

I would go further and say that as far as traditional metrical forms are concerned, these "irregularities" (John Crowe Ransom may describe them as "metrical texture") give an indication of how "organic" the form is. For it is clear that according to Read, geometric form is metrical form mechanically used, and, therefore, free from irregularities. My contention is that if the poem can give us a hint of what the mechanical form might have been, the organic form can be felt, realized, appreciated and judged by the reader with the help of "irregularities" against the shadow of the mechanical form lurking in the background. The metrical pattern provides us with this hint because, as I have already said, mechanical form is the result of a mechanical

employment of metrical form and metrical pattern. The violations of the metrical pattern are a reminder to the reader of the poet's struggle to achieve organic form, and one may learn from them how the poet followed the contours of his experience. Read's own discussions of the metre of "Christabel" and Wordsworth's blank verse are possible because he knows the basic regular pattern of each of these metrical forms.

Free verse, on the other hand, does not provide a hint of the mechanical form. Therefore,one cannot speak of "irregularities" in connection with it and one cannot judge the poet's struggle to achieve organic form. We do not see the form evolving before our eyes. We do not see the poet in his "workshop". It would be easier to judge and appreciate how organic the form is if the reader has even a vague idea of what the mechanical form might have been like. In the absence of such a hint we take the poet on trust. Read himself was baffled by the question of how to judge organic form. "Frankly, I do not know how we are to judge form except by the same instinct that creates it."[22] The organic form of a poem then, it would seem, could be judged only by the poet's peers. But such a conclusion is not altogether inescapable. If in the expression of organic form the poet provides us with a hint of mechanical form, one is provided with a point of departure for a critical exploration. Does expression of organic form in free verse provide us with

such a point of departure?

I would suggest that we apply to Read's free verse his approach to traditional metrical forms. This may be critically unorthodox. But such an approach does work in the case of Read's poetry. While judging the form of a poem in free verse, one could look for interplay of rhythms, one could also see what the dominant rhythm is and how often it has been departed from and why. In short, the technique that could be applied to verse in metrical forms could be applied to free verse too. Besides, one could examine expression with reference to the meaning and the mood a poem conveys. Since every verse is part of an overall poetic strategy for "defining" experience and conveying "meaning", its role in achieving definition of experience could be discussed with reference to the idea that one forms of it from the poem itself. We shall test the validity of these contentions with reference to Read's poetry, to which we may now turn since after <u>The True Voice of Feeling</u> there is no further significant discussion of organic form in his critical writings.

CHAPTER VII

"POETRY A PENNON": HERBERT READ'S POETRY

> Fate would be unkind if it buried his verse under the Coleridgean mountain of his prose. Luckily, poets in England seem to survive longer than thinkers.[1]

> My greatest ambition was to be recognized as a poet, but I soon learned that the modern world has little use for poets in general, and less for me in particular.[2]

Commenting on Read, F. Brantley says:

> His great dissatisfaction with his own world has led him to different perspectives--surrealism, Freudianism, a reverting to the subjects of the romantic poets--and all are reflected to some degree in his "Collected Poems".[3]

We have considered in detail in the third chapter the theory of poetry that Read developed in his Surrealistic period. We have also discussed his romanticism and the two inalienable aspects of it, namely, imagism and organic form. One may ask as to what extent these "perspectives", these views we have been analysing are reflected in Read's poetry. We shall be concerned with this question in the present chapter.

It should be pointed out that the assumptions underlying this question are twofold. One of them is that Read's poetic theory influences his practice. The other assumption is that there is a "one-way" relationship between his poetry and poetics. In other words, it seems to be assumed that his poetry does not determine or shape or modify his poetics

but that the latter is reflected in the former.

As regards the first assumption it may be pointed out that Read himself tells us in his "In Defence of Shelley", that "a clear conception of poetry does not necessarily imply an ability to put precept into practice". It is quite conceivable that Read could be an accomplished theorist and an execrable practitioner. My contention here, however, will be that Read's poetry does illustrate his poetics. As regards the second assumption I may say that one does not have convincing evidence to prove that Read's poetics was an outcome of his "poetry-workshop". This is not to say, however, that he developed his poetic theory apart from experience of poetry or aesthetic experience in general. One who insisted on a sensational basis even for his metaphysical concepts could not have theorized about poetry without experience of poetry.

Both his philosophical and empirical (scientific) theorizing about poetry is conducted with reference to aesthetic experience, experience of poetry in general. For example, the concept of intuition as "a sudden perception of pattern in life" is the basis of his principle of form in poetry, free verse being looked upon as the technique that serves to extricate this pattern from the circumambient chaos, and render it in words. To give another instance, he elucidates his distinction between personality and character with apt illustrations from English poetry. What

I would like to maintain is that though his poetics is related to poetry in general and that though his poetry is related to his poetics, the relationship between his poetry and poetics is different from the relationship between, say, Eliot's poetry and his poetics. Unlike the case of Eliot, the relationship between Read's poetry and his poetics is not dialectical. What I mean is that his poetry and poetics do not seem to enter into a mutually creative partnership. I shall restate the comparison between Eliot and Read.

That Eliot's criticsm runs parallel to his poetry is a view that is widely accepted. This kind of parallel is perhaps inevitable when the poetic theorist is himself a poet. An attempt could be made to show that there is the same kind of parallel between Read's theory and his poetry. The point of the comparison is, however, different. There exists a "dialectical" relationship between Eliot's criticism and his poetry, each influencing the other and being influenced by the other. The same kind of relationship could not be said to exist between Read's poetry and his poetics. Let us consider this question in some detail.

R. P. Blackmur has discussed the dialectical relationship between Eliot's poetry and his theory in terms of a metaphor of locomotion. He says:

> . . . we have only to think of how this criticism runs parallel to his poetry. There is a gap between, but the attraction across the gap is so strong that one train often runs on the other's track. For Lancelot Andrewes is only understandable when "Ash-Wednesday"

> and "Little Gidding" have been well read, and I rather suspect that all three need, at some point but not at all points, the backward illumination of "The Hippopotamus" . . . .[4]

Now, one cannot say of any of Read's critical books that it is "only understandable" when certain poems have been "well read". The reason for this phenomenon may be sought in the fact that Read has a remarkable talent for abstract thought and that his bent of mind is theoretical, scholarly, and "academic" in the best sense of that word. He is more speculative than Eliot and is always ready to follow the leads provided by various disciplines ranging from behaviourism, through Freud, Jung, the Gestaltists to Marx, Whitehead, Cassirer, Collingwood, Coleridge, Schelling and Hulme. Not that he cuts himself adrift from poetry. But his theory is less governed by his poetry than Eliot's theory is governed by his. His poetics is not, therefore, "manufactured" in his poetry workshop. It controls the "workshop". In support of my view I may refer to his discussion of "Love and Death" and "A Dream" in his "Myth, Dream and Poem", published in Collected Essays.[5] He takes care to point out that they bear out his critical principles. His discussion of the poems is not conducted in such a manner as to suggest that he arrived at these critical views as a result of his poetic practice, or poetic experience. It seems to me then that there is not that intimate and dialectical relationship between his poetry and poetics which characterizes Eliot's poetry and poetics. But one

can discuss Read's poetry in the light of his poetic theory and see to what extent the former is related to the latter.

What is the exact nature of the relationship between Read's theory of poetry and his poetry? This question can be approached in different ways. We can ask ourselves if his theory has a bearing on the content of his poetry. We can also ask ourselves if we can abstract any principles or critical details from it which will be of help to us in a technical discussion of his poetry. And finally, we can also ask if his theory can help us to explain certain characteristics of his poetry. These questions are not mutually exclusive. For example, when one discusses the introspective character of his poetry, one must refer to the content of his poetry in order to illustrate how it is introspective. But on the whole these questions provide a convenient and elastic framework within which to pursue our inquiry. I shall first attempt a broad characterization of his poetry with reference to his theory, then discuss some specific instances where his theory directly bears on its content, and finally go on to discuss his poetry with reference to his views on signs and symbols and organic form.

II

"I limit my search to myself", says the Second Voice in "Moon's Farm".[6] If one were to devise a motto for Read's poetry, one might suggest "Of the self-search I sing" as a possible candidate. candidate because it describes one of his main themes. Now, such a search

is endless because the self is endless. Read has expressed this idea himself:

> But the ancient man who said
> that the sun was new every day
> had spent his life seeking himself.
> But the same ancient man said
> that though you travel in every direction
> you will never find the boundaries of the self
> so deep is the logos of it.
> And that is the truth I have discovered.[7]

Read's poetry is an attempt to explore the self, the "state of subjectivity"--a characteristically romantic preoccupation. Therefore his poetry has the introspective quality he associates with romanticism. I shall discuss this point with reference to a few of his poems.

Consider his war poetry, for example. It is quiet and subdued in tone. It is contemplative. It is reflective. It is introspective. The war raises for him issues on which he sees it fit not to expend sarcasm, bitterness, irony or satire--the universal stock-in-trade of war poets. That is why he is a unique war poet. The difference between Sassoon's war poems and Read's is the difference between one who records his reactions to experience and one for whom experience is a point of departure for an exploration of the self. For exploration of the self is not identical with "documentation" of urgent personal reactions. This accounts for the reflective or philosophical nature of Read's poetry and its ruminative tone--ruminative in a hauntingly personal manner characteristic of the great romantic poets. His persistent questioning, his agonized

search for the meaning of experience and his relentless probing beneath the surface of external events are part of his exploration of the self. I shall illustrate these observations with reference to Read's "The End of a War".

It is significant that this major war poem of Read's was not published till fifteen years after the war. Obviously it is not a record of "urgent personal reactions", but emotion recollected in tranquillity. Here is an attempt made not to record experience but to transmute experience into poetry. He selects an average gruesome incident from the war as a "focus" for his feelings. But he is not interested in the incident per se, which is described in the "Argument" preceding the poem. He probes beneath the events, and examines the consciousness of the major participants in the gruesome incident--the German officer, the English officer and the French girl. But I must stress this point that the poem is not an examination of the attitudes and motives that caused the Great European War. It is an examination of the universal aspects of human nature. It probes such subjects as love, pride, generosity, defiance, God and the relationship of mind to matter. But what we have here is not a disquisition in a distant, neutral tone. These subjects come up for the two officers as each confronts himself. We witness the moment of self-realization. The poem is therefore an exploration of "states of subjectivity", and is intensely introspective. It is truly

Wordsworthian.

The same concern with one's state of subjectivity is evidenced in Read's "Ode Written During the Battle of Dunkirk", a moving examination of the consciousness of a First World War soldier reacting to:

> twenty years
> without design

that have led to:

> This is the hour of retribution
> the hour of doom, the hour of extreme unction
> the hour of death.[8]

What will bring the "war-weary world" "the perennial release from fear?" It is characteristic of this "introverted", introspective, romantic poet that he should plead for "organic development" of the self as a means of achieving "release from fear":

> The self, passively receiving
> illusion and despair
> . . . . . .
> returns reluctantly upon its self
> grown like a bud
> petal by petal
> exfoliated from an infinite centre
> the outer layers bursting and withering
> the inner pressure increasing
> seeking the light
> and the flush of colour born of light.[9]

This accurate representation of botanical growth also states an ideal for human growth. But such a growth is not easily achieved; it must be sought for. And it must also be sedulously preserved:

Shield the shoot
interpose a misty veil
water the root
this flower shall exhale
its scented peace.[10]

Read is speaking here of an ideal growth, an ideal subjectivity, an ideal consciousness. Nineteenth century romantics spoke of the limitless possibilities of the self. Their twentieth century successor does not question that belief. But he is intensely aware of the hostile environment in which it must be nurtured with tenderness. For

The sun
has a hot dry breath.[11]

Besides the ideal of organic development (the manifestation of which on the literary level is the principle of organic form), another important component of romanticism, as we have already observed in the chapter on "Romanticism", is the "sense of wonder". The second Voice in "Moon's Farm" says:

That [wonder] is another of my pet words.[12]

In his "The Gold Disc" he says:

Why in this dry autumnal season
should the Castalian wonder never cease?[13]

Indeed, why? The reason is that the sense of wonder implies an infinite capacity to be surprised. It implies an attitude or a frame of mind which is receptive to what it is not familiar with, and which does not look upon the familiar as being explained once and for all. It also implies, as I suggested in my chapter on romanticism, an awareness of, or

an inclination to search for, the "essence" underlying "existence". Or, as Read puts it, the sense of wonder is connected with the ability to realize a "pattern" in the universe:

> We say we are lost in wonder
> as though it were a forest
> or a sea.
> But wonder invades us like the warmth of the sun.
> Our very consciousness expands when we discover
> some corner of the pattern of the universe
> realize its endless implications
> and know ourselves
> to be part of that intricate design.14

(Incidentally, we may recall that early in his career Read defined intuition as the ability to perceive a pattern in the universe.) Once man realizes the pattern, he is capable of creating beauty:

> Out of that labyrinth
> The man emerges: becomes
> What he is: can only seize
> The pattern in the bone, in branching veins
> In clever vesicles and valves
> And imitate in acts that beauty.15

All creation is "God's festival of perfect form", the word "form" being clearly used here as a synonym for "pattern". It hardly needs to be made clear that "pattern" to Read is not mere "physical pattern", though the word "pattern" may seem to be so used at times. For detection of essence underlying existence is also a discovery of a pattern. Read's "Moon's Farm" is an exploration of the essence of his existence, and through his existence, of existence in general.

Consider the theme of "Moon's Farm". The poet returns here because:

In the end
I came back here
to the scene of my birth and infancy.
I thought I might find the truth about myself here.[16]

The poet is assisted in his exploration of himself, in an understanding of the essence of things, by Two Voices. The familiar, natural scene becomes the source of self-revelation. He comes to realize that he is part of "that intricate design" of the "pattern of the universe". Incidentally, there is something Wordsworthian about this approach to the "familiar". He has the Wordsworthian ability to make the familiar strange, and like Wordsworth, he does it by reflecting on his existence and understanding the "pattern" of his life, in the setting of Moon's Farm where

> It was always 12:25 at Moon's Farm.
> 12:25 is God's time.[17]

Read's ideal of organic development (best illustrated in nature) and his sense of wonder (which realizes organic pattern in the universe) lead him to the world of nature, which is the source of his poetic inspiration. In other words, his romanticism determines the choice of his subjects. In support of this observation I shall quote a remark of his from Poetry and Anarchism which reveals his yearning for the world of nature, and his opposition to industrialism:

> I despise the whole industrial epoch--not only the plutocracy which it has raised to power, but also the industrial proletariat which it has drained from the land and proliferated in hovels of indifferent brick. The only class in the community for which I feel any

> real sympathy is the agricultural. Deep down my attitude is a protest against the fate which has made me a poet in an industrial age.[18]

It is not surprising then that the pastoral note should be present in his poetry. Reacting against industrialism, which destroys the sense of man's organic relation to nature, he turns to subjects which reveal this organic relationship. For an emphatic statement of this organic ideal we may turn to "The Visionary Hermit":

> I saw myself
> a bud thrusting through the black soil
> a point of green fire
> sucked upward by the sun
>
> I thought I could gather
> a unity from the air
> that my exfoliated petals
> would radiate from a golden eye
>
> My sense in the soil
> my stem an upright channel
> my tender twigs
> stretched towards the limits of the glittering sky.[19]

"My sense in the soil", "a unity from the air", "sucked upward"--these are revealing phrases. They reveal a desire for organic unity with nature and the universe. They reveal a desire for being part of "the pattern of the universe".

In poem after poem he suggests how this organic unity obtains in nature. "Summer Rain", for example, shows how created objects move in unison. Water

> like a blush of blood
> returns to the parch'd rood.[20]

The fox leaves "his fetid hovel"; "odours rise from thyme and fennel"; the worm "blindly renews his upward undulation".

And

> The soil respires as if in emulation
> of living things.

Death too is an organic part of this universe:

> A warm breath
> issues from the nostrils beneath
> the mask of death.[21]

"Aubade" is another poem where this sense of organic unity is revealed though a moving use of imagery:

> my body is a beaten
> silver leaf
> If I rise
> it will wrinkle
> a tinsel pod.[22]

These are not "precious" images. The images reveal the poet's sense of participation in created matter. But he is also aware that the modern man has lost this sense of organic unity. Addressing the nightingale, he says in "Day's Affirmation":

> But now it is different:
> you sing but we are silent
> our hearts too sadly patient
> all these years.[23]

The real significance of all romantic apostrophes to birds is the awareness they express of the unity of life.

III

We have considered so far how the romantic ideal of organic development and organic unity, and the romantic principle of the sense of wonder (realization of pattern in the universe) are expressed in his poetry. We have also seen how his romanticism has determined the choice of his subjects.

And we have also observed how intensely introspective his poetry is in keeping with his definition of romanticism as an "introverted" attitude. It remains to inquire if any other aspects of his theory can help us to understand the content of his poetry.

I may point out that the Freudian strand of the "scientific" level of Read's poetic theory cannot be of direct help to us in discussing his poetry because, for a successful application of the Freudian hypothesis, one ought to possess relevant, detailed information of a psychological nature which one cannot expect the poet to give in his poetry. Nor can the Jungian strand supply us with the analytical tools necessary for that purpose. However, acquaintance with these two strands of the scientific level of his theory helps us to detect the significance of some of his poems. We shall first consider the Freudian "strand" with reference to his poetry and then proceed to the Jungian one.

Let us see to what extent the Freudian strand can be helpful. I shall not discuss Read's "Love and Death", and "A Dream" for Read himself has pointed out the bearing of psychoanalytic concepts on the first two.[24] I shall point out how our understanding of "The Analysis of Love" is enhanced by our acquaintance with these concepts. Consider, for example, the following stanzas from Section 2 of this poem:

My capillaries disperse
 A large foliage of cells,
She enters my red shade like a woodpecker
 Fluttering against me with spread wings.

Up and down my galled trunk
 She travels with a petulant bill
And satiate sings
 In the moist shadow of my intricate heart.[25]

Here we have a precise description in imagistic terms of sexual intercourse. An amateur Freudian would readily point out the symbolic significance of "trunk", "bill" and "woodpecker". But it is not necessary to labour the obvious. What I may pause to comment on, however, is the exploratory metaphor of "foliage of cells". "Foliage" grows into "trunk". The "woodpecker" that has entered the "shade" "fluttering" with spread wings--incidentally, this suggests the initial excitement of the lovers and their embracing--begins to "travel" "up and down" the "trunk". The metaphor develops in an organic and inevitable fashion.

Section 7 also gains from one's acquaintance with the psychoanalytic framework:

Since you are finite you will never find
 The hidden source of the mind's emotion;
It is a pool, secret in dusk and dawn,
 Deep in the chartless forest life has grown.

Since you are blind you do not see
 The thirsting beasts peer from gnarled roots
And creep to the brink, at noon,
 To lap with rough tongues, rippling the
 burnished serenity.

--This mind which is collected
 From many tricklings, of dew and rain
Of which you are the chief
 And freshest in its depths.[26]

The first stanza refers to "the collective unconscious", and the second to "the id". If we recognize this, we can recognize the significance of the last two lines. In spite of all the forces the poet is subject to, his beloved represents to him the most important level of his being. It is a very fine compliment to the beloved. And I believe that a Freudian beloved (or reader) would understand its subtlety, its depth and its genuineness.

The more important influence on Read's poetry has been that of Jung. We may recall that Read came to attach great importance to the archetype in his theory of poetry. The poet is supposed to reactivate archetypes and thus secure the integration of the conscious with the unconscious. The archetypes he has sought to reactivate in his "Mutations of the Phoenix" and "Daphne" are those of rebirth and light respectively. The phoenix is a symbol of rebirth and transformation *par excellence*. Daphne is a symbol of light. Let us briefly consider how he has established the relevance of these symbols to modern times.

His "Mutations of the Phoenix" may seem to achieve a new interpretation of the myth by calling on the "bird of terrible pride" to "leave the incinerary nest" to

> survey the world;
> hover against the highest sky;
> menace men with your strange phenomena.[27]

That the phoenix should be a *strange* phenomenon and "*menace* the men" suggests our paralysing loss of belief in the

possibility of spiritual rebirth and transformation. Indeed, Read writes:

> Utter shrill warnings in the cold dawn sky;
> let them descend
> into the shutter'd minds below you.
> Inhabit our wither'd nerves.[28]

Clearly, our "shutter'd minds" and "wither'd nerves" need the ministrations of the phoenix: The phoenix must "spread his red wings". In short, Read is asking for a <u>saviour</u>. And in so far as he looks upon the phoenix as a saviour, he may seem to have interpreted the myth anew. But we must remember that Christianity had already invested the phoenix with that role. As Jung tells, "in Christian hermeneutics the phoenix is made an allegory of Christ, which amounts to a reinterpretation of the myth".[29] It would seem then that Read has spiritualized the pagan myth and de-christianized its Christian interpretation.

He has, however, offered an entirely new interpretation of the myth of Daphne. Daphne is a pattern of organic unity with nature. She was "rooted" but her senses did not decay. "Voices of innocence" celebrated "the god's defeat" as well as

> her unison with the green
> organic wealth of trees
> a dialogue with zephyrs
> an intercourse with birds and bees.[30]

Daphne is a source of enlightenment:

> Daphne enlightened a darker mind
> and drove the shadow from the place
> where love should be enshrined.[31]

She shows that

> Beyond the reach of sickly lust
> and fretful strife
> there is a stillness of the flesh
> another mode of life
> in which the still inquiring mind
> a recompense for love may find.[32]

What is the significance of this re-interpretation of the myth of Daphne? Read's poem has achieved what in the Jungian level of his theory he expects of poetry. By linking the ancestral heritage, which is still alive in the unconscious, with the present, he establishes the vitally important connection between a consciousness oriented to the present moment and the collective unconscious which extends over infinitely long periods of time. Read has given a new expression to the archetype of light by reinterpreting the myth of Daphne. His interpretation makes Daphne "relevant" to us. She is above the evils we suffer from: lack of organic unity with nature, loss of love in lust and incapacity for the life of contemplation. She is presented as a symbol of enlightenment for the modern man.

Besides acquaintance with the Freudian and Jungian strands of the scientific level of his theory, acquaintance with the philosophical level of it also helps us to understand some of his poems. Unless one is aware of Read's views on reason and emotion, one misses the significance of his poem, "The Falcon and the Dove". It is an allegorical representation of the conflict between reason and emotion.

The falcon (the word appears in the title of the poem only) is identified as "high-caught, hooded Reason". The dove is a symbol of the imagination. But if one remembers that around this time the definition of poetry as "felt thought" was gaining ground, one would not be wrong in thinking that Read was trying to suggest this very idea and that, therefore, the dove could be taken as a symbol of emotion.

The popular notion of the irreconcilable nature of reason and emotion is suggested by the pair of birds Read has chosen to translate his idea of "synthesis" of reason and emotion. But the "translation" is rich in ambiguities. For the choice of these two "protagonists" conveys the notion that the discovery of Beauty (poetry) is a result of the subjugation of the dove by the falcon. But it is a poor synthesis which is based on the "liquidation" of one of the parties to it. To drop the facetious tone, one sees that reason is assigned the dominant role in the act of synthesis: the falcon hunts the dove. I would suggest that Read's representation of the conflict between reason and emotion shows that he is inclined to interpret reason in the sense of "rationality". Why? One associates the qualities of aloofness and aggressiveness with rationality. And these are the very qualities of Read's falcon. The impression, therefore, that one is left with is that emotion is powerless before reason. And that is exactly what Read says:

And now the falcon is hooded and comforted away.[33] As Professor Tschumi puts it: "Reason is ultimately the victor, yet must be dismissed at the end".[34] Clearly, this does not bring us anywhere near synthesis. Read has not succeeded in presenting his idea of "synthesis", of fusion, because he looks upon reason as being active, and emotion as being passive. And that reason is "comforted away" does not suggest a "synthesis" of reason and emotion. By pointing out the implications of his imagery, I have tried to suggest that one detects in his poetry at this time a tendency to use the word "reason" in the sense of "rationality"--a tendency that he showed in his criticism as well around the same time, as Middleton Murry has pointed out in his review of Reason and Romanticism.[35]

One comes across a more successful statement of the ideal of synthesis of reason and emotion in his "Ode Written During the Battle of Dunkirk". As I have pointed out in the first chapter, he had clearly defined for himself his integrationist conception of reason by this time. According to this conception, reason must be informed by all other mental functions in order that one may possess an integrated personality. Now, consider the following stanzas from the last section of this poem:

> The self perfected
> tranquil as a dove
> the heart elected
> to mutual aid.

Reason and love
incurv'd like a prow
a blade dividing
time's contrary flow.

Poetry a pennon
rippling above
in the fabulous wind.[36]

"The heart elected to mutual aid" suggests that emotion is not self-directed. "The self perfected tranquil as a dove" suggests that the self is not domineering and aggressive. ("The Falcon and the Dove".) It becomes clear from the first two stanzas that the "self" can be identified with "reason" and that the "heart" can be identified with "emotion". So what Read is saying is that reason and emotion must be informed by each other. "Reason and love incurved like a prow" suggests the perfection of the synthesis of reason and emotion. Such a synthesis enables one to navigate despite time's "contrary flow". In other words, an integrated, balanced personality can cope with our troubled times. And poetry is, therefore, a victory won from the heart of defeat. It is a "pennon" that adorns the "prow" (synthesis of reason and emotion) that divides like a blade. It seems to me that what Read is saying is that poetry is a natural concomitant of the synthesis of reason and emotion. And I may add that this poem is itself felt thought. For Read does not <u>describe</u> thought and emotion. He <u>expresses</u> them in terms of images, and by expressing them in terms of organically related images achieves an economy, unity, and tautness of expression which the more discursive "The Falcon and the Dove" does not have.

We have considered so far how the Freudian and Jungian strands of the scientific level of Read's theory can help us to understand the content and significance of some of his poems. We have also considered how acquaintance with the philosophical level of his theory is similarly useful. We have also characterized in Section I the broad characteristics of his poetry and pointed out his basic themes. In the course of our discussion so far we have touched on what I would describe as his "major" poems. Read did not name his major poems himself. A major critic and poet would hardly judge his own poems. However, he said very modestly that only a few of his poems "satisfy his own standards". While speaking of his standards, Read mentioned "intact form" as one of them. Another considerably important standard is the one which the distinction between signs and symbols supplies. Let us then consider some of the poems we have already referred to and a few others with reference to these "standards" which we have already discussed in our chapters on Imagism and Organic forms.

IV

Read distinguished between signs and symbols. Signs are related to "discursive consciousness" and symbols are related to "non-discursive consciousness". The one states the definite; the other explores states of consciousness. The one is rational; the other proceeds from the unconscious. The one is deliberate; the other, instinctive. Now, Read describes these

two types of consciousness in "Moon's Farm":

Yes: we have two voices
the instinctive voice that flows like water from a spring
or blood from a wound
and the intellectual voice that blares like a fanfare
from some centre in the brain.[37]

The instinctive voice flows; the intellectual voice "blares". The one flows gently and smoothly like a spring or blood; the other is loud and a little ostentatious. The one is natural like a spring or blood; the other is acquired like "some centre in the brain". For the poetic mind, however, it is the instinctive voice that is significant because it is spontaneous. And faith in spontaneous expression is one of the articles of Read's romantic faith--an article that he hardly tired of affirming.

The instinctive, spontaneous voice speaks in symbols; the intellectual voice speaks in signs. We have encountered this view in his critical writings and we have already discussed it in Chapter II. What I would like to draw attention to is the fact that the same view has been expressed by him in his poetry. Consider these lines:

I have always felt satisfied
with a natural outlook on life.
By this I do not mean
the outlook of what is called natural science.
Materialists of that kind
stand this side of the logos.
They assume
that their words and signs are fixed and measurable entities
that with their words and signs
they can explain the cosmos.

But it is merely a higher childishness
to go to the opposite extreme
that is to say
beyond the natural function of the logos
To assume the autonomous reality
of a realm with which we cannot communicate
except by means of the logos.
In the beginning was the word
and in the end are many words
nets to catch the butterfly truth.[38]

Read's insistence on words is inescapable. He challenges the "materialist" assumption that words are "fixed and measurable entities" and that with "fixed and measurable entities" one can "explain the cosmos". Words, according to him, are not "static". The materialist conception of words is static and such a conception renders words incapable of capturing a dynamic reality. What Read wants to point out is the exploratory character of words. He says that words are "nets to catch the butterfly truth". The phrase "butterfly truth" suggests the elusive nature of reality and the verb "catch" suggests the exploratory character of words. To the materialist conception of words as signs Read opposes his view of words as symbols--symbols that explore and illuminate the unknown. Signs cannot explain the cosmos. But symbols can. Discursive consciousness (which is associated with rationality and signs) has its limitations. Non-discursive consciousness (which is instinctive and spontaneous and employs symbols) is the poetic consciousness.

If we train the light of the above discussion on Read's poetry we discover that Read did not always use

words as symbols. Consider his "Harvest Home", for instance:

> The wagons loom like caravans in the dusk
> They lumber mysteriously down the moonlit lanes
> We ride on the stacks of rust gold corn
> Filling the sky with our song
>
> The horses toss their heads and harness-bells
> Jingle all the way.[39]

Mark the words "blue caravans", "rust-gold corn" and "mysteriously". These words are descriptive and explanatory only. They do not look beyond their descriptive purpose. They function as "signs" within this poem. Their connotational potential has not been fully realized by Read. They do not explore a situation; they transcribe it. The colours "blue" and "gold" only register impressions; "mysteriously" does not suggest any sense of mystery. And "moonlit lanes" looks suspiciously like an unfortunate survivor of the Georgian misadventure.

Or take another example:

> O dark eyes, I am weary
> of the white wrath of the sea.
>
> O come with me to the vernal woods
> the green sap and the fragrant
> white violets.[40]

The entire poem is a collection of clichés. And clichés, whether poetic or journalistic, use words as counters, which use represents the <u>lowest</u> level one can reach in the treatment of words as signs. However, I am not saying that signs are clichés. Treatment of words as signs <u>can</u> lead to cliché-formation. What I am really driving at is that

words are used as signs when one is not interested in their full connotational potential and when one uses them solely for the purpose of conveying an impression accurately. Consider the following lines:

> Rain-filled ruts
> reflect
> an apple-green sky.[41]

It is easy to recognize that words are used as signs here because what these lines convey is a precise statement of a certain impression. They do not invite you to look beyond the immediate, for their referents are clearly defined. I should not be understood to mean that precision as such is characteristic of signs only. What is characteristic of words as signs is their restrictive precision which does not make full use of the connotational potential of words.

How are words used as symbols? Consider the opening lines of "Winter Grief":

> Life so brief
> Yet I am old
> with an era of grief.[42]

These lines do not contain an image as such. Yet they are evocative. The evocativeness may be due to the contrast between "brief" and "era", "brief" and "old", and the joining together of these juxtaposed nouns and adjectives with a natural, almost unsought rhyme between "brief" and "grief". Each of these words comes to have an expanding field of referents. Their meaning is enriched as we read further in the poem and realize that the poem as a whole presents a

picture of universal sadness in which the earth and all living things share. In other words, since these words do not have a determined set of referents, they are open-ended as it were, and therefore function not as signs but as symbols.

This conception of words as signs is implied in Hulme's "Classicism and Romanticism", (I have made it clear in my chapter on Imagism that this essay reveals the classicist side of Hulme and should not be mistaken to represent Hulme's real critical position). According to this essay, the poet knows what he wants to say and he "bends" his medium to fit the contours of his vision. In other words, words are looked upon as passive counters which can be made to capture the poet's vision or his impressions. However, Hulme's own poetry shows that he did not look upon words as signs. But if this conception of Hulme's is adopted seriously, it will restrict the scope of poetry considerably. Poetry would cease to have exploratory value for words would be treated as signs. However, Read was not dominated by this conception of words as signs.

What we have said about words as signs and symbols applies to images also. One can use images as signs or one can use them as symbols. What I shall call the "illustrative metaphor" is an example of image as sign. What I shall call the "exploratory metaphor" is an instance of image as symbol. My use of the word "metaphor" in connection with

both images as signs and images as symbols may seem to go against Read's distinction between metaphors and symbols. But I argued in my chapter on Imagism that both metaphor and symbol depend on "resemblance" in spite of the fact that the former brings together two "known terms" and the latter, a known term and an unknown term. My purpose in using the words "illustrative metaphor" and "exploratory metaphor" is to show that they are two different uses of metaphor. We shall first discuss "symbols" or exploratory metaphors in Read's poetry and then turn to his illustrative metaphors.

Turning to images as symbols we find that in some instances an incipient image is taken up and developed and explored in such an organic relationship with the theme of the poem, that as the image grows the theme also is explored. This exploration is also illumination. Consider, for example, the following lines from Read's "Ode":

> The self, passively receiving
> illusion and despair
> excluding
> the unreal power of symbols
> the false shelter of institutions
> returns reluctantly upon its self
> grows like a bud
> petal by petal
> Exfoliated from an infinite centre
> the outer layers bursting and withering
> the inner pressure increasing
> seeking the light
> and the flush of colour born of light.[43]

These lines achieve such perfect identification between the "self" and the "bud" that half-way through them one ceases to be aware of the linking adverb "like" in the seventh

line. What follows in the last six lines is a sensitive exploration of the process of the growth of a bud into a flower. One is not made aware that the bud stands for the self. Nor does Read work out any "connections" between the various stages of the growth of a bud and the various stages of the growth of the self. If he had, the poem would have sounded artificial, contrived and rhetorical. By refusing to "work out" connections (which is in the tradition of what is usually called "oriental style") he leaves the symbol open for exploration by the reader. But the point is that he initiates the process of exploration, takes it as far as he can, and leaves the reader sufficient clues without sacrificing the effectiveness of his symbol. He covers the unknown with what is known in order to discover the unknown.

On the other hand an image may seem to give the impression of being exploratory. Consider the following lines from "Moon's Farm":

> There a man goes
> spinning out the thread of his destiny
> millions more are doing the same thing.
> The threads cross
> and turn
> and cross again
> and the pattern that emerges we call history.[44]

The incipient image is "the thread of destiny". One part of the metaphor, thread, is developed in terms of the procedure of weaving, and the two terms of the metaphor "thread of destiny" emerge as a more precise and more specific metaphor:

the pattern of history. In the previous example there was no such obvious identification of the terms of the metaphor. Read does not, for instance, introduce the phrase "flower of life" anywhere in the poem. His poem establishes the metaphor of "flower of life" without stating it baldly. This is possible because the relationship between the image and the theme is organic. But the relationship of

> The threads cross
> and turn
> and cross again

to the theme is not organic. They do not illuminate our understanding of the process of history, which they are presumably meant to. To sum up, we learn from the two quotations discussed above that the success of the exploratory metaphor is to be judged in relation to its bearing on the theme of the poem. If the relationship is organic, the metaphor is successful. If it is not organic, the metaphor only gives the illusion of being exploratory. I shall give a few more instances of the exploratory metaphor.

My first example comes from one of Read's early poems, "John Donne Declines a Benifice":

> Budded emotions swell and show green sheaths
> Piercing to their wanted light.
> From that I must gently cultivate
> Ingenious trees, threading their laths
> Of leaves and twigs into the air of heaven.[45]

The image of "budded emotions" is an exploratory metaphor, a symbol because it suggests the process of maturing and growth of emotions without being explicit about what exactly

this "growth" consists in. Read explores for us the various botanical stages of growth, starting with "buds" and reaching as far as the growth of these buds into "trees" with "leaves and twigs". He thus covers the unknown (emotions) with the known (buds, trees) in an effort to illuminate the unknown. Happily, he does not interfere with the process of exploration by attempting to make his "meaning" clear. That would have turned the symbol into a blatantly rhetorical and explanatory device. Nevertheless, by exploring one term of the metaphor he has thrown light on the other. What is significant about such a procedure is that it does not yield up its meaning, which is already there, without an effort on the reader's part to participate in the process of exploration. Let us make such an attempt.

The word "light" does not refer to physical light only. This becomes clear from the use of the word "heaven" in the last line. The first two lines suggest the upward, heavenward reaching out of emotions. The need for training, controlling and gently disciplining emotions so that they may flourish in the presence of heaven is suggested by the last three lines. "Gently cultivate" suggests disciplining of emotions. And that they should derive their sustenance from heaven and be blest by its presence is clearly indicated by the last line. Read's symbol is successful because it explores but does not explain.

My second instance of Read's exploratory metaphor

comes from his "Time and Being" (1965). I must quote extensively from the poem.

Beneath this black and tortured thorn
let us rest as we take our bearing
you and I in a universe
where nothing is unless we utter
and out of our words comes a Word.

Nothing existed and something is born
like a lamb on the cold green grass
our Word is bloody and hardly can stand
bedraggl'd in wind and bitten by thistle
a bleat of distress.

But it is ours this weanling cry
not a thought but a poem
it came out of the womb where nothing was
from the empty house of Being
in the time of another world.

Where the rafters are rough and the floors are bare
where the walls are blank and no vent
gives out on the world or the sea
and the only sound is the sound we make
the dole of our wondering lips.[46]

The image that I would like to draw attention to is the exploratory metaphor of the "house of being". It is with the help of one known term of the metaphor, "house", that he covers the other term, "being". The description of the house is precise. Its rafters are rough, it is bare, blank, closed and empty. The suggestion that he is making through this description of the house is that "being" is empty and inhospitable, and that our poetry is a response to it. The only occupant of this house is "our Word", "a bleat of distress", "weanling cry", "the dole of our wondering lip". In fact, this "Word" establishes "being". "Nothing is unless we utter". The image of the house supplies with the means

of understanding the nature of "being". This exploratory metaphor is a metaphysical symbol because it attempts to express a metaphysical idea. If we remember the philosophical level of Read's theory, the symbol becomes more intelligible. Read derived from Heidegger the idea that poetry is an "establishment of being."[47] This poem is essentially a statement of that idea.

I have tried so far to illustrate Read's concept of symbol or "exploratory metaphor" with reference to his poetry. We may now turn to his concept of "metaphor" or what I have called "illustrative metaphor". I may point out that when I use the expression "illustrative metaphor", I do not have in mind only the figure of speech called metaphor. For the purposes of this discussion similes also are treated as "illustrative metaphors". (For similes also bring two things together on the basis of their resemblance). With this preliminary explanation I shall turn now to a discussion of illustrative metaphors culled from various poems.

Let us consider the following lines from his "The Analysis of Love":

> There are moments when I see your mind
> Laps'd in your sex;
> When one particular deployment
> Is the reflex of incomplete attainment.
>
> These moments vanish
> Like lamps at daybreak:
> The wide and even light
> Is kind and real.[48]

The first two lines of the second stanza contain what is technically called a simile. It is a good example of what I have been calling "illustrative metaphor". The point of these two lines is not an exploration of the nature of these "moments". They are described directly without any attempt at suggesting the total psychological situation. He is more interested in capturing the swiftness and inevitableness with which "these moments" vanish. To put it differently, he selects one aspect of the total psychological situation and concentrates on conveying it in vivid terms. It is true that he covers an unknown (moments) with a known (lamp); but that is done for the purpose of illustrating a part of the total situation and not conveying the whole of it imagistically, which is what an exploratory metaphor would have achieved.

Let us consider a few examples of the illustrative metaphor. Consider these lines from "The Retreat":

> when in some sudden hush
> I fall a victim to the ghouls
> I buried years ago in a sepulchre
> of calm amnesia, then once more
> I see the screen the years have built
> Between this day and the patterns wrought
> In love and battle by the ecstatic heart.[49]

Here we have a metaphor, "sepulchre of calm amnesia". But it is not an exploratory metaphor, because in contrast with the examples of exploratory metaphor we have considered, it is not pursued further. It succeeds in being an objective equivalent of certain aspects of amnesia but it does not

go further than that. It does not have any "reverberations". Read does not hint that it could be explored further, or if it could be, how. In the absence of any such guidance from the poet, if the reader were to explore it further, he would be running the risk of turning the poem into an excuse for his interpretive fantasy--a phenomenon quite noticeable in some "explications" of modern poetry. The obvious conclusion then is that Read's metaphor here is illustrative and not exploratory.

I shall quote a few more examples of the illustrative metaphor. Consider the following lines from "Night Ride":

> their hands linkt
> across their laps
> their bodies loosely
> interlockt
>
> their heads resting
> two heavy fruits
> on the plaited basket
> of their limbs.[50]

This clever and elaborate metaphor presents the subject from outside. It realizes an impression in objective terms. But the objective terms do not contribute towards revealing the personalities of the young lovers who are about

> to face the fate
> of those who love
> despite the world.

Read presents us with an objective equivalent of his impression. Nevertheless, the effect of the metaphor is to prettify his subject. One may say that here is an

illustrative metaphor which is really decorative and a trifle trivial.

But an illustrative metaphor need not necessarily present its subject from outside. Consider the following line, for instance:

the Morse code of a boot and crutch[51]

This line is certainly an attempt at capturing a certain impression. Nevertheless, it succeeds in conveying more than just an impression which the metaphor from "Night Ride" does not. However, the illustrative image does not show a tendency to expand in its reverberations the way an exploratory metaphor does. Nor is the reader's response so guided by Read as to suggest that there are reverberations that one must listen for.

This detailed examination of some of Read's poems with specific reference to his distinction between images as symbols (exploratory metaphors) and metaphors (illustrative metaphors) has, I hope, established fairly convincingly that Read's poetic theory (or at least parts of it) is capable of practical and profitable application to poetry. This distinction has the beneficial result of making us look at the images presented by poetry carefully. For it makes it clear to us that not all images serve the same purpose. An awareness of this helps us to discriminate images and to determine their relative function. And Read as poet yields more to the reader if his distinction is

borne in mind. Why?

Read is a symbolist though he is sometimes described as a second generation imagist. Acquaintance with his poetic theory shows that he could be called an imagist only if one has in mind some of his poems published as "Eclogues", especially such poems as "The Pond", "April", "The Woodman", "Harvest", "Curfew", "Movement of Troops".[52] If, however, one is aware of his views on the image we have discussed in the fifth chapter, one realizes that Read is a symbolist. And if one looks at a symbolist through the spectacles of imagism as it is usually understood, one does not get the right perspective on the symbolist. One fails to do justice to the symbols. What with his use of the image as symbol from his early poetry, and his clear formulation of his symbolic ideal in the thirties and later in The Forms of Things Unknown, it is not surprising that K. L. Goodwin[53] regards him as having deviated from imagism. But Read was more faithful to Hulme the romanticist than many an "imagist". And like Hulme he remained faithful to the principle of organic form--more faithful than many an Amygist.

Read's theory of organic form is capable of practical application to poetry. We may recall how he analyses the metre of "Christabel" and Wordsworth's blank verse. He points out the great number of "irregularities" which occur in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's employment of their respective

metre. Such irregularities, he says, are functional. They are necessary for suggesting "transitions of passion and imagery". His consideration of Coleridge's (experimental) metre and Wordsworth's blank verse establishes the fact that in order to achieve organic form metres cannot be followed mechanically. It also implies that a consideration of the relationship between metre (rhythm) and meaning, rhythm and emotion and rhythm and imagery is important in a study of organic form. I propose to test these implications with reference to Read's poetry. I am aware of the fact that meaning cannot be studied apart from emotion and imagery, and that meaning, emotion, rhythm and imagery form a complex whole. But I would like to submit that one can broadly disengage these elements for the purposes of an analytic study. And the aim of my "analytic" study here is to prove that Read's concept of organic form is not just a vague and "untestable" generalization. The implications of his concept that I have referred to above are of central importance in any endeavour involving practical criticism.

I shall test these implications with reference to two poems, "Sonnet" and "Even Skein". I have selected a sonnet for discussion because in the case of a sonnet we know what its mechanical form should be. (Iambic pentametre, fourteen lines and Petrarchan or Shakespearean structure). And it may be recalled that I said in the last chapter that if one has an idea of what the mechanical form of a

poem might have been, it is possible to discuss whether the form it does have is organic. The second poem I have selected is in free verse and we shall see if one can discuss its "organic form".

The subject of the sonnet, "My hand that out of the silk subsiding waters", could be said to be summarized in the last two lines:

> She is a nymph and she is free
> And I am but a fettered ape.[54]

The rest of the poem has developed this contrast in imagistic terms. The "protagonist" of the poem is not exactly a love-lorn young man of traditional love poetry though his tone may seem to be somewhat romantic. The female protagonist is not exactly a "scornful" maid of traditional love poetry. The gulf between the protagonists is of a psychological nature. In spite of their physical intimacy there is an emotional distance between them. The subject of the sonnet is a certain state of mind of the male protagonist and it is this state of mind that is explored in the sonnet.

The imagery that Read employs for exploring this state of mind is organically related to it. The protagonist's feelings of loss and despair are sensitively suggested through the exploratory symbol of a ship-wrecked mariner. After the ship-wreck of the relationship the man finds himself floundering, despairing and bewildered. The woman is implicitly compared to the sea, her "cool breasts" being described as "curdled crest of the waves". It is

from this "sea" that the "mariner" is reaching out for help. But the "sea" is unaffected by the "ship-wreck". After having described her breasts as "curdled crest of wave", the poet goes on to say:

"But a heart beneath beats tranquilly"

The "tranquillity" of the woman is in complete contrast to the man's despair. Completely unaffected by the "ship-wreck",

her mind is wandering restlessly
Over the wide dominions of sense.

But the man's mind is rooted to the disaster. The octave ends on this note. The second "movement" consists of seven lines instead of the traditional six. Here the protagonist announces his resolve; "she is free"; he anticipates her sense of liberation. But he realizes that he himself is fettered. The last seven lines are a study in contrast of the opposed responses of the man and the woman to the new situation brought about by the man's declaration: "she is free".

It is not only the imagery that is organically related to the meaning, but the rhythm also shows an organic relation to the meaning and the mood the poem presents. Consider the first line, for example, of the first stanza:

My hand that out of the silk subsiding waters
Reaches in despair
Might be some ship-wrecked mariner's
And the cool soft breast it caresses
The curdled crest of a wave

The first line is an Alexandrine. It has four stresses and eight unaccented syllables. The basic rhythm is iambic. There are three modulating feet: a pyrrhic in the second foot, an anapaest in the third and an amphibrach in the last. This particular arrangement of feet is integrally related to the meaning of the first line. The pyrrhic followed by an anapaest gives the effect of "gliding" and that effect is prolonged by the addition of an unaccented syllable at the end of the line. Thus the metrical scheme of the first line is organically related to its content. The "irregularities" (to use Read's own expression) that one finds here in the form of three non-iambic feet are functional. The same can be said of the fourth line:

And the cool soft breast it caresses

The anapaest in the first foot is followed by an assertive spondee which is succeeded by an anapaest that is extended by the addition of an unaccented syllable. Unless I am being too fanciful, the rhythm suggests the effect of gentle motion that is arrested and flows again. Remove "and" from the line, and the effect is destroyed. If, for example, one places a comma at the end of the third line and removes "and" from the fourth, the broad meaning of the poem would not be affected. But then there would not exist the organic relationship between the meaning and the rhythm I have commented on.

For further proof of the organic relationship

between the rhythm, and meaning and emotion, let me turn to the first five lines of the second movement:

> She is free: I know her voice will sing
> Above the severed oaks: her steps
> Will be light as she proceeds
> Festively under a tree
> Dark as a falling assegai.

The rhythm of these lines is appropriate to the meaning and the mood they present. The two trochees in "She is free:" (I give the pause the value of an unaccented syllable) are counterbalanced by three iambic feet which swell through the second line to give place to an anapaest which is heightened by a pyrrhic and an iamb. Thus the rhythm enacts the contrast between the heaviness of the man's declaration and the cheerful sense of liberation the woman is expected to feel. But a certain sombreness is cast over the whole second movement by the halting dactyllic rhythm of the fourth line, which rhythm is emphasized by the trochaic rhythm of the last line. Once again the rhythm enacts the contrast between the woman's sense of liberation and the man's sense of being fettered. Indeed the co-operation between the rhythm and the meaning of the poem is remarkable.

It will be seen then that there are "irregularities" in the pattern of rhythm of this sonnet. But these irregularities are strictly functional and they are necessitated by transitions of passion. In other words, the meaning and

the emotion that the line expresses govern its character. It is this very concern for organic expression which requires him not to search for rhymes. The only rhyme that occurs in the poem ("tranquilly" and "restlessly") is imperfect and effortless. Why does he call his poem a sonnet then?

It will be seen that this poem is a mixture of the Petrarchan as well as the Shakespearean form of the sonnet. Perhaps he thought that the Petrarchan form was appropriate to the tone of romantic love of the male protagonist and that the Shakespearean form was appropriate for a description of his "dark lady". And the very use of this romantic metrical form--the sonnet--brings an undercurrent of irony to the poem which deals with loss of love. However, in the interest of organic form he did not impose any particular structure of the sonnet on his poem.

We shall consider a poem in free verse, "The Even Skein". The poem is a meditation on life and death and frustrations, incompleteness, and unevenness of life as well as love. There are ragged ends wherever "mind meets matter". There is evenness only in death. Death is all.

The imagery of the poem is organically related to the subject. The main image here is that of a skein. (It is stated clearly towards the end of the poem though it is implied all through). Read describes the ragged ends that go to make up the skein--the skein of time: the "ragged ends" of the world, the ragged ends of love, the ragged ends of

life, in short the ragged ends of matter and sentient matter. In the first passage of the poem he speaks of the ragged ends of the world and love, in the second of the ragged ends of life, and in the third of the even skein of death. The first passage thus leads to the second and the second to the third. The "skein" of life may be tangled. But Read has mapped it evenly! The "skein of death" does not need such mapping. Why? Because there are ragged ends and an uneven skein whenever "mind meets matter". But when the bond between mind and matter is dissolved, the cause of unevenness is removed. The idea of death as the "even skein" is, therefore, implied in the idea of the uneven skein of life.

Besides the imagery, the form of the poem too is organic. It has been said by one critic that Read's free verse is prose cut up into lines of varying length. Frederick Grubb says: ". . . we have arbitrary line lengths; capricious, unjustifiable acrobatics of rhythm; incongruous injection of sensual imagery into the Teutonic discourse."[55] A rather harsh indictment of Read as a poet this. But it is also unfair. My detailed discussion of his "Sonnet" and "Even Skein" has sought to establish that his imagery is organic to the subject. And if it is organic, it cannot be incongruous! Secondly, if it were realized why the lines are of varying length, what the poetic logic be that underlies the obvious "raggedness" (unevenness) of texture, what

unstated reasons govern the "cutting-up operation", one would be less willing to write off the profound poetry of a profound critic in the casual and summary fashion of F. Grubb. If Grubb be right, one must conclude that Read has not achieved organic form in his poetry. But my contention has been that Read has achieved organic form. And I have tried to demonstrate this on the basis of Read's own principles. I shall substantiate my point further with a detailed discussion of the rhythm of "Even Skein".

Consider the first three lines of the poem:

> Ragged ends
> are the world's ends: land in water, wind-woven branches,
> sea-spray, star-fret, any atmosphere;[56]

The question that one may ask is: Why does Read "cut" his first line after "ends"? And unless one answers that question one cannot decide whether the "cut" is arbitrary or not. I shall attempt to answer that question. If Read were to write:

> Ragged ends are the world's ends
> land in water, wind-woven branches

the phrase "ragged ends" would compete for the reader's attention with the predicate, "are world's ends". But let us remember that according to Read the visual gestalt of a printed line is significant in poetry. The impact of the visual gestalt of "Ragged ends" is not the same as the impact of the visual gestalt of "Ragged ends are the world's ends". "Ragged ends" is the key-phrase of the poem. It

defines the theme which is taken up and developed in various contexts before it finally emerges as "ragged ends of time" in the second last line of the poem. Read's "cutting" of the sentence is governed by the needs of his poem. One may give a few more examples from this poem to show how the length of the line is in conformity with the dictates of the subject. Consider these lines:

> down alleys when the broken light
> falls brokenly
> on broken walls[57]

One may ask why the last two lines are not printed as one line. I imagine that these lines, as they are printed here in the poem, constitute two separate units and thus enact the idea of brokenness that is expressed in these lines. It also seems to me that the fractional pause at the end of "falls brokenly" which the sense (though not the grammar) of those words suggests, is not disregarded by the reader since they are printed separately. And I think that this almost imperceptible pause makes considerable difference to the tone of the passage. In other words, the cutting of these lines is functionally related to the meaning and mood of the poem.

I shall analyse a few more lines to prove that the rhythm of this poem is functionally related to the meaning, mood and imagery of the poem:

and everywhere
where mind meets matter, fray'd nerves
and tender fingers feeling the stone's jagged edge
ragged ends of love
that can never be complete
secret meetings, interrupted speeches
broken handshakes
and the shuffle of reluctant feet

The use of spondees in lines two and three is significant. The first spondee is preceded by an iamb and the second spondee is preceded by iambs and a pyrrhic and followed by an iamb. The elements that the rhythm emphasizes, namely, "mind meets matter" and "stone's jagged edge", are precisely the ones that are, as we have seen above, of central importance in the development of the meaning of the poem. One should also notice that with the exception of line five the iambic rhythm changes to the trochaic from "ragged ends of love" in the fourth line to "broken handshakes" in the seventh. This variation in rhythm serves to mark the transition from the level of general statement regarding "raggedness" in life to the level of specific instances of the "ragged ends of love". As a matter of fact, the rhythm is trochaic and sprinkled with spondees whenever he speaks of "ragged ends" of whatever kind in the first passage of the poem:

Ragged ends
are the world's ends: land in water, wind-woven branches
sea-spray, star-fret, any atmosphere

With the exception of a pyrrhic and an amphibrach in the second line the rest of the feet are trochees and spondees and a dactyl. One can see then that though the basic rhythm of the poem is iambic, Read has allowed himself frequent "irregularities" in the interest of achieving expression that is appropriate to the meaning and the mood he is trying to convey. One may then say that Read's verse is strictly bound to its expressive necessity and that its freedom consists in the recognition of this necessity. Or to put it differently, free verse is a remarkably supple strategy for achieving organic form. In so far as my metrical analysis has revealed this suppleness, it is pragmatically valid. And that is the <u>only</u> validity I claim for it.

To summarize this rather protracted discussion: I have attempted to characterize the broad nature of Read's poetry and point out its basic themes. In this attempt I allowed myself to be guided by his theory only. I have also tried to demonstrate how acquaintance with the scientific and philosophical levels of his theory helps us to understand some of his poems and see their significance. I have also tried to abstract from his theory a few criteria which could be applied to his poetry. The results of this application show that Read's theory is not too general to be useful. I would go further and say that not only is his theory relevant to his poetry but that acquaintance with the former enhances one's appreciation of the latter.

CONCLUSION

My discussion of Read's poetry in the light of principles abstracted from his theory may give one the impression that his theory of poetry is "New Critical". And it may be pointed out to me that, as a matter of fact, Read was contemptuous of New Criticism and that he described it as being "a funkhole of objective analysis".[1] It might then be concluded from this contradiction between the critical implications of my analysis of Read's poetry and his avowed opposition to New Criticism, that I have tried to turn Read into a "New Critical" theorist.

But let me hasten to add that I have no intention of trying to deck out Read in "borrowed feathers". If I may wax a little metaphorical, Read's native plumage is sufficiently variegated and does not need borrowed hues and tints. If what I have attempted to do with his poetry sounds "new critical", I have derived my sanction for the attempt from Read. Am I suggesting that Read belonged to the "New Critical" party without knowing it?

It may be pointed out that there are some significant similarities between Read's theory and the concepts

that form the "new critical" arsenal. Both Read and the New critics define poetry with opposition to prose; both accept the principle of organic form, though, it is not interpreted in the same manner by them[2]; and both accept the doctrine of the symbol, and the distinction between signs and symbols. Let R. S. Crane stand as my authority for the account I have given of the concepts central to New Criticism:

> Words and meanings, images and concepts, symbols and referents--those are the axes on which, in this [New] criticism, everything turns; by these poetry is constituted as a special kind of language for the expression or communication of special kinds of thought not fully compassable by the human mind in any other medium . . .[3]

It must be granted, however, that the kind of analysis that could be attempted on the basis of these principles can never be a substitute for the <u>poetic experience</u> itself; it cannot make available to one the <u>immediacy</u> of poetic experience. Read says:

> We, who are aggressively self-conscious, in order to write poetry, or even to appreciate poetry, must retire deep within ourselves and make contact with a suppressed social consciousness, namely, the collective unconscious. Only in this way can we recover the immediacy which was the original characteristic of poetic utterance.[4]

It becomes clear from this remark that for Read a truly profound response to poetry is not a rational or analytical act. Indeed, he says in his "The Style of Criticism" that "scientific criticism is subordinate to intuitive criticism". I think we are back again at the distinction between "comprehension" and "apprehension". Scientific criticism could be said to help us to comprehend. But Read has no

doubts about its inability to help us apprehend. What can one say of Read's own principles? Do they help us "apprehend" poetry? Now, it is true that Read's principles do, as a matter of fact, help us to understand the functioning and complexity of the poetic structure. In other words, they do help us to comprehend. But we should remember that they set us on our way to further exploration so that we may be able to apprehend the experience--an act that ultimately one has to perform for oneself.

This demand for a profound response may perhaps be made with some authority by one who was steeped in the philosophical and scientific learning of his times and whose views on poetry, therefore, were not mere hunches or opinions. His views were backed by his philosophical or scientific frames of reference. Consider, for example, his definitions of poetry and his analysis of the symbol. We have seen in the course of the second chapter that Read defined poetry time and again with opposition to prose. Read's initial position was that prose is analytic and poetry synthetic. This position deepens over the years in the sense that it comes to base itself on philosophical concepts. Thus, for example, we find him establishing a connection between poetry and intuition, or poetry and the integrationist concept of reason (with its emphasis on balanced personality and undissociated sensibility). Finally, we find him relating his distinction between prose and poetry

to the distinction between discursive and non-discursive consciousness, the concept of non-discursive consciousness being derived by him from Cassirer. To this very concept of non-discursive consciousness is his conception of the symbol related--a conception that in the thirties was related to the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious. The implication of these views and distinctions is that poetic discourse is unique: it is not rational, analytic or discursive.

The view that poetic discourse is unique logically gives rise to the belief that the structure of poetic discourse is unique too. Romantic critics from Coleridge onwards have maintained that poetic structure is characterized by organic form. This is the view that Read also maintains in his writings. Like Coleridge he looks upon form as internal to content, that is, as originating from content or experience. And this view, it must be remembered, finds its <u>philosophical justification</u> in Schelling's analysis of essence and existence with reference to poetry. Read is sympathetic to this account, as I have pointed out in my chapter on Organic Form. So here, once again, one may observe Read's concern for a philosophical justification of what may be looked upon by many as merely a critical principle. But it may be asked: How does Schelling's distinction between essence and existence bear on form and content in poetry? I have suggested that the distinction

between form and content corresponds to the distinction between essence and existence. Essence could be related to form and existence to content. And just as essence underlies existence, form underlies content. In other words, just as essence is internal to existence, form is internal to content. The principle of internality of form has its philosophical justification.

Similarly, the distinction between signs and symbols, which is well entrenched in Read's poetic theory, derives its justification from Cassirer's distinction between discursive and non-discursive consciousness. Read is not content with saying that a metaphor is explanatory and that a symbol is exploratory. He gives his analysis of imagery a philosophical dimension. He does this by explaining in his discussion of the intensive aspects of poetry that the image is "an intuitive extension of consciousness, an act of apprehension but not yet of comprehension". In other words, the image is a strategy for an attack on non-discursive consciousness. What is true of the image is true of symbols on the linguistic level. In fact, words as signs and words as symbols are related to two different orders of consciousness. And herein lies Read's contribution to the somewhat confusing debate centred round "signs" and "symbols". He brings Cassirer's concept of "word-magic" to bear on this discussion and relates words as symbols to non-discursive consciousness.

To conclude this part of our discussion. Some of the central ideas of Read's poetic theory have won widespread acceptance now. This may be partly because Read is a romanticist. And New Criticism is romantic in spirit. (I say it is "romantic" because its "expressionist" bias and its attempts to prove the unique character of poetry are, I believe, in the romantic tradition). I must admit that Read's influence on New Criticism may not be as obvious as that of Eliot. But it must be remembered that the language of Eliot's criticism, as R. S. Crane has pointed out, is in its "essential constitution the '<u>romantic</u>' language of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Arnold".[5] A study of Read's poetic theory, it follows, is essential for an understanding of modern poetics since one finds in Read's theory a frank expression of an unabashed <u>romanticism</u>, which does not care to hide itself under a classicist facade.

It should be remembered that Read does not just take over his concepts from Coleridge. He brings to bear on them his knowledge of contemporary philosophy. His use of Santayana and Whitehead to develop the concept of intuition, and his use of Cassirer's concepts of discursive and non-discursive consciousness <u>can</u> be looked upon as Read's attempt to give his romantic critical concepts a contemporary justification. And by giving such a justification, he could be said to have renewed the relevance of romantic criticism. For Read's critical concepts are then seen to

be not only not arbitrary, but they are seen as being deepened and made relevant by his "contemporary justification" of them. Read's devotion to Cassirer has great significance for Read's poetics.

However, Read's critical activity is related to a non-philosophical field as well. This part of his critical activity I have described as the "scientific level" of his theory. To be more precise, I mean by the scientific level, those critical speculations of Read which were inspired by Freud and Jung. The most significant difference between the philosophical level and the scientific level is this: the former explains how and why words and images are used as symbols in poetry and how poetry is a unique form of discourse with a unique structure, etc. What it then tends to emphasize is the separateness of poetry. But it should be noticed that the scientific level does not try to establish the separateness of poetry. It tends to assimilate it to primary activities of our nature. Perhaps the distinction I am trying to make is just a question of emphasis. However, I shall pursue my argument further. According to the Freudian strand of this level, for example, the true meaning of a poem is not to be looked for on the surface which the poem presents. Its true meaning lies in its content. The business of poetic theorist is not the manifest content as such, but what is going on in the depths of the poet's mind. Poetry is thus assimilated to dream-

experience. To give another instance of this process of "assimilation". Read's theory of automatism, which he abandoned later, is an attempt to explain how one could establish a contact with the unconscious, his assumption being that the unconscious is the primary source of poetry. Thus it will be seen that even the poetic technique devised on the basis of Freud's psychology attempts to explain how poetry can be related to the most primitive and universal layer of our consciousness, namely, the unconscious.

It is Jung who explored the collective nature of the unconscious; and Read drew heavily on Jungian psychology. Poetry is seen as having close affinities with myths or the archetypes they express. Poetry is thus seen as participating in the universal symbolic processes such as myths and archetypes. And by participating in such processes, it reactivates archetypes. Thus the Jungian strand also assimilates poetry to a universal experience, to a basic, primaeval process. By reactivating archetypes, the poet "speaks with a thousand tongues"; he raises the idea he is trying to express above the occasional and the transitory into the sphere of the ever-existing. In Jung's words, the "poet transmutes personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, thus evoking all those beneficient forces that have enabled mankind to find a rescue from every hazard and to outlive the longest night."[6] Some of Read's poems, as I have pointed out in the last chapter, answer to this

description.

The sociological strand of the scientific level of his theory is the weakest aspect of it. The reason for its weakness is that it is not sufficiently well-developed. Read confines himself to making the broadest assertions about the relationship between poetry and the social structure which gives rise to it. Thus we are told that classicism is the literary aspect of political tyranny and that romanticism represents a revolt against it. But he recognizes that the sociological approach is useful only for understanding the ideological content of art. Thus this approach, this strand of his theory recognizes the relatedness of poetry to the social structure in which it is produced.[7]

It should become clear then that Read's theory has two levels, which means that he approached poetry from different view-points: the philosophical and the scientific, the term scientific being used here to cover the disciplines represented by Freud, Jung and sociology. The philosophical level explains the uniqueness of poetry; the scientific reveals its relatedness to universal human processes and to society. The former defines poetry by showing how it is different from non-poetic discourse; the latter not only assimilates it or relates it to universal human processes but also indicates the relevance of the social structure. Between them the philosophical and the scientific levels

offer a theory which establishes the unique character of poetic discourse, relates it to the deeper, primitive basic human processes, and links it to the social structure.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES, INTRODUCTION

[1] M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: The Norton Library, 1958).

[2] I have been using the word "philosophical" to describe his framework. I do not use it in the positivistic sense to mean intellectual analysis of verifiable concepts only. For according to the positivistic conception, Kant, who inveighed against metaphysics, is himself a metaphysician and so a neo-Kantian like Cassirer, whose works influenced Read, would be considered to be a metaphysician too. For the purposes of this dissertation the words "philosophy" and "philosophical" are used generically to include "metaphysics" and "metaphysical". This kind of usage of the word "philosophy" may be a little arbitrary. Especially since Read often declared himself to be suspicious of metaphysics. But his suspicions notwithstanding, he does show a metaphysical tendency as I shall argue later. My generic use of the term "philosophy" may be a little naive but it is adequate for my purpose, which is analysis of Read's poetic theory. However, when I wish to characterize his "philosophy" further, I use the word "metaphysics".

[3] Collected Essays in Literary Criticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), p. 125.

[4] The Meaning of Art (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), p. 36.

[5] Review of Johannes Scotus Erigena, by H. Bett, The New Criterion, IV (October, 1926), pp. 776-82.

[6] The Forms of Things Unknown: Essays Towards an Aesthetic Philosophy (London: Faber and Faber, 1960).

[7] Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 43.

[8] Speculations, ed. Herbert Read (New York: Harcourt, Brace, n.d.), pp. 141-70 and 171-214.

[9] Modern Man in Search of a Soul (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1936).

[10] Collected Essays, pp. 105-106 and 111-115.

[11] The Contrary Experience: Autobiographies (London: Faber and Faber, 1963).

[12] Art and Letters, I (January, 1918), 73-78.

[13] The Criterion, I (April, 1923), pp. 246-266. It is included in Collected Essays, pp. 183-195. Subsequent references are to the latter publication.

[14] Reason and Romanticism (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926).

[15] Phases of English Poetry (London: Hogarth Press, 1928). English Prose Style (London: G. Bell, 1928).

[16] Collected Essays, pp. 183-195.

[17] Form in Modern Poetry: An Essay in Aesthetics (London: Vision, 1932).

[18] First published in Surrealism, ed. Herbert Read, (London: Faber and Faber, 1936). It is included in The Philosophy of Modern Art: Collected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1952). Subsequent references are to the latter publication.

[19] The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry (London: Faber and Faber, 1953).

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER I

[1]Herbert Read, The Tenth Muse (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 5.

[2]Herbert Read, The Contrary Experience, p. 278.

[3]I am not sure that Read would have accepted this conception of philosophy. "In the past philosophy has been more than a theory of knowledge or a clear understanding of the dimension of the language. It has been an adventure of ideas . . ." So said Read in The Tenth Muse, p. 112. When Read speaks of philosophy as being "an adventure of ideas" I think he is using the word 'philosophy' in a non-technical manner. It is not surprising then that he should be a little cynical of "systems of philosophy". In his criticism of Miss Mary Wallace's criticism of Vauvenargues he says: "She has perhaps fallen into the vulgar error of imagining that the construction of a system of philosophy is a proof of systematic thought; it is more often an elaborate facade designed to hide a structure of meaner dimensions." Collected Essays, p. 226. This sounds almost like a defence plea! One must realize then that Read is not a professional philosopher of the type of Kant or Hegel or Schelling or Croce. However, he has been influenced by them all.

[4]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 17.

[5]Herbert Read, Review of Science and the Modern World, by A. N. Whitehead, The New Criterion, IV (June, 1926), p. 581.

[6]This explains why English critics as a rule, as Read has said, "resorted to nothing more distant from their subject than common sense". Collected Essays, p. 124.

[7]The Contrary Experience, p. 131.

[8]Herbert Read, Review of The Travel Diary of a Philosopher, by Count H. Keyserling, The New Criterion, IV (January, 1926), p. 192.

[9]Ibid., p. 191.

[10]Herbert Read, Review of Johannes Scotus Erigena, by H. Bett, The New Criterion, IV (October, 1926), p. 777.

[11]T. S. Eliot, Review of Reason and Romanticism, by Herbert Read, The New Criterion, IV (October, 1926), p. 756.

[12]The Contrary Experience, p. 277.

[13]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 99. Italics my own.

[14]Collected Essays, p. 187.

[15]Ibid., p. 189.

[16]Herbert Read, The New Criterion, IV (June, 1926), p. 582.

[17]Quoted by Read from Science and the Modern World in his review of it in The New Criterion, IV, 585.

[18]Collected Essays, p. 186.

[19]Art Now: An Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 32.

[20]Collected Essays, p. 192.

[21]To Hell With Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 27.

[22]A Coat of Many Colours (2nd ed. rev.; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 221.

[23]Ibid., p. 220.

[24]Ibid., p. 221.

[25]But this strategy employed by Read to correlate mind and matter should not give us the impression that he is guilty of "religious thinking". He says that he cannot be accused of "latent religious thinking". There is a "considerable difference between the recognition of absolutes in philosophy and what generally meant by 'religious thinking'." He further adds: "Religious thinking involves an act of faith--a belief in the supernatural. That kind of belief I do not possess." A Coat of Many Colours, p. 220. What begins as a protest develops into a confession!

[26]Reason and Romanticism, p. 26. Italics my own.

[27]Herbert Read, Review of Notes on the Originality of Thought, by Leon Vivante, The Monthly Criterion, VI (October, 1927), p. 368.

[28]Read offers an interesting description of intuition in 1928 when he tries to distinguish it from instinct. He says that the capacity of power to "discern a pattern in events" may be called intuition, "if intuition is to have any meaning not covered by the word instinct". English Prose Style, p. 94. The expression "the capacity to discern a pattern in events" is significant. Read is anticipating here the definition of intuition he advanced in 1929.

[29]Collected Essays, p. 189.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 94.

[32]Ibid., p. 190. The implication of this remark is that according to Descartes' conception of intuition, the mind is not measured by things. For Read intuition is related to "things"; for Descartes it is not related to "things".

[33]Ibid., p. 195.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Form in Modern Poetry, p. 82.

[36]Ibid., p. 44.

[37]Collected Essays, p. 195.

[38]Supra, pp. 9-11.

[39]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 17.

[40]"Sir Herbert Read and English Surrealism," JAAC, XXIV (Spring, 1966), p. 404.

[41]H. W. Hausermann, "The Development of Herbert Read," Herbert Read: An Introduction to his Work by Various Hands, ed. Henry Treece, (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), p. 62.

[42]Collected Essays, p. 87.

[43]Ibid., p. 88.

[44]Read, The New Criterion, IV, 611.

[45]Phases of English Poetry, pp. 122-23.

[46]Reason and Romanticism, p. 27. Italics my own.

[47]Supra, p. 16.

[48]The Times Literary Supplement, July 8, 1926, p. 453.

[49]Reason and Romanticism, p. 27. Italics my own.

[50]Supra, note 45, p. 19.

[51]Phases of English Poetry, p. 78.

[52]Supra, note 45, p. 19. I may add that it seems to me that Read regards "rationality" and "reasoning" as synonyms.

[53]The Contrary Experience, p. 353. Italics my own.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Art and Society (London: Faber and Faber, 1945), p. 105.

[56]Herbert Read, "The Lost Leader," The Sewanee Review, LXIII (October-December, 1966), p. 558.

[57]C. J. Jung, Psychological Types (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), p. 515.

[58]Herbert Read, "The Preaching Critic," Newsweek, May 10, 1954, p. 98.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Art Now, p. 36.

[61]Collected Essays, p. 124.

[62]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 24. Italics my own.

[63]Art Now, p. 36.

[64]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 96.

[65]Ibid., p. 24.

[66]Ibid., p. 29.

[67]The Contrary Experience, p. 194.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER II

[1]Read, To Hell with Culture, p. 171.

[2]Read, The Sewanee Review, LXXVI, 210.

[3]The Times Literary Supplement, December 27, 1928, p. 1022.

[4]"Poetics", "poetic theory" and "theory of poetry" are used as synonyms in the course of this discussion.

[5]Selected Writings, p. 63.

[6]p. 230.

[7]Wordsworth (London: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930), p. 154. Italics my own.

[8]Solomon Fishman, "Sir Herbert Read: Poetics vs Criticism," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XIII (December, 1954), p. 160. Italics my own.

[9]The Contrary Experience, p. 202.

[10]Art and Letters, I, 73.

[11]Ibid., p. 73.

[12]Ibid., p. 78.

[13]Ibid., p. 74.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Reason and Romanticism, p. 18.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 20.

[20]Ibid., p. 21.

[21] Ibid., p. 28. Italics my own.

[22] Ibid., p. 22.

[23] English Prose Style, p. x.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., pp. x-xi.

[26] Ibid., p. xi.

[27] Ibid., p. xi.

[28] Review of English Prose Style, The Dial, LXXXV (December, 1928), p. 524.

[29] I. A. Richards, Review of English Prose Style, The Criterion, VIII (December, 1928), p. 317. Italics not mine.

[30] Ibid.

[31] English Prose Style, p. 154.

[32] Phases of English Poetry, p. 122. Italics my own.

[33] Ibid., pp. 121-22. Italics not mine.

[34] Ibid., p. 123.

[35] English Prose Style, p. 154. Italics my own.

[36] Phases of English Poetry, p. 74. Italics not mine.

[37] English Prose Style, p. 164.

[38] Collected Essays, p. 195. Italics my own.

[39] Supra, p. 16.

[40] Form in Modern Poetry, p. 40.

[41] Ibid., p. 44.

[42] Ibid., p. 82.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 44.

[45] Ibid., pp. 44-45. Italics not mine. (Cf. above, notes In Phases of English Poetry he said that poetry gives "equivalence" of "emotional thought". In English Prose Style he said that in poetry "the expression is the emotion". Now he is saying that poetry gives "objective equivalence" of "vision" or "intuition". We should remember that so far Read has, except with reference to emotion, spoken of "poetic expression" in terms of "equivalence".

[46] Supra, see note 37.

[47] Supra, pp. 52-53.

[48] Supra, pp. 47-50.

[49] Collected Essays, p. 120. Italics my own.

[50] Form in Modern Poetry, p. 41.

[51] pp. 154-55.

[52] Form in Modern Poetry, p. 40. Italics my own.

[53] Ibid., p. 81.

[54] Ibid., p. 18.

[55] Quoted by Read, ibid., p. 27. Italics not mine.

[56] Ibid., p. 29.

[57] Ibid., p. 19.

[58] Quoted by Read, ibid., p. 23. Italics not mine.

[59] Ibid., p. 21.

[60] Ibid.

[61] This kind of adaptation of a psycho-analytic view is in keeping with the "terms of his treaty" with the sciences. He says on page 15 of Form in Modern Poetry: "As literary critic--that is to say, as a scientist in my own field--I insist on maintaining my territorial rights when I enter into treaty with another science. I accept just as much as seems relevant to my purpose, and I reject anything that conflicts with the evidence of my own special sensibility." A confession of one's eclecticism could not be more spirited.

[62] Form in Modern Poetry, p. 30. Italics my own.

[63] Ibid., p. 23.

[64] Ibid., p. 24.

[65] Ibid., p. 23.

[66] Collected Essays, p. 100.

[67] A Coat of Many Colours, p. 108. The essay, "The Faculty of Abstraction", from which this remark is quoted, was first published in 1937.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Art and Society, p. 7. Italics my own.

[70] Supra, pp. 17-18.

[71] Art and Society, p. 120.

[72] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 109. Italics my own.

[73] Ibid., p. 129.

[74] Ibid., p. 121.

[75] Supra, pp. 52-53.

[76] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 121. Italics my own.

[77] Review of Art and Society, The Criterion, XVI (April, 1937), p. 518.

[78] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 121. Italics my own.

[79] Quoted by Read in The True Voice of Feeling, pp. 111-12.

[80] For Cassirer's discussion of "non-discursive" or "mythical consciousness" see The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. II: Mythical Thought (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 29-59 and 233-61.

[81] The True Voice of Feeling, p. 112.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., p. 152.

[84] Ibid., p. 153.

[85] Supra, pp. 48-49.

[86] The True Voice of Feeling, p. 154.

[87] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 111.

[88] Ibid., p. 110.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Supra, pp. 69-70.

[91] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 111.

[92] Ibid., p. 112.

[93] I have included "images" among "intensive aspects" of poetry in spite of the fact that Read mentions images among "extensive aspects". (See, The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 112). My reason for doing so is this: He discusses "metre", an "intensive aspect" of poetry, and then goes on to discuss the image. (See The Forms of Things Unknown, pp. 113-114). Immediately following this discussion he refers to the gestalt as the "second non-metrical intensive aspect of poetry", which clearly shows that the first non-metrical aspect which he discussed, namely, the image, is an intensive aspect.

[94] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 121.

[95] Ibid., p. 113.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., pp. 113-14.

[99] Ibid., p. 120.

[100] Ibid., p. 115.

[101] Ibid., p. 116.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., p. 112.

[104] Ibid., p. 116.

[105] Ibid., p. 123.

[106] Ibid., p. 117.

[107] Supra, pp. 78-79.

[108] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 38. Italics not mine.

[109] Ibid., p. 39.

[110] Ibid., p. 39.

[111] Ibid., p. 139.

[112] Ibid,, p. 134.

[113] Supra, p. 25.

[114] G. A. Bonnard (ed.), English Studies Today (Bern: Frank Verlag, 1961), p. 39.

[115] Ibid., p. 40.

[116] Ibid., p. 33.

[117] Selected Writings, p. 203.

[118] Collected Poems (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 273.

[119] Ibid., p. 272.

[120] Ibid., p. 273.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Supra, pp. 91-92.

[123] Collected Poems, p. 274.

[124] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 121.

[125] Ibid., p. 45.

[126] Read, English Studies Today, p. 36.

[127] Ibid., p. 36. Italics my own.

[128] The following remark of Read substantiates my argument: "The whole structure, not merely of this particular theory of poetry, but of the philosophy of life upon which it is based, would fall to pieces unless related to a belief in what Santayana has called a realm of essence; the highest poetry is inconceivable without the intuition of Pure Being as well as the sense of existence." Form in Modern Poetry, pp. 81-82. Italics my own.

[129] Form in Modern Poetry, p. 23.

[130] Ibid., p. 23.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER III

[1]Herbert Read, Art Now, p. 85.

[2]Herbert Read, To Hell with Culture, p. 176.

[3]Herbert Read, Art and Society, p. 120.

[4]Read, The Tenth Muse, p. 173.

[5]Collected Essays, p. 124.

[6]Ernst Cassirer, Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 54-58.

[7]Collected Essays, p. 125.

[8]The True Voice of Feeling, p. 272.

[9]Phases of English Poetry, p. 75.

[10]"Art--Picasso and the Marxists," The London Mercury, XXXII (November, 1934), p. 95.

[11]To Hell with Culture, p. 75.

[12]Art and Society, p. 1.

[13]Ibid., pp. 1-2

[14]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 19.

[15]Ibid., p. 19.

[16]Ibid., p. 20.

[17]Ibid., p. 19.

[18]Ibid., p. 20.

[19]"My Credo: Critic as a Man of Feeling," Kenyon Review, XII (Autumn, 1950), p. 577.

[20]Supra, p. 91.

[21]Consider for instance this contemptuous summary-description of Read's career: "Mr. Herbert Read, imagist in imagist days, Eliot-ironist in Eliot-irony days, war-poet in war-poetry days--one Mr. Herbert Read has entirely gone surrealist . . ." Geoffrey Grigson, "A Letter from England", Poetry, XLIX (November, 1936), p. 101. It is obvious that Grigson thinks of these aspects of Read's work as discrete entities, each distinct from the other. But as a matter of fact Read's poetry was imagist in "war-poetry days", and ironic even before the hey-day of Eliot-irony. The irresponsible Mr. Grigson indulges his vituperative genius when he thinks up another vivid phrase: "Herbert Read, quoter, taster, and politico-aesthetic chameleon". Ibid., p. 102.

[22]The Contrary Experience, p. 279.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Review of The Artist and Psycho-analysis, by Roger Fry, The Criterion, III (April, 1925), p. 472.

[25]Reason and Romanticism, p. 95. Italics my own.

[26]Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id (London: Hogarth, 1962), pp. 5-12. C. J. Jung, Psychological Types (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), p. 165.

[27]Reason and Romanticism, p. 95.

[28]Ibid., p. 90.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Psychological Types, p. 596.

[31]The Contrary Experience, p. 279.

[32]Collected Essays, p. 283.

[33]JAAC, XXIV, p. 405.

[34]"Psychology and Criticism", New Verse, A. 20 (April-May, 1936), p. 22.

[35]The True Voice of Feeling, p. 261. "In Defence of Shelley" was first published in 1936.

[36]Art and Society, p. 89.

[37]Ibid., p. 92. Italics not my own.

[38] Collected Essays, p. 104.

[39] Art and Society, p. 110.

[40] New Introductory Lectures (London: Hogarth Press, 1932). p. 110.

[41] Quoted by Read in Art and Society, p. 110. Also see Freud's New Introductory Lectures, p. 101.

[42] Art and Society, p. 111.

[43] Ibid.

[44] New Introductory Lectures, p. 106. What Freud calls the "perceptual system" (another phrase used by him being "perceptual-conscious system") is directed on to the external world, it mediates perceptions of it, and "in it is generated, while it is functioning, the phenomenon of consciousness". New Introductory Lectures, p. 100. But the deeper layers of the mind are inaccessible to it.

[45] Art and Society, p. 94.

[46] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 129.

[47] Ibid., p. 136.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The distinction that Read makes here is critically sound. But it does not need this psycho-analytic crutch. For the point he is really making is that symbols are far more profound and significant than metaphors. One can verify this by examining how symbols and metaphors function in poetry. I shall discuss this subject in greater detail in my chapters on Imagism and Read's poetry.

[50] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 135.

[51] Ibid., p. 124.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Left Review, II (July, 1936), ii.

[55] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 129. Italics my own.

[56] Collected Essays, p. 103.

[57] It is true that the surrealists insisted on automatic expression. However, says Read, they did not assert that "all art must of necessity be produced under such conditions". He quotes Breton as saying: "Verbal and graphic automatism only represents a limit towards which the poet or artist should tend." The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 110. What Read is decidedly against is rational control.

[58] Collected Essays, p. 103.

[59] Ibid., p. 105.

[60] Ibid., p. 108.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Supra, p. 44.

[63] Collected Essays, p. 109.

[64] Ibid., pp. 109-10.

[65] Quoted by Read in The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 41.

[66] "Freud introduced the concept of a fixed amount of mental energy which is shifted between the different layers of the mind. What depth perception gains in energy is lost to surface perception and vice versa. The greatest switches of energy occur in falling asleep and in awakening. The act of artistic creation too entails a withdrawal of energy from the surface mind into the deeper layers which in the case of automatic art drains the surface mind of its energy charge altogether. The amount of energy thus liberated is employed in the unconscious automatic form play . . ." The Psychoanalysis of Artistic Vision and Hearing (New York: George Braziller, 1965), p. 61.

[67] Icon and Idea, p. 123.

[68] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 53.

[69] Ibid., p. 53.

[70] Ibid.

[71] "The Cult of Sincerity," The Hudson Review, XXI (Spring, 1968), p. 68.

[72] The Criterion, III, p. 472.

[73] Collected Essays, p. 144.

[74] Education Through Art (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), pp. 28-9.

[75] Icon and Idea, p. 145.

[76] The Sewanee Review, LXIII, p. 561.

[77] Truth is More Sacred, pp. 160-1.

[78] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 100.

[79] Ibid., pp. 189-90.

[80] Ibid., p. 190. The "archaic moulds" are "archetypes".

[81] Bernard Williams in his review of The Forms of Things Unknown dismissed the book as "A lot of nothing". Spectator, July 29, 1960, p. 188. It goes without saying that Mr. Williams' assessment is far from being accurate. Nevertheless, it is a sad testimony to the fact this Jungian Avatara of Read has baffled some readers.

[82] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 190.

[83] Ibid., p. 92. Italics not my own.

[84] Read derives this evolutionary hypothesis from Jung. Jung has written: "The further development of man can only be brought about by means of symbols which represent something far in advance of himself, and whose intellectual meanings cannot yet be grasped entirely. The individual unconscious produces such symbols, and they are of the greatest possible value in the moral development of the personality". Quoted by Read in The Tenth Muse, p. 202. I think that Read's theory of art and archetypes we have been discussing here explains in broad terms the process whereby such symbols are produced. If I may repeat myself, the pouring of the artist's psychic energy into "archaic moulds" (archetypes) results in the production of aesthetic and psychic symbols. The former are valuable with regard to the evolution of human consciousness. But the latter do not possess such significance.

[85] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 53.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., p. 132.

[88] Ibid., p. 133.

[89] Ibid., pp. 134-35.

[90] C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image (London: Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 127.

[91] The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 96.

[92] The Hudson Review, XXI, p. 58.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Collected Essays, pp. 111-15.

[95] Supra, pp. 158, 160 and 165.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER IV

[1]Herbert Read, "The Lost Leader," The Sewanee Review, LXIII, 555.

[2]Annals of Innocence and Experience, p. 229. The remark about Hulme's classicism is perceptive and true. But did Read really think so in his Hulmean phase? He has not left us any contemporary evidence to prove that he embraced the classicism of the self-styled classicist because he considered it to be "really" more romantic--more romantic than romanticism itself.

[3]JAAC, XIII, 156.

[4]Modern Philology, LII, 68.

[5]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 107.

[6]"Rather Beautiful Animal," New Statesman, November 29, 1958, p. 775. Italics my own.

[7]Quoted in The Contrary Experience, p. 205. Read does not give the date of the letter. Hulme's translation of Sorel's book was published in 1916. Read acquired it immediately.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Collected Essays, p. 144.

[10]Ibid., p. 134.

[11]Ibid., p. 131.

[12]Ibid., p. 144.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 134.

[15]T. S. Eliot, "The Idea of a Literary Review," The New Criterion, IV (January, 1926), p. 5.

[16]Collected Essays, p. 134.

[17]Ibid.

[18]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 107. Italics my own.

[19]Read says: "The predominance which is given on the one hand to order or judgment and on the other hand to emotion or feeling determines those types of expression which are given the historical terms 'classical' or 'romantic'." English Prose Style, p. 154. Italics not mine.

[20]Fishman, JAAC, XIII, 156.

[21]Reason and Romanticism, pp. 55-56.

[22]Ibid., p. 38.

[23]The New Criterion, IV, 581.

[24]Reason and Romanticism, p. 55.

[25]Form in Modern Poetry, p. 38.

[26]Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[27]Collected Essays, p. 123.

[28]"Art--the Situation Today," The London Mercury, XXX (October, 1934), p. 575.

[29]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 105.

[30]Ibid., p. 107.

[31]Jean Paul Sartre states the ideological affiliation of surrealism very clearly in his What is Literature? (London: Methuen, 1967). He says: "Yet, surrealism declares itself revolutionary and offers its hand to the Communist Party. It is the first time since the Restoration that a literary school explicitly claims kinship with an organized revolutionary movement," p. 139.

[32]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 107.

[33]Ibid., p. 108.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., pp. 108-109.

[36]Supra, p. 183.

[37]The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 110.

[38] Ibid., italics not mine.

[39] Fishman, JAAC, XIII, 159.

[40] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 109.

[41] Ibid., p. 111.

[42] The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 21-26.

[43] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 109.

[44] JAAC, XXIV, 407.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "The House of Art," The Sewanee Review, LXII (Autumn, 1954), p. 524.

[47] The True Voice of Feeling, p. 17.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The London Magazine, II (June, 1955), p. 69.

[50] Ibid., p. 72.

[51] Ed. D. G. Hoffman, English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 167.

[52] Quoted by W. A. Madden in "The Divided Tradition and English Criticism," PMLA, LXXIII (March, 1958), p. 73.

[53] The London Magazine, II (June, 1955), p. 72.

[54] The Philosophy of Modern Art, p. 106. Note his assertion: "Superrealism in general is the romantic principle in art."

[55] Herbert Read, Review of Romantic Conflict, by Allan Rodway, Listener, November, 1963, p. 891.

[56] Ibid., quoted by Read.

[57] Ibid.

[58] The Contrary Experience, p. 281.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER V

[1]The Contrary Experience, p. 172.

[2]I have Read's authority in my use of the term "Imagism". On page 106 of The True Voice of Feeling he writes: "Though it is too limited, it is convenient to retain imagism as a term for these principles." (He is referring to the principles enunciated by Ezra Pound in his letter to William Carlos Williams).

[3]Stanley Coffman, Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 38.

[4]The Contrary Experience, p. 175.

[5]Perhaps it could be maintained that the theories of Hulme and Pound imply the necessity of free verse, though they do not theoretically insist on it. If you follow the "contours" of your thought (which is what Hulme demands of the poet) or if you match your "musical phrase" to the emotion you are expressing (which is what Pound demands of the poet), the logical consequence is that you cannot accept the claims of a preconceived metrical pattern for being the "container" of expression because such claims are external to the subject matter of expression. And one cannot reconcile the form dictated by the internal necessity of expression with the external claims of a shape which is foreign to the subject matter of expression. As a matter of fact, such views have come to be identified with Read. I shall try to interpret his position in the next chapter.

[6]The Imagist's view of the image could be derived from the poetic practice of ~~the supreme imagist~~ H. D.--the supreme imagist. K. L. Goodwin says that in a poem of the true Imagist type, the facility for clear, precise description must be applied to "a particular object, not to a scene." The Influence of Ezra Pound, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 186. Now, if this account of Goodwin is accepted as being accurate, Read is not always a true Imagist poet. But one must go back to Hulme to see what exactly is meant by the image. It is my contention in the following pages that Read recovered the true Hulmean sense of the image.

[7]Art and Letters, p. 78.

[8]Quoted by Coffman, p. 183.

[9]Art and Letters, p. 78. Italics my own.

[10]Kenyon Review, I (Autumn, 1934), p. 354.

[11]Quoted by Coffman, p. 169.

[12]Some Imagist Poems: An Anthology (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), p. vi.

[13]Kenyon Review, p. 360.

[14]Coffman, Imagism, p. 185. Italics not mine.

[15]Interview with Herbert Read, The Poet Speaks, ed. Peter Orr (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 197.

[16]English Prose Style, p. 155.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Collected Essays, p. 98.

[19]Ibid., p. 99.

[20]Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[21]Quoted from Alun R. Jones, The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 159.

[22]The Philosophy of Modern Art, pp. 131-32. Italics not mine.

[23]Ibid., p. 135.

[24]Collected Essays, p. 110.

[25]Ibid., p. 109.

[26]Form in Modern Poetry, p. 65.

[27]The Philosophy of Modern Art, pp. 53-54.

[28]Encounter, IV (January, 1955), p. 8.

[29]The Sewanee Review, LXIII (October-December, 1956), p. 559.

[30]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 114.

[31] T. E. Hulme, "Notes on Language and Style," in Michael Roberts' T. E. Hulme (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), pp. 274-75.

[32] T. E. Hulme, Speculations (New York: Harcourt, Brace, p. 167.

[33] Quoted from Alun R. Jones, The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme, p. 46.

[34] The True Voice of Feeling, pp. 114-15. Italics my own.

[35] Cf. K. L. Goodwin, who says that "true" Imagism has no place for "speculation of rumination about the significance of the object". The Influence of Ezra Pound, p. 186.

[36] A Coat of Many Colours, p. 90.

[37] The Origins of Form in Art, p. 140.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER VI

[11]Herbert Read, Collected Poems, p. 98.

[2]Ibid., p. 16.

[3]The True Voice of Feeling, p. 151.

[4]Wordsworth, pp. 250-51.

[5]Ibid., p. 254.

[6]Ibid., pp. 253-54.

[7]Phases of English Poetry, p. 67.

[8]Page 21. Though Read does not speak of "emotional or intuitional immediacy" in this remark, one may maintain that the very purpose of following the rhythm of emotion is to maintain it in its immediacy.

[9]Form in Modern Poetry, p.8.

[10]Ibid., p. 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 10.

[12]Ibid., p. 24.

[13]The True Voice of Feeling, p. 16.

[14]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[15]Ibid., p. 17.

[16]Ibid., p. 21.

[17]Ibid., p. 152.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Review of The True Voice of Feeling, The Twentieth Century, CLIII (April, 1953), p. 296.

[20]The True Voice of Feeling, p. 27.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[22] *The Meaning of Art*, p. 21.

FOOTNOTES, CHAPTER VII

[1]Review of Herbert Read's Selected Writings, ed. Allen Tate, TLS, December 19, 1963, p. 1044.

[2]Herbert Read, "Whatever Happened to the Great Simplicities?", Saturday Review, February 18, 1967, p. 23.

[3]Fredrick Brantley, "Poets and their Worlds," The Yale Review, N. S., XLI (March, 1952), p. 479.

[4]R. P. Blackmur, "In the Hope Straightening Things Out," T. S. Eliot, ed. Hugh Kenner (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 139.

[5]Pp. 105-107 and 111-115.

[6]Read, Collected Poems, p. 211.

[7]Ibid., p. 208.

[8]Ibid., p. 162.

[9]Ibid., p. 163.

[10]Ibid., p. 164.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 215.

[13]Ibid., p. 240.

[14]Ibid., p. 215.

[15]Ibid., p. 171.

[16]Ibid., p. 208.

[17]Ibid., p. 225.

[18]Herbert Read, Poetry and Anarchism (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), p. 9.

[19]Collected Poems, p. 257.

[20]Ibid., p. 151.

[21] Ibid., p. 152.

[22] Ibid., p. 123.

[23] Ibid., p. 119.

[24] Collected Essays, pp. 105-107 and 111-115.

[25] Collected Poems, p. 70.

[26] Ibid., p. 72.

[27] Ibid., p. 59.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Collected Works, ed. Herbert Read, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), XIV, 336.

[30] Collected Poems, p. 248.

[31] It may be pointed out that none of the Western myths assign this role to Daphne. The Indo-Aryan myth of Ushas, the parent stem from which the Greek Daphne is an offshoot, does, however, assign exactly this role to her. It is doubtful if Read was acquainted with Indian mythology at first hand. For fuller discussion of this myth see Mythology of the Aryan Nations by Rev. G. W. Cox (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), I, 418.

[32] Collected Poems, p. 250.

[33] Ibid., p. 77.

[34] Raymond Tschumi, Thought in Twentieth Century Poetry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 79.

[35] TLS, July, 1926, p. 454.

[36] Collected Poems, p. 164.

[37] Ibid., p. 207.

[38] Ibid., p. 210.

[39] Ibid., p. 17.

[40] Ibid., p. 17.

[41] Ibid., p. 254.

[42] Ibid., p. 23.

[43] Ibid., p. 163.

[44] Ibid., p. 212.

[45] Ibid., p. 65.

[46] Ibid., p. 251.

[47] The Forms of Things Unknown, pp. 109-110.

[48] Collected Poems, p. 71.

[49] Ibid., p. 66.

[50] Ibid., p. 124.

[51] Ibid., p. 129.

[52] Ibid., pp. 16-18 and 22.

[53] The Influence of Ezra Pound, p. 196.

[54] Collected Poems, p. 236.

[55] Frederick Grubb, A Vision of Reality (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 100.

[56] Collected Poems, p. 118.

[57] Ibid.

FOOTNOTES, CONCLUSION

[1]Quoted from Read's letter to Stephen Spender, Struggle of the Modern (London: H. Hamilton, 1963), p. 181.

[2]For Cleanth Brooks, for example, form is a "semantic structure". See Crane, The Language of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry, p. 92.

[3]Crane, p. 99.

[4]The Forms of Things Unknown, p. 118.

[5]Crane, p. 98.

[6]Jung, Contributions to Analytical Psychology, p. 248.

[7]I have not considered the sociological aspect of his theory with reference to his poetry because such an approach would not have told us anything significant about his poetry as such. Read himself recognized that this approach does not contribute towards aesthetic evaluation.

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