

r in other words, to treat "con-
ms of "matter," the "mental" in
sical," "people" in terms of "en-

fly: The poem begins with an
which in the course of the fur-
t is "separated out," splitting
er and a spiritual counterpart.
on is the malign aspect of the
action its benign aspect. In the
elopment, the malign passion is
he benign active partner, the in-
tion, takes over. At the begin-
two aspects were ambiguously
assion would be the "scene" of
(the "objective symptoms" of
e paralleled by the "subjective
e mind, the bodily state thus
r ground of the mental state).
come separated out, the mental
the bodily passion. It becomes
right, making discoveries and
ounded in the bodily passion.
of action, in transcending the
symptoms of the fever, would
ifferent ground or scene, one
ality to the quality of the tran-

nt act is concretized, or "mate-
ision of the "immortal" scene,
anza IV to the original scene of
renly" scene of the dead, or im-
ne scene in which the Urn was
l and which is also fixed on its
the internality of this vision,
passage in Yeats relating the
y without to the depths of the
we showed a similar pattern in
of the vision that followed his
an's Homer. We suggested that
oming upon a new internal sky,
tion with the Urn as act, the
came upon through identifica-
ctments of Chapman's transla-

ent scene is the level at which
of contradiction no longer pre-
re terms of this scene, he can

proclaim the unity of truth and beauty (of science
and art), a proclamation which he needs to make
precisely because here was the basic split respon-
sible for the romantic agitation (in both poetic
and philosophic idealism). That is, it was gratify-
ing to have the oracle proclaim the unity of po-
etry and science because the values of technol-
ogy and business were causing them to be at
odds. And from the perspective of a "higher
level" (the perspective of a dead or immortal
scene transcending the world of temporal contra-
dictions) the split could be proclaimed once more
a unity.

At this point, at this stage of exaltation, the
fever has been replaced by chill. But the bodily
passion has completely dropped out of account.

Literature as Equipment for Living

Here I shall put down, as briefly as possible, a
statement in behalf of what might be catalogued,
with a fair degree of accuracy, as a *sociological*
criticism of literature. Sociological criticism in it-
self is certainly not new. I shall here try to sug-
gest what partially new elements or emphasis I
think should be added to this old approach. And
to make the "way in" as easy as possible, I shall
begin with a discussion of proverbs.

I
Examine random specimens in *The Oxford Dic-
tionary of English Proverbs*. You will note, I
think, that there is no "pure" literature here.
Everything is "medicine." Proverbs are designed
for consolation or vengeance, for admonition or
exhortation, for foretelling.

Or they name typical, recurrent situations.
That is, people find a certain social relationship
recurring so frequently that they must "have a
word for it." The Eskimos have special names for
many different kinds of snow (fifteen, if I re-
member rightly) because variations in the quality

All is now mental action. Hence, the chill (as in
the ecstatic exclamation, "Cold Pastoral!") is
proclaimed only in its benign aspect.

We may contrast this discussion with explana-
tions such as a materialist of the Kretschmer
school might offer. I refer to accounts of motiva-
tion that might treat disease as cause and poem as
effect. In such accounts, the disease would not be
"passive," but wholly active; and what we have
called the mental action would be wholly pas-
sive, hardly more than an epiphenomenon, a
mere symptom of the disease quite as are the
fever and the chill themselves. Such accounts
would give us no conception of the essential mat-
ter here, the intense linguistic activity.

of snow greatly affect their living. Hence, they
must "size up" snow much more accurately than
we do. And the same is true of social phenomena.
Social structures give rise to "type" situations,
subtle subdivisions of the relationships involved
in competitive and coöperative acts. Many
proverbs seek to chart, in more or less homey and
picturesque ways, these "type" situations. I sub-
mit that such naming is done, not for the sheer
glory of the thing, but because of its bearing
upon human welfare. A different name for snow
implies a different kind of hunt. Some names for
snow imply that one should not hunt at all. And
similarly, the names for typical, recurrent social
situations are not developed out of "disinterested
curiosity," but because the names imply a com-
mand (what to expect, what to look out for).

To illustrate with a few representative ex-
amples:

Proverbs designed for consolation: "The sun
does not shine on both sides of the hedge at
once." "Think of ease, but work on." "Little trou-
bles the eye, but far less the soul." "The worst
luck now, the better another time." "The wind in
one's face makes one wise." "He that hath lands

hath quarrels." "He knows how to carry the dead cock home." "He is not poor that hath little, but he that desireth much."

For vengeance: "At length the fox is brought to the furrier." "Shod in the cradle, barefoot in the stubble." "Sue a beggar and get a louse." "The higher the ape goes, the more he shows his tail." "The moon does not heed the barking of dogs." "He measures another's corn by his own bushel." "He shuns the man who knows him well." "Fools tie knots and wise men loose them."

Proverbs that have to do with foretelling (the most obvious are those to do with the weather): "Sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon, Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon." "When the wind's in the north, the skilful fisher goes not forth." "When the sloe tree is as white as a sheet, sow your barley whether it be dry or wet." "When the sun sets bright and clear, An easterly wind you need not fear. When the sun sets in a bank, A westerly wind we shall not want."

In short: "Keep your weather eye open": be realistic about sizing up today's weather, because your accuracy has bearing upon tomorrow's weather. And forecast not only the meteorological weather, but also the social weather: "When the moon's in the full, then wit's in the wane." "Straws show which way the wind blows." "When the fish is caught, the net is laid aside." "Remove an old tree, and it will wither to death." "The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature." "He that bites on every weed must needs light on poison." "Whether the pitcher strikes the stone, or the stone the pitcher, it is bad for the pitcher." "Eagles catch no flies." "The more laws, the more offenders."

In this foretelling category we might also include the recipes for wise living, sometimes moral, sometimes technical: "First thrive, and then wive." "Think with the wise but talk with the vulgar." "When the fox preacheth, then beware your geese." "Venture a small fish to catch a great one." "Respect a man, he will do the more."

In the class of "typical, recurrent situations" we might put such proverbs and proverbial ex-

pressions as: "Sweet appears sour when we pay." "The treason is loved but the traitor is hated." "The wine in the bottle does not quench thirst." "The sun is never the worse for shining on a dunghill." "The lion kicked by an ass." "The lion's share." "To catch one napping." "To smell a rat." "To cool one's heels."

By all means, I do not wish to suggest that this is the only way in which the proverbs could be classified. For instance, I have listed in the "foretelling" group the proverb, "When the fox preacheth, then beware your geese." But it could obviously be "taken over" for vindictive purposes. Or consider a proverb like, "Virtue flies from the heart of a mercenary man." A poor man might obviously use it either to console himself for being poor (the implication being, "Because I am poor in money I am rich in virtue") or to strike at another (the implication being, "When he got money, what else could you expect of him but deterioration?"). In fact, we could even say that such symbolic vengeance would itself be an aspect of solace. And a proverb like "The sun is never the worse for shining on a dunghill" (which I have listed under "typical recurrent situations") might as well be put in the vindictive category.

The point of issue is not to find categories that "place" the proverbs once and for all. What I want is categories that suggest their active nature. Here is no "realism for its own sake." Here is realism for promise, admonition, solace, vengeance, foretelling, instruction, charting, all for the direct bearing that such acts have upon matters of welfare.

2

Step two: Why not extend such analysis of proverbs to encompass the whole field of literature? Could the most complex and sophisticated works of art legitimately be considered somewhat as "proverbs writ large"? Such leads, if held admissible, should help us to discover important facts about literary organization (thus satisfying the requirements of technical criticism). And the kind of observation from this perspective should

apply beyond literature to life in helping to take literature out of its place and give it a place in a general picture).

The point of view might be put another way: Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with situations. In so far as situations are current in a given social structure, we need names for them and strategies to deal with them. Another name for strategies is *tactics*.

People have often commented that there are *contrary* proverbs. But I find the above approach to proverbs suggests a modification of that comment. The traditions depend upon differences involving a correspondingly different strategy. Consider, for instance, the opposite pair: "Repentance comes never too late to mend." The first is a warning. It says in effect: "You'd better not get yourself too far into it." The second is consolatory, say "Buck up, old man, you can still pull through."

Some critics have quarreled with the selection of the word "strategy" in this process. I have asked them to suggest an alternative term, so far without profit. I can think of is "method." But if in suggesting to some people an alternative procedure, "method" errs in suggesting "methodical" one. Anyhow, let's leave it at that.

Concise Oxford Dictionary: "Strategy: The art of the movement of an army or armies in a campaign, so moving or disposing troops or forces upon the enemy the place and conditions for fighting preferred by one side." A Greek word that refers to the leading of an army.

New English Dictionary: "Strategy: The art of projecting and directing the larger movements and operations of a campaign." André Cheron, *Traité Complet de la stratégie des manoeuvres, de la sortie et le bon arrangement*.

Complete Treatise on Chess: "Strategy: The art of the movements whose goal is attack and correct position."

"Sweet appears sour when we pay," is loved but the traitor is hated," the bottle does not quench thirst," never the worse for shining on a he lion kicked by an ass." "The "To catch one napping." "To smell ol one's heels."

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apply beyond literature to life in general (thus helping to take literature out of its separate bin and give it a place in a general "sociological" picture).

The point of view might be phrased in this way: Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*. In so far as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them. Another name for strategies might be *attitudes*.

People have often commented on the fact that there are *contrary* proverbs. But I believe that the above approach to proverbs suggests a necessary modification of that comment. The apparent contradictions depend upon differences in *attitude*, involving a correspondingly different choice of *strategy*. Consider, for instance, the *apparently* opposite pair: "Repentance comes too late" and "Never too late to mend." The first is admonitory. It says in effect: "You'd better look out, or you'll get yourself too far into this business." The second is consolatory, saying in effect: "Buck up, old man, you can still pull out of this."

Some critics have quarreled with me about my selection of the word "strategy" as the name for this process. I have asked them to suggest an alternative term, so far without profit. The only one I can think of is "method." But if "strategy" errs in suggesting to some people an overly *conscious* procedure, "method" errs in suggesting an overly "methodical" one. Anyhow, let's look at the documents:

Concise Oxford Dictionary: "Strategy: Movement of an army or armies in a campaign, art of so moving or disposing troops or ships as to impose upon the enemy the place and time and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself" (from a Greek word that refers to the leading of an army).

New English Dictionary: "Strategy: The art of projecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign."

André Cheron, *Traité Complet d'Echecs*: "On entend par stratégie les manoeuvres qui ont pour but la sortie et le bon arrangement des pièces."¹

¹*Complete Treatise on Chess*: "Strategy signifies the manoeuvres whose goal is attack and correct position." [Ed.]

Looking at these definitions, I gain courage. For surely, the most highly alembicated and sophisticated work of art, arising in complex civilizations, could be considered as designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts and images, and to so organize them that one "imposes upon the enemy the time and place and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself." One seeks to "direct the larger movements and operations" in one's campaign of living. One "maneuvers," and the maneuvering is an "art."

Are not the final results one's "strategy"? One tries, as far as possible, to develop a strategy whereby one "can't lose." One tries to change the rules of the game until they fit his own necessities. Does the artist encounter disaster? He will "make capital" of it. If one is a victim of competition, for instance, if one is elbowed out, if one is willy-nilly more jockeyed against than jockeying, one can by the solace and vengeance of art convert this very "liability" into an "asset." One tries to fight on his own terms, developing a strategy for imposing the proper "time, place, and conditions."

But one must also, to develop a full strategy, be *realistic*. One must *size things up* properly. One cannot accurately know how things *will be*, what is promising and what is menacing, unless he accurately knows how things *are*. So the wise strategist will not be content with strategies of merely a self-gratifying sort. He will "keep his weather eye open." He will not too eagerly "read into" a scene an attitude that is irrelevant to it. He won't sit on the side of an active volcano and "see" it as a dormant plain.

Often, alas, he will. The great allurements in our present popular "inspirational literature," for instance, may be largely of this sort. It is a strategy for easy consolation. It "fills a need," since there is always a need for easy consolation—and in an era of confusion like our own the need is especially keen. So people are only too willing to "meet a man halfway" who will *play down* the realistic naming of our situation and *play up* such strategies as make solace cheap. However, I should propose a reservation here. We usually take it for granted that people who consume our current output of books on "How to Buy Friends

and Bamboozle Oneself and Other People"² are reading as students who will attempt applying the recipes given. Nothing of the sort. *The reading of a book on the attaining of success is in itself the symbolic attaining of that success. It is while they read that these readers are "succeeding."* I'll wager that, in by far the great majority of cases, such readers make no serious attempt to apply the book's recipes. The lure of the book resides in the fact that the reader, while reading it, is then living in the aura of success. What he wants is easy success; and he gets it in symbolic form by the mere reading itself. To attempt applying such stuff in real life would be very difficult, full of many disillusioning problems.

Sometimes a different strategy may arise. The author may remain realistic, avoiding too easy a form of solace — yet he may get as far off the track in his own way. Forgetting that realism is an aspect for foretelling, he may take it as an end in itself. He is tempted to do this by two factors: (1) an ill-digested philosophy of science, leading him mistakenly to assume that "relentless" naturalistic "truthfulness" is a proper end in itself, and (2) a merely competitive desire to outstrip other writers by being "more realistic" than they. Works thus made "efficient" by tests of competition internal to the book trade are a kind of academicism not so named (the writer usually thinks of it as the opposite of academicism). Realism thus stepped up competitively might be distinguished from the proper sort by the name of "naturalism." As a way of "sizing things up," the naturalistic tradition tends to become as inaccurate as the "inspirational" strategy, though at the opposite extreme.

Anyhow, the main point is this: A work like *Madame Bovary* (or its homely American translation, *Babbitt*) is the strategic naming of a situation. It singles out a pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure, that recurs sufficiently often *mutatis mutandis*, for people to "need a word for it" and to adopt an attitude towards it. Each work of art is the addition of a word to an informal dictionary (or, in the case of purely derivative artists, the addition

²Burke is parodying Dale Carnegie's *How to Make Friends and Influence People* in particular, but the genre of the self-help book continues to thrive today. [Ed.]

of a subsidiary meaning to a word already given by some originating artist). As for *Madame Bovary*, the French critic Jules de Gaultier proposed to add it to our formal dictionary by coining the word "Bovarysme" and writing a whole book to say what he meant by it.

Mencken's book on *The American Language*, I hate to say, is splendid. I console myself with the reminder that Mencken didn't write it. Many millions of people wrote it, and Mencken was merely the amanuensis who took it down from their dictation. He found a true "vehicle" (that is, a book that could be greater than the author who wrote it). He gets the royalties, but the job was done by a collectivity. As you read that book, you see a people who were up against a new set of typical recurrent situations, situations typical of their business, their politics, their criminal organizations, their sports. Either there were no words for these in standard English, or people didn't know them, or they didn't "sound right." So a new vocabulary arose, to "give us a word for it." I see no reason for believing that Americans are unusually fertile in word-coinage. American slang was not developed out of some exceptional gift. It was developed out of the fact that new typical situations had arisen and people needed names for them. They had to "size things up." They had to console and strike, to promise and admonish. They had to describe for purposes of forecasting. And "slang" was the result. It is, by this analysis, simply *proverbs not so named*, a kind of "folk criticism."

3 With what, then, would "sociological criticism" along these lines be concerned? It would seek to codify the various strategies which artists have developed with relation to the naming of situations. In a sense, much of it would even be "timeless," for many of the "typical, recurrent situations" are not peculiar to our own civilization at all. The situations and strategies, framed in Aesop's Fables, for instance, apply to human relations now just as fully as they applied in ancient Greece. They are, like philosophy, sufficiently "generalized" to extend far beyond the particular combination of events named by them

in any one instance. They name and we could say that they are on a "high abstraction." One doesn't usually think "abstract," since they are usually their stylistic expression. But the aim to discern the "general bellinlar" (which would suggest that of Goethe).

The attempt to treat literature from point of situations and strategies is ant of Spengler's notion of "timeless, contemporaneity corresponding stages of different ci stance, if modern New York is m dent Rome, then we are "contempc decadent Rome, or with some decadent city among the Mayas, e sense that situations are "timeless, cal," "contemporaneous." A given tionship may be at one time nam foxes and lions, if there are fo about; or it may now be named in manship, advertising, the tactics, etc. But beneath the change in j may often discern the naming of tion.

So sociological criticism, as he would seek to assemble and codi might occasionally lead us to outr as we sometimes found exempl great sermon or tragedy or abstrus losophy the same strategy as we t fied in a dirty joke. At this point sermon and the dirty joke togethe ing by situation" and showing the ble particularizations. In his exc erning essay, "A Critic's Job of Blackmur says, "I think on t (Burke's) method could be appl fruitfulness to Shakespeare, Das or Marie Corelli."³ When I got th I had to admit that Blackmur was cle is an attempt to say for the m be said. As a matter of fact, I'll g and maintain: You can't propo

³Richard P. Blackmur, "A Critic's Job published in *Language as Gesture* (1952)

ng to a word already given artist). As for *Madame Bovary*: Jules de Gaultier proposed a dictionary by coining the word and writing a whole book to it. In *The American Language*, Mencken did. I console myself with the thought that Mencken didn't write it. Many people wrote it, and Mencken was the one who took it down from the shelves and a true "vehicle" (that is, a vehicle greater than the author who wrote it, but the job was done by it). As you read that book, you were up against a new set of situations, situations typical of our politics, their criminal reports. Either there were no standard English, or people were using it in a way that didn't "sound right." It arose, to give us a word for our situation for believing that America is fertile in word-coinage. It is not developed out of some situation that was developed out of the fact that situations had arisen and people had to name them. They had to "size things up" and console and strike, to promise and threaten. It had to describe for purposes of action. If "slang" was the result. It is simply *proverbs not so named*, a slang.

would "sociological criticism" be concerned? It would seek to find strategies which artists have used in relation to the naming of situations. Much of it would even be "timeless," the "typical, recurrent situations" of our own civilization at various times and strategies framed in it. For instance, apply to human relations as fully as they applied in animals. They are, like philosophy, sufficient to extend far beyond the situation of events named by them

in any one instance. They name an "essence." Or, we could say that they are on a "high level of abstraction." One doesn't usually think of them as "abstract," since they are usually so concrete in their stylistic expression. But they invariably aim to discern the "general behind the particular" (which would suggest that they are good Goethe).

The attempt to treat literature from the standpoint of situations and strategies suggests a variant of Spengler's notion of the "contemporaneous." By "contemporaneity" he meant corresponding stages of different cultures. For instance, if modern New York is much like decadent Rome, then we are "contemporaneous" with decadent Rome, or with some corresponding decadent city among the Mayas, etc. It is in this sense that situations are "timeless," "non-historical," "contemporaneous." A given human relationship may be at one time named in terms of foxes and lions, if there are foxes and lions about; or it may now be named in terms of salesmanship, advertising, the tactics of politicians, etc. But beneath the change in particulars, we may often discern the naming of the one situation.

So sociological criticism, as here understood, would seek to assemble and codify this lore. It might occasionally lead us to outrage good taste, as we sometimes found exemplified in some great sermon or tragedy or abstruse work of philosophy the same strategy as we found exemplified in a dirty joke. At this point, we'd put the sermon and the dirty joke together, thus "grouping by situation" and showing the range of possible particularizations. In his exceptionally discerning essay, "A Critic's Job of Work," R. P. Blackmur says, "I think on the whole his (Burke's) method could be applied with equal fruitfulness to Shakespeare, Dashiell Hammett, or Marie Corelli."³ When I got through wincing, I had to admit that Blackmur was right. This article is an attempt to say for the method what can be said. As a matter of fact, I'll go a step further and maintain: You can't properly put Marie

³Richard P. Blackmur, "A Critic's Job of Work" (1935), published in *Language as Gesture* (1952). [Ed.]

Corelli and Shakespeare apart until you have first put them together. First genus, then differentia. The strategy in common is the genus. The range or scale or spectrum of particularizations is the differentia. Anyhow, that's what I'm driving at. And that's why reviewers sometime find in my work "intuitive" leaps that are dubious as "science." They are not "leaps" at all. They are classifications, groupings, made on the basis of some strategic element common to the items grouped. They are neither more nor less "intuitive" than any grouping or classification of social events. Apples can be grouped with bananas as fruits, and they can be grouped with tennis balls as round. I am simply proposing, in the social sphere, a method of classification with reference to strategies.

The method has these things to be said in its favor: It gives definite insight into the organization of literary works; and it automatically breaks down the barriers erected about literature as a specialized pursuit. People can classify novels by reference to three kinds, eight kinds, seventeen kinds. It doesn't matter. Students patiently copy down the professor's classification and pass examinations on it, because the range of possible academic classifications is endless. Sociological classification, as herein suggested, would derive its relevance from the fact that it should apply both to works of art and to social situations outside of art.

It would, I admit, violate current pieties, break down current categories, and thereby "outrage good taste." But "good taste" has become inert. The classifications I am proposing would be active. I think that what we need is active categories.

These categories will lie on the bias across the categories of modern specialization. The new alignment will outrage in particular those persons who take the division of faculties in our universities to be an exact replica of the way in which God himself divided up the universe. We have had the Philosophy of Being; and we have had the Philosophy of Becoming. In typical contemporary specialization, we have been getting the Philosophy of the Bin. Each of these mental localities has had its own peculiar way of life, its

own values, even its own special idiom for seeing, thinking, and "proving." Among other things, a sociological approach should attempt to provide a reintegrative point of view, a broader empire of investigation encompassing the lot. What would such sociological categories be like? They would consider works of art, I think, as strategies for selecting enemies and allies, for socializing losses, for warding off evil eye, for purification, propitiation, and desanctification, consolation and vengeance, admonition and ex-

hortation, implicit commands or instructions of one sort or another. Art forms like "tragedy" or "comedy" or "satire" would be treated as *equipments for living*, that size up situations in various ways and in keeping with correspondingly various attitudes. The typical ingredients of such forms would be sought. Their relation to typical situations would be stressed. Their comparative values would be considered, with the intention of formulating a "strategy of strategies," the "overall" strategy obtained by inspection of the lot.

It has been said that Leavis's criticism, was born in Cambridge, England, in 1895. Leavis survived his tenure as a lecturer at Eton to become a lecturer at Eton to Downing College in 1932 and his wife, the former Queen's College, Oxford, in 1933. Their critical principles, Leavis's visiting professor of English at Eton (1965-68), Wales (1969), and B. Leavis, and in the year of his death.

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F. R. Leavis

1895-1978

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Like his German contemporary, Critics, Leavis viewed the world of drifting after World War I had desensus. Although England, unlike aristocratic ideology of the military mud of the Flanders trenches. Organ failed to offer any coherent explanation of the Flanders trenches. Organ failed to offer any coherent explanation of the Flanders trenches. Organ failed to offer any coherent explanation of the Flanders trenches.