COGNITIVE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF POETIC APPRECIATION:

A THEORETICAL AND CLINICAL INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

The development of poetic appreciation is investigated by combining philosophical analysis with Piagetian-type interviews in order to argue a general case for the fundamental importance of knowledge and the emergence of cognitive abilities in the education of artistic appreciation. Coleridge's poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is used as the object of appreciation for a series of clinical interviews involving 30 subjects, 10 at each of three different age-levels: $9\frac{1}{2}$ - 10 year olds; $11\frac{1}{2}$ - 12 year olds; $13\frac{1}{2}$ - $14\frac{1}{2}$ year olds. Illuminative protocols are drawn from these interviews to illustrate various aspects of the educational theory that is advanced. This theory draws upon recent research and writings in the philosophy of art, literary criticism and developmental psychology as these relate to curriculum problems in the appreciation of art and literature. The educational implications of the argument are then synthesized into a tentative theoretical framework for the teaching of poetic appreciation.

The rejection of positivism and recent moves towards epistemological pluralism are used to support the claim that artistic appreciation, no less than science, is a domain of public knowledge characterized by critical enquiry, objective canons, and concepts shared within a socio-cultural tradition. It is contended that because appreciation presupposes an interpretation which entails "seeing" works of art and literature under an appropriate aspect and in correct relationship to their context, artistic appreciation is not the result of merely subjective or idiosyncratic responses to artistic experience but requires an initiation into the understanding of relevant concepts, the knowledge of publicly identifiable criteria, and a gradual induction into the interpretive mode of reasoning.

It is argued, moreover, that emotional responses to art are not "inner" subjective states but are themselves structured by cognitive appraisals of the aesthetic object. Hence, there is an important distinction between an affective response to the experience of art and an appreciation in which emotion is controlled by valid interpretation. Because this control presupposes public norms and the knowledge necessary to apply them, the education of the emotions through the appreciation of art and literature is necessarily cognitive.

Thus, it is argued that the education of poetic appreciation, as with other forms of art, requires the development of interpretive reasoning ability and specific cognitive capacities such as metaphoric competence and perceptual discrimination. The development of these capacities involves the progressive equilibration of cognitive structures exhibiting features of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation.

The task of the teacher in the education of poetic appreciation, therefore, is to provide the experiences of poetry necessary to the understanding of poetic meaning, and to make available the knowledge necessary to an educated and mature appreciation. The key to such appreciation, it is claimed, lies in developing the ability to construct valid, comprehensive and consistent interpretations on the basis of relevant contextual knowledge. Only when this ability has been developed can evaluation, or the critical appreciation of poetry become a central focus for education.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be an impossible task to acknowledge separately all the formative influences behind a thesis of this nature. Significantly, it is a very personal statement and draws upon many strands of interest and concern which could be traced back to an early stage in my own development. However, during the past five years in which the thesis itself has taken shape, I have had the benefit of support and guidance from a number of mentors, colleagues and friends whose direct influence I have greatly valued. In particular, I wish to acknowledge my special debt to the following:

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Finally, I owe a very special debt of gratitude to the thirty children who took part in the study, to the teachers who taught me to appreciate poetry and to the students whom I later taught. It is by sharing the experience of reading Coleridge's great poem with so many others that I have gained some insight into the nature of poetic appreciation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Education in literature and the arts is of fundamental importance and its value, for many people, may be taken as being self-evident. But it requires more than a declaration of faith to ensure that the aesthetic mode of experience will continue to have a secure and enduring place within the curriculum. If knowledge and experience in this area of education is to be given the high priority and serious attention in the future that it has surely had in the past, then it is crucial that the educational practices aimed at fostering and developing such knowledge and experience have a substantial and well-defended theoretical foundation.

While it could be said that recent progressive educational ideologies, with their romantic notions of childhood and their child-centred views of learning, have made aesthetic education their special concern, it could also be observed that such ideologies have entertained the view that all knowledge is socially constructed, subjectively held, and completely relative in its claims to truth. Under such a persuasion, art and literature are among the first domains to have their foundations of value and objectivity undermined.

It is something of a paradox therefore, that instead of being at the centre of the curriculum, this area of education has come to be regarded by many as a somewhat peripheral or incidental concern of the school. It has come to be seen by many as an area of education that involves the emotions rather than the intellect, an area where pleasure and enjoyment take precedence over discipline and skill. Such a view, moreover, usually takes artistic production and perception to be the special province of the subjective as contrasted with the more important objective domains of knowledge.

But how does this fallacious doctrine come about in the first place? In part, the answer may lie in a mistaken distinction between the intellectual and the emotional.

In the school curriculum there has traditionally been a pervasive emphasis on intellectual achievement and cognitive learning. This emphasis has sometimes been accentuated by particular social events as was the case in American education following the rise of Sputnik I on 4 October, 1957. This brought about a complete change and a whole

new emphasis in the teaching of science and mathematics which gradually came into New Zealand schools during the 1960's. Accompanying this change, was a renewed conviction that intellectual development should continue to be the foremost concern of formal education. This position was given voice by the Commission on Education in New Zealand (commonly known as the Currie Commission) in 1962 when it was stated that:

> ...particular institutions, such as schools, are provided for particular purposes and there cannot be much doubt that the intellectual development of each pupil to his full capacity is still the primary, even though it is not now the sole, purpose of New Zealand schools. (p.21)

This view is completely acceptable within the context of a liberal-progressive educational ideology provided that intellectual development is interpreted in its widest sense, that is as the development and broadening of the mind, including feelings and imagination. But the problem is that "intellect" is often defined in a very narrow sense and then used to make distinctions between some school subjects and others. So it is claimed that subjects such as science and mathematics are primarily concerned with the intellect whereas art, drama, literature are more concerned with the emotions or feelings. Not only are intellect and emotion thought of as separate, in this view, but intellect is somehow considered to be more important.

Thus, for those adopting such a view, painting, music and poetry are assumed to be subjects that engage the feelings and feelings are considered to be non-intellectual functions. Intellect, however, is associated with subjects such as science and mathematics or, more generally, with all those subjects that are conveyed and studied through the use of discursive or propositional language. It is assumed, moreover, that only discursive language can be the vehicle of thought - so that where such language is not used, the intellect is not being used and therefore intellectual or cognitive development is not expected to occur.

It is the central proposition of this thesis not only that such a view is fundamentally false, but that it leads to some very harmful educational implications. In the discussion that follows, it is argued that cognition, the state of knowing, is of central importance in pursuing the goals of education in the arts. While the specific focus of the investigation is on certain aspects of children's appreciation of poetry, the theoretical implications go much further and have relevance for a number of important questions in the wider domains of literary and artistic education. At the outset, however, it is necessary to

locate the specific concerns of this investigation within the context of those wider domains.

The Aesthetic and the Arts

In the first place there is an important conceptual distinction to be made between the aesthetic and the artistic. While, in general terms, aesthetic education is taken to include all aspects of education in the arts, it is important to recognize that the aesthetic is a much wider domain covering experiences that are not dependent for their meaning on what have come to be recognized and understood as forms of art.

What it is that makes a situation aesthetic, what defines the aesthetic point of view, has been the subject of considerable philosophical debate (Urmson, 1957; Beardsley, 1958; Kennick, 1958; Sibley, 1959; Tomas, 1959; Stolnitz, 1960; Coleman, 1968; Dickie, 1969). Urmson (1957) argues that the aesthetic situation is distinguished from others by the particular criteria used to describe it (moving, beautiful, exciting etc.) rather than the particular emotions that it evokes. Many however (such as Tomas, Sibley, Beardsley) have sought to define the aesthetic in terms of its experiential features. But in all these discussions it is assumed that the aesthetic object can be either natural (a mountain, a forest, a sun-set) or a work of art. In summarising a number of these discussions, Coleman (1968) puts forward four distinguishing criteria which he claims mark out the correct use of the term "aesthetic." A situation, point-of-view or attitude is aesthetic, according to Coleman, when:

(1) it is intellectually pleasureful (in the motivational sense of something which 'moves us' - including the 'pleasure' we find in the tragic, the discordant or the grotesque).

(2) it is disinterested (in the sense that there is no necessity for a practical problem to be solved, a want to be satisfied or an intellectual question to be answered).

(3) it is universalizable (insofar as, under ideal conditions, there will be general agreement concerning the above qualities).

(4) it is commendable (in that if an experience is intellectually pleasureful, disinterested, and universalizable, the object of that experience - or that which occasions it - is an object that is to be praised and recommended to other persons).

It is important to recognise that all these criteria refer to the way an object is perceived, the aspect under which it is described,

rather than to any constituent feature of it. None of them implies that the object of aesthetic appraisal is necessarily located in any particular socio-cultural context of which some prior knowledge might be necessary. While being entirely descriptive and evaluative in nature they could apply to a diverse range of objects or activities. Moreover, as Kennick points out, we can evaluate objects, activities and works of art from many different points of view:

> We can use novels and poems and symphonies to put us to sleep or wake us up; we can use pictures to cover spots on the wall, vases to hold flowers, and sculptures for paper weights or door stops. This is what lends point to the distinction between judging something as a work of art and judging it as a sedative, stimulant, or paper weight; but we cannot conclude from this that Art has some special function or purpose in addition to the purpose to which it can be put.
>
> (Kennick, 1958: 329)

When a work of art is considered from an aesthetic point of view, it is not being considered in relation to some external function to which it might be put or to some extrinsic purpose that it serves. But these same conditions can also apply to sunsets, athletic performances and mathematical proofs - all of which can be considered from an aesthetic point of view.

The concept of art is itself what has been called an "essentially contested concept," in that what counts as art is itself the subject of perennial debate (Gallie, 1964, ch.8). There is, however, general agreement that works of art are necessarily cultural artefacts the meaning of which is governed by conventions.

Hence, for the purposes of the present thesis, it is not important that we establish an absolute demarcation between the aesthetic and the artistic (even if this were possible). It shall suffice to say that these are not coterminous concepts and that while it is appropriate to consider the appreciation of works of art as entailing the aesthetic point of view, there is also more to the appreciation of a work of art than this notion implies. Best illustrates this point with the following example:

> Some years ago I went to watch a performance by Ram Gopal, the great Indian classical dancer, and I was enthralled by the exhilarating quality of his movements. Yet I did not appreciate, because I could not have understood, his dance artistically, for there is an enormous number of precise meanings given to hand gestures in Indian classical dance, of which I knew none. So it seems clear that my appreciation was of the aesthetic not the artistic.
>
> (Best, 1978: 115)

As this example suggests, the appreciation of art goes beyond the effects or impressions that it has upon us, to include the knowledge and understanding that we bring to the encounter. It is with appreciation in this sense that the present thesis is concerned. An aesthetic experience can be entirely subjective in the same way that a religious experience is something that we may or may not have, depending on how a situation, an object or an activity affects us and how we respond to it. That we have an aesthetic experience is contingently but not logically related to whether or not we can talk about it.

Appreciation, on the other hand, does not belong only to a subjective inner world about which we cannot speak (following Wittgenstein, as will be argued, such a view is unintelligible). Nor is it simply the voicing of private attitudes and personal opinions. The appreciation of a work of art or literature is both a private and a public activity, embodying not only objective criteria for interpreting its meaning and judging its value, but also a language in terms of which such interpretations and judgements can be communicated to others. It is a rule-governed activity that can be understood, therefore, only when one has been initiated into it. It is this initiation process, moreover, which constitutes one of the central aims of education in literature and the arts.

Making and Matching

The second distinction that is crucial in setting the stage for this investigation is that which can be made between creativity or expression *in* the arts and appreciation *of* the arts. The eminent art historian and critic, Ernst Gombrich (1960) has referred to this as the distinction between "making" and "matching," and it is now widely recognized by researchers in the field of child development (Gardner, 1973b) that the capacity to produce or "make" art, in a minimal sense, precedes the capacity to interpret, appreciate, or "match" the works of others. But too often, in educational terms, it has been assumed that these two aspects are merely different sides of the same coin: that to teach an appreciation of art we should encourage more creativity or expression in art. While it is true that artistic development begins in the spontaneous efforts of the young child to communicate to others by means of a symbolic product that is capable of being responded to, understood, and even appreciated by others, whether such a product has artistic value in the opinion of others, or in terms of some public

criteria, is quite a different matter and may have little or no relevance for the very young child. However, the connection between originality and value is of increasing importance in later stages of development in artistic creativity. Howard Gardner, in his comprehensive review of the psychological research relating to artistic development (Gardner, 1973b), distinguishes what he calls "three independent systems" in the developing human being: the making system, resulting in the creative actions of the artist; the perceiving system, resulting in the artistic discriminations of the critic; and the feeling system, resulting in the aesthetic experiences of the audience. He suggests that:

> Development can be seen as a process wherein the three initially discrete systems gradually begin to influence each other, with interaction eventually becoming so dominant that each system inevitably involves the other ones. The rules whereby each of these systems independently evolves and comes to interact with others are open to study.
>
> (Gardner, 1973b: 39)

Although the central concern of the present study is with the interactions that may occur between the perceiving system and the feeling system, there is a prevalent misconception concerning the educational justification for certain aspects of the making system which should first be dispelled. This is the view that the justification for teaching an appreciation of the arts is to be found in the reasons for teaching creativity in the arts.

Creativity and Aesthetic Expression

How creativity in art or literature can be taught is a vexed question. Some seriously question whether it can be taught at all in any meaningful sense (e.g. White, 1972) and suggest that the most that can be achieved is to provide the optimal conditions under which it may flourish. The common fallacy, however, is to assume that such conditions are those which will ensure a maximum freedom of expression. This fallacy derives from the widely held and psychologically valid belief that children need opportunities to express themselves in order to provide a release for pent-up emotions and to ensure that a healthy balance or harmony is maintained in their emotional development. The arts may be seen to provide a form of therapy for the emotionally disturbed or anxious child because they allow him to give vent to otherwise repressed feelings or uncontrollable impulses. In

psychological terms, it may be the case that children need to release strong emotions when they are distressed, angry, sad or happy, and they may do this by scribbling with crayon, splashing about with paint or pounding clay, but there is much more to art than the mere release of emotional energy. Indeed, it is in the control of emotions that one of the important distinguishing features of artistic activity lies. This point is well made by Bettelheim who writes from a psychoanalytic perspective yet forcefully declares that:

> Art educators, in trying to apply psychology's findings to art, have been led to accept the primitive, unstructured, or playful use of art materials, and to mistake regression for creativity or sublimation. But the value of teaching art to the child, and of all creative activity, does not lie in a freedom of expression that is often little more than regression, but rather in the chance, through art, to integrate unconscious and preconscious material into ego-controlled, creative work.
>
> (Bettelheim, 1979: 416)

Creativity then, is not something that occurs in a vacuum; nor is it produced by simply having the freedom to do as one pleases. If creative products are to have value, they must be meaningful within an identifiable context of conventions or a conceptual framework to which they can be related. Such a context is what is meant by an artistic tradition and it is arrived at only with the mastery of knowledge and after considerable discipline. Again, this point is made by Bettelheim when he states that:

> ...what makes for creativity is not any unconscious outpouring, but the process whereby carefully selected and arranged elements of such fantasies are rigidly worked over by a critical mind in a most disciplined way within the framework of a well-understood tradition. It is immaterial whether the artist accepts, modifies, or rejects a specific tradition, that is, how in his works he relates to it; but to communicate meaning the work of art in some way must be positively or negatively connected with its tradition.
>
> (Bettelheim, 1979: 414)

What this means then, is that while free expression may have a place in education and may well be justifiable on psychological grounds, it is not to be equated with artistic creativity (cf. Eisner, 1973). The fact remains that while only a small number of children are likely to become creative artists, all children are able to improve their capacities to appreciate art and the art-world requires an audience as much as it requires artists. Furthermore, the exercise and education of the imagination does not necessarily require the opportunity for free and

original expression. Appreciation itself is a creative and imaginative activity in that it involves the integration of meaning and the interpretation of symbolic or natural objects. As Mary Warnock states in the concluding chapter of her book on imagination, where she considers the educational implications of her philosophical analysis:

> ...in suggesting that the education of children should be directed to their imagination, I am not suggesting that they should be specially encouraged to be 'creative' or to express themselves. I do not believe that children exercise imagination more by having a set of hand-bells put before them, or a glockenspiel, and being told to make their own music than by listening to music with a receptive ear. I do not believe that there is anything uniquely valuable (though it may have value) in getting children to write or draw things which are to be original. On the contrary, they may be deprived if they are not encouraged to read and to look at the works of other people...grown-ups, or the works of nature. The fact is that if imagination is creative in all its uses, then children will be creating their own meanings and interpretations of things as much by looking at them as by making them.
>
> (Warnock, 1976: 207)

For the majority of children, learning to appreciate works of art may be a more appropriate and meaningful educational goal than making things that have little value. In recognizing this important point, so often ignored by educators, Bettelheim continues with the following telling comment:

> ...all too often I find the correct notion - that the insight of the artist leads to a cultural discovery for all of the people - perverted to mean that all people can, by their dabbling in paint transform their insights into art. The slogan that everybody can paint, which everybody certainly can, should never be taken to mean that everybody is an artist. But unfortunately, the conviction that art has something of great import to say to everybody who is ready and able to respond appropriately to its message is often taken to mean that everybody who has learned to dip his brush into paint has something of importance to add to man's understanding of himself and the world.
>
> (Bettelheim, 1979: 421)

The proper focus for education in the appreciation of the arts, therefore, is the nature of the encounter between child and art-world in relation to the child's readiness and ability to respond appropriately. It is this focus, more specifically directed at poetic art, that provides the subject of the present study.

A Cognitive Approach to Appreciation

The basic premise upon which this investigation is developed is

that acts of cognition are constitutive of much that we take as being central to the appreciation of art, including perception, feeling, imagination and even such noble notions as intuition or vision. Like all human activity, art occurs in a context and knowledge of the context is necessary to the meaningfulness of the activity. Not only does appreciation of the arts depend essentially on our having a common-sense knowledge of the world, but our apprehension of a particular work will be the richer the more specialized knowledge we have of the time and place in which it was produced, the genre to which it belongs and the tradition to which it relates. In the words of Roger Scruton,

> Appreciation of art involves understanding a system of signs, and this understanding is a cognitive capacity, rather than a capacity for any kind of feeling or experience.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 168)

The symbol systems which constitute the world of art exist only insofar as they can be interpreted and understood. Symbols are not perceived merely by seeing what is there, but rather what is seen is apprehended in accordance with previously accumulated experience that has been organized into patterns and categories which may be revised but cannot be eliminated. Symbols are not only central to all art but they are central to any process that involves interpreting and understanding the world.

Hence, the main implication of a cognitive approach to the appreciation of art is that it takes art to be a form of knowledge. And there will be an important distinction to be made between knowing how and knowing that in the appreciation of the arts (Ryle, 1949: 28-60). This distinction will be explored in considerable depth in later chapters. At this stage, however, it can be noted that a cognitive approach will give special attention to the functions of talk about art. Whereas someone could read many poems or listen to dozens of operas and presumably acquire considerable knowledge of how to appreciate these things, a cognitive approach to the teaching of poetry or music would involve gaining knowledge about the elements of poetry, what poems meant, the critical analysis of particular poems, and so on. It would be very much knowledge that works of poetry or music have certain features and can be interpreted in particular ways.

Now, it has been suggested that "knowledge about" the arts (knowing that) in some way destroys the pristine purity of our "knowledge in" the arts (knowing how) (cf. "Shakespeare was killed for me by my

teachers"). This point is well made by Hermione, in D.H. Lawrence's novel Women In Love, when she comments,

> When we have knowledge, don't we lose everything but knowledge? If I know about the flower, don't I lose the flower and have only the knowledge? Aren't we exchanging the substance for the shadow, aren't we forfeiting life for this dead quality of knowledge? (p.30)

This may indeed occur, but by adopting a cognitive approach one is not suggesting that a verbal description of a painting or a piece of music, or an interpretation of a poem, is a substitute for experiencing the actual thing. By the same token, knowledge about the art object is not necessarily extraneous to it. A cognitive approach allows for the enrichment that can result from the interaction between different symbolic codes. Description, interpretation and criticism - varieties of talk about the arts - may indeed obfuscate and confuse, but they can also lead to a new and deeper discernment; they can amount to no more than barren verbalism, or they can constitute the articulation of a deep understanding, an appreciation and knowledge of a work of art. Whether it is one or the other depends not on whether a cognitive approach is taken but on how it is taken. The burden of this thesis is to argue for a cognitive approach to poetic appreciation that is both logically and psychologically valid and can therefore provide a sound theoretical basis for educational practice.

Literature as an Art Form

In taking poetic appreciation as a special case by which to illuminate more general aspects of artistic appreciation, an assumption is made about the nature of literature as an art form. Such an assumption requires little justification except insofar as it is clearly distinguished from other possible conceptions of literature.

Beardsley (1973: 24) has suggested that literature can be defined in at least three distinct, though interrelated ways: the language concept of literature refers to the total class of written or spoken pieces of natural language (discourses); the art concept of literature restricts the term to a sub-set of discourses which could properly be called "literary works of art" i.e. as artefacts produced with an aesthetic intention; and, the semantic concept of literature which avoids the "aesthetic criterion" by stipulating that literature consists of those discourses "a substantial portion of whose meaning is implicit (or secondary) meaning" (Beardsley, 1973: 27). For the purposes

of this investigation, it is predominantly the second of these, the art concept, that is being invoked.

Clearly, the first concept is too wide. While it is true that a literary work is always an object that is written or spoken in a language and in that sense is a linguistic fact, there are many texts and utterances that would not in any normal situation be construed as literature (e.g. instructions on how to bake a cake, or the command to someone to "stand up!"). As one literary theorist has recently stated:

> An utterance is not in itself a literary work: it is only when considered in a certain light by a reader who interprets it as intended to achieve a certain effect that it becomes, for that reader, a literary work.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 5)

There is a useful distinction then to be made between literary discourse and ordinary discourse. While they both communicate and while both employ words from the same primary language, the context and the purpose determine how the words will be understood. The position taken in this thesis, therefore, as will be fully argued in Chapter 8, is very close to that described by Martin when he states that:

> ...literary language brings to our notice, raises into consciousness, more of the content of the language we speak than does ordinary discourse, that when reading poetry we become more aware of implications and meanings that usually escape us.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 22)

This may appear to be an adoption of the third concept, the semantic concept of literature, and in part it is. To the extent that density, richness and essential ambiguity of meaning are very common features of literary discourse, this concept is useful. However, as has been argued by Lyas (1969) and Olsen (1978) semantic density is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for something being a literary work. Olsen makes the point as follows:

> The function and desirability of ambiguity can only be judged with regard to a purpose. In ordinary speech and many other types of discourse the goal is to eliminate ambiguity through context, and one ignores it if it does not give rise to misunderstanding. In literature ambiguity is very often used to enrich meaning in the way suggested by the semantic theory. It is a convention in literature that ambiguity should not be ignored but paid attention to....Semantic density has a function only in a context. It cannot by itself turn a passage into a literary work or guarantee that it is part of one.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 13)

Thus, it is the art concept of literature, rather than the more general language concept, which provides a platform for this investigation of the cognitive dimensions of poetic appreciation. While these dimensions will be entirely locatable within the language of a work, their contribution to its literary qualities must be related to the unity of the work as a whole and the nature of the context into which language must enter to become effective as literary language. While there are no aesthetic features of a literary work which cannot be reached through the text, and while such features will necessarily have a linguistic (syntactic, semantic or structural) basis, it is not enough to regard the text as merely an utterance or piece of discourse, as the language theory implies; nor is it enough, as the semantic theory implies, to confine interpretation to the search for layers of meaning in the semantically dense language of literature. In order to appreciate a literary text as a work of art, one must have an understanding of how the language functions in the larger context to which it belongs. Only with some knowledge of the conventions and practices that constitute the literary tradition of a given culture, can a text come to be understood and appreciated as a work of art.

The art concept of literature is fully expounded by Wellek and Warren, who commence their argument by asserting that:

> Language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculpture, paints of pictures, or sounds of music. But one should realize that language is not mere inert matter like stone but is itself a creation of man and is thus charged with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group.
>
> (Wellek and Warren, 1963: 22)

The distinctiveness of literary language lies in its imaginative qualities (as manifested in semantic, syntactic and structural features) but the context of literary art (the criteria by which it is interpreted and evaluated) is to be found in its various traditional genres such as the lyric, the epic, and the drama. It is with this concept of literature as an art form that the present thesis is concerned. Thus, in considering the appreciation of art, conceptually and theoretically, literature is taken as the exemplary case - not the arts of literature in their entirety, but some specific and central aspects of poetic appreciation. At first, while the examples are drawn from poetry, the discussion is concerned with appreciation in the wider sense. It is not until the final three chapters that the focus is directed more specifically at the appreciation of poetry.

Education for Appreciation

In the chapters that follow, the appreciation of art is seen to involve a number of specific cognitive demands. Firstly, there is reasoning involved in arriving at an interpretation and in checking the correctness of one's understanding of what the work means. Secondly, there is the ability to hold before the mind a complex pattern of connections and relationships. Thirdly, there is the ability to discriminate the various elements of the work and to pay attention to significant details. Fourthly, there is the control that is required to prevent one's personal responses from distorting the formation of a comprehensive and coherent interpretation. It is the function of education to ensure that such capacities develop and mature in order that appreciation may become possible as a freely chosen and meaningful human pursuit.

To be educated for artistic appreciation is to have some knowledge of the literary traditions towhich various works of art belong; it is to have some understanding of the criteria by which such works can be interpreted and evaluated; it is to be disposed towards the artistic experience in a particular way - to have acquired certain habits of discrimination and preference. Aristotle was probably the first to recognize this important educational function when he wrote:

> Our attitude towards what we listen to is determined by our habits. We expect things to be said in the way in which we are accustomed to talk ourselves: things that are said some other way do not seem the same at all but seem rather incomprehensible...Thus, one needs already to have been educated in the way to approach each subject.
>
> (Metaphysics, Book II)

It would be incoherent to simply inform a non-initiate what it was to appreciate a painting or perceive the artistic features of a piece of music, for there would be no way that he could understand this in terms with which he was already familiar..

The point of Aristotle's remark is that education entails initiation and the only way of coming to appreciate works of art involves becoming accustomed to expect certain qualities and to perceive these accordingly, perhaps in the presence of a teacher who already perceives them and appreciates their aesthetic value.

The same idea is voiced in more recent times by T.S. Eliot, who comments on its special relevance for the education of poetic appreciation:

> The experience of poetry, as it develops in the conscious and mature person, is not merely the sum of the experiences of good poems. Education in poetry requires an organization of these experiences. There is not one of us who is born with, or who suddenly acquires at puberty or later, an infallible discrimination and taste...Yet a very large number of people, I believe, have the native capacity for enjoying some good poetry...It is only the exceptional reader, certainly, who in the course of time comes to classify and compare his experiences, to see one in the light of others; and who, as his poetic experiences multiply, will be able to understand each more accurately. The element of enjoyment is enlarged into appreciation, which brings a more intellectual addition to the original intensity of feeling.
> (Eliot, 1933)

Whether it is only the "exceptional" reader who can become so educated, is largely an empirical question of course, but the contention that we should learn how to read poetry in addition to the experience of actually reading it is essentially the same claim that is argued in the present thesis as being a valid basis for educational practice.

It is a claim which rests on the assumption that the ability to make rational judgements must be learned, and that standards of truth and value can be acquired only after a systematic and coherent ordering of experience. Such an ordering of experience, furthermore, presupposes a certain level of cognitive development and it is for this reason that a critical approach to art and literature will be more appropriate at later stages of development, given that the necessary conditions have been provided earlier on.

It is the major contention of this thesis, then, that cognitive development is fundamentally important in the teaching of poetic appreciation and, by implication, in the wider domain of art education. It is argued that maturity in the appreciation of poetry, as for other forms of art, is achieved through the continuous interaction between the individual's emergent cognitive structures and those rational procedures for interpreting experience that constitute a domain of public knowledge. The education of poetic appreciation involves an initiation into a way of knowing what belongs to the objective art-world, with its traditions, concepts and standards.

This contention has both logical and psychological implications for an educational theory of poetic appreciation. The following analysis, therefore, proceeds on two interdependent levels: the conceptual and the empirical. The philosophical method is employed to

develop and argue for a particular approach to the teaching of poetic appreciation; the clinical interview method is used to provide a source of empirical data with which to illuminate and substantiate the position that is taken and the case that is being made.

While many of the questions addressed in the following chapters are theoretical and epistemological in character, their educational implications will be supported, as far as possible, on empirical grounds both by reference to relevant psychological research on poetic appreciation and by the use of selected excerpts from a number of interview protocols revealing aspects of appreciation at different age-levels. Thus, by combining theoretical analysis with illuminative data, the aim of the thesis is to explore the most important logical and psychological dimensions in the appreciation of poetry in order to advance an educational position with its attendant pedagogical and curricular implications.

It is important at the outset to locate the study in a wider theoretical and methodological context. Chapter 2, therefore, comprises a discussion which begins by considering the distinctively eclectic nature of educational theory and proceeds to an explication of the rationale behind the Piagetian clinical interview, which is held to be the most appropriate method by which to investigate cognitive structure and development.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is first to provide the grounds for focussing on Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and then to describe the procedures used in conducting thirty clinical interviews exploring children's appreciation of the poem.

Chapter 4 is concerned with establishing the claim that artistic appreciation, no less than science, is a domain of public knowledge characterized by objective canons and concepts shared within a socio-cultural context.

Chapter 5 advances the theory that the appreciation of art logically entails acts of interpretive cognition, implying that the education of appreciation involves bringing the child to <u>see</u> something in a work of art or literature that he has not seen, or to see it in a new way, or to see the whole work from a new perspective.

The aim of Chapter 6 is to employ a theory of cognitive emotion to explicate the distinction between affective response and artistic appreciation. It is argued that because interpretation entails

cognitive appraisal, the affective response to art or literature can be controlled and the aim of education is to ensure that valid interpretation is the basis of such control. Only in this way can the appreciation of art and literature properly contribute to the education of the emotions.

Thus, it is argued that the key to poetic appreciation as with other forms of art, lies in the ability to construct valid, comprehensive and consistent interpretations on the basis of relevant contextual knowledge. But this ability emerges only gradually through the course of cognitive development and in Chapter 7 its cognitive structural features are explained and exemplified in terms of Piagetian theory.

To complement this structural analysis, Chapter 8 presents a semantic analysis of poetic language together with an exploration of the nature of poetic understanding considered from a developmental point of view.

Finally, in Chapter 9, the educational implications of the preceding argument are synthesized into a tentative theoretical framework for the teaching of poetic appreciation.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND CHOICE OF METHOD

The question of which methodological approach to employ in the present study has to be considered in the light of certain considerations that follow from the distinctive nature and purpose of educational theory.

In education, as in other practical areas, the purpose of theory is to provide a justification for action and a conceptual frame of reference for identifying and ordering those aspects of the world that are especially significant for the realization of particular educational intentions. It is this aspect that distinguishes educational theory from other kinds of theory that tend to be more explanatory in nature. Although educational theory seeks to describe and explain, it is also concerned with guiding and improving practice, with prescribing certain ends and what ought to be done to achieve them (Hirst, 1966). The value components of an educational theory, which will include its practical implications, are neither inductive nor deductive, but deliberative. Educational theory is not limited to forming generalizations or explanations; nor is it confined to the purpose of forming abstractions from principles; always, at some stage, it is concerned about what ought to be done in particular educational situations.

Hirst likens educational theory to political theory or engineering in pointing out that the substance of the theory is not contained in a body of propositions or knowledge about the world, but in the direct application of such knowledge to the decisions about what should be done in particular educational situations or about particular problems of practice.[1] Hirst's illustration is worth considering at this point:

> The educationist is not simply interested in, for instance, the nature of historical explanation, the place in it of moral judgments and the psychological aspects of acquiring historical concepts. He is

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[1] Hirst's conception of educational theory as inclusive of values is much wider than the conception of theory taken in a strictly empiricist account. The latter is taken by O'Connor (1957) and the two positions have been the subject of a lengthy debate (cf. Hirst, 1973; O'Connor, 1973). The arguments lie outside the scope of the present discussion but Hirst's position is cited here as being consistent with the way in which educational theory is construed within this thesis.

> concerned with using these kinds of knowledge to form rationally defensible principles about the place of history teaching in education, what history should be taught in schools and how it ought to be done.
>
> (Hirst, 1966: 48)

There are no specifiable formulae which would enable a teacher to determine whether a particular child will benefit from a particular course or curriculum. It is always a matter of judgment based on deliberation (Schwab, 1969) which should therefore be subject to rigorous critical appraisal.

When explanations are made in support of particular educational judgments, it is important to remember that reality is always more complex and many-sided than any single explanatory theory can capture. As Schwab comments:

> Nearly all theories in all the behavioural sciences are marked by the co-existence of competing theories ...All the social and behavioural sciences are marked by "schools" each distinguished by a different choice of principle of enquiry, each of which selects from the intimidating complexities of the subject matter the small fraction of the whole with which it can deal.
>
> (Schwab, 1969: 13)

Thus, there are always more observations that could be made than can possibly be incorporated in any one theory. Or, expressing it another way, any single theory that is advanced will always leave some observations out of account.

It follows from these considerations of the nature of an educational theory that many of its central claims may be outside the province of empirical investigation but are nonetheless open to critical scrutiny and objective substantiation. The validity of an educational theory, therefore, will depend as much on its conceptual clarity and coherence as on its empirical discoveries about the world. Furthermore, in practical educational situations, there is a closer link between theory and practice than there is between facts and practice. For what a teacher does in practice is derived more from the theories that he or she holds, whether consciously or unconsciously, than from his knowledge of facts and empirical findings.

Now, the purpose of the present study, as set out in the previous chapter, is to advance and substantiate a particular theory concerning the teaching of poetic appreciation. Because such a theory entails both conceptual and empirical aspects, the method employed combines

philosophical analysis with clinical investigation. The observations which comprise the data (in the form of interview protocols) are used to illuminate and substantiate the theoretical position that is being advanced. Before proceeding further however, it is necessary to elucidate what is meant by the clinical interview and to consider its methodological rationale within the context of theoretical analysis.

The clinical interview is a one-to-one situation in which the investigator presents a subject with a task or semi-structured experience to which the subject makes some kind of response. On the basis of this response, the investigator will then ask the subject a question, pose a variation of the problem, or in some carefully selected way, alter the stimulus situation in order to reveal more than could be revealed in the response alone. Each subsequent question, each modification of the stimulus situation, is a deliberate decision on the part of the investigator, made in the light of a theoretical frame of reference, intended to further illuminate what lies beneath the subject's response. Because each interview is the result of this organic interactive process, not all subjects, even within a single age-group, will be presented with exactly the same total stimulus situation, although the original task may have been held constant. The crux of this method is to explore what lies beneath an overt behavioural response by pursuing a deliberate question-response-question-response sequence during the course of which the investigator uses all the insight and ability at his or her command in order to understand what the subject says or does and to adapt subsequent questions in terms of this understanding.

The clinical method has been used widely in the study of cognitive development. Undoubtedly its greatest exponent has been Piaget, who has used the method to study the development of language (1926), judgment and reasoning (1928), logical thought (1929), moral judgment (1932), play and fantasy (1951), and the growth of particular concepts such as causality (1930), number (1952), time (1969), movement and speed (1970a) and so on.

More recently, the method has been used effectively by others to study the growth and development of religious concepts (Goldman, 1964), syntactical structures (Chomsky, 1969), political concepts (Connell, 1971), and children's reasoning and conceptions in art (Machotka, 1966; Gardner et al., 1975a; Smith, 1975; Parsons et al., 1978) and literature (Petrosky, 1977; Hardy-Brown, 1979).

In the empirical study of literary judgment and appreciation,

clinical methods have a well established tradition, beginning with the early studies of literary judgment carried out by I.A. Richards (1929) in which a dozen or so poems were subjected to detailed analysis by his undergraduate students in English literature. The technique employed by Richards of taking the verbal protocols of individual reactions to the poems and using them as an empirical foundation for a theory of poetic appreciation, has obvious relevance for the present study, especially when combined with the Piagetian interview.

However, despite these well-known and respected exponents of the clinical method, its use is still sometimes called into question, especially in the field of psychology where methods often assume ideological guises, giving rise to what Bruner (1957a) has labelled "methodolatory". This explains why some psychologists have demonstrated a methodological obsession with experimentation (Johnson-Laird and Wason, 1977: 2) in their striving to emulate the supposed empiricism of the physical sciences and their illusory pursuit of what Hudson (1972) has so aptly called "the cult of the fact". But in psychology, as in other domains of human enquiry, our quest is not simply for facts, but for theories, models and hypotheses - conjectures that make possible the explanation and understanding of complex realities.

Piaget, writing from the perspective of a philosopher as much as a scientist, asserted long before Kuhn or Popper that:

> In psychology as in physics there are no pure "facts", if by "facts" are meant phenomena presented nakedly to the mind by nature itself, independent respectively of hypotheses by means of which the mind examines them, of principles governing the interpretation of experience, and of the systematic framework of existing judgments into which the observer pigeon-holes every new observation.
>
> (Piaget, 1929: 23)

In Piaget's view, theoretical investigation should always precede measurement and observation in science and he has long held the conviction that philosophical, especially epistemological, problems themselves can be located within developmental data. The methodology does not somehow <u>reveal</u> the data as a body of "facts" but rather, it makes possible an interpretation of what is observed in the light of theoretical insights that have already been made (cf. Hanson, 1958). The similarity with physics is suggested again by Piaget when he writes,

> A physicist...does not measure a form of energy until a far more thorough theoretical study has been made of what is to be measured and of the instrument of measurement itself.
>
> (Piaget, 1970b: 59)

It is not surprising therefore that in order to carry out his own 'thorough theoretical study' of cognitive development, Piaget has adopted the approach of the clinician, rather than the experimentalist, as being not only appropriate but essential to his task. As this approach has provided a model for the present study, its main features need to be considered at this point.

The Holistic Approach and the Pattern Model of Explanation

Diesing (1971: 147) defines the standpoint of the clinician as holistic. He comments that "The holist uses evidence to build up a many-sided, complex picture of his subject matter". Whereas the experimentalist uses a deductive model of explanation by which he seeks to discover causal connections, the clinician uses what Abraham Kaplan (1964) has called "the pattern model of explanation". This involves the search for a pattern into which the various observed elements can be placed and inter-related; a model which will explain both commonalities and disparities, continuities and discontinuities. This is a process which unites theoretical insight and imagination with disciplined observation and persistent search. Kaplan comments that:

> For the pattern model, objectivity consists essentially in this, that the pattern can be indefinitely filled in and extended: as we obtain more and more knowledge it continues to fall into place in this pattern, and the pattern itself has a place in a larger whole.
> (Kaplan, 1964: 335)

The distinctiveness of the pattern model of explanation, with its holistic approach, constitutes the major strength of the clinical method and is probably best described through comparison with the deductive model of explanation which characterizes the experimental method.

An example of the pattern model of explanation is to be found in jurisprudence where lawyers, in the context of court-room procedures, set out to present a pattern of evidence and argument that will establish a case for either the guilt or the innocence of the defendant. In contrast to this, the deductive model of explanation is to be found in a science such as physics. For example, if we accept (i) Newton's laws of motion and his law of gravitation, and (ii) certain data on the solar system (masses, distances, instantaneous velocities, etc.) it is possible to deduce something close to Kepler's three "descriptive" laws of planetary motion, being summaries of observations and therefore, in this

case, generalizations from which predictions about planetary motion can be made.

Diesing discusses four significant contrasting features in these two models of explanation.

First, there is a distinction with regard to generalizability. In the deductive model of explanation "there is always a sharp distinction between the explanandum, the thing to be explained, and the explanans, that which does the explaining" (Diesing, 1971: 160). The former is usually a particular instance, while the latter is a general covering law (Hempel, 1965). In the pattern model, however, "both explanandum and explanans are on the same level of generality, and the relation is that of part and whole. Both are equally particularized to the system being described, and no general laws appear anywhere." (Diesing, 1971: 160). Thus, in the courtroom situation, each piece of evidence is a part of the total pattern, but the pattern itself is as unique as each contributing piece of evidence.

Second, there is a distinction with regard to predictability. Whereas in the deductive model, prediction and causal connections are important, in the pattern model description and interpretation are important and "it is not possible to deduce an unknown part of a pattern from a known part" (Diesing, 1971: 163-4). Thus Kepler's laws will enable the prediction of future planetary motion, whereas, in the courtroom, the prosecuting lawyer is not at all concerned with the probability of another crime being committed on some subsequent occasion.

Third, there is a distinction with regard to finiteness. In the experimental model, a finite and discreet number of deductions can be made from an equally finite and discreet number of hypotheses. On the other hand, it is characteristic of the pattern model to be dynamic and open to further interpretations so that "a pattern is rarely if ever finished completely" (Diesing, 1971: 164).

Finally, there is a distinction with regard to stability. Hence, in a deductive explanation, there is a sharp distinction between explanandum and explanans which enables each to be observed and tested separately. (This is the distinction that is frequently made between dependent and independent variables). However, it is characteristic of pattern models that the pattern itself is an integrated whole that is subject to change in the course of its development "and any part of the pattern may be affected by changes in another part" (Diesing, 1971: 166).

In sum, we can characterize methods according to the modes of

explanation that they entail and these in turn are characteristic of the theories out of which such explanations arise. Whereas the experimental and quasi-experimental methods (cf. Campbell and Stanley, 1963) will produce relatively finite and stable explanations in the form of generalizations from which predictions can be made, the holistic, clinical (or case-study, or participant-observer) methods (cf. Smith, 1978) will produce relatively dynamic and integrated explanations in the form of particularized descriptions from which interpretations can be made. Furthermore, the purposes to which theories are put will be directly related to the kinds of explanation that they contain. As Diesing points out,

> One should not expect a clinical, holistic theory to be hierarchical-deductive, to contain rigid formal definitions, or to yield predictions and deductive explanations. Its task rather is to provide revealing classifications of cases and to sensitize one to what is happening in a case.
>
> (Diesing, 1971: 258)

But, above all, the whole model (or paradigm) comprising method, explanations and theory, must be especially suited to the phenomena being studied. In this regard, where mental phenomena are concerned, where the field of study comprises the structure and development of human cognition, the experimental model has been found wanting.[2] This has led one experimental psychologist to the following conclusion:

> In short, we have been badly oversold on the classical experimental model as the means of studying such central aspects of human psychology as cognition. Too much evidence - obvious and available evidence - is ignored because it fails to conform to our prejudices about how empirical information arises. We have insisted upon the measurement of behaviour to the extent that most of the things we observe have no relevance for the process of thinking.
>
> (Deese, 1969: 518)

This realization that the method must take account of the relevant

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[2] In a recently published volume reporting a number of research studies on problem-solving and other thought processes, the editors comment that:

> "Unfortunately, an understanding of human mentality is not to be achieved merely by carrying out experiments - no matter how exemplary they are - and developing theories to account for their results."
>
> (Johnson-Laird & Wason, 1977: 2)

evidence may well have been the single most significant factor in determining Piaget's choice of the clinical interview as the most appropriate method by which to investigate the cognitive structures of the developing child. Behind the method itself, however, there is a theoretical perspective defining what will count as evidence in the first place. It is to a consideration of this perspective that we now turn.

The Structuralist Perspective

The metatheoretical perspective behind Piaget's use of an holistic approach and a pattern model of explanation is what has come to be called structuralism.

Piaget (1971) has defined structuralism as a method of inquiry based on the concepts of totality, self-regulation, and transformation,[3] common not only to anthropology and linguistics, but to mathematics, physics, biology, psychology, and philosophy as well. Essentially, it is a theoretical perspective in social science that has found expression not only in the work of Piaget but also in the work of the anthropologist, Levi-Strauss and in the linguistic theories of Jacobson and Chomsky.

Structuralism makes possible the discovery of inter-relationships among observed behavioural phenomena. It is a perspective which, when applied in the realm of social science, prescribes certain operations or ways of working upon data such that the structural components and underlying relationships within the phenomena, whether comprised of kinship relations, language, myths, thoughts or dreams, whether manifested at the level of individual behaviour, social institutions or cultural systems, can be mapped and understood in formal and symbolic terms. The structures so revealed provide a set of categories and abstract rules in terms of which the observed phenomena can be interpreted and understood. Behind the perspective, therefore, lies an epistemology and a number of assumptions about the nature of man and the development of knowledge, language and culture.[4] As Howard Gardner expresses it in the title of

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[3] These concepts will be explicated in Chapter 7 where they are discussed in relation to the implications they have for the present study.

[4] For an analysis of the epistemological basis of structuralism, see Goddard (1975). See also Robey (1973) which comprises a collection of essays on the application of structuralism to different forms of knowledge. The epistemological premises are specifically discussed in papers by Culler and Mepham.

his comparative study of Piaget and Levi-Strauss, the essential enterprise of structuralism is "the quest for mind."[5]

Although they come from different disciplines and show differences of method and orientation in their work, both Piaget and Levi-Strauss have been concerned with discovering the universal logical structures of the human mind.[6] Each has adopted the Kantian view of man as a being capable of rational autonomy who, through active reason, derives order from the flux of experience by forming conceptual and categorical structures. It is important to recognize, however, that these structures do not have an existence apart from the observed phenomena to which they relate. A cognitive structure does not have a mental referent in the sense that it denotes some kind of 'ghost in the machine' (cf. Ryle, 1949). Rather, it is a residual category into which we can place (interpret) certain classes of action. To use Goddard's words,

> ...truths of structure are intended to refer to the properties of the human mind, and must therefore be called truths of reason: that is necessary truths which are factually inaccessible, or only indirectly accessible through the examination of empirical materials.
>
> (Goddard, 1975: 106)

These 'empirical materials' or observed phenomena comprise the data from which the structures are logically derived or inferred. It is these that comprise the speech utterances recorded by the linguist, the

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5 Gardner considers that the particular view of the mind entailed in structuralism provides a point of departure for the theorizing of both Piaget and Levi-Strauss:

> "Two assumptions mark the structuralist enterprise overall. One is the belief that through careful examination of groups which, like children or primitives, differ from the contemporary Western adult, new light can be cast on the whole of human experience; the second is the faith that what is distinctive about human beliefs, development, and institutions is a reflection of the fundamental nature of human thought, and hence, the biological structure of the 'human mind'." (Gardner, 1973a: 13)

6 Michael Lane (1970) in the introduction to his book on structuralism, expresses its basic premise as follows:

> "...social structures are the product of a reason (<u>esprit</u>) that is innate in all men. That is, it is genetically rather than socially or culturally determined. Further, this reason operates unconsciously, and we can have access to it only through the systems that it forms, myths, kinship systems, systems of change, linguistic structures, cultural artefacts and so on." (p.31)

the fieldnotes of the anthropologist, or the clinical interview transcriptions of the psychologist (see Figure 1).

The Concept of Structure in Social Science

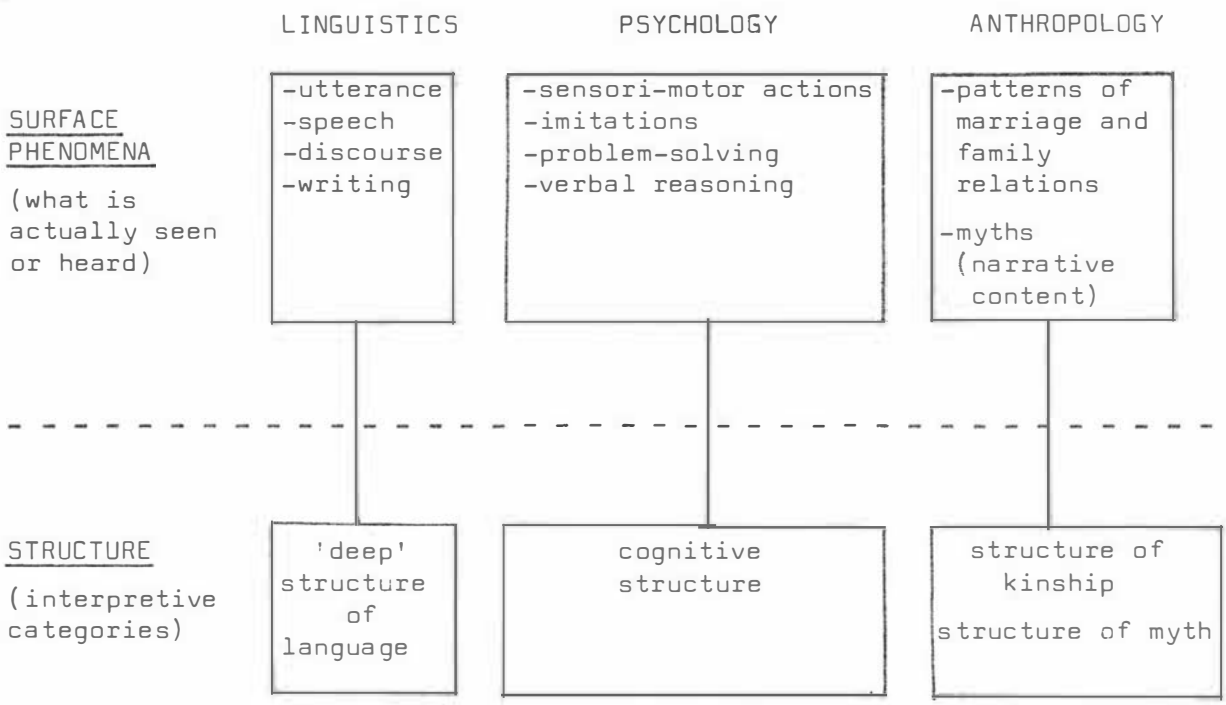

Figure 1

Because the structuralist perspective is holistic, concerned with integrating the observable elements of phenomena into patterns that can be understood and can provide us with interpretive frameworks, it is particularly appropriate to the study of human actions. In Piaget's theory, the clinical interview is a deliberate and selective sampling of human action and, because action is a manifestation of thought, the interview data provides the raw material for a structural analysis of human cognition.

Piaget's Clinical Method

Flavell (1963: 37) has described Piaget's theory as essentially descriptive-explanatory rather than predictive, adding that it could be characterized as "loose" rather than "tight" in its specification of

concept meanings. In approaching the study of human cognition, or what he has called genetic epistemology, Piaget has clearly adopted a structuralist standpoint, governed by the conviction that human thought and action develops with a characteristic wholeness or integrity. It is from this theoretical standpoint that he has refined and perfected the clinical method as the most appropriate investigative tool for his purpose.

In all his voluminous writings, Piaget has provided comparatively sparse comment on the clinical method that he has used to discover and map the structures of cognitive development across the many domains of knowledge that he and his colleagues have studied. However, in the introduction to The Child's Conception of the World (Piaget, 1929) a somewhat detailed account of the clinical method is provided and it is carefully distinguished from the 'test method' and the 'method of pure observation.'

Piaget claims that the clinical interview unites "what is most expedient in the methods of test (experimentation) and of direct observation whilst avoiding their respective disadvantages" (Piaget, 1929: 7). As much as the experiment is for the experimentalist, the purpose of the interview for the clinician is to seek empirical evidence with which to verify or refute the theoretical conjectures that he makes. But while the systematic theoretical framework is very important, Piaget emphasizes that:

> ...the clinical examination is also dependent on direct observation, in the sense that the good practitioner lets himself be led, though always in control, and takes account of the whole of the mental context, instead of being the victim of "systematic error" as so often happens to the pure experimenter.
>
> (Piaget, 1929: 8)

Whereas observation methods focus on what the child will do under certain environmental conditions, the clinical interview focuses on what the child can do in a specified situation or context. From an holistic developmental point of view, the latter is the more penetrating question because it considers not only the overt behaviour and the environment in which it occurs, but more importantly, the total mental context in which behaviour can be interpreted, not merely as response, but as action. Whereas controlled systematic observation can achieve validity through measurement or quantification, the clinical method achieves contextual validity. The clinician "always has several different kinds of evidence

available, he can always assess the validity of a kind or piece of evidence in the context of others" (Diesing, 1971: 147). It is on this particular feature that the objectivity of his method depends.

It is a common fallacy that the clinical method lacks scientific rigour because it is too subjective and unsystematic. Indeed, much of the early resistance to and rejection of Piaget's work may have stemmed from certain prejudices about how empirical knowledge arises. What is important to recognize, however, is not that the clinical method is less valid than other methods, but that it is a different kind of validity. The main features of this special kind of validity have been explained as follows:

> To distinguish contextual validity from the kind of validity important to the psychometrician and survey researcher, I shall venture to call it dependability. The dependability of a source of evidence is the extent to which its output can be taken at face value relative to other sources of evidence, in the process of interpreting manifold evidence. None of the evidence used by clinicians and participant observers is absolutely dependable; none is ever completely free of the need for cross-checking and reinterpretation. The techniques of contextual validation must be used more or less continuously on nearly all the evidence gathered.
>
> (Diesing, 1971: 149)

But this dependability of evidence is not achieved easily. It is made possible both by the flexibility of the method itself, and by the proficiency of the person who uses it.

Goldman (1964) who used the clinical interview to study the development of religious concepts, considered the method to be more penetrating than the use of written responses or multiple-choice questionnaires. Not only is the method more suitable for a wider age-range but it enables the skilled interviewer to identify the 'stock response' which may have been learned in the classroom but does not reflect deeper understanding. Because it is more flexible than other methods, the clinical method "makes for wider differentiation of response, reveals obscurities, explores them, and gives a more accurate picture in depth of a child's concept" (Goldman, 1964: 35).

In a recently reported study of logical operations in poetic interpretation, Hardy-Brown (1979: 135) states that:

> It seems clear that 'objective', non-interview formats for assessing formal operations within a given domain should be derived only after exploration of operational thinking in that domain via the more flexible and sensitive

> clinical interview approach. In addition only a clinical interview approach is likely to be reasonably sensitive to variables such as the subject's prior familiarity with the testing area, as well as his motivation toward, or interest in, the area.

Thus, when a response is taken as a criterion, it can be interpreted within its mental context, and it is therefore much clearer what it can be taken as a criterion for. For the context, as Piaget points out, "may be one of reflection or of spontaneous belief, of play or of prattle, of effort and interest or of fatigue" (Piaget, 1929: 9-10). Without some knowledge of the mental context, the response itself may tell us very little about the cognitive process.

The main objective of the interview is to question the child at precisely those points where direct observation or preconceived tests would fail to get below the surface of cognitive content or functioning to reveal the underlying structural aspects. It is, in Piaget's view, a technique that may be mastered only after long practice; for at every stage, the judgment of the interviewer is crucial.

> And above all, it is so hard to find the middle course between systematization due to preconceived ideas and incoherence due to the absence of any directing hypothesis! The good (interviewer) must, in fact, unite two often incompatible qualities; he must know how to observe, that is to say, to let the child talk freely, without ever checking or side-tracking his utterance, and at the same time he must constantly be alert for something definitive; at every moment he must have some working hypothesis, some theory, true or false, which he is seeking to check.
>
> (Piaget, 1929: 9)

Thus the element of judgment is crucial in determining the direction that each interview takes. The interviewer must decide after each response whether or not further questioning might yield a more complete picture (or pattern) of the child's understanding. There is sometimes a delicate compromise between the urge to continue with a probing analysis of the child's thought and the constant need to maintain a high level of rapport and motivation. The interviewer must be always alert to the subject as a person, sensitive to individual differences in attention, perseverance and verbal responsiveness. Each interview will follow its own unique course depending on the selective judgments that the interviewer must make in the constant effort to ensure that the underlying cognitive structures are manifested in the verbal responses that are elicited.

The special strength of the clinical method as an investigative

tool in psychology depends upon the capacity of the practitioner to make fine and parsimonious discriminations in a discerning search for the most pertinent and useful evidence. Liam Hudson, commenting on the way psychologists collect and marshall evidence, whether statistically or by means of case material, makes the important point that:

> In practice...the vital distinction is that between interpretations which are fertile, and those which are trivial or barren. This, it need hardly be said, is not wholly an objective matter; rather, one of judgment.
>
> (Hudson, 1975: 35)

Not only is this judgment exercised during the interview process itself, but also during the later stage of interpreting the protocols and reporting the evidence that has been gathered. Again, Piaget's own work is exemplary.

The Interpretation of Protocols

In presenting his findings, Piaget uses selected excerpts from the protocols, preceded, followed and accompanied by his own interpretation and explanation. The primary data is thus used illustratively to substantiate the theoretical assertions. This procedure provides the model for the present study and will be further described in the next chapter. However, some comment is required at this point to clarify what is involved.

In the first place, it is important to recognize that the clinical interview is not a pedagogical technique; the primary aim is not to teach but to find out what the child knows. Neither is it a dialogue in the sense of an interactive communication or exchange of thoughts. In the clinical interview, "reciprocity of interpretive perspectives" is not assumed (Winner and Gardner, 1977: 101). Indeed, it is expected that the child's cognitive structures will produce a qualitatively different interpretive perspective from the adult interviewer who asks the questions. In evaluating the protocols, therefore, it is important to penetrate the verbal content of surface phenomena, the child's actual utterances or statements, in order to ascertain how the concept is held, the judgment is reached, or the problem is solved. In doing this "one should try neither to overestimate nor to underestimate the child's intellectual level through incautious interpretation of what the child has said and done" (Flavell, 1963: 29).

The greatest problem to overcome at the interpretive stage arises from the verbal aspect of the clinical method. In the typical Piagetian

interview, the child not only responds to verbalizations but he also responds with verbalizations and, as Flavell (1963: 437) points out "the problem lies in trying to decipher these for their cognitive-developmental meanings and implications". This is a problem of which Piaget himself has been only too aware and he uses the term "verbalism" to refer to situations in which language is used without being fully understood, instances of what he calls "the imaginative interpretation of imperfectly understood words" (Piaget, 1926: 149).

In discussing the types of reactions revealed by the clinical interview, Piaget distinguishes between five kinds of answers that children might give to a clinical probe.[7] The first two of these constitute forms of verbalism, while the other three contain what Piaget calls convictions. (By this general term he seems to mean any substantive elements of thought or cognition, e.g. 'notions', 'conceptions', or 'constructions'). The five separate categories of response are defined as follows:

1. Answer at random "...when the child appears uninterested ...it replies at random and whatever first comes into its head." (Piaget, 1929: 10).

2. Romancing "...when the child, without further reflection, replies to the question by inventing an answer in which he does not really believe" (Piaget, 1929: 10).

3. Suggested conviction "...when the child makes an effort to reply to the question but either the question is suggestive or the child is simply trying to satisfy the examiner without attempting to think for himself" (Piaget, 1929: 10).

4. Liberated conviction "...when the child replies after reflection, drawing the answer from the stores of his own mind, without suggestion, although the question is new to him" (Piaget, 1929: 11).

5. Spontaneous conviction "...when the child has no need of reasoning to answer the question, but can give an answer forthwith because already formulated" (Piaget, 1929: 11).

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7 Such probes can be of a general kind, such as the 'why?' question, or more specific, such as 'How do you mean?' or 'What makes you think so?' questions.

The most important type of answer from the structural point of view is the liberated conviction because it is, as Piaget explains,

> ...neither spontaneous nor suggested; it is the result of reasoning, performed to order, but by means of original material (previous knowledge, mental images, motor schemas, syncretic associations, etc.) and original logical instruments (method of reasoning, natural tendencies of mind, intellectual habits, etc.).
>
> (Piaget, 1929: 11)

The interpretation of protocols, therefore, is mainly a search for these liberated convictions which provide illustrative criteria of the cognitive processes and structures which are the real focus of concern. This focus of concern, in the present study, is limited to the cognitive-developmental features of poetic appreciation and certain cognitive features of artistic appreciation generally.

In the next chapter, the procedures and source of data for the present study are described. Subsequently, in the main body of the thesis, the interview protocols are interpreted, from a structuralist perspective, in terms of a theory of art appreciation the logical coherence of which provides a pattern of explanation for the empirical observations that have been made.

Hence, the primary aim of the analysis that follows, in keeping with much of Piaget's work, is to go some of the way towards mapping the isomorphic relationship between psychological cognitive development in the domain of poetic appreciation and the logical or formal criteria by which the activity of poetic appreciation is marked out as a meaningful and coherent human activity.

CHAPTER THREE

CLINICAL PROCEDURES

In order to illuminate and explore in depth some of the practical implications of the structural features (both logical and cognitive-developmental) of poetic appreciation implied by the theory that is advanced in the following chapters, the present study includes a series of clinical interviews with children, using Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as the object of appreciation. This chapter sets out the reasons for selecting this poem as stimulus material and the procedures used in conducting the series of clinical case studies of poetic appreciation which comprise a major component of the investigation. Subsequent chapters will include selected excerpts from the interview protocols arising from these case studies.

The Object of Appreciation

In a study that seeks to delineate the structural features of the act of appreciating a work of art, it is clearly important that the object or objects of appreciation exhibit as many of the criterial attributes of an art-work as possible. However, while it is one thing to declare that such attributes are important, it is quite another matter to specify just what these criterial attributes are. Indeed, the whole question of what distinguishes a work of art from other objects is highly problematic (Hospers, 1969). What we cannot do, it would seem, is set out the generally agreed conditions that have to be met for some particular work to be counted as a work of art. On the other hand, what we can do is identify certain works of art (how many is not known) as being generally agreed masterpieces or "great works." If we take such works as being paradigm cases, then it follows that they will necessarily have the most important of the criterial features even if these cannot be specified. Applying this notion to literature, Olsen reasons as follows:

> It is a contingent but happy fact that there exists a body of literary works which in Western culture is generally agreed to be paradigmatic (i.e. they are agreed to be great works of literature). There may be ferocious debates about whether certain types of text can be considered as literature, or whether a particular new text can be subsumed under the concept 'literary work of art,' but all such debates can be carried on only with an already

> established concept of literary art in mind, and on the presupposition that this is a shared concept. The group of generally accepted paradigmatic cases constitutes a necessary basis for a shared concept, since there is no shared theory of the nature of literature.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 2)

In selecting an object of appreciation for clinical investigation, therefore, the first criterion is that it be a paradigm case of poetic art. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was selected for the study because it meets this requirement. It is a long narrative poem by S.T. Coleridge, which first appeared in 1798 in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads and has now an established place in the tradition of English literature. Not only does it appear in nearly all anthologies of English poetry, but it has been almost universally acclaimed as one of the greatest poems in the language, thereby fulfilling established criteria of aesthetic quality. Many would agree with J.B. Priestley's assessment that:

> 'The Ancient Mariner' is the most wonderful romantic narrative poem in the English language, one of the supreme triumphs of the romantic imagination, unforgettable in its horrors, marvels and lyrical beauty.
>
> (Priestley, 1960: 150)

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was described by its author[1] as a poem of "pure imagination" - an apt description considering that it is in the richness of the verbal imagery, combined with the mesmeric effect of the narrative, that the poem's most powerful qualities lie. To say this, however, is not to imply that the poem lacks thematic structure or moral import, or that it has no unity of meaning. As with all great works of art its meaning is there to be discovered in the act of full appreciation. But it can be appreciated on different levels and the more complete understanding, that which begins to penetrate the rich depths of Coleridge's intentions, requires that the reader's own imaginative powers be activated to the limits of their capacity.

There exists a substantial body of literature about the poem, much of which is related to the origins and effects of the imagery (Livingstone Lowes, 1927; Warren, 1947; House, 1962; Coburn, 1967) and Coleridge himself was one of the first major poets in the language to write at length on the creative and imaginative processes (Richards, 1934; Walsh, 1967; Warnock, 1976; Beer, 1977).

While possessing a simplicity and directness of language, "The

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[1] See 'Reply to Mrs Barbauld' in Coleridge, S.T. The Complete Works, ed. W.G.T. Shedd, 1884, p.324.

Ancient Mariner" contains some of the most vivid imagery in English literature. In the words of Humphry House (1962: 87), "it uses to the full the vividness of visual description which was one of Coleridge's great poetic strengths." The use of repetition, alliteration and assonance gives the language a particularly memorable quality although the vocabulary is generally very simple. For example:

> The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
> The furrow followed free.

- about which, House comments:

> Scarcely any reader, from first acquaintance in childhood, has not felt that the first, most elementary contact with the poem leaves such isolated descriptions fixed in the memory, and it is only a step further, if it is a step at all, to feel, at the next level of relevance, the perfect attunement between the descriptions and the states of the Mariner's mind.
>
> (House, 1962: 87)

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the poem is that it has an immediate appeal to a wide range of age levels. This makes it particularly suitable as stimulus material for clinical interviews focussing on the development of poetic appreciation.

The extent to which children can comprehend the poem's meaning is dependent on two separate sets of conditions. In the first place, their understanding is a function of what they themselves bring to the encounter from their own prior experience and developed capacities for imaginative response to language. In the second place, their grasp of the poem's meaning is a function of the encounter itself and can be directly influenced by the act of articulating and expressing, or constructing, a coherent meaning in response to the words of the poem. In each case, the imagination is bound by the structural limits of understanding and the interpretive limits of the context in which the reading experience is embedded.

Hence, to say that poetic appreciation is an act of imagination, is only another way of emphasizing the cognitive pre-requisites of its full achievement, and such a notion is in complete concordance with the way in which the nature of imagination was conceived by Coleridge himself. For Coleridge, imagination was the supreme power of the human mind: an active and creative force. He defined it, in chapter 14 of <u>Biographia Literaria</u>, as that "synthetic and magical power" which,

> ...reveals itself in the balance of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete;

> the idea, with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects...

Imagination, in this sense, is the integrative capacity which lies behind all acts of interpretive cognition or "seeing as" (a notion to be fully explained in Chapter 5 of this thesis). Indeed, Coleridge's clear rejection of an associationist view of the mind, and his adherence to a conception of the mind's formative powers, make him an early exponent of the very epistemological thesis for which Piaget has become the most notable spokesman. Dorothy Emmett, writing on Coleridge's philosophy of mind, has commented that:

> ...Coleridge was seeking a view of the mind as an originative shaping activity, working upon images supplied through sensation, yet making something new and individual out of them.
> (Emmett, 1967: 165)

Such a view is very close to the structuralism of Piaget which was introduced and briefly discussed in the previous chapter and will be more fully considered in Chapter 7. It is not surprising, therefore, that "The Ancient Mariner" should prove to be such an appropriate and suitable literary work from which to investigate the structure and development of literary understanding.

The poem is of sufficient length to provide enough stimulus material for detailed, in-depth clinical interviews; yet it also comprises a unified work of art providing an aesthetic experience which has a wholeness and integrity of its own. From the holistic standpoint of a structuralist approach this unity of both internal (inter-dynamic) relationships within the object of appreciation and external (contextual) relationships between the object and the art-world to which it belongs, are of central importance. For this reason, a single poem is more suitable than a collection of shorter poems, even though the latter may have been able to tap a wider range of responses.

The Clinical Interviews

The interviews involved a total of 30 subjects, 10 at each of three different age-levels: $9\frac{1}{2}$ - 10 year olds (4 boys, 6 girls); $11\frac{1}{2}$ - 12 year olds (5 boys, 5 girls); $13\frac{1}{2}$ - $14\frac{1}{2}$ year olds (5 boys, 5 girls). The groups were taken from primary, intermediate and secondary levels of schooling respectively.

The subjects were selected from these particular age-groups in order to span the period of cognitive development, in Piagetian terms,

from concrete operations to formal operations, including the transitional stage between these two modes of reasoning. The full rationale behind this stage-theory of cognitive development will be given in Chapter 7.

The study is non-experimental, concerned with each interview as an ideographic exploration of poetic understanding rather than seeking to control or quantify particular variables. In order to produce sufficient developmental homogeneity at each age-level to enable valid qualitative comparisons of interview protocols between age-levels, the subjects were selected on the basis of consistently high verbal ability.

Subjects in each age-group attended the same school but were not necessarily from the same classroom. They all volunteered their participation in the project and as far as could be ascertained, none had any previous acquaintance with the poem.

Sub-groups comprising 2 or 3 children were taken on separate days to the Curriculum Laboratory, Massey University. Each clinical session involved the following procedures:

1. The 2 or 3 children, together with the interviewer, began by listening to a full recording of the poem read by Richard Burton. A "listening post" was used for this purpose in a small room having subdued lighting and minimal distractions in order that relaxed attention could be sustained.

2. As each child was interviewed individually, in a separate room, the other children were engaged in playing such games as draughts and ludo in order to keep them occupied and prevent verbal communication about the poem. If there was just one other child this problem did not arise.

3. Rapport was established, first with the group and then with each child separately. With the group as a whole, this involved some general comments intended to provide an orientation towards the experience. They were told by the interviewer that this was a study of children's appreciation of poetry; that they were about to listen to a long poem which was written about 200 years ago in which an ancient mariner stops a wedding guest who is on his way to a wedding and tells him about a voyage that happened a long time ago. The purpose of the equipment was explained, any questions were answered, and as far as possible the children were put at ease and encouraged to relax. The rapport with each individual child was further enhanced before commencing the clinical interviews. This involved talking a little about their

general interests, family background, attitudes to school, etc. The purpose of such conversation was none other than to establish an open communicative relationship - as free from inhibitions and defensiveness as it was possible to achieve.

4. Although each interview was unique and took its own particular shape, there was a similar sequence of basic questions and for each subject the same key passages from the poem were used as the focus of interpretation (see Appendix 1).
The nine passages from the poem that were re-played during each interview were selected in such a way that they enabled the continuity of the narrative to be re-called while at the same time providing for close reading and interpretation a diverse range of images and a variety of forms of poetic language that would be representative of the poem as a whole.

5. Each clinical interview, taking about 1 hour, was taped for later transcription. Passages from the poem were re-read in sequence before being interpreted and where questions were directed at particular lines or stanzas, these shorter excerpts were projected onto a screen behind the interviewer so that they could easily be read by the subject. During each interview a total of seventeen excerpts were projected in this way for close reading and interpretation (see Appendix 1).

6. The thirty tapes were all transcribed by the interviewer (see Appendix 2 for sample transcript from each age-level). All details were recorded, including "um's" and "uh's" and noticeable pauses. Where elements of non-verbal expression were observed during the interviews, these were noted, especially where these appeared to form part of the total response to the poem (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, eye movements).

Interpretation of Transcripts

In their close reading of the poetry, subjects were asked to comment on the meaning and to judge the effectiveness of the language. The main probing questions were: What does it mean? and, Why do you think it means that? The focus was upon the imagery, especially the ways in which this is evoked through the use of figurative language such as metaphor and simile. The purpose of the interviews was not to teach, but rather to discover what to teach on the basis of what the

child knows and understands. Thus, in addition to probing cognitive structure (on the Piagetian model) some questions were intended to "orient" the child - not towards the correct response, but towards a "better" or "more appropriate" response in terms of certain interpretive criteria.

The opening section of the interview protocols provides a clear illustration of how the clinical method has been used. In this example, the interviews reveal a pattern of explanation concerning how children initially come to understand what the poem is about.

The importance of this initial impression is that it constitutes the first stage of interpretation. As with many works of art and literature, the title of the poem provides the very first indication to the reader of how to construe the world of the poem.[2] And the title of the poem is echoed in the first line ("It is an ancient Mariner") which has the immediate effects of both focussing attention on the figure of the old sailor who is to become the central and dominant subject of the poem, and creating an atmosphere of remoteness in time and place - as of something located in the distant past.

All thirty of the children interviewed understood that the poem was about an old sailor or seaman, but there was a wide variation in response to the overtones of the language used to create this initial impression of the poem's subject.

When asked to distinguish between "ancient mariner" and "old sailor" four of the 9 - 10 year olds were unable to comment. Six were able to say that the words used convey a sense of something old: e.g.

Clare (9yr 7 mth): It sounds a bit old fashioned so the poem might be old fashioned.

Tania (10yr 0 mth): Because the poem's of a long time ago or something old.

Only one commented on the unusual quality of the language, whereas this quality was mentioned by four children at the 11 - 12 year level, with comments such as: "it is more interesting," "it sounds different and more exciting," "it adds a bit of spice."

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[2] This is a normal and legitimate function of titles, as Olsen points out:

> The Waste Land as a title tells the reader how to construe the world of this poem; and if he recognizes the role the concept of the waste land plays in regeneration myth, he will have access to a further set of concepts which can be used in the interpretation of the poem.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 104)

At the 14 year level, the appropriateness of the language to the poetic intention begins to appear in some of the comments: e.g.

Ann (13yr 6 mth): ...I suppose because when this poem was made - well I don't know when it was made - but probably the...it sounds several centuries old anyway...and at that time English was different, and I suppose it has something to do with that.

Gaeleen (14yr 5 mth): ...because that was the word when it was written...mariner...for this type of poem 'the mariner' would sound better.

Others indicated an awareness of the special connotations of the words:

Blair (14yr 7 mth): I suppose that he must be really old...not just old but a lot older than old.

Terry (13yr 11 mth): Well, if you say an ancient mariner, you mean someone who's been on the sea quite a while and he knows all the laws of the sea and everything like that.

The reader's initial impression of the Mariner is produced in the first five stanzas:

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three,
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye -
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone;
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

These stanzas evoke an atmosphere that is tense and ominous. The abrupt and dramatic encounter between the Mariner and the Wedding-Guest prepares the reader for the terrible events that will follow as the tale unfolds. The Mariner is presented as an awesome figure, someone who is very old and strange ("ancient") as if from another world. Reeves describes the poetic effect as follows:

> Only three characteristics of the Mariner are noted: his long grey beard, his glittering eye, and his skinny hand. The first indicates his great age and his appearance as a sort of prophetic figure; the second suggests an obsession amounting almost to madness; the skinny hand is enough to suggest the emaciated condition of one who has been through a severe physical trial.
>
> (Reeves, 1965: 34)

Thus, a complete interpretation of the image will be able to go beyond the descriptive level to suggest an explanation for the reaction shown by the Wedding-Guest who cannot but listen to the Mariner although it be against his will. The interview protocols reveal how far the children's understanding of the image encompasses such an interpretation.

While younger children can understand the visual description of the mariner, they are less likely, it appears, to relate this to the mysterious effect that he has upon the Wedding-Guest. When asked what it is about the Mariner that stands out most or that they remember most clearly after listening to the opening five stanzas, only 4 of the 9 - 10 year olds mentioned his bright or glittering eyes, and only one in this age-group related this to his effect on others:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): His eye...(Why does the wedding guest stop?)...because he's got a glittering eye...(Why would that make him stop?)... he might have some unusual power or something.

Some recalled his "grey beard" or his "skinny hand," while other responses included: "he sounds old," "he wants to tell his story" and "he goes on a voyage." But for nearly all these children the combined effect is barely grasped. The following response is typical:

Clare (9yr 7 mth): Well he's got a grey beard...he probably looks very old...(And is there anything about him that stands out?)...um...he's got a deep voice...(Why does the wedding guest stay and listen?)...he's probably interested in the mariner.

The reference to his voice is derived not from the words of the poem but from the experience of hearing it read. These elements are not differentiated by this child.

At the 11 - 12 year level, six of the ten children interviewed immediately mentioned the Mariner's eyes and three of these went on to describe the hypnotic effect upon the Wedding Guest. For example:

Julie (11yr 5 mth): His eyes...(What is there about his eyes?) ...their glitter...(What does that mean?) ...oh, they were bright eyes...(And what effect did they have on the wedding guest?) ...um sort of hypnotised him.

Heather (11yr 11 mth): He's got that kind of look about him,.. that he can get you involved and,.,he kind of hypnotises you into listening.

For some at this level, the action details of the incident appear to predominate over the more subtle qualities of the special relationship between the Mariner and the Wedding Guest or the effects of the description upon the reader. Thus:

Jody (11yr 11 mth): He's stopped by the,.,um,..by the ancient mariner and he tells him something about a boat,.,and he tells him to leave him alone so he can go,.,but he doesn't he just takes his hands off him and keeps talking to him.

Darren (12yr 0 mth): The guest doesn't want to listen to him because he wants to get to the wedding... (And is there anything about the mariner that you particularly remember?)...oh, he had a long beard and he was kind of old... (Yes, and any part of him that particularly stands out?)...well, his thin hands...he was very thin.

With most of the responses obtained from the oldest group of children however, we can observe a much fuller appreciation of the total effect that can be evoked by the subtle connections between the Mariner's physical characteristics and the psychological effects these produce upon the Wedding Guest and hence indirectly upon the reader. Eight of the ten subjects interviewed at the 14 year level had no apparent difficulty in commenting on the special significance of the Mariner's eyes in preventing the Wedding Guest from following his initial inclinations and in giving the Mariner a strange influence over the Wedding Guest's will. The following two protocols are representative:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): The mariner's got some sort of power or something to...(What is it that makes you think that?)...well, it's...he holds him with his glittering eye,.,um,.,just looking into his eyes makes him have to listen, sort of thing.

Colin (14yr 0mth): Well, that he wanted to tell them,..um,.. get it off his chest about that story and that was about the only person,.,people about to tell them,.,and he tried to hold them first but they wanted to get cracking off to the wedding,.,and then he just let them go and they...he...they caught his eye and theyjust stopped and waited and listened to him,.,(Yes, what is it that makes them stop and listen?)... his eyes.

The confusion of singular and plural in the above response indicates that some of the precise details of the incident are less

dominant for this subject than the global impression. But the global impression is clearly accurate. For some subjects at this level, however, the main associations are still incomplete. For example:

Chris (14yr 5 mth): um...well, he sort of talks in a strange voice as if he's...you know, in a grievance about it or...(Is there any particular part of the mariner that seems to stand out in the description?) ...well, he's got a bony hand...I don't know...(And what effect does he have on the wedding guest?)...oh, he sort of puts him in a trance so that he's just got to listen he can't do anything else...(And how does he do that?)... I'm not sure.

For this subject it would seem that the significance of the Mariner's eyes has not been recognised. Once pointed out however, and this subject's appreciation would be immediately increased as the connection clearly lies within his capacity to comprehend. Similarly, for the following subject, who mentions all the main associations except the Mariner's eyes:

Terry (13yr 11 mth): He was an old man with a large grey beard ...and he's trying to tell a story to the young wedding guest and the bride is waiting for him...(Does the wedding guest want to hear the story?)...no, he wants to get on with it...(Yes, and what effect does the mariner have on him?)...oh, he makes him stay and he interests him in the first few words that he says...and so he waits and listens...(Is there anything about the mariner that seems to stand out particularly?)...the way that he speaks...(Yes, good and anything else?) ...his beard is mentioned.

But even where the full cumulative effect of this initial description of the Mariner is incompletely comprehended, the simplicity and directness of the language ensures that most readers, from a comparatively early age, gain a vivid and forceful impression of what the poem is to be about.

Interpreted in the above way, the interview protocols are used to illuminate various aspects of poetic appreciation. Sometimes the questions are used as very general probes (e.g. What is it that makes you think that?) where the intention is to delineate the extent of the child's understanding. At other times, however, the leading question (e.g. And what effect does he have on the wedding guest?) or the approving response - "yes" or "good" - is used specifically to "pivot" the child's understanding towards a more appropriate, more valid interpretation of the poetry. Where these

"teaching" episodes occur, they are deliberate deviations from the neutral stance of the ideal Piagetian clinician, but they are necessary to explore the educational implications of the theory that is under investigation.

Thus, where the children's answers reveal spontaneous or liberated convictions, in the Piagetian sense, these provide protocols revealing aspects of cognitive structure. On the other hand, some protocols are able to illustrate very specific teaching interventions.

Hence, interpretation of the transcripts has involved selecting excerpts from the interview protocols using, as far as possible, the holistic approach outlined in Chapter 2, with the aim of gradually elaborating an explanatory pattern that will account for the structural features of poetic appreciation. The selected examples are then used to illustrate important aspects of poetic appreciation in the light of the theoretical position that has been worked out. In this way, the discussion seeks to illuminate the dynamic interaction between observed cognitive-structural characteristics of children's capacity to understand and the contextual-semantic features of the poem as an art object to be appreciated. The contention of this thesis is that mature (or educated) poetic appreciation results from this delicate interplay between the child's emergent understanding and a public domain of objective knowledge.

CHAPTER FOUR

APPRECIATION AND KNOWLEDGE

> The poem's existence is somewhere between the writer and the reader: it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to 'express', or of his experience of writing it, or of the experience of the reader, or of the writer as reader.
>
> T.S. Eliot: Introduction to *The Use of Poetry*, 1933.

> The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it). The poem belongs to the public. It is embodied in language, the peculiar possession of the public, and it is about the human being, an object of public knowledge.
>
> W.K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon*, 1954: 5.

In order to support the claim that the education of appreciation is achieved through the growth of knowledge and understanding (in which cognition plays a necessary, though not sufficient, part) it is important at the outset to examine the ontological and epistemological status of art and literature. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss, from a philosophical perspective, the nature of knowledge in relation to art and the experience of art objects.

The discussion begins with a critical examination of some prevailing conceptions of artistic knowledge in order to support the claim that a logical structure exists and to suggest some of the distinctive features of that structure that might be important in the education of artistic appreciation. This is followed by a consideration of the epistemological and ontological status of artistic knowledge in comparison with scientific knowledge. It is argued that the rejection of the positivist view of science and the acceptance of epistemological pluralism by some of the most influential of recent philosophers in the field has important implications for the objectivity of artistic knowledge and provides a powerful case for its educational justification.

The claim that artistic appreciation is teachable is predicated on the theory that art and literature comprise a distinct form of knowledge that can be acquired through the process of education. The explication of this theory begins, in this chapter, with a consideration of two fundamental and related philosophical questions: What is the substance and structure of artistic knowledge? and, What is it knowledge of?

Recent attempts to defend the view that artistic knowledge exists and is therefore capable of being learned have responded to the above questions in three basically different, though not mutually exclusive, ways. Briefly, these three different approaches to artistic knowledge can be found in:

(1) The so-called expressionist theories which maintain that works of art and literature embody the expression of knowledge in various symbolic forms, i.e. each work is a unique symbolic representation or expression of something that is otherwise known, felt or understood apart from the work itself.

(2) Those theories which hold that works of art and literature comprise statements of substantive knowledge in themselves, i.e. they are unique, non-discursive statements capable of being understood without reference to things beyond themselves.

(3) Those theories taking the view that artistic knowledge can only be knowledge about works of art, i.e. what can be stated in a discursive or propositional form by way of description and criticism of the works themselves.

An examination of these three general approaches to the problem of artistic knowledge reveals some of the conceptual confusions and difficulties which a theory of artistic appreciation must overcome if it is to produce logically sound implications for education.

Art as Expression

The concept of expression is central to many theories of art[1] and has been the subject of considerable philosophical discussion.[2] In most

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1 Santayana (1896); Croce (1922); Ducasse (1929); Dewey (1934); Collingwood (1938); Read (1943); Langer (1942, 1957).

2 See Bouwsma (1954); Tomas (1962); Hospers (1969).

of these theories, expression is taken to be the most important defining feature of works of art, so that before anything can qualify as art it must necessarily be the expression of something or other (Hospers, 1969). What it most often expresses, according to this view, is the emotion of the artist and this emotion is taken to be something separate from the expression itself. Consider Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquility" or Collingwood's account of what it means to say that a man expresses his emotion:

> At first, he is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what that emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. While in this state, all he can say about his emotion is: "I feel...I don't know what I feel." From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself.
>
> (Collingwood, 1938: 109)

Some expressionist theories hold that works of art express symbolic meanings the nature of which, as Collingwood's account of emotional expression suggests, the artist may not be consciously aware. Herbert Read (1943) for instance, accepts the Jungian theory that art is the expression of universal mythic content emanating from the deep substrata of the collective unconscious mind. These universal psychic symbols, originating in the primordial past are implicit in all artistic expression, altering their forms but never their contents. It is understandable that such theories often reach into the realms of mysticism so that the work of art is comprehended as a symbol for some "greater reality". Ernst Cassirer comes close to this when he suggests that art symbolizes a kind of intuitive knowledge:

> In this sense each new "symbolic form" - not only the conceptual world of scientific cognition but also the intuitive world of art, myth and language - constitutes, as Goethe said, a revelation sent outward from within, a "synthesis of world and spirit", which truly assures us that the two are originally one.
>
> (Cassirer, 1961: 111)

Another widely known philosopher of art, strongly influenced by Cassirer, who also subscribes to the expressionist view that the meaning of a work of art is what it symbolizes (i.e. expresses) is Susanne Langer. She states that:

> Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.
>
> (Langer, 1953: 40)

The artist, according to Langer, knows in a non-logical, intuitive

way the nature of emotions and can therefore create forms that will enable the true expression of these emotions. An artefact, therefore, is essentially "objectified feeling" and its appreciation is no more than the intuitive knowledge of the feeling that it expresses. She says of music, for instance, that it "expresses primarily the composer's knowledge of human feeling" and that the feelings revealed in music:

> ...are presented directly to our understanding, that we may grasp, realize, comprehend these feelings, without pretending to have them or imputing them to anyone else.
>
> (Langer, 1957: 222)

This occurs because:

> ...there are certain aspects of the so-called "inner life" - physical or mental - which have formal properties similar to those of music - patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfilment, excitation, sudden change, etc.
>
> (Langer, 1957: 228)

Her theory has some similarities with T.S. Eliot's notion of an "objective correlative":

> ...in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.
>
> (Eliot, 1928: 100)

But what can be made of such a notion if it is applied to a specific poetic symbol such as "the albatross" in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"? Within the context of the poem, the killing of the albatross is a highly significant event, a terrible unmotivated crime against the natural world. The dead albatross becomes a symbol for the Mariner's strong feelings of guilt, an "objective correlative," to use Eliot's term, for a particular emotion. This does not imply, however, that the symbol "expresses" an emotion which at some time was experienced by the poet and now, because it is embodied in a poem, has become "objectified feeling" which, in Langer's words, the reader may "grasp, realize, comprehend" or have in any other way as a consequence of reading the poem. Because the killing of the albatross is "a ghastly violation of a great sanctity" (House, 1962: 97) within the context of the poem, nothing is implied about either the emotions of the poet in creating this symbol or the emotions of the reader in appreciating its power. Even the interpretation of the killing of the albatross as a "crime" is not dependent on the emotions normally invoked by a "crime," for the killing of the albatross only counts as a crime within the context

of the poem and the same act within another literary work would not necessarily be interpreted as a "crime." Indeed, the justification for characterizing it as a "crime" and therefore interpreting the dead albatross as symbolic of the Mariner's guilt, comes from pointing out similarities between this act, as it occurs in the poem, and what would ordinarily be called a crime. If no such similarities can be shown, there will be no reason for characterizing the act in this way. But this is a conceptual matter - it depends on how the symbol is interpreted, not on what it "expresses" in the sense referred to above.

The Problem with "Art as Expression"

The above example exposes the major problem with an expressionist account of artistic knowledge, that is in its mistaken construal of emotion as an inner state of which the work of art is an outer expression capable of causing an emotional state when it is fully appreciated. For, as Bouwsma (1954) argues, we can appreciate the emotion in a work of art without having to experience that emotion. We can, for example, perceive or sense the sadness of sad music without feeling sad ourselves. The sadness is a quality of the music, it is not a separate state or feeling existing initially in the indiscernable regions of the artist's mind and subsequently produced or evoked in the mind of the listener like some kind of conditioned response. This point is effectively made by Bouwsma when he writes:

> The sadness is to the music rather like the redness to the apple, than it is like the burp to the cider.
> (Bouwsma, 1954: 78)

In other words, the work of art does not "cause" my aesthetic appreciation of it. Rather, my appreciation constitutes an attitude towards it or an appraisal or interpretation of it which I can justify by pointing to the work itself (including its context), describing it, and giving reasons for seeing it as I do. Hence, the appreciation of a work of art requires conceptual ability and the more complex the interpretation required to justify my appreciation, the greater the intellectual demand will be.

This can be observed in the way children of different ages interpret the narrative content of "The Ancient Mariner." When asked what the story means, 9 - 10 year olds answer with statements such as:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): ...it means about the mariner's adventure...he had an adventure on the sea...

Clare (9yr 7 mth): ...it's about the tale of a mariner and how he gets almost shipwrecked and he has a dream...

Tania (10yr 0 mth): ...it's about the wedding guest and the ancient mariner...and the ancient mariner goes away on his journey to the south pole ...and he returns with a tale about his trip.

Such interpretations are confined to a simple sequence of events. Slightly older children, however, can begin to interpret the moral import of the story, as in the following protocols:

Alison (11yr 5 mth): ...it means that if there is something...if you're in trouble and something or someone helps you then don't throw it away...be careful with it...and don't do anything you might regret later...because he killed the albatross...and all his friends on his ship died...and he had all these visions...and he heard these things...and now he had to live the life of a tramp and go around...and he had to tell someone - anyone that he chose - his story before he could sleep.

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): um, well, I can't really put it into words... it's my own feeling you know that I have myself when I listen to it...but in some parts...um, there's hatred towards the mariner from me because...like when he kills the albatross I think he's killed the albatross for no reason at all...and I think it's mean, harsh and cruel...and I love animals and I send hatred to the mariner about that...but later on in the poem I feel sorry for him...you know...oh well, um... having to put up with all his dead crewmen... and living with this story for the rest of his life...and um having to live by himself and put up with a haunting ship...and just his men dying around him...and sometimes I don't think he...sometimes he self-pities himself...but I don't think he overdoes that.

It is because of Kendal's cognitive ability to interpret the moral significance of the events of the poem that she is able to describe the relevant emotions - it is not because the poem <u>causes</u> these emotions in her. (This point is further elaborated in Chapter 6 where affective response is distinguished from artistic appreciation).

From an educational point of view, expressionist theories of art will tend to emphasize the importance of the encounter between child and art-world without providing any criteria for what is to count as being educated in the appreciation of art.

One critic of expressionism (Casey, 1966) has described

Susanne Langer's theory as a "profound" account of art because she believes that meaning and value depend upon a mystical relationship between the artefact and the human feeling it expresses. The intuitive knowledge of this relationship can only be completely private and subjective.

> For Mrs Langer Art is the expression of the "inexpressible". Art has connotation; it expresses those areas of human experience - "the inner life of feeling" - which lack a conventionally assigned verbal notation. Works of art express feelings by reproducing their form; works of art stand in a relation of logical analogy to feelings.
>
> (Casey, 1966: 64-65)

There is nothing in such an account that an educator could begin to get a grip on - thus, the effect is to render the appreciation of art unteachable because there are no criteria for improvement. If art is the expression of the inexpressible, then artistic knowledge is knowledge of the unknowable. The account becomes incoherent.

As another critic (Best, 1974: 185) has pointed out, the problem with Langer's theory lies not so much in what she says about the way symbols are used in art, but rather the claim that the work of art as a whole is a symbolic "form of feeling": that its meaning lies outside itself, in some metaphysical relationship. But, as Best goes on to show by way of example:

> ...no appeal to a relationship with such a form will make any difference to our saying that Adagio for a Dead Soldier is sad. The meaning of this dance has nothing to do, even if it made sense, with the expression of a logical form or feeling. The meaning of the dance is to be seen there, in the dance itself, in the way we interpret it, in the significance and associations of the movements with life situations, and relations with the other arts. Suzanne Langer makes meaning an extra entity, and since it cannot be perceived she has to make it transcendental and discoverable by intuition.
>
> (Best, 1974: 186)

Best's objection to the way in which Langer construes the meaning of art carries the further implication that expressionist theories of artistic knowledge, if not unintelligible, will be unlikely to go very far in promoting the place of art in education. For it is a minimal requirement of any activity, if it is to be educational, that it should be rational in some sense. Only if an activity is rational can there be any criteria of mastery, of what is to count as getting better at it (Peters, 1967). Hence, an educational activity has to be answerable to

objective, publicly recognizable criteria which can be cited as reasons for pursuing it (Hirst and Peters, 1970). Because expressionist theories of art cannot offer such criteria, we must look to the cognitive characteristics of artistic appreciation in order to justify the claim that there is knowledge here which can be properly taught.

Art as Statement

We turn now to a consideration of those theories in which art is taken to consist of meaningful statements within a unique form of knowledge having its own internal logical structures and its own criteria for truth. In short, art is taken to be a language in its widest sense, containing internal structural relationships analogous to linguistic grammatical structures.

But what does it mean to refer to art as a language? In summary, this view holds that language encompasses all the forms in which thought can be embodied in symbolic statement (Goodman, 1968). The discursive forms are those which we find in natural language,[3] including most forms of everyday speech as well as the conventional languages of mathematics and science. But there are many non-discursive forms of language in which thought can be stated and where the symbols are derived not only from words, but from shapes, movements, colours, sounds and all the other ingredients that are found in the arts. It is claimed that just as discursive languages have their distinct logical and syntactical structures, so too do the non-discursive languages of the arts. Furthermore, we cannot translate the symbolic languages of art into the discursive language of speech - even poetry defies translation into prose.

Susanne Langer, whose philosophy of art encompasses much more than the expressionist aspects discussed above, also considers art to be a symbolic language. She emphasises that not all meaning is conveyed through the sequential ordering that characterizes logical speech or discourse (Langer, 1957: 79-102). In some symbolic modes, including mythology and the arts, the separate elements are related to one another but these relationships are not stated explicitly. Thus, not only do

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[3] Phenix (1964: 81) defines the term as follows:

> To say that ordinary languages are "discursive" means that they are used in customary speech for communicating ideas in a consecutive, connected fashion, following the principles of common logic. Such discourse is appropriate for assertions of fact and other utterances meant to be understood literally.

works of art constitute embodiments of symbolic meaning, but according to Langer:

> ...the meanings of all other symbolic elements that compose a larger, articulate symbol are understood only through the meaning of the whole, through their relations within the total structure. Their very functioning as symbols depends on the fact that they are involved in a simultaneous, integral presentation.
> (Langer, 1957: 97)

She speaks of "presentational symbolism" to distinguish this kind of incompletely differentiated thinking from the sequential array of explicitly related ideas that characterizes "discursive thinking". But Langer is insistent that presentational symbolism is no less cognitive as a vehicle of meaning. While recognizing that there are different types of symbolic mediation, she states that:

> No symbol is exempt from the office of logical formulation, of conceptualizing what it conveys; however simple its import, or however great, this import is a meaning, and therefore an element for understanding.
> (Langer, 1957: 97)

This view is shared by Hirst (1974) who also suggests that works of art are symbolic statements, expressing truths that cannot be communicated in any other way. But where Langer talks of the intuitive grasp of meaning, Hirst argues that meaning is necessarily contextual:

> ...art, like all other symbol systems, has meaning as an essentially human creation, and its meaning is dependent on the contexts in which works of art have point and significance.
> (Hirst, 1974: 158)

This particular conception of art belongs within Hirst's wider account of the forms of knowledge; a theory intended to provide an epistemological justification for curriculum planning that has undergone considerable revision and modification since it was first advanced (Hirst, 1965).

In Hirst's view, the central aim of education is the development of the rational mind and to talk of the development of the mind, he argues, is only another way of talking about the acquisition of knowledge:

> To acquire knowledge is to become aware of experience as structured, organized and made meaningful in some quite specific way, and the varieties of human knowledge constitute the highly developed forms in which man has found this possible...to have a mind basically involves coming to have experience articulated by means of various conceptual schemata.
> (Hirst, 1974: 40-1)

The development of mind, according to Hirst, is marked by the progressive differentiation in human consciousness of some seven or eight distinguishable cognitive structures or forms of knowledge that have progressively developed over millennia and are characterized by their distinctive concepts, logical structures and truth criteria. Thus all knowledge and understanding is logically locatable within one or several of the following domains: mathematics, the physical sciences, knowledge of persons, literature and the fine arts, morals, religion and philosophy (Hirst, 1974: 25).

Now, Hirst's theory has been subjected to considerable criticism and questioning since it was first advanced and he would be ready to concede that it is still in a speculative and formative state. However, the theory is of particular interest here because it does provide a framework in which the possibility of propositional knowledge (i.e. knowledge that) in the field of art and literature can be examined.

Hirst has stated that the domain of knowledge with which he is centrally concerned is "the domain of true propositions or statements" (1974: 85), i.e. propositional knowledge or "knowledge that". This is not to deny the existence of "knowledge how" (procedural knowledge) or "knowledge with the direct object" (as in knowing by acquaintance or knowing persons). Indeed, he acknowledges that "the practice of the arts and their appreciation involve much know-how" (1974: 154). But most of his writing on this topic has been directed at his claim that art constitutes a language, in the fullest sense, and that works of art are statements in that language which can be tested objectively for their truth value.[4]

It has been suggested (Scrimshaw, 1975) that Hirst's notions of "language" and "statement" are far too wide and that these terms properly belong only to the natural (discursive) languages. However, such a criticism rests on a stipulative use of these terms and seems to overlook the special sense in which Hirst is using the notion of "objective truth". This use is closely related to his conception of art as a symbol system in which meaning is <u>contextual</u> rather than either intuitive or strictly propositional in precisely the same way as natural language statements

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[4] Pring (1976: 38-9) suggests that Hirst's over-emphasis on "knowing that" and relative neglect of "knowing how" in his treatment of art and literature overlooks the cognitive components in "knowing how" which are just as central as they are in propositional knowledge.

generally are. He observes that:

> It is only by virtue of the relationship that is created between the symbols and, in Wittgenstein's phrase, "the form of life" that the context presents, that there can be that objectivity of judgment that we call truth.
> (Hirst, 1974: 160)

Objectivity, therefore, is a matter of intersubjective agreement arising from "forms of life" in which men share (Hamlyn, 1972: 246). The form of life determines the limits over which concepts may change and have application and is revealed in the implicit agreements that enable men to describe and conceptualize certain of their shared experiences in common ways that can be understood. The intelligibility of a symbol system, whether it be natural language or art, is fundamentally dependent, therefore, on the central conventional elements in it. Such a condition applies to <u>any</u> symbol system, and Hirst adds that:

> The ways in which noises and marks can be related to "the form of life" where agreement in judgment is possible, may be many and the kinds of objective judgment may be very diverse.
> (Hirst, 1974: 160)

The reason that different symbol systems exist is that symbolic materials themselves set very severe limits on what can be expressed in them. Hence, according to Hirst,

> we must not assume that natural languages exhaust all the possibilities of different relationships.
> (Hirst, 1975: 45)

Furthermore, the existence of different symbol systems makes it possible

> that certain things that are the case could only be expressed in one form of symbolic structure because no other could be established with the same relationship to "the form of life".
> (Hirst, 1975: 45)

So by tying the notions of "objectivity" and "truth" to the intersubjective agreement constitutive of "the form of life" Hirst is able to make the important claim that there is a parallel, from an epistemological point of view, between the objectivity of judgments about the truth or falsity of scientific statements about the physical world and judgments about works of art or literature. Furthermore, he suggests that concepts such as "imagery", "movement" and "rhythm" might function as artistic concepts in a similar way to concepts in the other forms of knowledge. It is through such concepts that artistic experience can be distinguished, because:

> An area of experience arises with the development of the concepts it employs and they in their turn develop in the use of the appropriate public language.
>
> (Hirst, 1974: 162)

Hirst's thesis goes a considerable way towards providing a strong justification for the place of artistic knowledge in the curriculum. By defining objectivity as a necessary feature of any symbolic system and by emphasising that the cognitive elements of artistic experience are a direct consequence of the categorial and structural features of artistic knowledge itself, Hirst provides a case for art education which manages to avoid the logical confusions of expressionism and intuitionism, and the conceptual unintelligibility of what we have already called the "profound" or mystical accounts of art. His conception of art as statement, however, leads him to insist that the distinctiveness and irreducibility of artistic knowledge means that art criticism (i.e. talk about art) does not properly belong in this logical domain.

This insistence produces an ambivalence towards the role of criticism or knowledge about art in the education of artistic appreciation and Hirst's thesis leads him to give undue weight to the logical truism that statements about works of art are not themselves artistic statements. But if artistic knowledge is fundamental to artistic appreciation, and this is the central argument of the present thesis, we must take issue with Hirst's contention that knowledge about works of art is not a logical feature, even in some special sense, of artistic knowledge per se.[5]

The Problem with "Art as Statement."

Again, from an educational point of view, theories which hold that art is autonomous language provide very little justification for the education of appreciation beyond the acquaintance with works of art and literature per se.

The major problem with such theories seems to be in their assumption that there is a special kind of incommensurability between knowledge about art (including descriptions and interpretations of art) and works of art in themselves. Hence, Langer claims that there is a semantic barrier

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[5] Hirst's position is shared by Louis Arnaud Reid, who maintains that:

> Critical and other propositional talk about art is talk about it, not the talk of art. There is no talk of art as such. Knowledge of art is a knowing which intrinsically contains no talking, no propositions in any sense in which we have been using this word.
>
> (Reid, 1969: 217)

between discursive and presentational modes which logically prevents any kind of translation between them. Hence, talk about art is considered to be just that, and to have very little, if any, direct bearing on the understanding or "true" appreciation of art. Such a view, however, is logically untenable, and if adopted has certain educational implications which are clearly incompatible with the theory of artistic appreciation that is presently being advanced.

One such implication is that it fosters the practice of "education through immersion" in the arts, which is often accompanied by a zealous commitment to the belief that it is only through making and doing, listening and viewing, that the symbolic language of art can be understood, just as it is only through listening and speaking that children learn their mother tongue. This belief embodies a principle that is essentially true, but teachers who dogmatically subscribe to it tend also to promote a dual misconception: (1) that artistic appreciation is not something that can be directly taught, and (2) that it is sufficient to foster such appreciation merely by exposing students to varieties of art and encouraging them to respond in their own personal and subjective ways - expressing what are assumed to be their emotions rather than their thoughts. Once again then, the false conceptual separation of cognition and affect implies that feeling is little more than an undifferentiated and passive "inner state", whereas it can be the refined product of a cognitive appraisal or interpretation of experience, as will later be argued (Chapter 6).

This leads to another questionable implication of the incommensurability thesis, as defined above, namely that discursive language is an improper vehicle for coming to understand and appreciate presentational symbols. Hence, Susanne Langer's assertion that:

> in art such (discursive) interpretation is vicious, because art - certainly music, and probably all art - is formally and essentially untranslatable.
>
> (Langer, 1957: 234)

She adamantly disagrees with Urban's contention that:

> ...interpretation of poetry is the determination of what poetry says....One of the essential functions of the teaching of literature is its interpretation ....Now a character of such interpretation is that it is always carried out in non-poetic terms or in less poetic terms than the thing interpreted.
>
> (Urban, 1939: 487-88. Cited in Langer, 1957: 234)

But the key to what Urban is saying here lies in the word

interpretation - a notion that is not synonymous with understanding although, as will later be argued, it is logically necessary to it. Urban's comments in interpretation of poetry are, therefore, despite Langer's suggestion to the contrary, completely consistent with his later statement about the uniqueness of the poetic symbolic forms:

> The poet...does well to speak in figure, to keep to his own symbolic form. For precisely in that symbolic form an aspect of reality is given which cannot be adequately expressed otherwise. It is not true that whatever can be expressed symbolically can be better expressed literally. For there is no literal expression, but only another kind of symbol.
>
> (Urban, 1939: 500. Cited in Langer, 1957: 234)

It is important to realize that when Urban states that the meaning of poetry cannot be expressed literally it is not the same as saying that it cannot be interpreted literally - a distinction which, it will later be argued, is of crucial educational significance. Indeed, it will be contended that it is a primary task of art education to effect some kind of rational dialogue between what Langer calls the discursive and the presentational forms in order that artistic appreciation can become a justifiable educational pursuit, rather than a subjective, uncritical and indulgent absorption of experience. (This argument is developed in Chapter 8).

This dialogue can produce a gradual clarification of meaning, whereby confusions, misconceptions and partial understandings are eliminated and a richer, more coherent interpretation results.

For example, many children's initial interpretation of the following lines is confused and incomplete because important elements of the poetic description are not correctly understood:

> The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
> So smoothly it was strewn!
> And on the bay the moonlight lay,
> And the shadow of the Moon.
>
> The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
> That stands above the rock:
> The moonlight steeped in silentness
> The steady weathercock.

The following protocol shows a minimal discrimination of semantic elements contained within the image:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): ...it's kind of really calm and when they come in it could be night...it could be somewhere in the night because the rock shone bright and the moonlight steeped... well, the moon's probably shining on that

rock...(And what did it look like?) ...it would look like the rock and it could be all white and shiny...(What do those last two lines mean?)...um, I don't think there's any wind because the steady cock...and that would mean the cock isn't moving because it's steady and still.

Where the interpretation rests on misconstrued meaning, clarification at the literal level can lead directly to improved understanding, as in the following protocol where the words "strewn" and "steeped" are an initial source of misunderstanding:

Jody (11yr 11 mth): ...well it says that the harbour was very clear...that he could see it clearly... and so smoothly it was...it was smoothly there...it was sort of like a picture he'd seen as clear as he could...(What does 'strewn' mean?)...I don't know...that's why I left it...and the moonlight lay... that...on the bay of the harbour the moon was out and the shadow of the moon...and the moonlight lay on the bay to make it look like a clear picture...and then... the rock shine is bright...is not less than what the moonlight-shine is...it's shining just as much...that stands above the rock ...well, it's the rock is shining brightly and the brightness stands above the rock... and the moonlight...("the moonlight steeped in silentness" - what does that mean?)...I think it's the moonlight was there...it was silent but it was moving in different places...(What does 'steeped' mean?)... 'steeped'...well it could mean...well what I think it means steeped - it steeped upwards - like something steep is very straight up and steep...(Yes, but it also means 'to soak something'...to steep something means to soak or to saturate it...now, what do you think is the appropriate meaning here?) ...I think it means that the moonlight saturated everything in silence...it soaked... it sort of um...it soaked up the silentness... and made it very still.

Clearly, it is only from the child's interpretation, <u>as it is articulated</u>, that any inferences can be drawn about knowledge pertaining to the comprehension of the poetry. The following subject moves towards a more correct interpretation as a result of the teaching episode:

Chris (14yr 5 mth): ...um, he sees a rock and um...a steady weathercock...(Well, let's read it closely, 'The harbour-bay was clear as glass, So smoothly it was strewn!' - what does 'strewn' mean?)...the way it's set out...(To strew something is to ?)...like, throw it, you

know...(To scatter it)...yes...(What is scattered?)...the buildings and things that stand out are all spread apart...you know ...('And on the bay the moonlight lay, And the shadow of the moon')...well, the water was undisturbed so it was just like a sheet of glass...('The rock shone bright, the kirk no less' - what's the kirk?)...um, I don't know...(Well, that's an old Scottish word for a church. 'The moonlight steeped in silentness' - what does 'steeped' mean?)... um, came down from the sky...the light from the moon...(What does the word 'steeped' mean?)...um, it came down like a...like a steep cliff...(Yes, well it can mean steep in that sense, but you can also say 'steep' to mean 'soak' or 'saturate' or 'drench.' Now, what do you think it means here?)...it lights everything up, you know, it's so light and bright...it makes them all stand out...and the boat and all the harbour... (What does 'steeped in silentness' mean then?) ...um, covered in silent light I suppose.

Where the literal interpretation of the poetry is correct in terms of all the discrete semantic elements, the dialogue serves to elicit the subject's own spontaneous conviction. The following protocol provides a graphic example:

Tina (13yr 2 mth): ...well, it's obviously at night and there's a lot of moonlight...the moonlight sort of lay on it...it was actually very clear, otherwise the moonlight wouldn't be just laying there, it would be bouncing about... um, there wouldn't be any wind...it would be just a quiet moonlight night...(What objects can you see?)...well, the moon and the land ...coming into the land and the...and you know just quiet sort of hills of the land and the sea all the way behind...(Do you know what a kirk is?)...a church isn't it?...(Yes, and a weathercock?)...yes, a weathervane...(What does it mean 'so smoothly it was strewn'? What does 'strewn' mean?)...um, thrown about ...but sort of scattered...smoothly but... there were no waves and there was no wind... (And what is it that is scattered about?)... um, all the small ripples and um...('And on the bay the moonlight lay, and the shadow of the moon')...the moonlight um...well it wouldn't be sort of bouncing about...it would be sitting quite smoothly because there were no waves...('The moonlight steeped in silentness' - what does 'steeped' mean?)...um, deep in it...I don't know...it sort of means being drenched in it...(So what does it mean, 'The moonlight steeped in silentness the steady weathercock'?)...well, there was no

> wind...and the weathercock wasn't moving and ...the moonlight wasn't making a sound...it was just...if it was moving, it was moving silently...everything was silent.

If such discursive interpretations of a poetic image that has been apprehended constitute knowledge, what is the nature of that knowledge and what relationship does it bear to the poem itself? These questions point to complex educational problems.

Knowledge about Art

This brings us to a consideration of those theories in which knowledge about art has an essential place, not as a substitute for knowledge of art but as a logically necessary extension of it.

The term "criticism" is sometimes used rather loosely to apply to any "talk" about art or works of art. Hirst, for instance, seems to use the term to apply to all cases where non-artistic statements are made about artistic statements. He adds that:

> Much of what they say is descriptive of the observable physical characteristics of works of art, is about the psychological genesis of works or their location in an historical and social context.
>
> (Hirst, 1974: 163)

What he does not say here is that much of what such statements say is by way of interpreting the works, which has the effect of producing particular "ways of seeing" them. What is said about a work of art is not something separate from an understanding of it, but rather is constitutive of that understanding. The apparent failure to recognize this important point, may explain why Hirst introduces an unnecessary means-ends distinction, when he says of the above statements about art that:

> All this is understanding of other kinds whose function is to lead one to artistic understanding itself and the development of knowledge, experience and judgment in this distinctive area.
>
> (Hirst, 1974: 163)

In criticising Hirst's claim that literary/art criticism does not constitute artistic knowledge, Gribble (1974) has argued that the problem lies in his misconstruing of the relationship between "knowledge in the arts" and "knowledge about the arts". This follows, according to Gribble, from a misunderstanding of what is implied by the "uniqueness", "untranslatability" or "irreducibility" of works of art, a point that has already been discussed above in reference to the disagreement between Langer and Urban.

In essence, Gribble's contention is that criticism is the articulation of our understanding/appreciation/knowledge of a work of art.

He says of Hirst's confusion that:

> He (Hirst) seems to think that knowing whether a literary work is aesthetically good or bad is not to know something about a literary work. And yet, his account of literary criticism is one which "includes statements of aesthetic judgements for which reasons are adduced."
>
> (Gribble, 1974: 3-4)

Part of the confusion may arise from using the term "criticism" to refer to all statements about art or literature when it seems to apply more specifically to the evaluative or judgmental kind of statement. It is important, however, to distinguish, at least in principle, three different modes of "talk about art": description, interpretation and evaluation (Aldrich, 1963). Each of these discursive modes will be included, to some extent, in the more general activities of criticism or appreciation; but the boundaries between them are certainly not clear-cut.

A work of art can only be appreciated under the light of a particular interpretation and all such interpretation begins with a description of the work itself. The logical and cognitive features of interpretation are discussed more fully in Chapter 5, but some elaboration at this point is necessary to establish the importance in artistic appreciation of knowledge about art.

The point has already been made (see Chapter 1, p.4) that we may respond to a work of art in a variety of ways, not all of which will be aesthetic. Similarly, we may describe it in non-aesthetic ways. But there is a crucial difference between explaining a particular response that we may have (e.g. why a painting reminds us of our grandfather's garden) and justifying an aesthetic interpretation (cf. Isenberg, 1969). To justify an interpretation (something which can only be done by means of discursive language) is, logically, to seek to convince others that a work of art should be construed in a particular way, and not merely that it can be construed in such a way. Interpretations may, for instance, relate the work of art to a wider mythological context in which its symbols are located, but every interpretation will have to be compatible with the describable properties of the work of art in question.

In practice, we cannot say precisely where description of a work, or part of a work, ends and interpretation begins.

An aesthetic response to the work is always an interpretive description or a hierarchy of such descriptions. Olsen makes this point in the following way:

> Redescription is constitutive of a reader's response to a literary work. Whether this is a brief lyric or a three-volume novel, the construction of a web of concepts which the reader uses to interpret the work is a necessary condition of getting aesthetic satisfaction from it. The aesthetic response even to short lyrics is structured as a hierarchy of descriptions.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 89)

Indeed, the act of interpreting poetry exemplifies very clearly the way in which knowledge about an art object contributes to our appreciation. In this case, the precise language with which to describe the various poetic effects is not merely instrumental to a complete interpretation, but is intrinsic to the act of appreciation itself. This is evidenced in many of the interview protocols of the present study, and will be discussed more fully in later chapters. In the following protocol, for instance, the subject's interpretation of the lines is incomplete - not because of any lack of comprehension, but because he lacks a precise language with which to discriminate and describe the elements in his experience of the poem.

> Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
> Yet she sailed softly too:
> Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze -
> On me alone it blew

Tony (11yr 6 mth): ...the ship was being blown along...reasonably fast...and she was sailing softly...she wasn't going up and down and around...and the breeze was blowing sweetly, nicely...and it was blowing on the mariner...the mariner alone... on the mariner all alone...(Which words tell you what it was like?)...um, the last line... 'on me alone it blew'...(Why do you choose that line?)...oh, it sounds like it's nice to feel like that...('Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship' - what do you notice about those words?) ...oh, they've all got an 'f' sound and some have got an 's' sound...(What effect does that have?)...oh, I'm not sure...(What's being described?)...oh, the weather and the ship moving fast...(Why are some words used twice, like 'swiftly, swiftly'?)...to make sure that people are listening...and that it feels sweet ...oh, it just sounds nice.

In this case, some critical vocabulary (rhythm, alliteration, assonance, repetition) might give this child a vehicle with which to convey his appreciation more precisely, more completely. But it would also constitute an appreciation of different quality.

Likewise, with the following protocol, the subject's interpretation of the lines entails a description of particular features of the language.

The interpretation, moreover, subsequently provides the basis for an evaluative comment.

> I closed my lids, and kept them close,
> And the balls like pulses beat;
> For the sky and the sea, and the sea
> and the sky
> Lay like a load on my weary eye,
> And the dead were at my feet.

Chris (14yr 5 mth): ...he closes his eyes...his eye-balls...they're throbbing...in the sockets...(So how does he feel?)...um terrified...he would be in agony... (Why are the words repeated like that in the third line?)...because that's all there is to it...there's nothing else around on the horizon ...just the sea and the sky...(Why does the order of the words change - the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky?)...because it's sort of meaningless...there's two flat surfaces and it doesn't matter which way he says them they just mean the same thing...('Lay like a load on my weary eye' - what does that mean?)...well his eyes are so tired of seeing it that it's like a load...you know as if he has to carry them with him all the time...(And what did it feel like?) ...well, darkness comes over him when he closes his eyes...so it's the only way he can get rid of it...(Which line there do you think is the best?)...um...pause...I think the third line... it explains it the best because the whole um verse means that...there's nothing else around... and I think that best describes it the way it sounds...um the words all run together and they all begin with 's'...and it all sort of runs together...(What about the other lines?)...well the first two lines tell just what it felt like ...it sort of has a rhythm to it...like the rhythm of the beating in his eyes.

The above example shows the subtle relationship between description ("the words all run together and they all begin with s") interpretation ("the whole verse means that...there's nothing else around") and evaluation ("I think that best describes it"). While interpretation does not necessarily involve evaluation and is logically distinct from it, very often an interpretation of an art work leads into an evaluation. Just as description leads into interpretation, so interpretation leads into evaluation. This follows from the logical structure of aesthetic appreciation - a point that has been well argued by Stevenson (1962: 124):

> ...the interpretation and evaluation of a poem are rarely separable events in criticism. We do not first interpret it and then evaluate it, taking each step with finality. Rather, we test a tentative interpretation by considering the tentative evaluation of the poem to which it leads, progressively altering each in the light of the other.

Knowledge about art then has its own logic, with its own categorial concepts and special terms. To understand such terms (e.g. "dynamic", "balanced", "vivid") is to have learned their use in a context of artistic description/interpretation/evaluation. It is in this area of learning that knowledge about art is central and produces an important aim for aesthetic education. Such an aim would be obscured, or even lost, if we were to accept Hirst's claim that artistic knowledge is only the knowledge that is stated in works of art themselves. The fallacy entailed in such a claim has been clearly recognized by Gribble, when he states:

> Both Hirst and Reid fail to see that a man's "appreciation" of a poem, his "knowledge" of it, his perception of its "truth" (and this applies to the several senses which Hirst and Reid attach to these terms) can only be evidenced in the remarks he makes about it and it is for this reason that criticism is an articulation of our "knowledge" or "understanding" of art. We may hypothesize as we wish about the psychological states, the leaps and exercises and feelings he underwent in order to arrive at his perceptions but such hypotheses cannot form the basis for a judgment that X recognizes, understands, appreciates or knows a work of art.
>
> (Gribble, 1974: 8)

Conversely, knowledge about works of art is never sufficient on its own. It must always have its roots in knowledge of the works themselves; it must arise out of aesthetic involvement. As Gribble recognizes, "Our remarks may be counterfeit, repeated parrot fashion from an art book and so on" (1974: 9). It is always possible to acquire information about art in such superficial ways but this does not constitute knowledge in the sense we have been specifying. Indeed, it may be that because much learning in art education has been lacking in aesthetic involvement that a denigration of all knowledge about art has occurred - with adverse curriculum consequences for the education of artistic appreciation in particular.

Some of Hirst's confusion about the epistemological status of knowledge about art may derive from the analogies he makes with knowledge about science. While his extension of the notion of "truth" to cover objective judgments made in domains other than the scientific or mathematical is a move which is in accordance with much of the recent work in the philosophy of science, his conception of the role played by scientific criticism in the formation and structure of scientific knowledge is somewhat confused. He maintains, for instance, that

aesthetic or literary criticism does not constitute knowledge any more than scientific criticism constitutes scientific knowledge. He states that:

> Literary criticism as I understand it, plays a parallel role to that of moral criticism and that of scientific criticism. Its function as in these cases is to promote the making of the appropriate kind of objective judgment.
>
> (Hirst, 1971: 15)

But, in other places, Hirst clearly suggests that criticism (i.e. the procedures by which truth claims are tested) is a distinguishing feature of any form of knowledge. He accepts that "literary appreciation can be likened to scientific understanding" (Hirst, 1971: 17), but his curious assertion that it is only the judgment that constitutes knowledge is as untenable for art as it would be for any other form of knowledge, morality and science included. In respect to art it implies a mistaken view of the logical interdependence of description, interpretation and evaluation. In science the suggestion that criticism is not constitutive of scientific knowledge would only be accepted within a positivistic view of science, a position that is no longer tenable in the light of recent work in the philosophy of science,[6] and a position that is certainly not compatible with the epistemological pluralism espoused by Hirst.

At this point we can begin to examine the status of scientific knowledge in more detail in order to reveal how its recent reappraisal has provided a much stronger case for the claim that objectivity and truth do not belong exclusively to the province of the scientist but can be pursued in a variety of ways including those of artists and appreciators of art.

The Legacy of Positivism

A wide acceptance of the traditional positivist view of science has been accompanied by a serious undermining of the status of art as a form of knowledge. Those who have adopted the logical positivist position, in particular, have regarded art as a phenomenon existing completely outside the domain of verifiable knowledge.[7]

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[6] This work is contained in the following, among others: Hanson, 1958; Polanyi, 1958; Kuhn, 1962; Popper, 1963, 1972, 1976; Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970; Polanyi and Prosch, 1975; Feyerabend, 1975. For a lengthy and fully documented discussion of the 'dominant image' of Science, in contrast with the 'new image' that has arisen from the views of Kuhn, Hanson, Polanyi, Toulmin and the implications of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, see Phillips, D.L. (1977).

[7] Ayer, 1946, p.113.

Under this view, art appreciation is taken to be the gratuitous expression of subjective emotion.[8] Neither works of art, nor statements about them can be said to have objective validity apart from their existence as cultural artefacts or contextually relative speech-acts.[9] The attribution of positivist knowledge and truth does not apply to art and such terms are reserved only for science. Hence, for the logical positivist, scientific knowledge, as the paradigm of all true knowledge, is a property only of propositions that can be tested, directly or indirectly, by means of observation, and their truth rests entirely on their correspondence to what exists in the outside world.[10] Under the influence of positivism, the dominant image of the scientific method as the only logically legitimate modus operandi in the pursuit of objective knowledge has held powerful sway. The method of science, which entails the direct observation of perceived things and processes, provides the only valid link between knowledge of the world and the world itself. Not only does the positivist assert that the reality of the world is completely independent of the observer, but that there are certain observational categories or concepts which correspond directly with reality and are independent of conventions or interpretive contexts.[11] Science is thus the totality of true propositions and the practice of

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8 It is not only positivists who espouse this view. Hampshire (1954), for instance, argues that works of art are merely 'gratuitous' and therefore not capable of being evaluated because they bear no relationship to action; unlike a moral situation where some course of action is demanded.

9 The term 'speech-acts' is completely neutral concerning content. The distinction between propositions and speech-acts is the difference between what is said and the act of saying it (Austin, 1962).

10 The correspondence theory of truth is explained by Hamlyn, D.W. (1971), White, A.R. (1971) and Hamlyn, D.W. (1972b).

11 This is the position apparently taken by Wittgenstein in the Tractatus. In an atomic proposition each word or name corresponds to an object. True atomic propositions correspond to reality because they name objects and posit factual relationships between objects. Therefore all true complex or molecular propositions depend for their truth or falsity on the correspondence between their constituent propositions and the real world and nothing else. It follows from such a claim that all metaphysical, moral and aesthetic statements belong to that of which 'we cannot speak'. However, it is from this limited view of language that Wittgenstein's position changes most dramatically in his later work, Philosophical Investigations (Pears, 1971; Kenny, 1973).

science entails a rational process of empirical verification: the testing and validation of theories and hypotheses in a cumulative and progressive quest for objective knowledge about the world. Art, on the other hand, whether creative or interpretive in intent, is taken to be merely a subjective activity, and its appreciation or evaluation can be reduced to a pure and simple question of likes and dislikes. In this view of art, there can be no objective criteria of assessment, no standards of value, and no knowledge as such beyond the level of superficial affectivity. It is not surprising therefore, that adherence to a positivist epistemology can have devastating effects upon the very foundations of artistic knowledge. Indeed, from a philosophical point of view, if such a doctrine is accepted, there is little justification that can be given for the place of art in the curriculum other than as a means of relaxation or emotional catharsis.[12]

However, the positivist view of science has been seriously questioned and most of the powerful arguments (see Footnote 6) that have been mounted against it have indirectly confirmed the validity of art as an essential and distinct form of knowledge (cf. Chiari, 1977: 92). By examining some of the more important critiques of the dominant, positivist conception of science therefore, it is possible to prepare the way for an epistemology which enables literature and art appreciation, along with ethics, practical knowledge and history, to make claims to knowledge that are just as valid as those of, say, physics or mathematics.

The Rejection of Positivism

A number of philosophers have now rejected the idea that the demarcation between knowledge and non-knowledge depends upon something called "the scientific method". Some have adopted the extreme position of idealism, or even solipsism, in which all objective knowledge is denied and science, along with art, religion and morality, is relegated to the wasteland of full conceptual relativism.[13] Others, of whom

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12 The expressionist theories discussed above also lead to this view of the place of art in education.

13 This position, which seems to have derived considerable support from an interpretation of the later Wittgenstein (Trigg, 1973) which more recent interpreters have considered to be incorrect (Phillips, 1977; Hughes, 1977) has held considerable influence with the advocates of the so-called "new sociology of education" (Young, 1971). One of the strongest attacks to be made on the claims of logical and conceptual relativism is to be found in the addenda to Vol. 2 of Popper's '<u>The Open Society and its Enemies</u>' 4th ed. 1962.

Feyerabend (1975) has been the most articulate, have eschewed rationality itself, and preached a form of epistemological anarchism in which all knowledge claims are merely stronger or weaker contestants in an arbitrary battle for assertion. Neither conceptual relativism, nor epistemological anarchism however, while denying the power of positivism, can provide any stronger justification for art as a valid form of knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum. Indeed, they simply confirm the subjectivism and relativism that are already responsible for many of the confusions of theory and practice so prevalent in this area of education.

The most influential, and certainly one of the most persuasive advocates for a relativist conceptualization of scientific knowledge, and by implication artistic knowledge, has been Thomas Kuhn (1962).

Essentially, Kuhn's thesis is that scientific knowledge is not a distinct and inviolable mode of knowledge, but rather, it is a product of the social activity of scientific enquiry. This activity is concerned with the construction of theories rather than the discovery of facts about a reality that lies "out there". Observation is always theory-dependent and facts are always facts-as-interpreted within a theoretical context. Contrary to positivism, Kuhn asserts that "Scientific fact and theory are not categorically separable" (1970: 10). Piaget holds a similar view of science, as we have already noted (see Chapter 2). The context in which facts are interpreted according to Kuhn is provided by paradigms, which he defines as "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (Kuhn, 1970, p. viii). In many ways, Kuhn's concept of scientific paradigm can be likened to an artistic or literary tradition. In each case there is a context of examples against which the practitioner can interpret his own action as meaningful. Kuhn explains his concept in the following way:

> By choosing it (the term "paradigm"), I mean to suggest that some accepted examples of actual scientific practice - examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together - provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research. These are the traditions which the historian describes under such rubrics as "Ptolemaic astronomy" (or "Copernican"), "Aristotelian dynamics" (or "Newtonian"), corpuscular optics (or "wave optics"), and so on.
>
> (1970: 10)

It is not difficult to find comparable traditions in literature or

the arts. Such rubrics as "classical poetry" (or "romantic"), "tonal symphonic music" (or "atonal"), "representational painting" (or "non-representational") abound and within each there is a coherent tradition from which exemplary models can be taken. Furthermore, just as there is nothing absolute about an art tradition, so, in Kuhn's view, there is nothing absolute about a scientific theory. He conceives of the latter as a "conceptual network through which scientists view the world". Learning a paradigm means learning a specific way of looking at the world; likewise, learning a literary or artistic tradition (i.e. being initiated into it) means learning a specific way of interpreting and evaluating works of art. The educational implications of this point will be discussed more fully later, but there is a further aspect of Kuhn's view of science (viz, his relativism) which requires some critical explication at this stage, as its transference into the domain of art would pose some difficulties for the present argument.

The Fallacy of Conceptual Relativism

In defending the extreme relativism of his position Kuhn emphasizes the point that scientific truth and knowledge exist only by virtue of being accepted by one or another scientific community. He holds that there is no language for comparing and contrasting theoretical positions that have been worked out under different paradigms. They are incommensurable and communication is therefore not logically possible. Neither the content nor the practice of science can be compared across different paradigms and a scientist working within the context of one paradigm cannot at the same time view things from a different paradigm. He must undergo a sudden "paradigm-switch" which Kuhn has likened to a conversion: "a relatively sudden and unstructured event like the gestalt switch" (Kuhn, 1970: 121). What was once seen as a bird, for example, is now seen as an antelope, or vice versa. Kuhn is most emphatic that "the transition between competing paradigms cannot be made a step at a time" (1970: 149).

The incommensurability thesis arises from Kuhn's insistence on the mind-dependence of all knowledge at the price of any empirical realism. By defining paradigms as closed logical systems, Kuhn seems to be denying that they need bear any direct correspondence with the objective world. If objective knowledge is not possible, the scientist is logically forced in Kuhn's view, to accept the impossibility of critically comparing two paradigms. It is on this point that his thesis

comes closest to the pit-falls of idealism and conceptual relativism.[14] Furthermore, incommensurability is not a phenomenon characteristic of the arts, a point that was made above in reference to the discursive interpretation of presentational modes which is characteristic of most talk about the arts.

In artistic appreciation, not only is it possible to entertain different and contrasting "world-views", but it is fundamental to the experience of art that alternative descriptions and interpretations of the same work can be argued for and justified. Thus "Hamlet" can be interpreted in psychoanalytic terms or in terms of Greek tragedy. Each interpretation can be understood, though neither might be accepted as an entirely valid description of the play. For the description will depend on the play itself, its internal qualities and its relation to the world; and the extent to which the different interpretations are accepted will depend on how they are justified, i.e. whether or not the reasons given can be objectively substantiated by reference to the work and its context (Beardsley, 1958).

Beardsley (1969: 245) comments thus:

> I call a reason Objective if it refers to some characteristic - that is some quality or internal relation, or set of qualities or relations - within the work itself, or to some meaning-relation between the work and the world.

In the extensive critical debate concerning the theme of "The Ancient Mariner,"[15] the various reasons adduced for one interpretation or another have been "objective" in that sense, i.e. the arguments have been anchored in the text and it is possible to compare them in the light of such evidence.

Receptivity to different paradigms is one of the most important elements in the appreciation of poetry as can be clearly illustrated by comparing ordinary denotative or referential language with the metaphorical language of poetry. Ordinary language normally functions as a system to classify experience, a means by which we assimilate experience to a

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[14] Popper has completely rejected this aspect of Kuhn's thesis: "Kuhn suggests that the rationality of science presupposes the acceptance of a common framework. He suggests that rationality depends upon something like a common language and a common set of assumptions. He suggests that rational discussion, and rational criticism, is only possible if we have agreed on fundamentals. This is a widely accepted and indeed a fashionable thesis: the thesis of relativism. And it is a logical thesis. I regard the thesis as mistaken" (Popper, 1970, p.56).

[15] Warren, 1947; House, 1962; Harding, 1963; Gettman, 1961.

consistent, well understood scheme of categories. One of the main effects of poetic language however, is to create new categories, to accommodate experience in new ways and hence to liberate our scheme of categories from the constraints of ordinary language. The appreciation of poetry depends upon a receptivity, a disposition for paradigm shift. Metaphor, the essence of poetry, involves a fusion of disparate possibilities or "world-views."

The appreciation of poetic symbols involves breaking the normal language code. Thus, when Coleridge writes:

> The moving Moon went up the sky,
> And nowhere did abide:
> Softly she was going up,
> And a star or two beside -

we have, on the discursive level, a simple literal description, but on the presentational level, we have a powerful symbol for the gentle, redemptive side of the natural world. The description of the moon and the stars expresses order, joy, life, universal communion and process - all those things from which the Mariner is alienated (Warren, 1947: 243). Likewise, only by breaking free from the categorial constraints of ordinary language can we derive meaning from Keats' lines:

> The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.
> (Ode to a Nightingale)

This poetic image, which defies paraphrase, entails a fusing of several disparate ideas (sorcery, windows, waves, danger, enchantment, despair) in a powerful joint meaning that has never before been encountered and exists only in the combination of words that comprises that particular image. It is nevertheless an image rich with meaning within the context of the whole poem and therefore capable of an interpretation that draws objectively upon the relationships inherent within that context. Such an interpretation, anchored in a knowledge of the poem itself, could be likened to a conjecture in the scientific sense, and would be no more subjective nor less open to rational criticism. (This point is more fully elaborated in Chapter 8).

Thus, the incommensurability thesis of conceptual relativism espoused by Kuhn presents many problems for art as it does for science and must be rejected if a coherent theory of artistic appreciation is to be developed. The possibility of critical comparison (i.e. receptivity to different "paradigms") here enables education to have effect.

A Critical Epistemology for Science and Art

What is required, therefore, to retain the objectivity of scientific knowledge, while ensuring that the status of art in comparison with science is not diminished, is an epistemology that will occupy a middle ground between the extremes of logical positivism on the one side and conceptual relativism on the other. Such an epistemology would need to insist on both empirical realism (or objectivity) and the mind-dependence of all knowledge. It would need to be pluralistic, allowing for different kinds of knowledge and different routes to truth, without conceding to idealism, relativism or subjectivity.

The critical epistemology that has been developed by Popper goes a considerable way towards meeting these conditions. Most of Popper's work has been concerned with the logic of science but his conceptions of objective knowledge and critical thinking have equally significant implications for the epistemological status of art and literature.

Popper conceives of human knowledge as consisting of theories, hypotheses, conjectures and all the products of our intellectual activities. Knowledge, in this sense, is objective; it has an existence in the real world and is not merely a subjective state of mind. To the extent that knowledge exists independently of any particular knowing subject, it can be hypothetical, conjectural and open to criticism. Thus, for Popper, the demarcation between knowledge and non-knowledge is less important than the demarcation between knowledge and dogma. Each is characterized by a contrasting attitude of mind. Denouncing the narrowness and untenable certitude of logical positivism, he adds that:

> ...the dogmatic attitude is clearly related to the tendency to verify our laws and schemata by seeking to apply them and to confirm them, even to the point of neglecting refutations, whereas the critical attitude is one of readiness to change them; to refute them; to falsify them if possible.
>
> (Popper, 1963: 50)

In Popper's view then, scientific knowledge is necessarily conjectural and tentative, rather than certain. Its truth claims are always (a) partial and (b) provisional. The theories of science are partial in the sense that they can never be completely entailed or determined by the data on which they are based; they can never represent more than a part of reality. Such theories furthermore, are provisional in that they are always open to falsification and revision by the discovery of data which they cannot accommodate.

The complexity of reality is such that there will be always

scope for new scientific theories by which to modify or replace the explanations we already have. Likewise, given the complexity of art, there will be always scope for rival critical interpretations that draw attention to features previously not taken into account, and hence provide reasons for a change of judgment and appreciation.

The critical attitude, so vital to the growth of scientific knowledge, would not be possible if scientists were "locked-into" particular paradigms. Hence, in Popper's view, the incommensurability thesis of Kuhn is clearly not tenable, and he has responded as follows:

> I do admit that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our theories; our expectations; our past experiences; our language. But we are prisoners in a Pickwickian sense: if we try, we can break out of our framework at any time. Admittedly, we shall find ourselves again in a framework, but it will be a better and roomier one; and we can at any moment break out of it again.
>
> The central point is that a critical discussion and a comparison of the various frameworks is always possible. It is just a dogma - a dangerous dogma - that the different frameworks are like mutually untranslatable languages.
>
> (Popper, 1970: 56)

This comparison of frameworks is what occurs in science whenever the presenting problem, the hypothesis or the conjecture, does not readily fit into the scientist's existing theories.[16] It occurs just as significantly in art whenever an artist departs from the dominant tradition of his medium or when, in artistic appreciation, the discerning critic describes a work under a completely new and revealing light. Not only is this receptivity to other frameworks (what Popper calls "a critical attitude") necessary to the growth of knowledge in both science

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[16] For example:

> One way might be by reading the work of earlier scientists, philosophers or even poets. However, I will focus on another possibility. Perhaps the dissatisfied scientist reads a paper by another scientist who does not practise within his (the first scientist's) paradigm. And he finds that he cannot understand, cannot make sense of, this paper; the man simply views the world and the subject-matter of his scientific inquiry in a way that is foreign to our hypothetical reader. Yet the reader - prepared by his feelings of dissatisfaction within the paradigm under which he works - concludes: "It's interesting", or "Maybe there's something there", or "I wonder what he means", or "I wonder what he's getting at". Perhaps he makes contact with the author of the paper, and asks him for further elaboration, elucidation, clarification or examples. Or maybe he thinks he has some idea of what is intended and asks the author: "Do you mean this?" or "Is this an example of what is intended?"
>
> (Phillips, 1977, p.109)

and art, but it is something which can be consciously achieved.

Now, we have already suggested that "paradigms" in art consist of traditions, publicly shared ways of viewing the world and the subject-matter of art. Just as scientists conceive of the world in terms of paradigms into which they have been initiated, so too do artists, audiences and critics. Being initiated into an artistic or literary tradition, therefore, is comparable to being initiated into any other public tradition "enshrined in a public language" (Peters, 1966: 49). It is just as difficult to "get outside it" as it is for the scientist described above to "get outside" the paradigm under which he works. The point is made by Casey (1966: 24) as follows:

> You cannot decide to jettison great areas of moral and aesthetic knowledge at will any more than you can decide to forget what you know about mathematics or history.

But provided one has acquired what Popper terms "a critical attitude" it is possible to move from one framework into another and to make comparisons between different frameworks. This possibility is crucial from an educational point of view and it is as important in aesthetic education as it is in science education; in each case it allows for rational appraisal rather than indoctrinated acceptance.

How would receptivity to different frameworks appear in the case of literary appreciation, for example? Let us suppose that a critic puts forward an interpretation of Hamlet that sets out to relate its meaning to Hindu symbolism and show in these terms that it is a melodramatic failure. To be receptive to such an interpretive framework would not amount to a willingness to choose this interpretation as a true one (such a position would seriously reduce the cognitive element in appreciation), but to a capability of being able to see the play in a new and different way. The critical reader would ask: "Could Shakespeare have meant that?" or "Is that what the play means?" He would not be seeking to infer some entirely hidden intention, the truth of which could only be revealed by knowledge of what was in Shakespeare's mind. Rather, he would be seeking to substantiate (or justify) the interpretation in the light of the pattern of the play itself. He would be asking: "Is this a valid description of the object that is before me?"

But such questions presuppose certain criteria. An interpretation that was completely foreign to what we know about Shakespeare's intentions, or what we know about the language use, dramatic conventions, zeitgeist or social conditions of his time, would be less convincing, on logical

grounds, than one which took all these things into account. It would be like a scientific theory which did not fit with our observations of the world.

Critical appreciation of a work of art therefore, is not a total surrender to the persuasive grip of a particular paradigm, rendering one incapable of seeing the work in any other way. Rather, it is a highly discriminating kind of describing; just as science is a highly discriminating kind of conjecture.[17] Appreciation is not a matter of description plus some other element or event (such as enjoyment or intuition) any more than science is a matter of conjecture plus something else (such as certainty).

The Meaning of Art

Just as the predominant mode of scientific thought is conjectural, so the predominant mode of artistic reasoning is interpretive. The result in each case is the production of meaning derived from the decoding of a cultural object, e.g. the scientific document or the work of art. The hermeneutic situation is essentially the same whether it involves the interpretation of signs and symbols, gestures and events, poems and symphonies, theories or theorems. The meaning of a cultural object cannot be grasped from a raw and innocent apprehension of the object in itself.[18] When meaning has been conferred by an intentional act, it is necessary in order to comprehend that meaning, to make reference to more than the properties of the object in which the meaning is conferred. It is necessary to have some understanding of the context in which the intentional act occurred. Interpretation of meaning, whether in science or in art, is like following a rule; it is the particular context that determines how we are to apprehend the object.[19]

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17 E.D. Hirsch (1967: ix) makes a similar point when he writes:
> "...the practical goal of every genuine discipline is consensus - the winning of firmly grounded agreement that one set of conclusions is more probable than others - and this is precisely the goal of valid interpretation."

18 cf. E. Gombrich. "The innocent eye sees nothing".
Meaning requires what Bruner has called categorial identity.
> "If perceptual experience is ever had raw, that is, free of categorial identity, it is doomed to be gem serene, locked in the silence of private experience" (Bruner, 1957b: 124)

19 Wittgenstein's treatment of how we obey a rule (P.I., 1953, No.217) and his notion of "seeing as" shows how both action and perception are context-dependent. "- so we interpret it, and see it as we interpret it" (P.I., 1953, II, xi, p.193).
This point is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

The context supplies the criteria for what is to count as meaningful. Hence, the criteria for meaning in science include paradigms (or rules) of what is to count as observation, quantification, explanation and prediction. Likewise, in art there must be specifiable criteria for distinguishing between true (i.e. coherent and justifiable) and false (i.e. incoherent and unjustifiable) accounts of what any work of art means. Were such criteria not available, were <u>any</u> account (or interpretation) of the meaning of a work of art as acceptable as any other, then the objectivity and also the intelligibility of art would not be logically possible. Hence, in a case of artistic appreciation, the "logic of the situation" (to use Popper's generic idea) demands as much objectivity as a case of scientific conjecture. Joseph Chiari (1977: 96) makes the same point when he writes:

> ...the knowledge that (art) embodies, and that it can therefore impart to those who come to it, is not of the kind that can be quantified, verified or refuted through logical arguments or mathematical proofs. Its only grounds of verification are the human heart and the human imagination, which do not apply scientific criteria and measurements, but which certainly do apply the principles of coherence, organic wholeness and conformity with the verisimilitude of human experience....Art necessarily implies a discipline as rigorous and as exacting as that of science, and the kind of knowledge that it pursues and that it yields is, again, as rigorous and as valid as that of science, although it is pursued and assessed by different methods.

In essence, the point is that meanings, whether of words, theories, gestures, poems or paintings, have to be answerable, in principle at least, to public criteria.[20] The full implications of this point can make no sense to anyone who holds that aesthetic appreciation is an entirely subjective and personal matter in which any "response" is as valid or "appropriate" as any other.

<u>Summary and Conclusion</u>

The foregoing discussion allows us to conclude that the justification for knowledge of and about art is no less valid in its claims than the

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20 cf. Wittgenstein's argument concerning the impossibility of private languages:

> "Can I say 'bububu' and mean 'If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk'? It is only in language that one can mean something by something. This shows clearly that the grammar of 'to means' is not like that of the expression 'to imagine' and the like."
>
> (<u>P.I.</u>, 1953, p.18, note)

case for any other distinct form of knowledge. However, in emphasising the commonalities between science and art in the pursuit of shared meanings and public knowledge, there is something more to be said about the cognitive core of that knowledge, especially as this is fundamental to artistic education.

The appreciation of art and literature is not something which we can separate from other modes of intellectual activity. Both the production and the comprehension of symbols, whether they be words, images or gestures, must entail an activity of knowing or meaning, i.e. a cognitive activity.[21] Art, in both its creation and appreciation, is above all an act of intelligence. As John Dewey pointed out (1958: 46) "To think in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand upon thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal and mathematical". We cannot, therefore, set up a sharp distinction between aesthetic cognition and other forms of cognition. There is no rigid distinction between thinking out or stating hypotheses which are falsifiable in empirical terms and formulating interpretations which could be shown to be inappropriate or unjustifiable because they do not cohere intelligibly with the context from which they derive. There is no sharp intellectual boundary between explanations produced by deductive or inductive thought and justifications produced by reflective or interpretive thought.[22] The purpose of what is known and said in each situation is to construe the data of experience so that it engenders meaning in a particular way. This can only occur in the context of a conceptual framework which enables us to "see" or comprehend the meaning in that particular way and not in some other random, arbitrary or unintelligible light. As Polanyi has said: "Man lives in the meanings he is able to discern" (1975: 66).

The education of artistic appreciation is concerned with the discernment of meaning, with the development of new "ways of seeing". But this is not just a private, subjective pursuit; it involves the acquisition of knowledge, the initiation into a form of knowing with its inherent structures and distinctive concepts. Artistic appreciation is an activity that derives its point and significance from this wider domain of artistic knowledge.

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21 See Nelson Goodman (1968), pp.247-248.

22 In epistemological terms, this argument is entirely consistent with Piaget's structuralist theory of intelligence discussed briefly in Chapter 2. It will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 7.

The task of the present chapter has been to mark out some of the central features of artistic knowledge as an objective domain having its own conceptual structures and procedural logic from which educational principles can be derived. Arguments have been presented to show that expressionist or intuitionist accounts of aesthetic experience are not adequate for producing such principles and a case has been made for a theory which holds that knowledge in/of/about art is embodied in public symbol systems (both discursive and non-discursive) having an epistemological status no less objective than science, and demanding as much by way of educational initiation. It has been argued, furthermore, that knowledge _about_ art is as central to art education as knowledge _in_ or knowledge _of_ art and that the concepts and structures distinctive of this form of knowledge as a whole tend to cut across and transcend these less important heuristic boundaries.

The task ahead is to map the logical features of appreciation in more detail and to relate these to the emergent psychological structures which make development and education in this area of the aesthetic domain possible.

CHAPTER FIVE

APPRECIATION AND INTERPRETIVE COGNITION

> A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.
>
> (Wittgenstein, 1953: para 115)

> The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eye of others only a green thing which stands in the way....As a man is, so he sees.
>
> - William Blake

In the previous chapter, it was argued that appreciation of the arts constitutes a domain of objective knowledge that is comparable, in many respects, to the domain of scientific knowledge. Moreover, insofar as it is a domain of knowledge it can be said to have a logical structure, which consists of the rules for the meaningful use of the terms it employs. Only within the bounds of this logical structure can knowledge be constructed out of experience and in the appreciation of art, as has already been argued, such knowledge is defined in terms of its objects and the language under which those objects are described, interpreted and valued.[1] Aesthetic experience, therefore, can be educative only to the extent that it is also conceptual. Conversely, experience that is completely free of concepts, lacking even indirect reference to language in its widest sense, is experience utterly uninformed by communicable meaning; it is therefore, not only inexpressible but it is inconceivable that it could ever be educative in its effects.

This position is strongly supported by Wittgenstein's argument

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[1] This refers to language in the wider sense of public symbol system (cf. Wittgenstein's notion of "language-game").

against the possibility of a private language.[2] According to Wittgenstein, a private language is one whose words (or symbols) "refer to what can only be known to the person speaking: to his immediate private sensations" (P.I. 1953 Part 1, para 243). The point of his argument, however, is that such a notion rests on a fundamental mistake concerning the meaning of language. Wittgenstein claims that language derives its meaning from its use in a particular social context rather than from what it names. There is, therefore, a close connection between the fallacy of nominalism (or meaning-as-naming) in language and the assumed existence of a private language. For example, the meaning of a word such as "pain" is not learned merely by attaching the word to a sensation as in a bare ostensive definition. Rather, the meaning is learned through its connections with the natural expressions of pain. The meaning is the way the word is used in the context of the various circumstances and symptoms which we have come to take as criteria for the existence of pain (Kenny, 1973: 184). This semantic condition, in Wittgenstein's thesis, applies to all language that is ordinarily taken to be referring to mental states or experiences, including the experiences that we call "aesthetic". The condition implies that all meanings, whether of words in ordinary language, or of words or other symbols having artistic import, have to be answerable, in principle at least, to public criteria. It is only on the basis of this philosophical claim, furthermore, that a coherent logic of artistic appreciation can be established.

If a person's appreciation of the arts cannot be defined in terms other than those of completely subjective and personal "inner experience" it becomes unintelligible.[3] It is, of logical necessity, a social and

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[2] Wittgenstein (1968) Philosophical Investigations paras 243-363. The private languages argument is explicated in Kenny (1973: 178-202).

[3] This presupposition is denied by those who embark on phenomenological investigation. However, the position adopted here is supported by those who, mainly under the influence of Wittgenstein, have adopted an empiricist philosophy of mind. Scruton (1974: 10) for example, argues that:

> "...although an experience is supposed to be 'reduced' by phenomenological examination and hence separated both from its material object and from its outward expression, there can be no coherent description of what it is reduced to. The phenomenological 'descriptions' of experience, when they are not simply disguised references to public expression, are elaborate metaphors that tell us nothing definite about the experiences to which they refer".

public phenomenon. The socio-cultural situation that constitutes an objective act of artistic appreciation, therefore, requires that there be some form of communicable interaction between a knowing subject and a cultural object capable of being apprehended.

On one side, it requires an interpreting mind, the active intelligence of the appreciating agent. On the other side, it requires an object, the artefact in its cultural context, which is the material of interpretation. Appreciation, the ratiocinative act of interpretation, involves an interaction between these two elements that is both meaningful and communicable within an established and on-going mode of normative discourse[4] having its own distinctive logical structure. This mode of discourse defines what we shall call interpretive cognition and is the means by which the act of interpretation achieves its purpose: that is, the construction of artistic knowledge. The education of artistic appreciation, in this view, involves the development of interpretive cognition through gradual initiation into a particular mode of normative discourse. In the discussion that follows, we shall endeavour to establish the philosophical foundations for such a position in order that the educational questions can be properly examined.

The Act of Interpretation

It is a consequence of the epistemological theories outlined in the previous chapter that appreciation of the arts is no less a rational activity than those of science or mathematics. When someone is appreciating a work of art (e.g. a poem) he is trying to produce a coherent account of the object which involves trying to relate his thoughts to their subject-matter (the text of the poem): he is constructing an interpretation, and to do this he must, in a sense, go beyond what is "given" (i.e. the words of the poem). But this is not done in a random or arbitrary way. It is necessary that the person should attempt to bring what he thinks and says into relation with the object: his thoughts must be valid because of their "appropriateness".

But what could be meant by an "appropriate" interpretation of an art object? Here it is useful to invoke Wittgenstein's treatment of how we obey a rule, because it has a central bearing on the nature

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4 This concept of "normative discourse" is used here in the way that has been elaborated by Taylor (1961).

of the logical relationship between a work of art and the "appropriate" cognitive appraisal of it.

First, it is necessary to recall the case, set out in the previous chapter, for regarding art as a language in the widest sense. Now a language, according to Wittgenstein, is a set of activities governed by certain rules. These rules enable different uses of language in different circumstances; but they are always "public" in the sense that it must be possible for more than one person to learn to follow them. Hence, rules are conventions in that they are public and entail agreement, but they are not merely conventions, capable of infinite variation and arbitrary determination. As with concepts, rules are dependent on the world: they arise within a context without which they could have no possible point. For instance, Wittgenstein asks: "How does it come about that this arrow points?" (P.I., 1953, 454). The subsequent discussion shows that the significance of this remark is that the "pointing" of an arrow is not merely a matter of human convention, but has much deeper roots in reality than this kind of description would seem to imply. The wider ramifications of Wittgenstein's point have been explicated as follows:

> For where does our convention come from, that arrows in diagrams and on signposts "point" in the direction of the arrow tip? Arrows are something that human beings once used as instruments for hunting. They were made with a sharp tip at one end for this purpose, and to function they must be shot tip-first. So the convention about how an arrow points is not an arbitrary one. To be sure, if this planet's physics were very different, if what we call hunting had a totally different purpose than it now has, one might need very different "arrows" or might shoot arrows in some radically different way. So arrows that point are conventional; but that convention is not just based on an arbitrary agreement that might just as well have been arranged in some other way.
>
> (Pitkin, 1972: 123)

Similarly, the interpretation of a work of art is a matter of convention in that there are definite limits upon what can count as valid interpretation and what would be ruled out as being "over-elaborate" or "far-fetched". These limits lie in the relationship between the object itself and the context to which it belongs. As in the cases of "following a rule" and "meaning a word" it is the particular context that validates our interpretation of the art object, and the context must invoke public, communicable criteria. We justify

how we respond to a rule, how we interpret a poem or a picture, by pointing to a context, to a background. Interpretation without such a context is inconceivable.

For example, the word "silly" in the following stanza from 'The Ancient Mariner' would be very likely to produce a misinterpretation from a modern reader because it would be located in an inappropriate semantic context.

> The silly buckets on the deck,
> That had so long remained,
> I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
> And when I awoke, it rained.

But in the following interpretation, Robert Penn Warren places the word in a rich semantic context and offers an interpretation in which the word contributes a subtlety and depth to the meaning of the whole image:

> We can go at this by looking at the cluster of meanings involved in the history of the word, meanings which would have been vitally present for Coleridge and the shadows of which can be detected in contemporary usage. The old meanings of <u>saelig-seely</u>, the sense of fortunate, blessed, happy, innocent, weak, still haunt the word, and fuse with the other meaning. In the poem the phrase comes in the first dream of blessedness, innocence, and happiness, just after the Albatross has dropped into the sea, and in the dream even the inanimate objects, but those associated with the longed-for water, receive the touch of this blessedness - and incidentally this blessing of the buckets by the Mariner, for it amounts to that, repeats his blessing of the snakes, so that even the inanimate objects share in the new sacramental vision. As for the senses of weakness and stupidity in the word, we have the condition of the buckets as empty and worthless. Throughout, of course, there is the man-bucket transference, empty bucket and thirsty man (lonely, accursed, foolish, weak man) that become full and blessed.
>
> (Warren, 1947: 297-8)

Such an interpretation, with all its semantic density, would not be possible without a knowledge of the relevant linguistic context for this apparently very simple everyday word.

The importance of context in providing rules by which we can discern the relevance of a reason or the validity of an inference accounts for the impossibility of appreciating art without some background of socio-historical perspective. This point is clearly made by Scruton when he states:

> Every work of art is created in a medium, under the guidance of pre-established rules which may be broken but never ignored, for they embody the tradition of thought without which no work of art would be meaningful. Each word or gesture on the stage strikes us as in place or out of place, and no feature of the work of art can escape making some contribution to the effect. In the absence of rules and traditions our sense of what is appropriate could hardly be aroused, and appreciation of art would remain inchoate and primitive.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 248)

When the rules are broken, or when a new interpretation is put forward, the audience (reader, viewer, listener) can appreciate the point of what has occurred only if there is already a prior knowledge of the norm that has been broken, the tradition or convention that has been departed from. For example, the reader who knows something about the ballad verse form will be in a position to appreciate the deliberate variations from this convention in 'The Ancient Mariner' - variations which are used to produce particular poetic effects.

Different cultural contexts, different artistic traditions, will set different limits to the interpretations that can be considered appropriate, and even within the same tradition the rules or conventions may change and produce new boundaries and a new context within which interpretations can be made.[5]

Cognitive Appraisals and "Seeing As"

To say that the appreciation of art necessarily entails an interpretation which, in turn, necessarily entails a context, is to draw attention to the special kind of cognitive appraisal that is constitutive of the very act of appreciating a work of art or literature. The nature of this cognitive appraisal can best be understood by analogy with the notion of "seeing as".

Firstly, it must be emphasized that the concept of seeing, as we are using it here, entails more than visual sensation - it embraces the whole cognitive process by which an experience is interpreted. In this sense therefore, what we see will be illuminated by what we know, by the concepts we already have. Hanson points this out with a number of examples:

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[5] See Gombrich (1960: 20-21) for his discussion of what he calls "the riddle of style".

> Would Sir Lawrence Bragg and an Eskimo baby see the same thing when looking at an X-ray tube? Yes, and no. Yes - they are visually aware of the same object. No - the ways in which they are visually aware are profoundly different. Seeing is not only the having of a visual experience; it is also the way in which the visual experience is had.
>
> At school the physicist had gazed at this glass-and-metal instrument. Returning now, after years in University and research, his eye lights upon the same object once again. Does he see the same thing now as he did then? Now he sees the instrument in terms of electrical circuit theory, thermodynamic theory, the theories of metal and glass structure, thermionic emission, optical transmission, refraction, diffraction, atomic theory, quantum theory and special relativity.
>
> Contrast the freshman's view of college with that of his ancient tutor. Compare a man's first glance at the motor of his car with a similar glance ten exasperating years later.
>
> (Hanson, 1958: 16-17)

This close connection between the visual and the conceptual is, as Reichert suggests, deeply embedded in our language:

> A native speaker of German who does not speak English will see vergeben differently from an Englishman who is learning German, and both will see it differently from the non-German-speaking expert in type who will see it as an example of ten-point Black Letter. None of these ways of seeing vergeben is wrong. They simply reflect different correct ways of construing or classifying it. But it would be wrong to see it as a German word meaning "pot roast" or as eight-point Goudy Old Style.
>
> The example illustrates the close connection between the visual and the conceptual, and the naturalness of our use of all those terms that do service for both sight and knowledge. We can say "I see what you mean" or "I know what you mean," and "know" is believed to derive from the same root as "ken."
>
> (Reichert, 1977: 4)

Such examples show that knowledge, theories, concepts make a substantial difference to what is seen. As Hanson points out,

> There is a sense, then, in which seeing is a "theory-laden" undertaking. Observation of x is shaped by prior knowledge of x.
>
> (Hanson, 1958: 19)

This means that all seeing, all perceiving, involves forming hypotheses and using categories (Gregory, 1974: 201). Indeed, language itself functions as a classificatory system for that which is perceived.

But Wittgenstein discusses two distinct uses of the word "see"

and it is this distinction that enables us to explain what is involved in an aesthetic appraisal. The distinction is between seeing and seeing as.[6] The former is a case of seeing a thing for what it is, that is naming it or perceiving it categorially in a publicly verifiable way (e.g. seeing a knife, or seeing a fork).[7] The latter is a case of seeing something under an aspect (e.g. seeing a cloud as a camel, or seeing an ink-blot as a face). It does not make any sense to say "I see this knife as a knife" or "I see this ink-blot as an ink-blot" unless we are referring to different stages in the psychological process of seeing such as when we are first learning to recognize these objects. While it is sometimes useful to identify all seeing with seeing as, for the purposes of the present argument concerning aesthetic appraisals, Wittgenstein's distinction is especially significant. It is a distinction that Hanson makes with reference to science when he states:

> I do not mean to identify seeing with seeing as. Seeing an X-ray tube is not seeing a glass-and-metal object as an X-ray tube.
>
> (Hanson, 1958: 19)

But, when this distinction is made, seeing and seeing as are not just taken to be separate components in the psychological process of seeing, but are construed as logically distinguishable notions of seeing (Hanson, 1958: 21).

Wittgenstein illustrates the notion of seeing as by taking Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure (see Figure 2).

Jastrow's Duck-Rabbit

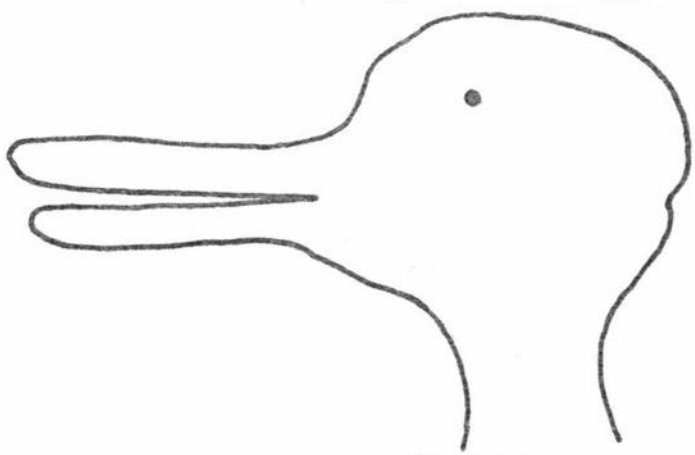

Figure 2

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6 See Philosophical Investigations, 1953, II xi, 193e.

7 This is not to deny that these objects are themselves cultural artefacts - a knife could be a weapon or an object of worship. But, given the cultural context, the object is seen for what it is in that context.

This figure can be seen as either a "duck" or a "rabbit". The beak of the "duck" becomes the ears of the "rabbit". The eye is common to both. The indentation to the right becomes the "rabbit's" mouth and is irrelevant on the "duck". In each case, the figure remains the same, but we see it under a different aspect. The particular aspect under which someone sees it may be revealed in the way it is described. Wittgenstein comments on this as follows:

> If I heard someone talking about the duck-rabbit, and now he spoke in a certain way about the special expression of the rabbit's face I should say, now he's seeing the picture as a rabbit.
>
> (P.I., 1953, p 206e)

The connection between Wittgenstein's analysis of aspect seeing and aesthetic appreciation is well established in the literature on aesthetic theory.[8] In general, it is argued that the special kind of cognitive appraisal involved in appreciating a work of art is neither inductive nor deductive, that is it involves neither the discovery of new facts, nor a deduction of consequences from what we already know Rather, it is a special kind of reflective thought which Wittgenstein has called the "dawning" of an aspect. In other words, it is through the cognitive appraisal that we come to "see" a picture or a poem in a particular way, we come to accept (or we are persuaded by) a particular interpretation of it. We have called this process interpretive cognition.

The analysis of seeing as situations reveals three distinct features none of which characterize ordinary cases of seeing and each of which has significance for artistic appreciation. We shall call these features: (1) interpretive indeterminacy, (2) intentionality, and (3) imagination. Let us now elaborate on each as they pertain to the cognitive appraisals involved in the appreciation of art and literature.

(1) Interpretive indeterminacy. It is a necessary condition of seeing as situations that what we are seeing (or apprehending) is capable of more than one interpretation. Obviously, the duck-rabbit can be seen as a duck or a rabbit; a cloud can be seen as a camel or a whale. But this is not to say that we can see these objects as

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8 See Aldrich, 1958; Casey, 1966; Hester, 1966; Clark, 1970; Crittenden, 1970; Scruton, 1974; Best, 1974.

anything. There will be strict limits to the possibilities which are made available by the concepts in our language (cf. Norman, 1972). Because a concept carries with it a distinction between correct and incorrect applications of it, there are some interpretations that are not possible. Thus, the figure can correctly be seen as both a duck and a rabbit provided we have these concepts, but it cannot correctly be seen as a clock. Likewise, works of art can be interpreted in different ways, ranging from the appropriate to the whimsical. The cognitive appraisal which produces an interpretation is justified by the giving of reasons, but these are reasons for seeing it as X, not reasons why it is X. Whether the reasons justify the appraisal, of course, will depend on the context.[9]

For example, the same work of literature might be appraised in different ways depending on the context in which it is read. A novel might be read as a piece of political propaganda or as a complex study of human character. "Gulliver's Travels" might be read as a children's fairy tale or as a powerful satire. "The Ancient Mariner" might be read as a poem with an exciting narrative or as a poem with deep symbolic meaning. But there are logical limits here. "Gulliver's Travels" could not be read as true autobiography and "The Ancient Mariner" could not be read as comic verse without rendering our normal use of language absurd.

The notion of "reading as" in these examples does not imply that the work itself changes from being a fairy tale to being a satire, or from being an exciting story to being highly symbolic. What happens is that when we read a work of literature, just as when we see an ambiguous figure, we may focus on only one aspect of it. There may be other possible aspects but only within certain limits.

Aspects, like aesthetic features, are not physical properties but neither are they images. In an important sense the aspect is in the object, in the public world. The duck or the rabbit is there to be seen, unless we are "aspect-blind" (P.I., 1953, 214e). The "aspect-blind" person, like the colour-blind person, fails to see something there to be seen, except that "aspect-blindness" is not a sensory deficit but something more like the absence of a concept or a piece of

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9 What is a reason in one context may not be a reason in another. Furthermore, as Scruton argues, incompatible critical judgments can be "entirely based on the same set of first-order features of a work of art". He takes a passage from Milton and shows how the same poetic images can be interpreted in two different incompatible ways. (Scruton, 1974: 36-37).

knowledge; it is subject to influence and change. Wittgenstein likens it to the lack of a "musical ear". Hence, while aspect-description is a genuine form of description, what it describes (the aspect) is not a physical thing, but rather the cognitive appraisal of something that is inherently ambiguous.

(2) Intentionality. One of the basic distinctions between seeing and seeing as is that the latter is subject to will (P.I., 1953, 213e). In order to see something we need only to believe that our senses are not deceiving us; but to see an aspect is an intentional act: it makes sense to say that we try to see an object as something or we come to see it as something.

This means that forming a cognitive appraisal or forming an interpretation is something I can do: it is not necessarily something I suffer or undergo. Not only is this crucial to the distinction between response and appreciation which we consider in the next chapter, but it is this feature that makes the teaching of appreciation possible. Clark illustrates this with the following example:

> The duck aspect of Wittgenstein's diagram comes through more readily if the diagram is shown in conjunction with other, more obviously ducklike, representations: teaching the student to see a diagram as representing both duck and rabbit might consist merely of a judicious display of other diagrams along with the ambiguous one. In getting students to see a painting as unified it might be possible to display a set of reproductions from which the nonunifying elements would be increasingly expunged.
>
> (Clark, 1970: 196-7)

Likewise, in teaching someone to understand a poetic image it might be possible to compare the passage of poetry with several paraphrases, each of which draws attention to different aspects of the image. Since metaphorical seeing as involves imagery associated with the meaning of language (cf. Hester, 1966) it may be that the appreciation of a particular metaphor follows from coming to see the compared elements as being of one kind rather than another. For example, a full understanding of the following image depends on whether the "ribbed sea-sand" metaphor is correctly grasped.

> 'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
> I fear thy skinny hand!
> And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
> As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The following protocol shows how the subject gradually comes to <u>see</u> the comparison <u>as</u> having the appropriate meaning:

Gaeleen (14yr 5 mth): (What did the Mariner look like?)... a scary person who makes him a bit scared ...and he's skinny and looks pretty ragged...(What do the lines mean?)...most probably...fairly obvious that he's been out in the sun...you know, he's a sailor ...he's been out in the sun a lot...and he's pretty skinny and lanky...(And what about "the ribbed sea-sand"? How does that fit?)...it kind of gives a picture of what he looks like...(In what way?)...um just like the sand...and he's kind of so... he's been in it a lot...(How is he like the sand? What is the "ribbed sea-sand?)...I don't know...(Is there a comparison here? Is there something about the sand?)...yes ...(What would it be?)...oh, he must look like the ribbed sea-sand somehow...(And how is the sea-sand ribbed? What does the word "ribbed" mean there?)...I don't know ...(What happens to the sand as the wind blows over it...or as the sea, the tide goes out?)...it moves...(And what is left in the sand?)...oh, it might leave water behind...or just kind of drift away...(What about the shape of a rib-cage? Is that how it could be described? The little ridges and bumps.)...oh, it leaves a kind of a wake where the water came up to...with little ridges and bumps...(And what are those little ridges and bumps being compared to?)...maybe he's so skinny that he's kind of bony...(And what about his bones?)... they're all sticking out...and showing... (And that just looks like?)...like the sand ...with all the lumps in the sand...just giving a picture of what he looks like... (Yes. Now, did you understand that comparison at first?)...no, because I didn't know what was meant by the "ribbed sea-sand"...(But you can understand it now?) ...yes.

The point here is that a great deal of aesthetic education is concerned with providing the conditions under which works of art and literature can come to be seen under new and more appropriate aspects (cf. Reichert, 1977: ch.1). This also is the primary function of the critic and, as Crittenden (1970) has argued, the activity is essentially one of persuasion. We come to grasp the appropriateness of an interpretation by being persuaded to see the object according to the interpretation. Crittenden is careful, however, to avoid any implication that this produces subjectivity in appreciation:

> It must be stressed that the persuasive nature of an aesthetic argument is not incompatible with its objectivity. On the contrary, the critic is answerable to the real perceptual conditions of the object which he discusses. That is, the object must have those properties and belong to that context of conceptual and other elements which make it perceptible in the way which the critic claims.
>
> (Crittenden, 1970: 243)

(3) Imagination. This brings us to the third distinguishing feature of seeing as situations: namely, that they always involve some degree of imagination. In order to see the duck-rabbit as a rabbit, we are required to take certain lines as representing ears, the dot as representing an eye, and so forth. This obviously requires imagination which, because it is intentional or subject to the will, is a cognitive act rather than a passive state of mind. Conceived of in this way, the imagination is not a separate faculty but is an inherent capacity of thought itself which, as Coleridge[10] has said, "modifies images, and gives unity to variety; it sees all things in one". Indeed, Coleridge has given us a concept of imagination as being the capacity of thought to enable us to perceive the general in the particular (Warnock, 1976). More than mere association, the imagination is an active combining power which brings ideas together and constructs new wholes. Hence, even perception itself can be imaginative when it is a mixture of both receiving and interpreting stimuli, that is when it combines passive experiencing with active constructing.[11] Imagination is concerned with what could be the case rather than with what is the case, with the realm of possibility rather than actuality. Such thought is fundamental to aesthetic appreciation, a connection recognized by Scruton when he states that:

> ...imagination is essentially thought that is unasserted, while being entertained as "appropriate" to its subject matter. And aesthetic experience, as one of the phenomena of imagination, shares the structure that this particular kind of thought dictates.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 91)

He then proceeds to elaborate upon the central imaginative function that characterizes aesthetic understanding. His account rests upon the claim that:

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[10] See S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Oxford, 1907.

[11] We might say that seeing as is thought-imbued perception. We do not see the figure and then interpret it (in our minds) as a rabbit. We see it as a rabbit (cf. Gregory, 1974).

> ...the element of thought involved in seeing as lies clearly in the field of imagination: it is thought that goes beyond what is believed or inwardly asserted, and beyond what is strictly given in perception. Hence it is thought that is subject to the condition of "appropriateness". My seeing an aspect raises the question of the appropriateness of what I see in the object in which I see it. Seeing as is rational, and the normative distinction between true imagination and whimsy can be applied to it. Aspect perception may change in the light of reason. I can be stopped from seeing a picture as a rabbit by being shown that it is meant to be taken as a duck, or that the mood of the picture can only be understood if it is taken in that way.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 112)

Because works of art are complex symbolic objects, considerable understanding may be required to grasp their meaning. If we recognize that this understanding requires an imaginative cognitive appraisal, we are ready to admit that artistic appreciation is an act of intelligence and, like the rest of human intelligence, it needs educating. Furthermore, it becomes clear that we cannot set up a sharp distinction between artistic reasoning and other forms of reasoning, just as we cannot restrict imagination only to creative and expressive activities. It is important to recognize that imagination is required not only to create but also to interpret a work of art (cf. Warnock, 1976: 207). For there is always more to experience, and more in experience than meets the senses, if there is an imaginative capacity to reach it.

Children's initial interpretive comments on a poetic image often reflect a deficiency in this imaginative capacity and they will sometimes struggle to find language to express the meaning that is just outside their cognitive grasp. For example, the following two attempts to interpret a vivid image from "The Ancient Mariner" will illustrate a failure of imagination for the two subjects, both of whom are unable to achieve a correct interpretation.

> It ceased; yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon,
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.

Chris (14yr 5 mth): ...um he's saying it sounds like a stream maybe...in the...when summer's just beginning and then it describes the contrast to night...the sleeping woods ...(What sort of sound is it?)...um well the day sound would be pleasant...you

know, a good sound to hear but... ("A noise like of a hidden brook" - what would that be?)...um maybe the sea...um, or the sound of drinking...("In the leafy month of June")...um, I'm not really sure about that because um...there wouldn't be any leaves on board...("That to the sleeping woods all night singeth a quiet tune" - what does that mean?)...it's dark and you know...(What is singing the tune?)...it could be them snoring um... or the boat creaking...(Well, what is singing the quiet tune to the woods?)... it could be the men...like in his imagination...he even could be imagining that they're alive again.

Andrew (11yr 9 mth): ...quiet like...oh, a sleeping woods... (In what way?)...oh well, it was all rainy and all splashy and all that...(And what did the noise sound like?)...well, you might hear a brook and you might not be able to see it...just hear it running and all that...(Was there a brook there?)... no...(Well, what's being described?)...the rain coming down on the sea and...(What is singing the tune?)...oh, the men would be singing in the rain...(What sort of sound is it?)...oh, rainy, splashy, gushy, and all that...and the Mariner feels happy that he's got rain.

In the following protocol, however, a correct interpretation indicates that the child's imagination has made the vital initial cognitive appraisal even though this child says that she does not have a clear grasp of the image:

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): ...um, a noise...a pleasant noise comes and ...like a brook...but he can't see the brook...um, a brook in June...and it's as though there's a tune...um coming from the pleasant noise...from the brook...and this noise is being made by the sails...(And what does the brook seem to be doing?)... um it's just a wee rustling...probably just a tiny rustling of leaves...but otherwise it's silent...apart from this brook running through...(And what does it mean, "to the sleeping woods all night, singeth a quiet tune"?)...it's um...the brook is singing to the wood...(How does that describe the sounds?)...well um...it just doesn't give me, you know the...I can't put a picture properly in my mind.

It is because aspect perception may change in the light of reason that teaching someone to <u>see</u> a poetic image <u>as</u> having a particular meaning is able to produce the intended effects, provided there is a basic

capacity for the imaginative cognitive appraisal involved. This can be observed in the following protocol:

Terry (13yr 11 mth): ...a pleasant sound...as the wind, the breeze...or whatever it was went through the sails...and it sort of made a whistling sound...(Where does the brook fit in?)...um, the sound as the boat moved through the water from the front...("In the leafy month of June" - what's that?)... that's when um...the leaves are falling off the trees...and they're into the actual ...down...onto the...down to the stream and onto the ground and everything like that... ("That to the sleeping woods all night singeth a quiet tune" - what is singing the tune?)...the wind um...whistling through the naked branches of the trees and twigs and that...(What is it singing the tune to?) ...just singing a tune...not really to anyone...just making a tune...(Let's look at that again. "A noise like of a hidden brook etc...")...oh, it's singing to the actual woods...(What is singing to the woods?)... the wind...is singing to the woods all night ...(Is the wind referred to there?)...no, it's a brook...the brook is singing to the woods all night as it rolls down the rocks ...(Do you understand it now?)...yes...(Why are the brook and the woods mentioned here?) ...well, the boat is moving through the water and making a sound like a brook...and it's sort of making the sound with the actual masts which are the trees...(So it's a comparison)...yes, between the boat and the woods...(Okay, did you see that at first?) ...no, I didn't really understand that at first.

Criteria of Interpretation and Understanding

It is because artistic appreciation involves cognitive appraisal, an imaginative act of cognition, that we can properly speak of the conceptual (rather than contingent)[12] relationship between a work of art and the "appropriate" interpretation of it. In order to explain this relationship it is necessary to invoke the concept of a criterion (Hamlyn, 1971: 68).

The concept of criterion, as used by Wittgenstein in Philosophical Investigations, refers to a publicly observable fact or feature by which

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12 This point will be further elaborated in the following chapter when we discuss the difference between reasons and causes as related to the distinction between "appreciation" and "response".

something is known. A criterion for X may be understood to be a feature of X, so that if we know the feature exists, we have a reason for knowing (provided we know the criterion) that X exists. For example:

> ...a criterion of intelligence, say, is a feature of a man which necessarily gives a reason for describing him as intelligent: this is part of what we mean by intelligence so that, were this fact or feature to cease to give a reason for the judgement, the concept of intelligence would thereby have changed.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 8)

However, having a reason for knowing that X exists does not mean that we know X exists. A criterion is not the same as a necessary condition and it need not be present in every case. Horses are by definition quadrupeds, so that being a quadruped is a criterion for being a horse, but occasional freak horses may have five legs. More importantly, we only have a concept of pain, according to Wittgenstein, because there are publicly accessible criteria for telling when someone is in pain. Likewise, in the appreciation of art, we can know what is to count as appreciation, only because there are publicly accessible criteria for appreciation.

In this sense, there cannot be a public language unless there are criteria concerning everything about which we are to have communicable intersubjective knowledge. But saying that a criterion is a feature of X is not to say that it stands for X or represents X or is evidence for the existence of X - for each of these locutions implies that X exists apart from its criteria. However, there is an important sense in which the criteria are constitutive of X. If it were possible to know all the criteria of X, together these would be sufficient to constitute a case of X, but each separate criterion on its own, or even whole sets of criteria may not be sufficient nor even necessary conditions for being a case of X. For example, being maned, being a quadruped, neighing etc. are all criteria for being a horse, but not all maned etc. things are horses. Many of the criteria for pain, moreover, may be simulated and a person may pretend to appreciate a work of art. But this does not mean that pain or appreciation exist independently of all their criteria. (How could they ever be known if this were so?) Rather, the criteria we have taken may have turned out, in a particular case, not to have been criteria at all. Whether a given feature is a criterion or not will depend on the total context.

This crucial point can perhaps best be explained by considering the two main kinds of criteria that enter into artistic appreciation: criteria of understanding and interpretive criteria.

Criteria of understanding: These criteria which will be more fully considered in Chapter 7, are those by which we can know that someone (including ourselves) appreciates a work of art. Wittgenstein says that "an 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" (P.I., 1953, para 580) (cf. Cook, 1969) and this is the case with "appreciation". Whether an object is understood and appraised aesthetically will depend on how it is interpreted (what it is seen as) and this will be revealed only in the kind of reasons given for the appraisal. The verbal description does not assert that a certain state of mind exists (i.e. it is not evidence for the separate existence of that state) but rather, it is a direct feature of the state of mind itself. Instead of describing some inner process, a state of mind which we call "appreciation", we should be concerned with actual cases of appreciative performance, utterance and so on. It is the adverbial sense of the word that we are after, not its nominal sense. So we should look for what it is to appreciate a work of art in the various activities which constitute appreciating it.

Hence, the verbal statement, or utterance, that is made about an aesthetic object, is not evidence of appreciation, but a criterion of appreciation (i.e. it is constitutive of appreciation). To try to refer to the appreciation apart from the utterance or statement, is to try to refer to a something about which nothing can be said.[13] This brings us

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[13] Best (1974) develops this point into a carefully composed argument concerning the logical analysis of expressive movements. In rejecting the behaviourist account, he adds that:

> "...there is a sense in which the behaviourist is right to say that mental statements can be understood only by reference to physical behaviour. He would be right if he meant by this that the actions of other people are criteria of their mental experiences. Instead, he mistakenly construes behaviour as evidence" (Best, 1974: 90).

He goes on to say of expressive movements that they "do not stand for anything, they are not evidence for anything. They are criteria of the emotions which they express" (p.93). This distinction is elaborated very fully by Cook (1969) who makes it clear that by putting forward a "criteriological" theory of meaning, Wittgenstein was not supporting a "subtle form of behaviourism."

to a philosophical problem concerning the relationship between behaviour and mental states which can be resolved, following Ryle (1949), by rejecting the traditional Cartesian body/mind dualism. However, as our current concern is with interpretive criteria rather than criteria of understanding, we shall take up this problem in a subsequent chapter (Chapter 7) because it is central to the account of artistic appreciation being developed. At this stage, however, our purpose is only to explain the notion of a criterion, in order to consider more fully the second kind of criteria in the appreciation of art and literature, namely interpretive criteria.

Interpretive Criteria: These are contained in or follow conceptually from the interpretation of the art object itself. The features of a work of art that go into the description under which it is interpreted (the aspect under which it is seen) are the criteria for its meaning. Some features, for instance, will be criteria for the artist's intention; others will be criteria for seeing it as tragic, unitary, balanced and so on. Hence, persuading someone to interpret the work in a certain way involves getting him or her to see the criteria as criteria.

Interpretation is not a private activity, leaving the agent with a personal and subjective version of a work which cannot be compared with other people's interpretations of it. The acceptability of an interpretation, the extent to which it is a meaningful and valid way of "seeing" the artistic aspects of a work, will depend on the features pointed to being publicly acknowledged and observable interpretive criteria.

Although these are describable features (which can be cited as reasons) making it logically possible to see the aesthetic object under a certain aspect, they do not establish the truth of a description or interpretation. (Again, as in the above case, they are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions). Different interpretations are always possible and even expert critics may disagree because, in an important sense, they may not be seeing the same criteria. The function of these criteria, however, is to place limits on interpretation.

An illustration can be taken from the way in which Humphry House disagrees with Robert Penn Warren's interpretation of "the shooting of the albatross" in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

> Mr Warren systematically and boldly uses the terms "symbol" and "symbolism", and develops his theory of a symbol as "focal, massive, and concrete".... Mr Warren is here somewhat confused: at one point he seems to equate the killing of the bird with the murder of a human being...and at another point to say that the killing "symbolises" the Fall...it is clear that the symbol must be functioning...in different ways: for the killing cannot equate with both a murder and the Fall, which are very different kinds of things. What happens in the poem is that the images gather their bearing by progressively rich associations, by gradual increment, and that exact equation is never fully demanded, even though the associations are ordered and controlled. The killing of the Albatross thus becomes a violation of a great sanctity at the animal, human, and spiritual levels...
>
> (House, 1962: 97)

Notice how consistency is used here as a criterion for the interpretation being put forward. But in order to accept this we must see the inconsistency in Warren's account as an inconsistency. Warren's interpretation may have more plausibility when other criteria are taken into account, such as completeness or comprehensiveness in explaining more of the poem's imagery. But not any interpretation of "the shooting of the albatross" could be plausible. It would probably be as impossible, for instance, to see it as "an act of mercy" as it would be to see King Lear as a comedy.

The point to be made here is that interpretive criteria produce validity, but not certainty. The fact that there is no final interpretation of a poem as rich and complex as "The Ancient Mariner" does not imply that all interpretations are arbitrary and incomplete.

In general, the more criteria that are invoked (either as formal features of the object itself or as factual features of its context) the more likelihood that the interpretation will be appropriate and complete, but this is never a matter of certainty and it is always possible that some new and superior interpretation will appear.

It is in this sense that interpretive reasoning is distinct from inferential or hypothetico-deductive reasoning. Interpreting a poem, seeing an aspect, seeing it as something "denotes an activity of the imagination rather than an activity of judgement" (Scruton, 1974: 91).

Interpretive Reasoning

It has already been suggested that the primary mode of reasoning in artistic appreciation is persuasion. This now requires a fuller

explanation in order to understand the nature of interpretive cognition and the important role it plays in the education of appreciation.

Firstly, it is important to recognize that persuasiveness can be both rational and objectively defensible. An argument is rationally persuasive when the acceptance of the conclusion is based on the reasons given, the evidence produced and procedures employed, provided that all of these are logically relevant to establishing such a conclusion. Interpretive reasoning, therefore, is rationally persuasive whenever it uses criteria in order to enable us to see an object as something, that is to bring our sense perception under an aspect. Casey illustrates this process with the following example:

> For instance I would show someone that a particular face is "smiling" by comparing the expression with other expressions, connecting it with behaviour which follows and precedes it and so on. Similarly I do not know that the smile is genuine by inferring that it is caused by a feeling of benevolence, for a man's smile is one of the criteria (not, admittedly, a very important one) of his benevolence. Nor is his benevolence simply a matter of his smiling, and if, on whatever ground, I become aware that he is malevolent I might interpret his expression not as a smile but as a leer or a smirk. These further facts, or further descriptions, do not "explain" why the expression is a leer rather than a smile, at least in the sense of providing causal hypotheses; rather they give reasons, or a justification for taking it to be, or seeing it as one or the other.
>
> (Casey, 1966: 21)

This example is analogous to the way in which interpretive reasoning enters into the educational process. The teacher, aiming to foster appreciation is continually endeavouring to rationally persuade the student to see the artistic features which they can both observe as fitting together into one pattern rather than another. The teacher seeks, by drawing attention to some features rather than others, or by giving reasons of one kind or another, to produce a gradual shift in the student's interpretation of the art object. It is this dialectical component of interpretive reasoning that comprises the essence of education in artistic appreciation. A further example, provided by Best, shows precisely how this occurs:

> If one fails to notice the subtlety in the writing of Chaucer or Jane Austen, for instance, which makes their work ironical, then one has so far failed to understand it. One's interpretation is incorrect, and one's response inappropriate. Perhaps one needs to have this aspect pointed out, especially if one has not met examples of irony before. Someone more

> experienced and perceptive may be able to give reasons for seeing the irony in it by picking out features of the work whose significance had been missed. We may then come to see it differently, and thus to feel differently about it.
>
> (Best, 1974: 130)

But if appreciation depends upon valid interpretation within logical limits and in accordance with standards of correctness, what are the features of works of art upon which such interpretation should be based? Clearly, there is no simple answer to such a question. Indeed, a considerable body of critical theory has failed to produce a conclusive account of how valid interpretation might be achieved and it is no surprise that, in the world of art and literature, interpretive disputes abound. It may even be the case that such disputes contribute in a major way to the vitality and value of art in society and to its perennial interest and appeal for those who experience it.

While acknowledging this however, it is nevertheless clear that interpretive criteria can be specified to a greater or lesser degree in either (1) the internal context of the work itself as an intentional symbolic object, or (2) the external (ultimately social) context of meaning without which no successful act of communication would be possible. This is not to suggest that there is a clear-cut boundary between these two types of criteria, but rather the various parts will acquire their meaning in relation to the whole so that an overall coherence of interpretation occurs. While, in order to achieve this coherence, the emphasis may be placed on either features of the work itself or on facts that are external to it, neither of these on their own will provide sufficient grounds for a valid interpretation. This can be shown by considering the artist's intentions as interpretive criteria.

Intentions as Interpretive Criteria

The most obvious criteria for the interpretation of a work of art are to be found in the work itself, in what it states (or presents). If we consider the arguments against expressionism that were enunciated in the previous chapter, it makes little sense to look to the work of art as the expression of some thought, experience, or state of mind which somehow preceded it and yet still exists as a source of authority for determining its meaning. This point is clearly made by D.W. Harding when he writes:

> If we ask a poet what his poem is communicating we imply that he first had some idea or meaning and then translated it into the words of the poem. In fact what he had to say was not there until he said it. There was no preformed thought exactly corresponding to the poem but not the poem, any more than there can be an exact paraphrase which is not the poem.
>
> (Harding, 1963: 171)

To say this, however, is not to disclaim any reference to intentions, but rather to avoid referring to them in terms of what has come to be known as the intentional fallacy (Wimsatt and Beardsley, in Wimsatt, 1954). In sum, this fallacy holds that the meaning of a poem, for example, corresponds to what the poet intended, that is the poem is taken as being evidence of what the poet intended to express. When it is taken in this way, the fallacy can be seen to be an instance of the body/mind dualism to which we referred earlier.[14] But, as Lyas (1973) points out, many of the various versions of the argument derived from the "intentional fallacy" can be shown to rest upon a confusion about the relevant sense of "intention". First, it is a mistake to think of intentions as private mental events (cf. Ryle, 1949); second, intentions are not necessarily the same as "statements of intentions"; and third, we must distinguish between an intention in the sense of a prior plan or design and an action that is done intentionally. In short, it is the adverbial sense of intention, rather than the nominal sense, that is important to artistic appreciation. Wimsatt and Beardsley's argument is valid, therefore, only when it is applied to the nominal sense of intention, that is to the mistaken contention that appreciation necessitates some "knowledge of and reference to prior intentions and statements about prior intentions" (Lyas, 1973: 205).

This fallacy is discussed by Robert Penn Warren in the concluding section of his brilliant and authoritative interpretation of "The Ancient Mariner." In answer to those who might ask, "But how do you know that the poet intended the interpretation that has been drawn out of the poem?" Warren suggests that such a question, as stated, is a false question. He elaborates this position in the following way:

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[14] The main arguments against dualism will be considered in Chapter 7.

> What the poet is trying to discover...is what kind of poem he can make. And the only thing he, in the ordinary sense, may "intend" is to make a poem... he cannot do otherwise than "intend" what his poem says...but he does not fully know what he intends" until the poem is fully composed. A purpose "formally conceived" is not, as Wordsworth said, necessary, first to initiate the process of creation, or second, to give the finished poem a meaning ultimately expressive not only of the man but of his "ideas" in a restricted sense.
>
> (Warren, 1947: 269)

The crucial point here is that there is nothing that can be said about an artist's intentions apart from the various criterial features of the context in which the artist's work is interpreted. Since art is, by definition, an intentional activity, it would be absurd to deny the relevance of any knowledge of intentions to artistic appreciation.[15] What we must come to understand therefore are the various contextual criteria (both internal and external) by which intentions can be recognized.[16] The greater our understanding of these, the better will be our appreciation of the work concerned. Warren develops this point as follows:

> If the poet does not have a blueprint of intention (and if he does happen to have it, we ordinarily have no access to it), on what basis may a poem be interpreted? What kind of evidence is to be admitted? The first piece of evidence is the poem itself...the criterion is that of internal consistency. If the elements of a poem operate together toward one end, we are entitled to interpret the poem according to that end....But the application of the criterion of internal consistency cannot be made in a vacuum. All sorts of considerations impinge on the process. And these considerations force on the critic the criterion of external consistency. But consistency in regard to what? First, in regard to the intellectual, the spiritual climate of the age in which the poem was composed. Second, in regard to the overall pattern of other artistic work by the author in question. Third, in regard to the thought of the author as available from non-artistic sources. Fourth, in regard to the facts of the author's life.
>
> (Warren, 1947: 269-70)

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15 For a full discussion of the importance of intentions in understanding aesthetic meaning, see Savile (1972).

16 The following example illustrates this sense of intention: Supposing I had made a move in chess and someone asked me "Did you intend to mate him?", I answer "I did", and he now asks me "How could you know you did, as all you <u>knew</u> was what happened within you when you made the move?", I might answer "Under <u>these</u> circumstances this was intending to mate him" (Wittgenstein, 1958, <u>The Brown Book</u>, 147).

Indeed, the main source of criteria for intentions may be what the artist says, or has said, about the intentions of his work. But, while he must be considered to be a privileged authority on how his work is to be interpreted, he cannot invariably be considered as such. It is always possible that an agent can be mistaken in his explanation about the intention of his own action. As Casey (1966: 149) points out, if the writer is in a better position to interpret his own work than the informed reader "this is because he is liable to know his own work better than most readers - but as a matter of fact, not of logic". The most important criteria for intended meaning will belong to the internal context of the work itself. Scruton (1974: 227) makes the point that a work of art is 'transparent' to intention.

The criteria that must be identified in order to determine what is meant are necessarily public in character: the intentional act of communicating meaning requires (logically requires) reference to norms, rules, conventions, expectations, etc. that are already shared by a relevant community of potential listeners, viewers, readers and so on. Unless such an external context is presupposed, communication would be, in principle, impossible.

Contextual Criteria of Interpretation

The context of interpretation for a work of art is to be found in the form and content of the work itself and the social situation in which it is located. This can be illustrated by taking the case of poetry.

A poem is a semantic structure. It is meaningful language and to this extent it is not distinct from the language of ordinary speech. While it is more intense and more concentrated than the language of ordinary life, poetic language achieves its sense in much the same ways: by its form, by its syntax, by the immediate context in which it is located, and by the wider context of cultural experience to which it belongs. But in poetry there is also a special interdependence between what is said and how it is said. For to understand a poem requires more than merely to understand what its words literally mean (i.e. the semantic content). As with all art, the form and content must cohere and cannot be separated. There are not separate criteria for sound and sense, for instance, but rather, as Scruton points out,

> One's ability to hear words in a certain way cannot be described independently of one's grasp of their meaning.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 185)

Poetic meaning is produced by the complete integration of form (syntax, rhythm, sound, design, and internal structure) and content (connotation, metaphor, image, narrative) within a context of shared signs and symbols, the context of a public language.

Hence, to change the form which embodies a work of art (the particular arrangement of words in a poem, for example) would be to change the criteria of interpretation and the intended meaning would then be different. But understanding the intended meaning of a work of art is possible only if the criteria of form and substance presented directly in the object are supplemented by reference to an external (ultimately social) context of meaning which the act of appreciation must always presuppose and without which no successful act of communication, of any kind, would be possible.

There are no clear boundaries, then, between the internal and the external contexts of interpretation. The assumption that there is constitutes one of the most serious mistakes underlying the work of those literary critics who have come to be identified with what is called the "New Criticism".[17] Thus, one of the central claims of the "New Criticism" is the insistence on the autonomy of the text, which means that the source of meaning cannot extend beyond the literary object itself. But the boundaries of a text are never clear: the interpretation of a single line may depend on other lines; a poem can refer to other poems by the same poet; images or symbols can allude to myths or other literary contexts. In fact, some reference beyond the text as a "determinate thing" is necessary in order to establish that it is a work of art, a cultural object (and not merely an arrangement of marks on paper).

One of the strongest critiques of the assumptions underlying the "New Criticism" is to be found in the work of E.D. Hirsch (1967, 1976). Hirsch argues that the internal context of a literary work (i.e. the context established within the text itself) fails to establish any determinate meaning and to make it the exclusive source of meaning, as the "New Criticism" does, merely opens the door to relativism and subjectivism in interpretation. It is Hirsch's view

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17 In particular, one could mention such critics as W.K. Wimsatt, John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate. See Simonson (1971) for a discussion of the main features that these critics have in common.

that a literary work (and by implication, any work of art) is always produced in a particular social context and is always interpreted by a particular audience.

That there are no clear boundaries between the internal and external contexts of interpretation is well illustrated by Humphry House's interpretation of the following two lines from "The Ancient Mariner":

> Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
> The glorious sun uprist:

House comments as follows:

> The syntax of these two lines makes it possible to interpret -
> Either (a) That God's head is dim and red, but the glorious sun uprose unlike it.
> Or (b) That the glorious sun rose like God's head which is not dim and red.
> Interpretation (b) is made rather more likely, and (a) rather more unlikely, by the comma after "red," and this comma is apparently present in all texts. Lyrical Ballads, 1800, reads:
> Nor dim nor red, like an Angel's head,
> with a comma after "head." There seems no apparent reason, either internally in the poem, or externally, why an angel's head should be dim and red. This temporary variant seems to point to accepting interpretation (b) with the common reading.
> The very fact that Coleridge ever changed "God's own" to "an Angel's" seems to suggest that what he had in mind was the nimbus, aureole or "glory" of Christian iconography, and that this is picked up in the word "glorious." The rising sun was bright, golden and rayed, quite different from the small, clear-edged, bloody sun which becomes the image of evil two stanzas later.
>
> (House, 1962: 99-100)

The allusion to Christian iconography is external to the text of the poem, but it is considered to be significant because it is consistent with the internal pattern of meaning. A complete interpretation of the image, therefore, depends upon the linguistic context (both internal and external) of the words used.

The analogy with linguistic meaning is useful in making clear the importance of criteria derived from the external context of interpretation. For the meaning of a word can be understood only in relation to its context. How it is used in that particular context governs its meaning and makes consistency of understanding possible. As I.A. Richards has stated,

> ...a word's context is the words which surround it in the utterance and the other contemporaneous signs which govern its interpretation...insufficient attention to the accompanying sign field (the setting and occasion) which controls the context (recurrent groups of events in the past) is a frequent cause of mistaken understanding.
>
> (Richards, 1938: viii)

So it is with works of art: they can be understood ultimately only in relation to a context, to a set of conventions and a cultural tradition. As with words in linguistic utterances, the context sets limits on the range of interpretations that could be understood as appropriate or "correct". This range, within which meaning is correctly derived, will tend to be much wider for works of art than it is for verbal utterances, but it has its limits nevertheless. Indeed, all cultural constructs (ways of seeing) are shaped by the contexts in which they are embedded; so that, as Norman points out,

> Similarly, the possible ways of seeing man's nature and his place in the universe are made available by the moral and intellectual traditions within one's culture. Thus there are limits to what can be said. And what is said can be more or less appropriate. The available traditions do not confine us once and for all; new ways of seeing can be developed and extended - but not arbitrarily.
>
> (Norman, 1972: 9)

To require that an interpretation be appropriate, therefore, is to require only that it be possible to distinguish between what a work of art means (however, vague, ambiguous or open-ended that may be) and what it does not (or can not in terms of its context) mean.

For example, we might consider how we would justify an interpretation of a painting such as Brueghel's "The Fall of Icarus" (see Figure 3, page 108).

This painting depicts a Mediterranean land and sea-scape with a ploughman in the foreground, together with a shepherd tending some sheep, and a ship in the background sailing towards a distant harbour. In the lower right-hand corner of the picture, a small and apparently insignificant pair of legs can be seen disappearing into the ocean.

Now, it is only the title of the painting which recalls the Greek myth concerning Icarus (who escaped from the labyrinth with his father, Daedalus, and was drowned when the glue holding his wings melted because he flew too close to the sun). This informs us that the small pair of legs represents the iconographical centre of the painting. But why is the actual subject of the painting concealed

Brueghel's "The Fall of Icarus"

Figure 3

from us in this mass of other detail? What is the relationship between the myth and the events depicted in the painting? Why is our attention drawn away from the legs (which are not even located in the centre of the picture) and directed towards the images of the ship, which is sailing on towards the harbour in the far distance, and the peasants, who are engrossed in their toil? These are the questions which an appropriate interpretation would seek to answer.

The fact that the painting is set in Brueghel's own time, a deliberate anachronism, gives the myth a universal significance in relation to the meaning expressed in the painting. Furthermore, biographical facts derived from Brueghel's letters suggest that he had a particular tragi-comic view of the world as being "topsy-turvey and wrongheaded, blind to the importance of the most momentous occurrences".[18]

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18 See, for instance, Lindsay and Huppe, 1956.

Not only does this contextual information account for Brueghel's habit (observable in other paintings as well) of concealing the real object of a picture and letting it disappear in the surrounding mass of content, but it also lends weight to an interpretation of the painting in terms of the essential paradox of human suffering. For Icarus, the event must be considered to be the ultimate catastrophe; but the world is oblivious or indifferent to his suffering.[19] The ship sails on, and the ploughman turns away, symbolizing the very personal and private nature of Icarus's tragedy.

Such an interpretation is not only consistent with the formal and substantive features of the painting itself, but it is also consistent with all that is known about the painting. We might consider whether, in fact, an appreciation of this painting would be possible without some knowledge of its external context: it is certainly most unlikely that anyone could understand its intended meaning without some knowledge of its title, the myth to which it alludes, and the historical context in which the artist produced it. The more of this context we can know and understand, the deeper will be our appreciation of the painting. In this case, as in all cases of artistic appreciation, depth of understanding is a matter of both knowledge and the capacity to discern subtle and complex interpretations. Such interpretations will be appropriate because they are justifiable in terms of the available criteria. The work of art then becomes transparent to an informed and discerning appreciation.

Interpretation and Evaluation

Thus far we have defined interpretation as the particular kind of cognitive process involved in the act of appreciation, but interpretive reasoning also encompasses both description and evaluation. Indeed, it is a feature of the language of aesthetic appreciation that there are no clear-cut boundaries between description, interpretation and evaluation. This point was made in the previous chapter but it now requires further explication.

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19 This is essentially the interpretation of the painting that gave rise to W.H. Auden's well-known poem "Musee Des Beaux Art." The painting is a very important element in the external context of the poem and an appreciation of the poem enhances an appreciation of the painting.

Clearly, to appreciate something is to go beyond an acquaintance with it, or even an understanding of it, and to have some knowledge of its value. In this sense, appreciation subsumes evaluation, rather than vice versa.[20] The evaluation is itself a highly discriminating kind of describing which becomes a persuasive interpretation - it is not a matter of something additional to the interpretive process.

To make this clear we must first distinguish between the attitude of liking or valuing a work of art and being able to appreciate it. For to say that a person values a work is not to say that it has value. Appreciation is concerned with the logical rather than the psychological grounds for valuing. It is this distinction that enables us to say, "I see the value of this work of art but I do not like it". Our reasons for liking a work of art may have little or nothing to do with its merits as a work of art; they may not even be aesthetic reasons. Whether we like something or not may simply depend on how we respond to it. However, our appreciation of a work of art necessarily means that we have come to see it from an aesthetic point of view (Taylor, 1961).[21]

Now, the aesthetic point of view is defined by the canons and criteria of interpretive reasoning. It is a conventional, a rule-governed activity - a "language-game" (in Wittgenstein's sense) into which we must be first initiated. Hence, when we seek to justify our judgments from an aesthetic point of view, we will cite reasons which are "good (and a fortiori relevant) according to the particular canons which define that point of view" (Taylor, 1961: 109). To take an aesthetic point of view then, is to be disposed to use a certain normative language, that is to engage in interpretive reasoning within the framework of an existing universe of normative or public discourse. It is to agree to follow the rules, for as Taylor argues:

> ...rules of relevance and rules of valid inference, which constitute the canons of reasoning that set the framework of a point of view, are the rules which govern our use of a normative language...taking a certain point of view is deciding to use a certain normative language.
>
> (Taylor, 1961: 263)

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20 Not all would agree that appreciation necessarily entails some degree of evaluation. Ziff, for instance, states that:

> "Only some of the remarks sometimes made while discussing a work of art are reasons in support of a critical evaluation of the work: to evaluate a work one must understand it, appreciate it; much of what is said about a work is directly relevant only to an appreciation of it" (Ziff, 1962: 160).

21 The distinction between "response" and "appreciation" will be discussed in the next chapter.

This means that evaluative principles are built into the very procedures by which we describe and interpret literary or artistic works. There is a cumulative transition from description to interpretation to evaluation (cf. Crittenden, 1970: 239) - a pattern that is well illustrated in Leavis's method of literary criticism. This method is such that:

> The Critic's aim is, first, to realize as sensitively and completely as possible this or that which claims his attention; and a certain valuing is implicit in the realizing.
>
> (Leavis, 1962: 213)

To defend an evaluation of this kind one can only go on describing and interpreting the work of art, relating it to other works and so on, until the person one is trying to convince is satisfied. Margolis (1961) suggests that, while we may talk about the truth or falsity of a description, it is more appropriate to say of an interpretation that it is "plausible", "reasonable", "admissible" and so on. Although, in his view, interpretation is not logically bound to have evaluative force, he does not doubt that interpretations are generally used in evaluative ways. Very often the critic's purpose in advancing a particular interpretation is to persuade his readers to "see" the "facts" in one way rather than another. But this is not to say that what he is doing is arbitrary; it is not simply a matter of preference, of simply choosing any interpretation and inducing a similar attitude in others or persuading them to "choose" in the same way. (Such an account would seriously reduce the rational and cognitive elements in interpretation). If the interpretation is from an aesthetic point of view, it will be couched in the normative language of appreciation and will reflect the canons of reasoning which govern its use. As E.D. Hirsch (1967: 10) states: "Validity of interpretation is not the same as inventiveness of interpretation." In sum, the logic of appreciation demands that not <u>any</u> reason can be understood as supporting an artistic judgment. Margolis makes a similar claim when he writes,

> In aesthetic criticism.. we have procedures for determining the truth of the statements that enter into our description of a work of art and procedures for determining the plausibility of interpretive statements. And just as an hypothesis about the origin of the solar system must accord with the known laws and facts of the system, would-be interpretations must accord with the description of a given work of art and with admissible "myths" or schemes of imagination.
>
> (Margolis, 1962: 117)

These procedures, together with what Margolis calls "admissible 'myths' or schemes of imagination" are embodied in the cultural context or public tradition to which the work of art belongs. They are the standards, the principles or criteria that make the appreciation of art possible and they have, in the terminology of John Rawls (1972: 20), survived the test of "wide reflective equilibrium" within a tradition of normative discourse.

Without an awareness of these standards it is difficult to conceive how education in the arts could aim for anything more than catharsis, entertainment, or the indulgence of personal desires. Without some principles or criteria, value is reduced to opinion, interpretation sinks into a slough of solipsism, and appreciation becomes something that is subjective and relative to the individual, something basically irrational. As Best points out,

> If an activity is not rational in any sense, then the notion of standards cannot be applicable to it, since to set a standard necessarily involves the possibility of giving reasons which refer to observable phenomena, and without standards it is hard to see how an activity could be regarded as educational.
>
> (Best, 1974: 115)

This final point provides a powerful justification for the inclusion of artistic appreciation in the school curriculum, for it is clearly not something that can be left to chance, nor is it something that will be learnt incidentally in the course of other pursuits.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined the logic of artistic appreciation as a cognitive activity. It has been argued that the criteria for interpreting a work of art are embedded in a normative language system and bounded by a logical structure. Hence, there will be limits on what will count as a valid or plausible interpretation of any work and those limits can be known only by someone who is already initiated, to some degree, into the language of appreciation.

It has been argued that because interpretation is a matter of "seeing as" or bringing an object under an aspect, it is necessarily cognitive and involves the imagination. But an "appropriate" interpretation of any work of art or literature requires knowledge of the context, both the internal features of the work itself and external facts about how, when, where and why it came into existence. Thus, to

teach someone to appreciate a work of art or literature is to give him knowledge about how it is to be appropriately understood, to enable him to interpret it by bring it under an aspect - persuading him to see it in a particular way and to interpret it according to public criteria. Only when it is interpreted and understood in this way can its value be appreciated by standards that are public and objective rather than personal and subjective. These are the hallmarks of an educated appreciation.

CHAPTER SIX

APPRECIATION AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSE

> The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other.
>
> (Dewey, 1938: 13)

Having examined the main features of the cognitive process entailed in understanding and appreciating a work of art or literature, we can now turn to a closer analysis of the experience upon which such cognition is based and without which no appreciation would be possible.

It can be inferred from the theoretical position advanced in the previous chapter, that it is not the experience of an art object per se that enables one to arrive at an appreciation of it, but rather the process of reasoning by which the object is interpreted. The experience of an object produces aesthetic meaning when one acts upon the object in a certain manner. The result of this action is artistic knowledge, but while it is occasioned by an experience, it is not caused by that experience, as Hamlyn makes clear:

> To say that certain knowledge is not derived from experience does not imply that one must be born with it, for, as Kant pointed out, while all knowledge may come <u>with</u> experience it may not all come <u>from</u> experience. Experience may be the occasion for our coming to know something without its being the case that we get the knowledge from experience.
>
> (Hamlyn, 1978: 29)

It is this Kantian premise which provides the linchpin of the following discussion concerning the place of emotional experience in artistic appreciation. For it is argued that while the appreciation of an art object is necessarily preceded by an experience of that object, the experience will not be sufficient to ensure that appreciation occurs. The argument of the preceding chapter claimed that in appreciating the art object we may come to see things about the object that we have not previously seen. It will now be argued that, while our appreciation is grounded in experience, it is not

merely caused by it (Hamlyn, 1978: 122-6).

Now it follows from what has been said already that when a person gives an interpretation of an art object (e.g. states what a poem means) it is logically consistent to pose "why" questions for the purpose of bringing that person to justify his interpretation. It is not sufficient that he merely record the impression that the object makes upon his mind. Validity in interpretation is not subjective, for it involves the rational act of placing the object within a context. Such an act is also imaginative because it involves the discovery of conceptual connections rather than the mere arbitrary insistence on seeing a connection where none had been noticed. It is this normative element that distinguishes truly imaginative interpretation from interpretation that is merely whimsical or fantastic. This distinction is of fundamental importance, for appreciation must be concerned with imaginative interpretation and not with the production of subjective impressions. To identify the latter with appreciation is to fall victim to a fallacy with very damaging consequences for education in literature and the arts.

In the first place, there is a crucial distinction to be made between artistic (or literary) response and appreciation. From an educational point-of-view, the failure to recognize this distinction gives rise to a great deal of confusion about the educational objectives[1] of engaging students in the study of a work of art or literature.

There is now, for example, a considerable body of empirical research on how individuals respond to literature and how they acquire literary interests and preferences.[2] However, much of this research reflects a serious conceptual confusion between "response to literature" and "literary appreciation" - a confusion which directly affects its educational relevance.[3] Indeed, much of the uncritical

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1 The term 'objectives' here is not meant to imply a means-end separation, as in the usual 'behavioural objectives' or 'instructional objectives' sense, but rather a reference to the point of the activity or encounter. (See Eisner, 1969; Hirst, 1977).

2 Much of this research has been carried out in the United States. See, for example, Squire (1964); Wilson (1966); Purves (1968); Squire (1969); Slatoff (1970); Cooper (1971); Purves and Beach (1972); Terry (1974); Cooper (1976).

3 Interestingly, this confusion is not to be found in the work of I.A. Richards, who pioneered the empirical study of literary appreciation. Indeed, Richards (1928) was interested in the relationship between response to poetry and critical judgment.

subjectivism, so common in literature classrooms over the past decade or so, can be directly attributed to a number of muddled doctrines about the psychological effects of reading literature. Hence, what sets out as an educational activity in literary appreciation, often goes no further than self-exploration, with students talking only about their own opinions and attitudes.

Reasons and Causes

Failure to recognize the distinction between response and appreciation has been referred to as the affective fallacy.[4] It rests on the mistaken assumption that the meaning of a poem (or any work of art) corresponds to what the reader (listener or viewer) feels (i.e. the impressionistic effects that it has). According to Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954) it amounts to "a confusion between the poem and its results (what it is and what it does)". In other words, it entails a fundamental conceptual confusion between reasons and causes in explanations of human action.

Reasons and causes are categorically separate and statements about a man's reasons for his actions are not in competition with statements about the causes of his behaviour.[5] The two sorts of statements are on quite different levels of explanation. As Melden (1961) has argued, an account in terms of reasons cannot be reduced to one in terms of causes.[6] Take the statement "I raised my arm because chemical processes x, y and z took place in my brain". This might be a correct causal explanation of why my arm rose but it would not be acceptable as a description of why I raised my arm. The latter calls for a justification in terms of reasons. Similarly, to take an example from Wittgenstein,[7] when I read a sentence I could explain what I do by saying that the word-shapes somehow cause my utterance. But as Wittgenstein points out:

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4 See W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy", in W.K. Wimsatt (1954).

5 See Peters, 1958; Anscombe, 1959; Hampshire, 1959; Melden, 1961; Kenny, 1963.

6 While it is, in a sense, conceivable to cite causes as reasons (e.g. when the agent cites a physical stimulus - change in room temperature - as a reason for his action - opening the window), it is not conceptually accurate to speak of reasons as causes.

7 P.I., 1953, 169. See also paras 493 and 498.

> One might rather say, I feel that the letters are the reason why I read such-and-such. For if someone asks me "why do you read such-and-such?" - I justify my reading by the letters which are there.
> (P.I., 1953, 169)

This conceptual difference between reasons and causes is crucial to the present discussion because it is central to the distinction between literary or artistic appreciation and literary or artistic response. The essential point is that a work of art does not cause an interpretive comment but rather, it is a reason for uttering it. This point is clearly stated by Best (1978) as follows:

> Reasons for aesthetic appreciation give grounds for a response which could not intelligibly be characterised independently of the work of art. This is quite different from an account of the causal effect, which could be identified independently. To put the point another way, if aesthetic appreciation were a matter of causal reactions, then, since cause and effect are logically distinct, it would have to make sense to suppose that the same response could in principle be achieved by a pill, instead of the work of art.
> (Best, 1978: 77)

Thus, there is a logical rather than a causal connection between an art object and the appreciation of it - furthermore, it is precisely this feature that makes the teaching of appreciation possible. This can be illustrated from the different responses children make to the following lines of "The Ancient Mariner":

> Her lips were red, her looks were free,
> Her locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was as white as leprosy,

To respond appropriately to these lines is to appreciate the dramatic effects of the word "leprosy" in controlling the total pattern of meaning. The image of mysterious and fascinating beauty is suddenly taken over by the powerful connotations of revulsion and fear - even terror - which the word "leprosy" evokes. But this particular poetic effect will be appreciated only if the appropriate connotations of the word are responded to. In the following protocol, the emotional significance of the word is not fully understood and the child's appreciation of the image is incomplete:

Clare (9yr 7 mth): ...she had her hair...um, her face was pretty colourful but her skin was very white...(Which word stands out most?) ...leprosy...(Why?)...because, um... pause...(What is leprosy?)...it's a skin disease...(Yes, and what does it suggest to you?)...um, I sort of see the skin with holes in it or something

like that...(How does the description start off?)...'Her lips were red, her looks were free, her locks were yellow as gold' - it sounds beautiful to me ...(Then, what happens?)...um, she starts getting older and she'd probably be small...um, she's colourful in every way except for her skin...her skin's white.

Even where the meaning of "leprosy" is explained by the interviewer, if the child does not appreciate the wider semantic context of the word, the response may continue to be inappropriate. For example:

Kirsten (9yr 7 mth): ...that her lips were very red and her hair had lots of yellow...just like the colour of gold...(Yes)...and her skin was like the waves on the sea or something... (What's leprosy?)...pause...(Do you know what leprosy is?)...no...(Well, leprosy is a horrible disease...and what do you think happens when you get a horrible disease?)...you can die...(And what might happen to your skin?)...it goes very white and you get a fever...(Yes... now think about that for a moment and then tell me about this description... How is she described?)...as if she had leprosy and her skin was white as anything and...(What sort of impression does that make?)...as if she's a very weak person who's very ill or something...(How is she described in the first two lines?)...it sounds as though she's really pretty... (And then what happens?)...the third line sounds like...um, then she...um, it sounds like she's just getting old or something ...(Why?)...um, leprosy is a very bad disease...um, it makes you feel as though she had leprosy and she was dying...at first you feel really happy because it looks like she's pretty and then your attitude changes because you know that she's dying and you feel very sorry for her.

In this case, the child's response indicates an inappropriate emotion of pity or compassion which would be inconsistent with the wider context of meaning. Compare this with the following protocol:

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): (How did she appear to them?)...ghostly ...very um...perfect and um...just very white...(What kind of impression of her do we get from the first two lines?)... you get a very...a fantasy picture of her ...like a person in a story book or something...um, beautiful...a beautiful woman...(Is there any change in the third line?)...yes, she was very pale...and ghostly...and frightening...(What does the word "leprosy" mean?)...it's a disease ...a horrible disease...(So what does that

> suggest?)...they feel scared of her because she is so ghostly...(So how do the men feel about her, do you think?) ...well, they think she's beautiful but at the same time they're afraid of her.

Here is a child who appreciates the poetic significance of the contrast produced by the word "leprosy" because she can give contextual reasons to justify her response. In each of the above cases, the words of the poem have caused the children to offer different interpretations. It is in the nature of the reasons given by the third subject, however, that an appreciation of the poetry can be discerned.

Idiosyncratic responses are very often major impediments to appreciation. I.A. Richards referred to these difficulties as mnemonic irrelevances, which he said,

> ...are misleading effects of the reader's being reminded of some personal scene or adventure, erratic associations, the interference of emotional reverberations from a past which may have nothing to do with the poem.
>
> (Richards, 1929: 15)

In such cases, the task of the teacher is to assist the reader to overcome the difficulties of the irrelevant response and to move towards a coherent, complete and adequate appreciation of the poem, in accordance with an interpretation having general (though not necessarily universal) acceptance.

The Limits of Response

This is not to deny the importance of response as a motivational factor in the learning process. Clearly, the effect that a work has upon us is psychologically very important and will determine, to a large degree, our readiness to even begin to see it in a new or different way. But to remain at the level of response is inadequate, for this tells us nothing about the particular conditions that make artistic appreciation and judgment possible. To have one's interest sparked, to be motivated, is pedagogically important, but in the total educational process, though it may be highly pertinent to a consideration of means, it does not constitute an end.

Some influential critics have failed to recognize this fundamental distinction between the empirical features of how people in fact do respond to literary works and the logical (or conceptual) relations which would justify an appropriate appreciation of such works.

The recent work of Norman Holland (1968, 1973, 1975) provides a

paradigm case for this kind of conceptual confusion. Holland argues that literary interpretation is determined as much by the personality of the reader as by the text itself. His basic assumption is that:

> ...a reader responds to a literary work by assimilating it to his own psychological processes, that is, to his search for successful solutions within his identity theme to the multiple demands, both inner, and outer, on his ego.
>
> (Holland, 1975: 209)

In Holland's view there are no objective criteria of interpretation. The critic's interpretation is only one amongst all others, the only claim to validity being that it is coherent for him: it is his personal impression. All that the critic can do is offer "his own interpretation that others are free to accept or not as it suits them" (Holland, 1975: 221). There can be no rational grounds for preferring one interpretation over another for, as Holland puts it,

> All readings originate in the reader's personality - all are "subjective" in that sense. Some readings take close account of the words-on-the-page and some do not, but no matter how much textual, "objective" evidence a reader brings into his reading, he structures and adapts it according to his own inner needs...a reader responds to a literary work by using it to re-create his own characteristic psychological processes.
>
> (Holland, 1975: 40)

In positing his theory of "transactive criticism" (1975: 246-9) Holland makes the claim that:

> ...literary criticism can never in fact be the study of the text as a separate, objective thing and need never be the study of the self alone. Rather, interpretation is a function of identity. Therefore, the true focus of criticism has to be the relation between oneself and the text, and the sensible thing for literary people to do is to acknowledge that focus and write and talk accordingly, sharing our sameness and differences in interpretation so as to create an evergrowing resource of responses that we can share. In the phrase "transactive criticism," I am advocating a criticism in which we consciously recognize that we re-create literature for ourselves just as the transactional psychologists have shown we create the colours, shapes, and directions of the world we perceive.
>
> (Holland, 1975: 248)

Clearly, Holland's intention is to make literary response a matter of inference to an inner state, the inner state being guaranteed by some sort of contingent correlation of works of art

with forms of consciousness. The very use of the term "cause" in the passage quoted below indicates the pervasiveness of the conceptual error.

> It has been hard for me to get beyond the simple stimulus-response model that some psychological systems offer. As a rather positivistic person, I find it an attractive simplification, and it is the model that I, like most literary critics, almost automatically assume. Literature "does something" to its reader. From this point of view, a story is a stimulus that elicits a certain response. Within the story, any given element, a character, an episode, a theme, a sequence of images, even particular words or rhythms, cause certain reactions in the reader.
>
> (Holland, 1975: 42)

What is far more serious, however, from an educational point of view, are the implications for the teaching of literature which arise from this untenable doctrine. Holland advocates a kind of teaching in which:

> ...the teacher is essentially passive: he offers his students insights and they take them or not, as they wish. In a more active mode, he may urge them to contribute insights and dicta of their own from which a consensus can emerge: a series of statements about the story that most of the people in the class agree with although they retain their private experiences of the work. At the same time, as this consensus approximates a total interpretation of the work, some students will perceive it as a coercive force that threatens to overpower them, and they will reject it out of hand.
>
> (1975: 216-217)

Enough has been said to illustrate the subjectivism and relativism inherent in Holland's theory. It is significant that he uses the term "response" rather than "appreciation" but the complete absence of any notion of criteria for the "appropriateness" of interpretation leads to a conception of the teacher's role that is based on the model of the psychotherapist; his purpose being to draw the student out and get him talking about himself. Indeed, if there is to be no distinction between interpretations based upon a subjective response to an art object and an appreciation of the same object that can be justified by the giving of reasons, then the whole point of art is surely lost. For, as D.W. Harding points out:

> ...there is nothing wrong with completely idiosyncratic interpretations of anything, poems, pictures, music, clouds or coal-fires. But if that is all we want there is no need of authors

> and artists; we could just as well take a benzedrine tablet and sit down with a Rorschach blot or a picture from the Thematic Apperception Test and let our imagination loose.
>
> (Harding, 1963: 174)

But to reject the causal account of interpretation and the consequences that follow from it, is not to put in its place some absolutist view of artistic meaning. To say that interpretation of a work can be rational and objective is not to make an appeal to agreement, for there are always rival descriptions of any work as well as rival interpretations. But this does not mean that either is subjective. While there are ways of dismissing some interpretations as "whimsical" or "unfounded", there may be more than one interpretation that is valid. For, as Wittgenstein insisted (Moore, 1959):

> What Aesthetics tries to do, is to give <u>reasons</u>, e.g. for having this word rather than that in a particular place in a poem, or for having this musical phrase rather than that in a particular place in a piece of music.
>
> (Moore, 1959: 312)

According to Wittgenstein, we justify our interpretation of a sentence by the context in which it occurs, not by making an inference about the mental state of the person who utters it, or by merely observing the effect it produces on its hearers.[8] Similarly, in the appreciation of art we do not justify an interpretation of beauty by predicting its effects on either ourselves or others,[9] but by pointing to features of the object itself, the internal relationship of its parts, and its external relationship to other works, to the cultural context in which it was produced and so on. Thus the task of critics,

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8 This point is contained in the following remark:

> When I say that the orders "Bring me sugar" and "Bring me milk" make sense, but not the combination "milk me sugar", that does not mean that the utterance of this combination of words has no effect. And if its effect is that the other person stares at me and gapes, I don't on that account call it the order to stare and gape, even if that was precisely the effect that I wanted to produce (<u>P.I</u>., 1953, para 498).

9 Moore has reported Wittgenstein's position as follows:

> He said that in aesthetic investigations "the one thing we are not interested in is Psychology". To ask "why is this beautiful?" is not to ask for a causal explanation: that, e.g., to give a causal explanation in answer to the question "why is the smell of a rose pleasant?" would not remove our "aesthetic puzzlement" (Moore, 1959: 313).

and the task of teachers, is not simply to express their opinions, but to persuade others, rationally, that particular interpretations of art are valid. As Scruton has commented:

> Critics do not seek to establish how people respond to works of art: they attempt to create a series of norms, in the light of which some responses to a work of art will seem appropriate, others not.
> (Scruton, 1974: 139)

Establishing how people respond is the empirical concern of the psychologist and it should be distinguished from the normative concern of the critic.[10] The distinction is clearly made by Simonson, when he asserts that,

> Whatever convergence exists between psychology and literature, there still remains a fundamental difference between the two approaches to reality: one fragments and the other unifies; one strives for scientific objectivity and the other seeks aesthetic coherence and truth. For all his psychologizing, the literary critic's chief responsibility is as a critic, one who moves from analysis to evaluation and sees literature as an holistic art.
> (Simonson, 1971: 68)

It is the critic, and not the psychologist, who provides the appropriate model for the teacher of appreciation. For the educated appreciation of a poem, or any other work of art, involves understanding a language, a symbolic structure governed by a set of normative principles; and this understanding is a cognitive capacity, requiring discrimination and judgment, rather than a receptivity to any kind of feeling or response. To clarify this distinction, however, it is necessary to adduce an important implication of the inter-relationship between cognitive appraisals and affective responses.

Cognition and Affect

It is of crucial importance that an education in artistic appreciation is not only an education of the intelligence but is also an education of the emotions. To say this, however, is not to say that these are separate educational objectives or aims, although this has sometimes been suggested by those who subscribe to the taxonomic approach to educational objectives. The major advocates of this view

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10 Viewed in this way, the work of Norman Holland can be properly construed as a special kind of psychological research. What is being questioned here is not the psychological approach taken, but the claim that such an approach constitutes literary criticism or can provide a model for teaching literary appreciation.

are Bloom (1956) and his associates (Krathwohl et al, 1964), who have proposed a classification of objectives into three domains: the cognitive, the affective, and the psycho-motor. But, as Hirst (1974: 21) points out, the major problem with such an approach is that it reduces states of mind, such as "understanding" and "appreciation" to observable behavioural changes.

> From this point of view, to pursue the development of a pupil's understanding and appreciation of a poem is to pursue his responding in certain ways to particular stimuli.
>
> (Hirst, 1974: 21)

Such a view, according to Hirst, involves a category mistake of some consequence for it confuses the criteria for a state of mind with that state itself and therefore succumbs to a logical confusion. Furthermore, by positing a theoretical distinction between cognitive and affective objectives, the taxonomic approach violates the very notion of rational understanding as an over-arching educational aim. This happens because such an approach has no clearly worked-out epistemological basis (Pring, 1971) and lacks a concept of education which might provide a basis for the selection of objectives that would combine both cognitive and affective elements.[11] Pring (1971) suggests that it is a mistake to assume that the development of knowledge and skills of any kind can be divorced from the simultaneous promotion of a feeling for standards of truth and beauty which are part of what it means to have knowledge and to be educated.

This is not to say, however, that education is concerned only with intellectual development, but rather to recognize that knowledge and understanding are also central to emotional development. As Hirst points out,

> ...to characterize the objectives of education in relation to the development of rationality, is certainly to put at the very centre of what is pursued those forms of knowledge and belief in which we make sense of our experience. It is necessarily by means of knowledge, if not by knowledge alone, that fancy gives place to a recognition of fact, that irrational wishes give place to reasonable wants, and that emotional reactions give place to justifiable actions.
>
> (Hirst, 1974: 22)

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[11] See Gribble, 1970, for a critical discussion of this aspect of the taxonomic approach to objectives.

It is both conceptually and logically fallacious, therefore, to suggest that educational objectives in artistic appreciation can be located within an affective domain simply because the arousal of feelings and emotions is an essential element of aesthetic response. Emotional experience will accompany intellectual activity and the education of the emotions is achieved in large part through the development of certain cognitive capacities along with the emergence of particular knowledge and understanding.[12]

We are now in a position, in the light of the foregoing discussion, to substantiate the logical grounds for such a claim and to consider the distinction that is sometimes made between the cognitive and the affective elements in artistic appreciation.

Affect is often identified with feelings and feelings are contrasted with thought or cognition. But cognition, properly construed, refers to all the ways in which an individual comes to know and understand the world. Sense perceptions, symbols of various kinds, language (in both its discursive and non-discursive modes) are all cognitive in this sense, yet all are capable of evoking feelings. It is a fallacy therefore to assume that any symbol system is discretely cognitive or affective. Indeed, the view that some symbols are cognitive while others are affective leads directly into the dualistic fallacy of expressionism discussed in Chapter 4 (pp.49-52). Poetry, for example, in such a view, consisting mainly of figurative and metaphorical language, will be taken to express feelings and emotions rather than thought. The problem with such a view, however, is that it is epistemologically unsound and rests on a number of questionable assumptions concerning the nature of emotions.

The traditional conception of emotions as "inner feelings" has recently been challenged (Kenny, 1963; Peters, 1969, 1972; Hepburn, 1972; Best, 1974; Olsen, 1978) and it has been argued that emotions are not merely passive states that "happen to us" in the nature of "private inner occurrences". In Chapter 4 this traditional, dualistic conception of emotion was considered insofar as it underlies the various expressionist theories of art. Such a view of emotion could be seen to lead directly into a subjectivist account of artistic knowledge and appreciation.

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[12] This is not to deny the importance of affective and motivational factors, however. Scruton makes the important point that:

> "No cognitive theory of aesthetic experience can explain why one should desire to listen to a symphony again, any more than one should wish to re-read a scientific treatise, or repeat a successful experiment" (Scruton, 1974: 226).

However, instead of taking emotions as naming "private inner occurrences", the alternative view is to consider them to be ways of responding to objects or situations. Thus, my fear is fear of X, my anger is anger at Y, my pleasure is pleasure at Z. The emotion is an inextricable part of my reaction to these objects or situations, rather than a separate event occurring in the indiscernable regions of my mind. According to this view, the manifestations of emotion (in terms of what is said or done as well as the autonomic reaction) are logically (rather than contingently) connected to that emotion and they are therefore not symptoms, signs of, or evidence for, the emotion, but criteria for it. The object, the symptoms and the actions associated with an emotional state, taken all together comprise the necessary and sufficient conditions for recognizing that such a state exists (Ryle 1949).

While this view of emotion[13] owes much to Wittgenstein (1953) and Kenny (1963) it now has support also among psychologists (Arnold, 1969, 1970; Mandler, 1975).[14] In this view, emotions can be understood ultimately only in relation to a context. This accounts for the vast cultural differences that can occur in emotional reactions to what may on the surface appear to be identical events. Unless we share in a common culture, we may not know what to feel (Scruton, 1979). For example, compare the emotions evoked by a bull-fight with those evoked by the slaughter of a sacrificial lamb. The objective features of each event may be similar but the cultural meaning is very different and because each event is seen as something completely different, a very different quality of emotion is involved.

Hence, when one feels excitement or awe in the presence of some object or situation, one necessarily interprets that object or situation in a certain way: that is, a cognitive appraisal or deriving meaning (interpretive cognition) is an essential part of having that emotion. By altering one's appraisal of the situation,

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13 It is recognized that this is not the only view of emotion, and it has received some strong criticism (Wilson, 1972). Nevertheless, it provides a coherent and widely supported position from which to derive educational implications consistent with the main arguments of the present thesis.

14 Mandler, for example, makes the point that:

> "The experience of emotions and the conditions for many emotional behaviours are the interactional result of autonomic arousal and cognitive interpretation. The former determines the special visceral quality of these experiences as well as their intensity, while the latter affects the quality and category of the experience" (Mandler, 1975: 67).

the emotion itself can change. Hence, to use Best's example, in Shakespeare's great tragedy, Iago stirs up Othello's jealousy by influencing his appraisal of the situation.

> Othello was given reasons by Iago for seeing Desdemona's behaviour as evidence of infidelity, and this, he believed, justified his intense jealousy. But, too late, he is given further reasons which make him realise that Iago had deliberately misled him, and that Desdemona's actions were innocent. The change of object from unfaithful behaviour to blameless behaviour corresponds to a change in Othello's feelings from jealousy to remorse, and this is brought about by appreciating the significance of reasons which throw a new light on the actions of Desdemona and Iago.
>
> (Best, 1974: 107)

The Education of the Emotions

The point of the discussion so far has been not to reduce emotion to cognition but to show how emotional reactions commonly contain significant cognitive elements.[15] It is because of this that we can hold people responsible for their emotions because we can argue about the correctness or reasonableness of their seeing the situation in this or that way and thus of having this or that emotion. It is this aspect that makes education of the emotions possible. For emotions can have adequate or inadequate grounds; they can be justified or be absurd; they can be rational or irrational; they can be based on sound knowledge or blind ignorance.[16] In short, emotions are educable to the extent that they are logically dependent upon our beliefs, knowledge or cognitions. This follows from the fact that education is concerned with altering our way of seeing the world, by altering and shaping our concepts, meanings and levels of understanding (Peters, 1973).

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15 Conversely, it can be argued (Scheffler, 1977) that "cognitive functioning employs and incorporates diverse emotional elements - these elements themselves acquiring cognitive significance thereby". Scheffler goes on to discuss what he calls the cognitive emotions such as "the joy of verification" and "the feeling of surprise". He concludes that "the growth of cognition is...inseparable from the education of the emotions".

16 This is not to deny that some emotional states may be pathological or beyond conscious control. But in many instances, emotions are subject to some degree of conscious control - particularly when they are dependent on how a situation is construed.

An important consequence of this conception of emotion is that when we consider children's emotions we need to take into account certain facts about their cognitive development. For instance, Piaget has shown that young children are highly egocentric - perhaps this singleness of perceptual and conceptual view-point determines the way they see situations and hence the kinds of emotions they would feel. Hence, they may not show sympathy in a situation in which an adult would consider it to be the appropriate emotion. Because understanding another person's emotions is partly a matter of understanding how he interprets elements in his situation, it is necessary to be able to adopt another's point-of-view. To a large extent this is a cognitive activity involving role-taking capacities which psychologists have shown to develop only gradually as the child matures (Flavell, 1968).

These considerations have important implications for the relationship between artistic appreciation and the education of the emotions.

Most teachers recognize that it is virtually impossible for a ten-year-old child (to put the age no higher) to appreciate, above some minimal level, the poetry of John Donne or the novels of Henry James. This is not just because he lacks interest or motivation, but more importantly because he lacks the knowledge and the cognitive capabilities that are required in order to grasp their meaning. To say, furthermore, that he has not sufficient "emotional maturity" is to say that he does not know what to feel - he is not able to make the necessary discriminations and construct the appropriate interpretations.

Cognition and Emotion in the Appreciation of Art

Part of what it means to appreciate a work of art is to understand the particular way in which its emotional content is controlled by the cognitive appraisal that it demands. We come to recognize that the work provides us with an experience in which certain emotions are either appropriate or inappropriate (Casey, 1973). Hence, appreciation of art has a direct effect on the emotions - but it is a controlled effect, and the control is of a cognitive kind. This point is made in a delicate and subtle way by Nelson Goodman when he writes:

> The work of art is apprehended through the feelings as well as through the senses. Emotional numbness disables here as definitely if not as completely as blindness or deafness. Nor are the feelings used exclusively for exploring the emotional content of a work. To some extent, we may feel how a painting looks as we may see how it feels. The actor or dancer - or the spectator - sometimes notes and remembers the feeling of a movement rather than its pattern, insofar as the two can be distinguished at all. Emotion in aesthetic experience is a means of discerning what properties a work has and expresses.
> (Goodman, 1968: 248)

But the criteria for aesthetic emotion are unique to each art form and the feelings we experience are inseparable from the medium in which they are embodied. To change the medium or to change the work of art is therefore to change the emotion itself. Nevertheless, by coming to understand a work of art, whether it be literature, painting or music, children learn to better understand their own feelings and emotions. As Hepburn (1972: 486) points out, the importance of this "precision, particularity and freshness of emotion" in response to the arts is to be contrasted with the "characteristically blurred and hackneyed, emotion-cliches, determined or conditioned by the popular culture".

But the ability for appreciation that is necessary to the understanding of a work of art is not something that individuals develop as a result of their own natural curiosity - it is a skill that can be taught and in most cases requires the direct guidance of a teacher (cf. Osborne, 1970). Let us now apply this general claim to the teaching of poetic appreciation.

Poetry can provide the reader with verbal experiences which have the potential to invoke powerful and controlled emotional responses. This potential, however, is not released by merely exposing the reader to the poem. The poem has to first convey meaning - it has to produce a cognitive appraisal which enables the particular pattern of words to be "seen as" representing an authentic human experience. A poem must be interpreted before its meaning can be understood. Very often this meaning is conveyed through the imagery of the poem and it is through a cognitive appraisal of the precision and appropriateness of the imagery that the reader experiences a controlled affective response (Day Lewis, 1947: 35).

One of the obvious differences between "mushy" or sentimental verse of the greeting card variety and well-written poetry, is the

extent to which the poet controls our emotional response through the use of imagery.

If we compare the following two extracts we can see the immense contrast between uncontrolled and controlled emotional response.

The first is from an old school anthology:[17]

Oh! Sorrow, Sorrow, scarce I knew
Your name when, shaking down the may
In sport, a little child, I grew
Afraid to find you at my play.

But, Sorrow, Sorrow, let me rest,
For oh! I cannot sleep with you!

(Charlotte Mew)

Here the emotional appeal is to sentimental nostalgia but at a cognitive level the extended personification strikes us as being inappropriate. The poet is unsuccessful in controlling our emotional response because the images are ineffective and unable to carry the emotion that is being expressed. Indeed, the final image contains a level of ambiguity that may produce only humour for some readers - thus, completely shattering the emotional appeal of the preceding lines. Such verse is still a long way from the kind of emotion-stereotypes found on greeting cards - but it is tending in that direction. We interpret it as being insincere and this produces a criterion for its value.

It should be emphasized, however, that we interpret this verse as insincere not because we are guessing at the author's intentions but because the words used betray a lack of immediacy and relevance to the subject they are supposed to be presenting. We can show this by pointing to the language and indicating that it communicates on the level of vaguely emotional cliche without any precision of expression. Such a use of language logically cannot express a sincere or genuine emotion, no matter what the facts may be about this poet's life, her spiritual struggles, or even her stated intentions about what the poem means.

In contrast, consider the following lines:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist - slack they may be - these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry <u>I can no more</u>...

(Gerald Manley Hopkins)

Here, we have the carefully controlled emotional effect of great poetic art. In these few lines, Hopkins is expressing the

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17 <u>The Modern Muse</u>, circa 1932.

intensity of his personal struggle against despair at a time in his life when he almost gave up his religious vocation. Such biographical facts, of course, are very important to a full appreciation of the poetry. But it is in the way the language is used that the author's intention is fully realized. This poetry is interpreted as a sincere expression of feelings because the powerful images achieve an integration and synthesis of thought and emotion which can only be fully appreciated after we have understood the interactive meaning of the metaphors themselves. The image of "carrion comfort" creates a powerful new synthesis of meaning only after we have first appreciated the comparison between feasting upon dead meat and the terrible emotional state of despair. The tension and anguish is conveyed not only by the broken rhythm and inverted syntax, but also by the image of the twisted strands of rope representing the last vital elements of integrity and courage. The emotional response, therefore, is entirely dependent upon the meaning that these lines are capable of conveying.

The importance of the poetic context in defining the relevant emotion can be further illustrated from a close examination of the emotional content in Part IV of "The Ancient Mariner." Undoubtedly, the strongest emotion in the poem is the sense of isolation and unworthiness which the Mariner experiences at the height of his physical suffering:

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea!
> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony.

Taken from their context, such lines could be little more than doggerel, but within the total fabric of the poem they express very powerfully the culmination of the Mariner's experience - a compounding of social and physical isolation, remorseful anguish and oppressive weariness. The elliptical syntax, the repetition of the words, the duration of the rhythm, and the stark literality of these four lines, located in the poem precisely at the point where the Mariner's guilt is most intense, make this stanza a perfect embodiment of the horror of utter solitude.

Even 9 - 10 year olds show an awareness that the intensity of the emotion is dependent on the special construction of the language, although they are not able to specify the precise nature of this relationship. When asked to describe the feelings expressed, they comment as follows:

Joanne (9yr 11 mth): ...loneliness...a lot of loneliness and he was in a lot of agony...(Why is the word 'alone' repeated?)...because he wants to express a lot more feeling in it...not only was he alone but he was alone for a long,long time.

Tony (9yr 11 mth): ...he's in agony and he's...because um... he's the only one left in this wide, wide sea...and there's only water around and everything...and all the rest have died ...(Why are the words repeated?)...because he's alone so much...you know, he can't say it enough to tell anybody...you know, 'alone, alone, all, all alone' sounds better because it really tells you how it felt.

For slightly older children, the cognitive appraisal of how the words produce the poetic effect becomes a little more explicit. For example:

Paul (12yr 2 mth): ...well, he was lonely and um he was in pain...(And why are the words repeated?) ...well, because it adds more feeling if it's repeated...well, everytime it's said it doubles what it said before...like 'alone'...well that's just alone...but 'alone, alone'...well that's um...even more...there's strong feeling over it.

Darren (12yr 0 mth): ...the way it is there it tells you he was all alone for a long time and one 'alone' doesn't express how lonely he was.

John (11yr 4 mth): ...on a wide, wide sea...he repeats that again to give the impression that the sea is large and he can't see anything at all in sight...nothing's moving...the water's calm.

At the 14 year level, moreover, some children can begin to interpret the emotional content by describing precise features of the language, as follows:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): ...that he was all alone and that he was ...um, his soul was being tortured in some way...because of what he'd done...maybe what he'd done to the albatross or something like that...(What do you mean?)...feeling guilty or something...(And why are the words repeated?)...because all those 'alones' make it sound um...like he was alone, sort of thing...it's as if he's chanting it in some sort of a trance or something.

Chris (14yr 5 mth): ...well, he's um...he's been the only one left behind on the boat...and he feels that he's caused all their deaths...and there's no-one he can talk to or anything...and he couldn't die like all the others...(Why?) ...they're punishing him for what he'd done...(Why are the words repeated?)...

> it's emphasizing how bad it was to be all alone...it makes it seem...there's more emphasis on the alone part.

These protocols indicate that the task of appreciation is not simply affective despite the powerful emotions involved. It is first a task of interpretation that is essentially cognitive in character. It is for this reason that Wimsatt and Beardsley assert that:

> The more specific the account of the emotion induced by a poem, the more nearly it will be an account of the reasons for emotion, the poem itself, and the more reliable it will be as an account of what the poem is likely to induce in other - sufficiently informed - readers. It will in fact supply the kind of information which will enable readers to respond to the poem.
>
> (Wimsatt, 1954: 34)

As was argued in the previous chapter, it is the art object itself, the actual words of the poem, that is the central criterion of the emotions being expressed, and the condition of the poem effectively communicating those emotions is that the language used should have certain discernible features. The discernment of those features is an act of interpretive cognition.

It is with this aspect of appreciation that experience of poetry, along with other forms of aesthetic education, can have a direct influence on the refinement and education of the emotions. Both sentimental verse, of the type found on greeting cards, and good poetry, of the type found in many school anthologies, evoke emotion, but good poetry makes other, essentially cognitive, demands upon us. Good poetry evokes precise emotion and, as Hepburn expresses it, "the precise emotion may be dependent on a precise way of seeing, and that way of seeing be expressible only by certain words in a certain order" (Hepburn, 1972: 486). The first and most vital stage of poetic appreciation, therefore, is to form a cognitive appraisal of that "precise way of seeing" that is embodied in the language of the poem.

The Rational Aspect of Appreciation

The central aim of artistic education then, is to produce an objectivity of appreciation rather than a subjectivity of response. In essence, this means that a work of art will, of logical necessity, exclude certain interpretations and invite others. A poem, for example, is a consciously constructed set of words, formed in a context, a sphere of discourse that lies outside the contents of our

own minds. An educated appreciation of that poem, therefore, will depend not on an indulgence in our private responses, however acutely they might be felt, but rather in the degree of relevance that exists between the way the poem is interpreted and the context from which it derives its meaning. This pre-eminent aim of education in literature and the arts, so much under threat from the damaging doctrines of subjectivism and relativism, could not be more eloquently captured than in the following words of William Walsh:

> The quality of just and delicate relevance is the hardest come by, the most easily lost, of all the qualities of the educated mind. A leading idea, a quirk of intolerance, some failure in patience or self-restraint, and our analysis ceases to be critical - and educative - and the words of a great writer are made an occasion for rambling meditations of our own.
>
> (Walsh, 1959: 62)

But this quality of "just and delicate relevance" requires more than the raw data of experience. It is an achievement of the rational mind. It involves a gradual accommodation of the interpreter's personal response towards the verifiable meaning which the work of art has the potential to produce. This is what Hirsch refers to as validity in interpretation. Valid interpretation is not a subjective act but is governed by normative principles which operate to make the interpreter's personal response subservient to the single authorial intention represented by the work of art itself. Hirsch argues that subjectivity in interpretation leads to complete relativism of meaning:

> As soon as the reader's outlook is permitted to determine what a text means, we have not simply a changing meaning but quite possibly as many meanings as readers.
>
> (Hirsch, 1967: 213)

Appreciation requires that the reader's consciousness be subordinated to the authority of the text, for the text can represent only the "meaning" intended by the author.[18] This definition of "meaning", in the sense used by Hirsch, is not forced upon us by the text, but is simply to be preferred for its rational and practical advantages. Any alternative will only lead to a relativistic chaos in which neither criticism nor education could make any sense.

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[18] See Chapter 5, pp.101-4 for a clarification of intentions as criteria for interpretation.

If the meaning proposed by the interpreter, Hirsch argues, is not "verified in some way", then it "will simply be the interpreter's own meaning, exhibiting the connotations and emphases which he himself imposes" (Hirsch, 1967: 236). To verify the meaning, therefore, is to invoke plausible and coherent reasons for asserting that the proposed meaning is a correct meaning. The ability to do this is a measure of one's appreciation.

With great works of art or literature, however, there may be several levels of meaning all of which are contained within the single intentional act represented by the work of art itself. As Humphry House says of "The Ancient Mariner",

> The poem's very richness at once tempts and defeats definiteness of interpretation; as we commit ourselves to the development of one strand of meaning we find that in the very act of doing so we are excluding something else of importance.
>
> (House, 1962: 93)

In his own sensitive and imaginative interpretation of the poem, House considers the special significance of the Mariner's action in blessing the water-snakes - one of only three points in the poem at which the Mariner may be said to "act" (the others being the shooting of the albatross and the biting of his own arm). According to House,

> The blessing under the moonlight is the critical turning-point of the poem. Just as the Albatross was not a mere bird, so these are not mere water-snakes - they stand for all "happy living things." The first phase of redemption, the recovery of love and the recovery of the power of prayer, depends on the Mariner's recognition of his kinship again with other natural creatures.
>
> (House, 1962: 102)

Clearly, this interpretation connects the "blessing of the water-snakes" with the total symbolic structure of the poem. An educated appreciation would not fail to see the significance of the incident in these terms, but with young children, the symbolic interpretation is not always perceived. Indeed, only one of the 9 - 10 year olds in the present study perceived the symbolic significance of this incident. The interpretation contained in the following protocol exemplifies what Piaget would call a "liberated conviction":

Tony (9yr 11 mth): ...oh, when he felt some love...well it made the albatross fall off...by blessing the snakes...because you see he was really punished by that boat coming by...and killing that albatross

> ...but when he blessed that - them snakes - then it all comes back again ...you know, that the albatross would fall like lead into the sea and there would be...and then all that would be forgotten because...you know, he's um ...because he's made up for the killing that he did of the albatross.

Behind this interpretation is an awareness of the symbolic structure of the poem. All the elements of crime and punishment, repentance and reconciliation, are present in this child's comments. More typical at this level, however, and also for 11 - 12 year olds, is a response in which the incident is interpreted only in stark literal terms, such as the following:

Tony (11yr 6 mth):

> ...he feels lonely so he's feeling kind towards them...he praised them when he was lonely...and he didn't really know very much that he was doing it...um, then the albatross fell off his neck like a dead weight...it was so heavy... (Why do you think the albatross falls off at this point?)...oh, he must have leaned over the side to look at the water-snakes.

John (11yr 4 mth):

> ...he saw them and he was so amazed by their beauty and their splendour that he um...he felt better and he...he felt good and he...he blessed the saints and therefore he was able to speak...to pray...and he felt...he felt a lot better obviously...(And what happens to the albatross?)...oh, it fell off...it fell off the ship into the sea...(Why does that happen?)...I don't really know... it most likely was very heavy...

Here there is some awareness of the effects that the act of blessing the snakes has upon the spiritual state of the Mariner, but it is not related to the symbolic significance of the albatross falling into the sea. It is not until the 14 year level that an appreciation of these symbolic or structural elements becomes more common and the protocols reflect a much deeper appreciation of the poem's meaning. For example:

Lorraine (14yr 2 mth):

> ...he blessed them and he could pray again...like...sort of taking a load off...and then he prayed and the albatross just fell...he was lifted of a weight...they forgave him...like the albatross has been...like um...guilty complex sort of thing...and when he prayed it was like he thought the saints were listening to him again...and he was forgiven and the albatross vanished.

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): He didn't feel so alone with all those creatures around him...and the guilt of killing the albatross seemed to wear off him and just...he just kind of forgot about it...(So how did he feel towards the water-snakes?)...he felt... he felt um...kind of the same...he was kind of relating to them as if the snakes and himself had something in common... (And what happens?)...the albatross falls off his neck and falls into the sea... (Why does that happen?)...the guilt from killing the albatross has disappeared from him...the guilt has just gone away...so the albatross falls...and there's nothing to remind him of what he's done.

Blair (14yr 7 mth): ...well um...he um starts appreciating the snakes more as living creatures...and I suppose with that he repents about actually killing the albatross...and the guilt of it and that...falls off him...(How does that happen?)...well, the albatross falls into the sea...like a heavy weight lifted off his shoulders.

If we compare these protocols with those of the younger children (including the 9 year old Tony), we can observe that one aspect of the emerging capacity to perceive symbolic structure relates to the language in which it is described. Words such as "guilt", "forgiveness", "repentance" refer to relatively complex concepts which young children are not readily able to differentiate. It would seem that in teaching them to appreciate a poem of this nature, attention may need to be given to the explication of these central thematic concepts, provided the cognitive demands so made are within their capabilities. But this is the concern of the next chapter.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with the assertion that affective response is not the central criterion for artistic or literary appreciation and should therefore be incidental, rather than central, to the educative process. The argument supporting this claim began by exposing what has been called the affective fallacy in which the meaning of a work of art is taken to be synonymous with the psychological effect it has upon the person who is said to respond to it. By explicating the logical confusion between "reasons" and "causes" implicit in such a notion, it has been argued that artistic appreciation is a rational activity governed by normative principles,

rather than a domain of subjective experience. The personal or idiosyncratic response is only contingently connected to the work of art; it may or may not be appropriate depending on whether or not a logical connection can be also established. This involves justifying or verifying an interpretation, by invoking reasons, rather than explaining the causes of one's personal feelings. However, the act of interpretation, while essentially cognitive, in that it entails appraisal and discrimination, has a direct and immediate influence on the feelings and emotions of the interpreting agent. It is in this inter-dependence between cognition and affect that the central features of artistic appreciation can be found and it is essentially this relationship that enables aesthetic experience, when it is refined into appreciation, to contribute in a unique way to the education of the emotions.

In all of the preceding discussion, we have focussed on the logical features of artistic and literary appreçiation as distinct from the psychological nature of response. But our purpose in this has not been to suggest that the psychological aspects in appreciation are any less important than the logical aspects. Indeed, from an educational point of view, this could never be so because interpretive cognition is a capacity and therefore must be developed like other cognitive capacities.

Because artistic appreciation presupposes artistic knowledge, and because knowledge presupposes concepts, learning the skills of appreciation must entail the learning of concepts. As Hamlyn puts it,

> When we come to learning a language or a technique, and even more so with learning a subject, the appreciation and understanding of the subject and its principles comes to the fore. With the understanding of principles goes the ability to use certain concepts.
>
> (Hamlyn, 1967: 25)

But concepts and principles do not suddenly arrive, as it were; the individual does not lack them at one point in time and acquire them the next. They are the result of gradual psychological change brought about partly by relevant experiences and partly by particular actions of the developing mind. It is the development of these psychological aspects of artistic appreciation that provide the focus for the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE STRUCTURE

> Knowing, like teaching, requires the organism to be active and to construct meaningful patterns out of experience. At base, such patterns are artistic constructions, a means through which the human creates a conception of reality.
>
> (Elliot W. Eisner, 1979: 271)

The discussion to this point has been concerned, in the main, with elaborating and putting forward a case in support of the following two propositions:

(1) that knowledge and cognition are central to an educated appreciation of literature and the arts, and

(2) that while experience of art, both cognitive and affective, is necessary to the education of appreciation, not all such experience is necessarily educative.

Having argued, therefore, that appreciation involves the conjunction of a particular domain of conceptual knowledge with distinctive kinds of experience, the question that must be addressed now concerns the relationship between such knowledge and experience: How does the individual acquire the knowledge and understanding that is necessary to artistic appreciation? In other words, how can we explain the genesis of artistic knowledge in terms of the experience and growth of the individual? Such a question is of fundamental importance to any educational theory concerning the appropriateness of experience for the acquisition of specific concepts and the development of the relevant psychological mechanisms or capacities by means of which knowledge is acquired. In short, any theory which sets out to provide a rationale for the education of aesthetic appreciation must take cognitive development into account.

There could be little doubt that the most influential theorist in the field of developmental psychology has been Piaget, whose structuralist approach to the study of human cognition was outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. It is to a further consideration of Piaget's

work, and its potential implications for aesthetic development that this chapter is addressed. Before commencing, however, it must be said that this is not the place to provide a comprehensive account of Piaget's immense contribution to the field of developmental psychology and such a task, moreover, would reach well beyond the scope of the present discussion. In what follows, therefore, the intention is no more than to reveal the main points of convergence between cognitive-developmental theory and the logical features of artistic appreciation which have been set out in this study.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Structure

From the outset, Piaget's concern has been with the genesis of knowledge (particularly in the domains of mathematics and science) and with the transformations that occur in the structure of thought as the child's intelligence moves from being constituted only of sensori-motor action to eventually comprising abstract concepts and formal operations.

Through meticulous observation of the ways in which children react in carefully selected (and sometimes ingeniously contrived) situations, and the ways in which they respond to the searching questions of the clinician, Piaget has set out to identify (describe and classify) the necessary structures of the human mind, that is, of the mind conceived not as a domain of mentalistic subjectivity, but as one of objectively determinable structures.

The main features of the structuralist perspective were set out in Chapter 2, but it is necessary at this point to provide further explication of Piaget's particular version of structuralism in order to establish its relevance to an educational theory of appreciation.

To begin, it should be recognized that Piaget's basic orientation to human cognition is construed in biological terms. Thus, intelligence is broadly conceived as an adaptation to the social and physical environment. Through the process of assimilation the child acts on the environment in relation to his previous experience; through the process of accommodation the child incorporates new activities into his previous experience. Hence, intelligence is that set of actions and processes by which the individual assimilates knowledge and makes the necessary accommodations to this new knowledge. Of fundamental importance for the educator is the notion that intelligence is developmental and refers to the acquisition of knowledge in terms of a sequence of stages.

In Piaget's theory, cognitive-developmental "stages" possess the following characteristics:

(a) They imply that children at different stages of development possess qualitatively different modes of action or ways of solving the same problems.

(b) These different modes of action may be ordered in an invariant sequence.

(c) Each successive cognitive stage is a hierarchical integration of what has gone before. Higher stages do not replace lower stages, but rather reintegrate them.

(d) Though the rate of cognitive development may vary from one individual to another, the stages will appear in the same order for all individuals.

Piaget has specified four major stages of cognitive development having these characteristics (see Figure 4). It is the sequence that is important, however, and the relative chronological ages are subject to a wide range of individual differences.

Stages of Cognitive Growth

	STAGE	APPROXIMATE AGE
1.	Sensorimotor	0 - 2 years
2.	Pre-operational a. Preconceptual b. Intuitive	2 - 7 years
3.	Concrete operations	7 - 11 years
4.	Formal operations	11 - 15 years

Figure 4

Briefly, these stages have the following characteristics:

1. Sensorimotor stage: Intellectual functioning comprises physical actions.

2. Pre-operational stages:

   (a) Pre-conceptual: Development of language - symbols represent actions, "mental experiments" become possible, as does deferred imitation and symbolic play.

   (b) Intuitive thought: Egocentric; only one viewpoint; intuition and perception dominate over logical necessity. At this stage the child learns to draw and can listen to stories, where verbal evocation and mental images are involved.

3. Concrete operational stage: Thinking processes develop in direct relation to objects, especially the concepts of seriation, classification, conservation. Thought processes acquire the logical property of "reversibility", i.e. they go both ways: "if you have a brother, named John, then it follows that John must have a brother too" - the younger child will not see this logical connection.

4. Formal operational stage: Abstract reasoning becomes possible. Hypothetico-deductive thought. Capacity to deal with "as if..." propositions and logical inference, e.g. $a < b$ and $b < c$, then $a < c$.

Although such general stages of development can be identified, these are not absolute characteristics and for any individual child the content of thought will be determined by the child's unique experiences, and by the physical and social environment, in addition to the structural maturation of the mind (Flavell, 1963).

Body-Mind Dualism and Cognitive Structure

To clarify what is meant by a cognitive structure in the Piagetian sense it is necessary at this point to return to the philosophical problem of body-mind dualism which was mentioned briefly in Chapter 5 (p.98).

In summary, the dualist view (strongly adhered to by Descartes) holds that mind (or mental phenomena) and body (or bodily phenomena) are essentially distinct. In this view, there are two separate worlds: an objective one of physical entities, and a subjective one of inner and private thoughts, feelings, dreams and other mental referents. Cognition, which entails an interaction between these two worlds can be likened to a field of experience in which the subject (conceived of as mind) confronts objects (conceived of as matter). Without undue distortion the dualist thesis can be depicted diagrammatically as in Figure 5, p.143. The strongest critic of Cartesian dualism has been Gilbert Ryle (1949) who referred to it as "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine." In The Concept of Mind Ryle attempted to show that such a dogma is false because it entails what he called a "category mistake":

> It represents the facts of mental life as if they belonged to one logical type or category (or range of types or categories), when they actually belong to another.
>
> (Ryle, 1949: 17)

Model of Dualist Cognition

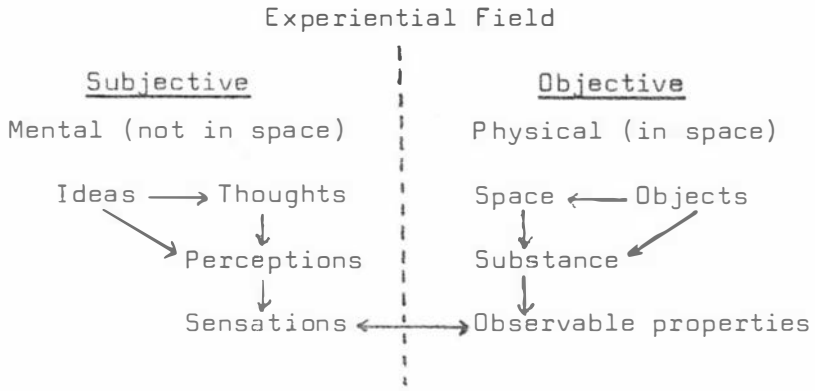

Figure 5

The argument has been interpreted in a number of ways (see Bestor, 1979) but for present purposes it is sufficient to say that the basic mistake of the dualist view is to use language under the assumption that words such as emotion, intelligence, intention, are the names for mental entities, that is, that these terms refer to "mental things." Ryle makes the point that these terms qualify what people do and undergo, rather than naming some kind of inner occurrences or mental acts.[1]

Now it has already been argued in earlier chapters of this thesis that some of the main conceptual confusions to be found in aesthetics rest upon this same dualistic fallacy. In particular, the expressionist theory is of this kind, holding that emotions are separate entities from the works of art in which they are expressed, and the intentional fallacy which holds that the artist's intention refers to some mental occurrence that preceded and is distinct from the art-work itself. It could be said, perhaps, that dualist assumptions underlie many of the ways in which artistic appreciation is misconstrued, including the notion that "talk about art" is only a distorted and incomplete reflection of the "true inner experience" of appreciation. In like vein, therefore, the term "cognitive structure" could be also misconstrued if it were to be used in the dualistic sense. Such a sense, however, would not be consistent with Piagetian theory, as the following discussion will endeavour to make clear.

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1 This interpretation of Ryle's position must not be confused with a behaviourist interpretation. Bestor (1979) shows convincingly that Ryle's argument is directed as strongly (though not as explicitly) against behaviourism as it is against dualism.

In a fundamental sense, Piaget holds that intelligence always involves a form of implicit activity upon the world and the very process of thinking would not occur in the absence of a developmental history in which the individual has performed physical actions upon the environment. In accordance with Ryle (1949: 41-50), Piaget regards intelligence as the disposition (or capacity) to act in certain ways. Mental operations, therefore, are simply internalized or transformed actions and sequences of actions, such that sensori-motor activity provides the necessary conditions for the later stage of formal operations. Hence, the physical actions of joining, reversing and co-ordinating objects become transformed into mental operations that are performed either upon linguistic/logical symbols or "formal propositions".

A cognitive structure then, is not a mental referent, but it is a descriptive category for a certain class of actions. It is not the content (either whole or in parts) that constitutes the structure, but rather the relations among the action elements; for example, how they are combined and integrated into perceptions, judgments, interpretations, problem-solving strategies. To define the cognitive structure is to define the categorial limits under which these actions can be described and hence to define their formal composition at a point in time (synchronic structure) or the transformations that occur through time (diachronic structure).[2] Thus the mind is not construed as a tabula rasa upon which the data of experience are written, nor as an "empty room" which is gradually furnished with images, memories and concepts, but as a domain of activity, a repertoire of potential actions, constrained and oriented by its essential structure.

Genetic Epistemology as the Construction of Knowledge

To understand Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which he refers to as genetic epistemology, it is necessary to distinguish between cognitive function, content and structure. Oversimplifying somewhat, it could be said that function is concerned with the processes that determine how cognition takes place at any particular stage in development; content refers to the specific actions from which we infer that functioning has occurred; and structure refers to the inferred

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[2] These terms are used more commonly in reference to linguistic structure, following the early work of Saussure (1915).

organizational properties or compositional laws which explain why this content rather than some other content has emerged. The relative importance of structure in this context has been clearly explained by Flavell.

> In Piaget's theory, cognitive structures lie between the general invariants of function and the specific variants of content; they form a kind of bridge between the nomothetic and the idiographic in cognitive development. Perhaps the most important thing to say about the concept of structure here is that, as we see it, one cannot really have a detailed theory of intellectual development without it.
>
> (Flavell, 1963: 409)

Piaget insists that transformations arise out of the relationship between the organism and the environment, especially when the organism acts upon the environment.

Intellectual activity begins with environmental demands and development involves the progressively more complex equilibration of the two processes of assimilation and accommodation. In effect this is a process whereby equilibrium is maintained in the various structural wholes (sensori-motor, perceptual, concrete operational, formal operational) throughout all the exchanges that occur between the growing subject and his environment. This equilibrium is not an extrinsic or added characteristic but rather an intrinsic and constitutive property of organic and mental life (Piaget, 1968: 100-14). Equilibration is a regulatory factor that unifies development.

Responses to environmental demands represent either assimilation or accommodation and physical actions gradually become internalized to form a mental structure (i.e. a repertoire of mental activities operating according to definite laws). The structure means that there will be limits to the content of intelligent behaviour (see Figure 6).

Model of Active Cognition

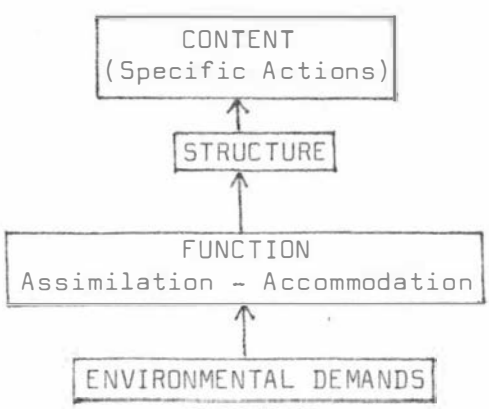

Figure 6

For each individual, therefore, knowledge must be constructed in the course of equilibration. Piaget makes the point that,

> ...observation and experiment show as clearly as can be that logical structures are constructed ...further, that this construction is governed by special laws.
>
> (Piaget, 1971: 62)

He criticises Chomsky for attributing the "stability of transformation rules" to their "innateness" rather than "equilibrium mechanisms".

> ...as if the appeal to biology implied by the hypothesis of innateness did not pose problems of formation just as complex as those involved in a psychological account.
>
> (Piaget, 1971: 12)

Piaget points out that Chomsky sees only two alternative explanations for the genesis of structure - "either an innate schema that governs with necessity, or acquisition from outside". The third possibility, and that which Piaget argues for, is "the process of internal equilibration".

Thus, Piaget advances a constructivist account of knowledge in which the developing individual and the environment comprise a dynamic system whose functioning determines a course of development governed by the progressive interaction of the component parts. Thus, his central concern is to account for the formation of knowledge as individual and environment interact.

> Structuralism, it seems, must choose between structureless genesis on the one hand and ungenerated wholes or forms on the other; the former would make it revert to that atomistic association to which empiricism has accustomed us; the latter constantly threaten to make it lapse into a theory of Husserlian essences, Platonic forms, or Kantian a priori forms of synthesis. Unless, of course, there is a way of passing between the horns of this dilemma.
>
> (Piaget, 1971: 9)

On the one hand, Piaget rejects the empiricist theory which holds that there is genesis of knowledge without structure. Such a theory, represented by Aristotle in classical philosophy, emphasizes contiguity (or association), repetition and memory, for example, Skinner's theory that language learning can be entirely accounted for through the building up of associations between items in experience (Skinner, 1957). On the other hand, he also rejects the notion of structure without genesis which can be found in theories such as Chomsky's which posits

the formation of innate ideas (Chomsky, 1968). For Piaget, the way out of the dilemma lies with the notion of construction. Avoiding the pitfalls of dualism and subjectivity, he emphasizes the point that in his view objectivity comes through activity, by means of a progressive movement in the interactions between an organism and its environment. He expresses this as follows:

> The achievement of knowledge is thus to be explained in terms of a theory indissolubly linking structuralism with constructivism, every structure being the resultant of a genesis and every genesis being the transition from a more to a less elementary (or more complex) structure. So that eventually logico-mathematical operations are linked to the general co-ordinations of action (unions, order, correspondences, etc.), and in the last analysis to biological self-regulatory systems; but without the latter containing in advance all those constructions for which they merely constitute the starting point.
>
> (Piaget, 1972: 12-13)

Thus, what is distinctive about Piaget's concept of cognitive structures is that these do not belong to the subject's consciousness, but to his operational behaviour or purposive actions. As Rotenstreich observes, whenever Piaget defines a cognitive structure,

> ...we notice the constant attempt to shift the centre of gravity of the analysis to what might be called objective or semiobjective patterns.... The reason for this shift again lies in Piaget's interpretation of the notion of rationality, which leads him to the assumption that a pattern of behaviour separated from consciousness may have a structure...
>
> (Rotenstreich, 1977: 373)

But this does not mean that structures exist "in the world" as opposed to existing "in the mind," for either locution implies that they are "things" whereas they are properly construed, not as referring to any "thing" but as qualifying features of the acting/experiencing phenomena. Thus, when Malcolm (1971) writes about the "myth" of cognitive structures and criticizes "the philosophical assumption behind the postulation of an 'internalized' structure, system or mechanism," it is the nominal sense that he is taking, not the adverbial sense. This point is made in a paper replying to Malcolm (Martin, 1973) which argues that the explanatory power of cognitive processes and structures rests on how such concepts are used rather than whether they involve reference to inner occurrences. It is clear,

therefore, that Piaget's concept of cognitive structure is fundamental to his constructivist epistemology.

The Limitations of Genetic Epistemology

As Hamlyn points out, the epistemological strand in Piaget's thought has strong similarities to Kant's position, such that,

> ...a compromise between empiricism and rationalism consists in part in trying to specify certain principles of the human understanding the application of which to experience is a necessary condition if that experience is to be objective.
> (Hamlyn, 1978: 51)

Piaget, however, goes further than Kant and assumes a convergence between the biological and the epistemological. Piagetian theory can be interpreted as being concerned not only with the development of the psychological mechanisms of knowledge-acquisition, but also with the evaluation of knowledge-claims (Siegel, 1978). This leads to a confusion between cognitive-developmental psychology, which is properly concerned with describing and explaining the stages of conceptual development, and normative epistemology, which is properly concerned with establishing criteria relevant to the logical analysis and validity of various knowledge-claims (Russell, 1979). It is this confusion that gives rise to the criticism of Piaget's apparent construal of truth and necessity as being derivable from biological functions, and his comparative neglect of the grounding of objective knowledge on intersubjective agreement (see Chapter 4 of the present thesis).

Hamlyn (1978: 56) argues that while Piaget's account places emphasis on experience as the source of objectivity in perception and cognition, he fails to establish a criterion for the distinction between veridical and non-veridical experiences. In Hamlyn's view, such a criterion would need to connect objectivity with intersubjective agreement if it is to distinguish between what is objective and mere figments of the individual imagination. We must distinguish, therefore, between (a) the structures of cognitive development, which enable us to explain why individuals can or cannot act upon the world or experience the world in certain ways - what their capacities or limitations are at certain stages of development - and (b) the concepts, principles and procedures which comprise a domain of shared and public knowledge.

While the acquisition of knowledge comes about through the actions and experiences of the individual which in turn must always

take place within structural limits, it also involves "the initiation into a body of knowledge that others either share or might in principle share" (Hamlyn, 1978: 58). This follows from Wittgenstein's thesis that knowledge is constituted out of agreement on the criteria for the truth and appropriateness of judgements (Wittgenstein, 1953: I, para 242). The point is well expressed in a paper questioning Piaget's claims for the explanatory power of genetic epistemology:

> The question of the origins of man's ideas (which includes the question of the pattern of their development) is one thing, and the question of the validity of these ideas is quite another.
> (Phillips and Kelly, 1975: 373)

Thus, it is with full recognition of this distinction, that the empirical investigation of cognitive development and knowledge-acquisition can make a proper contribution to educational theory. This condition applies as much to a consideration of education in the arts as it does to education in any other domain of knowledge and understanding.

Cognitive Development and Artistic Appreciation

As a consequence, the cognitive-developmental concerns of the present chapter are predicated on the logical features of appreciation that have been argued for in the preceding three chapters. In turning now to an examination of some of the cognitive structures which constrain and orientate the act of appreciation, it is important therefore to acknowledge, in accordance with all of the preceding discussion, that if someone is claiming to have arrived at the appreciation of a work of art or literature, it must be possible in principle to show what would count as appreciation by following recognized procedures and invoking public concepts, whether or not the person making the claim can himself go through these moves. In other words, there must be a context in which there has been some degree of prior agreement concerning what will count as an appreciation of the work and by what standards or criteria any descriptions, interpretive comments or evaluative judgments shall be deemed appropriate. When this requirement has been properly understood, the unique contribution of genetic epistemology to educational enquiry can be made in a more cogent and tenable way. This contribution has been aptly described by Howard Gardner in the following words:

> Piagetian studies of a domain of knowledge (e.g. time, space, causality) characteristically begin with a delineation of the 'end state', or principal features of an adult competence. Tasks are so devised as to elicit the full-blown competence of the mature organism; at the same time, they are designed to draw out qualitative features displayed by 'less developed' organisms as they confront the domain in question. The researcher administers the task to subjects possessing a wide range of assumed skills and competences, with the hope (and expectation) that a sequence of stages, ranging from total failure to total success, will emerge.
>
> (Gardner, 1979: 74)

But what does this mean for a theory of appreciation?

First, it means that appreciating a work of art is an "end state" that can be marked out by an indefinite number of specifiable cultural criteria, such as engaging in certain kinds of talk about the work in question, having certain concepts for interpreting it, and acting towards it in certain ways (e.g. contemplating it or apprehending it, rather than burning it or ignoring it). Many of these criteria have already been discussed in previous chapters. In brief, we can say that an act of appreciation necessarily requires a work to be appreciated and a context in which the experiences and actions of the appreciating agent can be understood, that is a shared language and set of concepts that are themselves constitutive of these very experiences and actions.

Second, it means that appreciating a work of art may be only partial or may be incomplete (i.e. may be "less developed") because the appreciating agent has not yet developed the capacities or mechanisms which make the appropriate experiences and actions possible. Thus, when all the contextual criteria mentioned above are met, but the various appreciating actions (i.e. what the subject says and does) are consistently constrained within definable limits, we can properly say that the capacity for appreciation is incomplete (or immature) in terms of the cognitive structure that it manifests. In other words, the appreciating actions are governed by a structure when they must be consistently located in a particular descriptive category. To define the criteria[3] for that category is to define the cognitive structure.

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[3] These criteria will pertain to the acts of comprehending, perceiving, understanding, describing, interpreting, evaluating, and so on - all of which are components of the act of appreciation. Statements such as "I like it" are already precluded from the category of appreciating actions (on logical grounds) because appreciation conceptually entails interpretive reasoning, that is the giving of reasons pertaining to the work of art and its context rather than the subjective states of the appreciating agent (see Chapter 6).

Criteria for Cognitive Structures of Appreciation

While structures may be called "mechanisms" of knowledge-acquisition, this should not be taken as implying a causal connection. Structures are enabling mechanisms rather than determining mechanisms. What this means is that the structure defines what actions are intellectually possible for a child at a particular stage of development. But the structure is not the source of these actions, i.e. not an inner impulse to action but rather a capacity for action having definite limits. Hence, whether an action occurs is not determined by a cognitive structure but it is the action itself which exhibits the structural features and these features moreover are to be taken as criteria for the structures.

Piaget begins his book on structuralism (Piaget, 1971) by defining the three formal properties or features that all structures share. These are the criteria of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation. Before considering the nature of these criteria and their place within Piaget's general theory of cognitive development, it is necessary to recall the concept of criterion which was introduced in Chapter 5 (p.95).

In defining the concept of criterion, it was said that a criterion for X may be taken to be a feature of X. Furthermore, if we know the criteria for X we have grounds for knowing X exists because the criteria are constitutive of X. Now this is important when considering cognitive structures for these can be known only by their criteria. Hence, the criteria for a cognitive structure are the features of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation manifested by particular actions (utterances, decisions, judgments, performances) made to meet particular environmental demands (questions, problems, dilemmas, tasks).

In proceeding now to discuss the structural features of interpretive reasoning, the interview protocols will be used to exemplify these cognitive-developmental properties of children's poetic appreciation.

1. Wholeness of Structures in Interpretive Reasoning

The idea of wholeness has much in common with the main principles of gestalt psychology. One of these principles states that any perceptual "whole" has both a qualitative and quantitative value or meaning that is different from that of the sum of its parts. This can be illustrated using the duck-rabbit figure discussed in Chapter 5 (p.87).

Recognition of the figure as a "duck" or a "rabbit" is independent of the parts that make up the figure, for the parts are the same in each case. Likewise, with some verbal constructions, it is possible to put more than one interpretation on the same statement, e.g. the wartime headline "Monty flies back to front" quoted by Chomsky.[4] Another gestalt principle states that such perceptual "wholes" tend to take on a form which is "ideal" in the sense that it is, among other things, the most simple, the most symmetrical and the most parsimonious.

These principles express notions that have always been considered fundamental to artistic creativity. Thus, in the words of Joseph Chiari:

> Art is a symbolic language with its essential laws of association and coherence, based on the structural correspondences between the perennial laws or truths of creation and man's mind, which intuits and reveals them.
>
> (Chiari, 1977: 98)

To express a similar idea, Koestler (1964) uses the term "bisociation" for the process of connecting hitherto separate "matrices." He argues that "the individual act of discovery displays essentially the same psychological pattern in science and in art" (1964: 352):

> Metaphor and imagery come into existence by a process, familiar from scientific discovery, of seeing an analogy where nobody saw one before. The aesthetic satisfaction derived from the analogy depends on the emotive potential of the matrices which participate in it.
>
> (Koestler, 1964: 343)

It is this "emotive potential" of the bisociated elements that produces the essential difference, in Koestler's view, between the bisociative act in art and its counterpart in science.

> The matrices with which the artist operates are chosen for their sensory qualities and emotive potential; his bisociative act is a <u>juxtaposition</u> of these planes or aspects of experience, not their <u>fusion</u> in an intellectual synthesis - to which, by their very nature, they do not lend themselves.
>
> (Koestler, 1964: 352)

Koestler's theory suggests then, that what is fundamental to the aesthetic process is the ability to perceive similarities and

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[4] Ambiguous statements of this kind show that language and thought are not identical; for otherwise we could not know that they can be interpreted in more than one way.

differences that are combined or integrated or juxtaposed into new wholes, the ability (that is) both to particularize and to generalize. First, there is the discrimination of the elements of experience, even when they already constitute unified wholes, and second, the discovery, or rediscovery, of an essential oneness underlying these apparently disparate qualities of objects that becomes manifest when they are related in particular ways. C. Day Lewis has identified the same process as being essential to the functioning of poetic imagery:

> There is a most remarkable weight and unanimity of evidence, both in the verse and the critical writings of English poets, that poetry's truth comes from the perception of a unity underlying and relating all phenomena, and that poetry's task is the perpetual discovery, through its imaging, metaphor-making faculty, of new relationships within this pattern, and the rediscovery and renovation of old ones.
> (Lewis, 1947: 34)

This capacity in the artist to perceive unity, while being recognized as vital to the very meaning and significance of art,[5] is only vaguely understood as yet by developmental psychologists. Some important work has been done recently in the area of metaphoric understanding and this will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

The psychological explanation for the "pleasure" or "cognitive satisfaction" that is produced by structural wholeness may be the same for the act of appreciation as it is for the act of creation. It has been suggested that certain unifying symbols or patterns of relationships might be natural products of the human mind. Jung, for instance, elaborated a theory of archetypes that were said to be inborn in the collective consciousness of all humans by virtue of their racial or cultural heritage. The Gestalt psychologists, on the other hand, have suggested that these universal patterns arise from a natural correspondence between the arrangement of elements and aspects in the physical world and the functioning of the human nervous system.[6]

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[5] Coleridge spoke of the imagination as seeing all things in one. "It reveals itself in a balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities" (see Chapter 3, p.35). A similar notion is expressed in the following comment by the modern poet, Stephen Spender:

> The task of the poet is now, as always, to reveal the singleness of life beneath the nightmare of phenomena.

[6] The Gestalt tradition has tended to concentrate on the visual arts and, within them, on the nature and object of pattern perception (Gardner, 1973b: 16) probably because this correspondence between visual stimuli and neural functioning is more readily amenable to experimental study.

Any attempt to study the wholeness of cognitive structure inherent in acts of appreciation, however, faces the problem of identifying the appropriate criteria. Koestler recognizes the limitations of the verbal utterance, when he comments that:

> The aesthetic experience aroused by a work of art is derived from a series of bisociative processes which happen virtually at once and cannot be rendered in verbal language without suffering impoverishment and distortion.
>
> (Koestler, 1964: 391)

Nevertheless, the verbal utterances made in response to a work of art, insofar as they can be taken as criteria for the understanding of it (see p.97), can provide considerable illumination of the cognitive processes at work. This can be illustrated from an examination of interview protocols made in response to the following image from "The Ancient Mariner":

> Almost upon the western wave
> Rested the broad bright Sun;
> When that strange shape drove suddenly
> Betwixt us and the Sun.
>
> And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
> (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
> As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
> With broad and burning face.

The image comes at the point in the narrative where the ghost-ship makes its first appearance. At one level, it is a visual description of the ghost-ship silhouetted against the setting sun; but a comprehensive and unified interpretation of the image requires an integration of several components of meaning. Not only is it necessary to understand the spatial relationships of the objects involved in order to "picture" what is happening, but to appreciate the full emotive force of its effect it is necessary to recognize that the juxtaposition of the sun and the ghost-ship is reinforced by the symbolic pattern that has already been developed in the earlier part of the poem. The sun is a source of suffering and has become a powerful symbol for the harsh and punitive aspect of the natural world. Here, it is not only associated with the appearance of the ghost-ship (which heralds a new stage in the Mariner's retribution), but it is personified as a human prisoner trapped behind dungeon bars. Hence, the whole image coheres into a powerful statement of the Mariner's spiritual condition. The combination of fear and desperate hope is made even more explicit by the prayer that is exclaimed in parenthesis.

For the 9 - 10 year old children who comprised the youngest group, the full comprehension of this image proved too demanding a task, and the interpretations given were clearly limited by cognitive structural constraints. These can be observed in the following protocol, for instance:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): ...the sun is up in the sky...(Yes)... and the Mariner, he is on the ship and then something that looks like big bars ...(What is it that looks like big bars?) ...long pause...(The other ship?...the ghost ship?)...yes...(What does it do?) ...it probably...some shadow or something on the sky making it look like these bars across...(And what does the sun look like?) ...it would just look like...kind of the sun being cut and lines...(And where is the sun in relation to the bars?)...in a dungeon, or...(Yes. Does it make the sun look as though it is in a dungeon?)... well, the bars that go across the sky could have the Mariner and his men in a jail...(Why?)...because it says 'Betwixt us and the sun'...because that could mean that they're in jail and the sun can't get to them.

Within the obvious structural limits of this interpretation, there is a "wholeness" - an attempt has been made to synthesize the various elements that have been discriminated. The level of generality, however, is rather simple and the personification is not understood correctly even when the analogy is made explicit. Some awareness of the emotive overtones of the image may be evident in the last comment but on the whole this interpretation focusses on the visual elements only.

Where the emotive associations are stronger, the visual elements of the image are less clearly discriminated, as in the following protocol:

Tony (9yr 11 mth): ...oh, he's looking into um...to the ship ...he's looking at the ship and he seems to know that it's a ghost ship...(What does it mean, 'And straight the sun was flecked with bars'?)...oh, life and death could be um...you know the actual bars... the white part could be life and the black part of the bars could be death...('As if through a dungeon-grate he peered' - who peered?)...ah, the ghostly figures...('With broad and burning face' - whose face is that?)...oh, it's probably the life one... the one that's dicing for life.

Comprehending the visual elements in such an image is clearly dependent on the sun-prisoner bisociation, but making this connection at the emotive level as well as the visual may require a generalizing function that goes beyond the cognitive-structural limits of children at this level of development. In the following protocol, for instance, the bisociative wholeness is eventually achieved, but only at the visual level:

Tania (10yr 0 mth): (What did it look like?)...all misty...it might be all misty around it and they can't see it clearly...they didn't expect anything to come...(And what did the sun look like?)...all misty...you can hardly see it...(And why was it 'flecked with bars'?) ...cos they could just see parts of it from the ship because of the ship that was there... (And what does it look like?)...it's got something in front of it...they can just see parts of it...(And what does it look like to them?)...pause...(What has the 'broad and burning face'?)...the sun...(And what does the sun look like here?)...oh, I don't know that...(What is a dungeon-grate?)...I don't know...(Do you know what a dungeon is?) ...yes...(And what's a dungeon-grate?)...oh, the bars on the window...it looks as if the sun is peering through the bars.

This child knew what the elements in the image referred to but the connections were not initially made until the questions led her towards a more complete interpretation - an interpretation that lay nevertheless within her cognitive capacity.

For some of the older children, structural limitations continued to impede the generalizing function:

Andrew (11yr 9 mth): ...oh, the...well the ghost ship is coming in and they're praying or something...(It says, 'When that strange shape drove suddenly betwixt us and the sun' - what happens there?) ...oh, it was...um...between them and the sun or something...and it came...it came into sight...('And straight the sun was flecked with bars' - what happens there?)...oh, it might be getting dark or something...all the rays or something...('As if through a dungeon-grate he peered' - what does that refer to?)...it might be the albatross...no, it wouldn't...('With broad and burning face' - what is that?)...it might be one of the people on the ghost ship...(Well, what's the dungeon-grate?)...um, there might have been a dungeon on the ship.

A literal interpretation, however, can produce inconsistency (lack of unity) and if this is verbalized it may well provide the mechanism by

which the metaphoric understanding is gradually grasped. For example,

(Darren (12yr 0 mth): ...the ship's coming through and they can see someone that looks as though he is all red...kind of a ship coming for them... they can just see him...(It says, 'When that strange shape drove suddenly betwixt us and the sun' - what happens there?)...the ship went in front of the sun...(And then it says, 'And straight the Sun was flecked with bars' - what is that?)...those could be the masts and you could see the sun through the masts...('As if through a dungeon-grate he peered with broad and burning face' - what is the face that is being referred to here?)...the ancient mariner's...(What's a dungeon-grate?) ...I think it's the bars on a dungeon...he could be down below looking out...(When it says the sun was 'flecked with bars,' are they the same bars being referred to?)...oh, it could...(How could it refer to them?)... he's looking through the other ship to the sun...through the masts kind of...looking at the masts...(Is there a dungeon-grate on the ship?)...no...it looks just like a dungeon-grate.

But a grasp of the metaphoric meaning, while enabling a unified perception of the visual image, may not generalize to the emotive level, e.g.

John (11yr 4 mth): ...the sun's setting and in between the sun and the ship he sees this ghost ship and um ...he can see all the rigging and everything and it's just like he's looking out of some window with iron bars across it...and he's really...he thinks it's real which it isn't ...(Whose is the 'broad and burning face'?) ...that's...that would be the sun...(Can you explain further?)...well, the face...the face of the sun is setting and he can just see it ...and it's just down...just about under the water...(And what is the reference to the dungeon-grate?)...oh, I would say...I would think that it would be the ropes and the rigging of the ghost ship...and they would be...some of them would be crossed most probably...and it would give him the impression of a dungeon-grate.

Where the image is generalized to an emotive level, the synthesis becomes much more forceful even though the visual elements may be incorrectly interpreted. The following protocol contains an interpretation that has vividness and wholeness at the emotive level, despite the incorrect grasp of the central metaphor.

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): ...the sun is in the west and going down... and then all of a sudden they see a strange shape which is the boat...of the ship which looks like a ghost-ship...and it's between um...the mariner's ship and the sun...and um...and then when it says 'and straight the Sun was flecked with bars'...um...as though the sun couldn't get out...it was...um... caged and 'Heaven's Mother send us grace!' ...they were frightened...they were afraid and that's why they...um...started praying or said that...and 'as if through a dungeon-grate he peered'...um...I'd say that was one of the people...the death...on the ghost-ship...and the 'broad and burning face'... um...hatred or...um...very broad and upsetting face...

The visual image of the sun as a prisoner ("couldn't get out," "caged") is juxtaposed with the crew being "frightened," "afraid" which coheres at the emotive level with the "hatred" on the "broad and upsetting face." That the face is incorrectly attributed to the death figure is a minor inconsistency which does little to lessen the unity of the interpretation. Thus, in a complete interpretation of this image, the visual elements and the emotive elements are themselves bisociated to form a higher level cognitive synthesis. In the following protocol, for instance, the emotional state of the crew, the sun as a symbol of retribution ("God might be looking down on them") and the visual image of the dungeon-grate, are all integrated within the cognitive structure of the interpretive act.

Colin (14yr 0 mth): ...the sun was going down...to night... (What's the strange shape?)...another sort of imaginary ship...maybe...it could be imaginary or it could be real...that's the ghost-ship...('And straight the Sun was flecked with bars' - what's that describing?) ...all the...um...masts and ropes on the ship would be making it barred...('Heaven's Mother send us grace!' - what does that mean?)... praying...or they um...they don't want to drop dead...they're all very scared and they're wondering whether they're going to die or live...('As if through a dungeon-grate he peered' - what does that describe?)...it might be the sun...or if they believed in God, God might be looking down on them and...(It says,'As if through a dungeon-grate he peered with broad and burning face')...it would be the sun coming out the...the ship's moving along and the sun's coming out again...into them...(And what does the sun look like?)... great big...and burning...and um...it got bigger and um...broader...(And the dungeon-grate?)...oh, a grating in the dungeon...like a window with grating on it or something...

> ...the sun is like a prisoner...coming out from behind the ship.

While it would be predictable that formal operational reasoning would enable such interpretive wholeness within a more flexible structure, it is important to recognize that abstractness and generality are not identical dimensions. Hamlyn reminds us of this when he comments that:

> If one views the matter (of what is intellectually possible) in terms of structures, as Piaget does, it is possible to say that generality-specificity is a dimension of the structures which is concerned with their scope and comprehensiveness. One structure is more general than another to the extent that it covers a wider range of phenomena and to the extent that it takes in less of the detail of what it structures.
>
> (Hamlyn, 1978: 118)

Furthermore, the structural features of children's thought are not themselves static and developmental change or transformation occurs because of continuous interaction between the child and his environment. Such transformation then, is the second criterion for cognitive development and the one that is now to be considered in relation to interpretive reasoning.

2. Transformations in the Structures of Interpretive Reasoning

According to Piaget, transformations in the development of cognitive structures can be traced in three general trends: decentration; interiorization; symbolization.

First, there is a steady decline in egocentrism as the child comes initially to perceive and later to reason about objects/symbols/concepts from viewpoints other than his own. This process of decentration underlies all cognitive development and is an essential element in the unfolding relationship between the child and his world.

Hamlyn (1978: 120) reminds us that egocentricity cannot be regarded as tantamount to privacy or subjectivity, but it can be construed as a conceptual limitation.

> Piagetian investigations into the moves away from egocentricity...investigations into the possibilities of children adopting points of view which are other than their own...are therefore investigations into the use of imagination and intelligent understanding.
>
> (Hamlyn, 1978: 120)

Only as children extend their viewpoints can they gradually begin to appreciate that a work of art is capable of different interpretations from the one they may have formed. They can begin to appreciate,

moreover, that some interpretations are more complete or more correct than others. For, as Hamlyn points out:

> To the extent that we can speak of the correct or right understanding of something, we can speak of the concept of that thing, and the concept is therefore objective and shareable with others.
>
> (Hamlyn, 1978: 74)

The second trend in cognitive development is a steadily increasing interiorization of action. The young child solves problems by performing physical actions such as gathering, separating, ordering. Gradually these actions occur through concrete and later formal operations.

This fits in well with Polanyi's concept of tacit integration (Mays, 1978) - that is, the capacity to perform skills without having a clear cut comprehension of the rules (or maxims) which these skills manifest.[7] As Mays suggests,

> For Piaget then the logical activities of the young child, for example, those which involve the classifying and ordering of objects, are at first directed by structures of which he is unconscious....As Piaget (1953: 40) puts it, 'He is unaware of this in the same way that in singing or whistling he is unaware of the laws of harmony.' Piaget's position here does seem to resemble Polanyi's that a skilful performance may exhibit a set of rules which remain unknown to the person following them.
>
> (Mays, 1978: 50-51)

This point is fundamental to Polanyi's claim that knowledge is never entirely explicit, never completely reducible to propositional terms. The tacit dimension is as essential to science as it is to art insofar as an education in either domain requires the construction of knowledge by a knowing subject.

Polanyi's interest has been directed less at propositional knowledge and the logic of scientific theorizing and much more at that aspect of knowledge which is not capable of abstract formulation. The knowledge that is involved in a practical skill, the knowledge that informs judgments of various kinds, the knowledge of a connoisseur, and the knowledge that makes a medical student become an effective diagnostician - all are examples of what Polanyi calls personal knowledge. He uses map-reading as an example:

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[7] Chomsky suggests that the child knows linguistic facts (such as the distinction between subject and predicate) before he knows any actual language.

> Consider the use of geographical maps. A map represents a part of the earth's surface in the same sense in which experimental science represents a much greater variety of experience. To use a map to find our way, we must be able to do three things. First we must identify our actual position in the landscape with a point on the map, then we must find on the map an itinerary toward our destination, and, finally, we must identify this itinerary by various landmarks in the landscape around us. Thus map-reading depends on the tacit knowledge and skill of the person using the map. Successful identification of actual locations with points on a map depends upon the good judgment of a skilled map-reader. No map can read itself. Neither can the most explicit possible treatise on map-reading read a map.
>
> (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975: 30)

What Polanyi has recognized as the learning of a tacit dimension of knowledge is close to Piaget's notion of the gradual interiorization of cognitive structures.

Aesthetically, as has already been argued in Chapter 1 (see p.5) of the present thesis, there is an important distinction between making and perceiving. As Gombrich (1960) has argued, in the arts "making comes before matching" and indeed research has shown that there are certain cognitive pre-requisites of mature metaphoric comprehension (Leondar, 1975; Billow, 1975) and that the general pattern is for spontaneous production to occur first, followed by comprehension and then by the ability to explain the rationale of a metaphor (Pollio and Pollio, 1974). Moreover, as children increase in age they show a tendency towards preference for an appropriate rather than a conventional metaphor (Gardner et al, 1975b) and they show an increasing capacity[8] to comprehend metaphors that involve more complex analogies (Winner et al, 1976). Such empirical findings as these can be readily explained in terms of transformations involving the tacit interiorization of cognitive structures.

The third trend in cognitive development is seen in the child's <u>growing use of symbols</u> of various kinds, such as words, pictures or concepts. The pre-operational child develops language and this enables him to represent objects in his environment. Later, the operations themselves are transformed into a linguistic or symbolic code, making

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[8] The implication is that conceptual capacities are a matter of degree. A child may be able to make discriminations and in that sense <u>understand</u> that there is a difference, without knowing precisely what that difference is (cf. Hamlyn, 1978: 93-4).

possible the abstract weighing up of possibilities and solving of problems. In Piaget's studies of concrete and formal operational thought he has been concerned mainly with denotative symbols - with words and concepts that have a definitive meaning. The ontogenesis of connotative symbols, however, is less well understood (Gardner, 1979). These are symbols that do not have a discrete link between signifier and referent, but rather evoke a certain quality of experience and assume a larger meaning or set of meanings which cannot be given, or not fully given, in perceptual experience itself. These symbols, which are largely exclusive to literature and the fine arts, sometimes enter the child's consciousness in early life and undergo structural transformations over time that are as yet only vaguely understood. Gardner (1979: 78) contends that study of the "operation" of symbol systems is still at an early stage and that:

> Rather than being essentially equivalent, symbol systems differ widely from one another in what they can encode (contrast language with music), what they typically express (contrast line drawings with dance), and which features they highlight (contrast the way in which volume is presented in number, music, or sculpture). Symbol systems also differ dramatically in their notationality: some allow a faithful mapping back and forth between notations and a field of reference (e.g. musical scores, Morse code); others, infinitely replete, permit an indefinite number of readings, which thereby preclude any exhaustive mapping back and forth between elements and referents (consider a portrait or a dance performance).
>
> (Gardner, 1979: 78)

In addition to these differences between the various symbol systems there will be marked differences between the expressive and the appreciative modes for each of them.

Transformations of cognitive structure in poetic appreciation could be expected to show features in accordance with each of the developmental trends outlined above. As children mature in their cognitive capacities, they will be able to construct interpretations exhibiting greater degrees of completeness, comprehensiveness and appropriateness because they are able to discriminate between the various elements of the text and articulate the features that they discern. The appreciation that is possible depends on these cognitive capabilities because, in the words of Olsen (1978: 125):

> Ability to think <u>about</u> a text <u>in terms other than</u> those provided by the text itself, is a prerequisite for understanding <u>any</u> text.

This has been clearly exemplified in the interview protocols made in response to the following image from "The Ancient Mariner":

> The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
> The furrow followed free;
> We were the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea.

While this image is primarily visual, the poetic effects are achieved through a powerful synthesis of sound and sense. The alliteration, the internal rhyme and the subtle rhythmic change combine to produce a stanza which Livingston Lowes (1927) described as among the most memorable in English poetry. In the first two lines, the movement of the ship is perfectly in tune with the natural elements and the mastery of man over nature is symbolized in the image of the plough. A climax occurs at the end of the third line and the long vowel sounds produce a slowing down of rhythm which perfectly expresses the appalling unexpectedness of the changed conditions represented by the becalming of the ship. With a simplicity that is rarely found even in great art, Coleridge has attained his own poetic ideal of placing the "best words in the best order" to form an image in which, as Humphry House comments (1962: 99) "the parallel between the physical voyage and the spiritual experience is most perfectly realized."

But appreciation of a passage such as this can occur on a number of different levels as the clinical interviews of the present study have revealed.

A significant observation is that the metaphorical meaning of the first two lines may elude the young child merely because the particular word "furrow" is outside his vocabulary and even though the referential meaning may be well within his range of experience. Of the ten children at the 9 - 10 years level not one could say what the word "furrow" meant yet all were able to describe a plough and could understand the metaphor when this concept was invoked. When the meaning of "furrow" was given to these 9 - 10 year old children as a straight piece of information, the whole visual image appeared to be unlocked.

Andrew (9yr 7 mth):	I think the rudder...it's like a plough and it churns up the sea...because when you see other boats you see them do that...
Clare (9yr 7 mth):	...like valleys of water following them...
Christine (9yr 11 mth):	...the furrow that the ship or the boat makes when it goes through...
Tania (10yr 0 mth):	...the ship is turning the waves over...
Joanne (9yr 11 mth):	...putting the waves into following rows, in a way...

Neil (10yr 6 mth): ...it means that there are little hollows like that (shapes his hands into a 'V')... like a plough going through the sea... because the back of the boat goes in...and as they're going along it leaves a ditch... underneath where it's been.

For these children the comprehension of the metaphor has become an act of discovery, which can be expressed in very personal terms as it is for the following subject:

Tony (9yr 11 mth): (What's a furrow?)...not sure about that... (Well, you know what a plough is?)...yes... (What does a plough do to the soil?)...oh, um, all the dry soil on top gets dug up and it wets all the...the...the soil that is... um, damp underneath comes up onto the top... (Well, there's no plough here, is there? So what does it mean, 'the furrow followed free'?) ...oh, I know what it is now...the...um, when the ship comes along there's white spread stuff comes out when...see once I was in a ...on this Picton ferry and you look out and ...especially if you're on a speed-boat or something...if a speed-boat passes you there's all sorts of waves that rock the boat.

Responding to the image in these subjective and idiosyncratic terms may be an important prerequisite to subsequent comprehension at a contextual level in which a complete and correct interpretation of the image is achieved.

In the following protocol the initial interpretation is incorrect because the metaphor is not grasped. However, there is a marked change of interpretation, with ensuing comprehension, once the elements of the analogy are connected and the metaphor is understood.

Steven (10yr 7 mth): (What's being described there?)...the sea and ...the sky...the weather...(And what's happening?)...it's coming up for a storm... (What does 'the furrow followed free' mean?) ...pause...(Do you know what a furrow is?)... no...(Well, do you know what a plough is?)... oh yes...oh, it's the rudder I think...(What does a plough do to the soil?)...digs it up ...(Well, there's no plough here, is there? So, what does it mean, 'the furrow followed free'?)...the sea...(What's happening to the sea?)...it's being split up...because the ship is sort of like ploughing it...(And what effect does that have?)...oh, all the water comes out from the sides of the ship and it all goes wavy.

Likewise, in the following protocol from Kirsten, we can observe a transformation of interpretive structure that is clearly predicated on the correct comprehension of the metaphor.

Kirsten (9yr 7 mth): (What sorts of things do you see?)...um, that it's most probably a very very rough sea...(What kind of picture do you get?) ...long pause...(Well, let's have a look at the words themselves. What's a 'furrow'? Do you know what a furrow is?)...no...(Well, do you know what a plough is?)...yes... (What does a plough do to the soil?)...um, it comes along and it makes kind of little mounds and a gully in the middle...(And that's called a 'furrow.' Now when it says 'the furrow followed free,' what does it mean?)...that um, something is happening... like what a plough usually does...(And what's happening?)...um, it's...the boat's going forward and it's making a gully in between...and all the waves are just coming out like this (makes a trough with her hands) ...(Yes, good. Now, how does it seem to you. I'll just read it again to you: 'The fair breeze blew etc.' What sort of picture do you see?)...there's a nice...um, fairly big breeze and all the waves are going...the foam on top of the waves is going everywhere ...um, and the boat is like a fairly big plough making the gully in between and the waves are just going out.

Again, the single word "furrow" is initially, for this child, an obstacle to the metaphoric understanding of the whole image. However, the elements upon which the analogy is based are clearly within her experience and understood at a tacit level. Once the conceptual barrier is overcome, the whole image crystallizes into a vivid set of associations.

A further observation that can be made with regard to the capacities of this youngest group of children to appreciate the poetic qualities of these lines, concerns the extent to which they could recognize and discuss the significance of the sound effects in contributing to the poetic meaning. When asked what sorts of things they noticed about the sounds of the words, four of the subjects stated that they noticed nothing, two made very vague comments about "the words rhyming" and three were able to perceive something very vaguely of the rhythmic change in the third line, with comments such as:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): 'We were the first that ever burst'... well, that was pretty quick...but 'into that silent sea'...that's when it slowed down...(Why does it slow down like that do you think?)...because the breeze...it might have dropped.

Tania (10yr 0 mth): (Do you notice anything about the sounds of the words?)...they rhyme, kind of...(And what else do you notice?)...they mean the opposite meanings...(In what way?)...well, from 'the fair breeze blew, the white foam flew'...um, they started from that but then

they burst...and went into the silent sea...and it was calm.

Steven (10yr 7 mth): (Does the sound of the words change at all?) ...yes...'we were the first'...it does a little bit...'into that silent sea'...just changes the sound of it.

Only one subject at this age-level perceives the sound of the lines as being central to the image but the awareness is at a tacit level only and he struggles to articulate his interpretation.

Tony (9yr 11 mth): (Do you notice anything about the sounds of the words there?)...oh, there might be... um, when they say, 'we were the first that ever burst into that silent sea'...well, um, the sort of...um, you know it seems...um, I haven't got the word for it...whispers... 'we were the first that ever burst'...sort of, um...he says it longer...like 'we were the first that ever burst into that silent sea' ...you know, as if it's going into a creepy sea.

This subject's interpretation, while going further than any of the others at this age level, lacks the discriminations that could be made possible by having a vocabulary and set of conventions by which to describe the poetic effects that are being perceived.

At the 11 - 12 year level, the protocols reveal an almost identical pattern to that for the youngest age-group.

As for the younger children, the referential meaning of the word "furrow" is unknown to all but two of the subjects and, as before, when the plough analogy is suggested the subjects are able to provide comprehensive interpretations of the image, e.g.

Jody (11yr 11 mth): ...the movement...um, the sort of gap that the boat was making when it was moving... following...(How?)...well, when you're going through the sea you always make a movement... well, the boat probably made the movement... made it look like it was being ploughed...a water-plough or something...and it just followed as it went through.

Julie (11yr 5 mth): ...well, the ship sort of cuts a path...the trail of the ship...it seems to follow because it's behind...

Heather (11yr 11 mth): ...the ship was like a plough...um, the ship was a kind of plough...it goes through the water and...um...the front part of it - I can't remember the name - it kind of splits the water, which makes a furrow...

Darren (12yr 0 mth): ...well, that would be the front of the ship, the bow, cutting through the water and the water just spreads out...

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): ...um, as the ship bounds through the waves, it will leave a hollow...a white hollow... and then, after a while, as it goes further and further along...the hollow would fade and fade and fade...until you wouldn't know the ship had been there.

As for the younger age-group also, the majority of subjects at the 11 - 12 year level showed no awareness of the alliteration or the rhythmic contrast as significant sound effects having an intrinsic function for the completeness of the image. Where there is a partial awareness, as in the following two protocols, the lack of a coherent language with which to describe the elements that have been perceptually discriminated becomes a significant limitation for the interpretation that is attempted.

Heather (11yr 11 mth): (Do you notice anything about the sounds of the words here?)...there's lots of 'f's... (Why is that, do you think?)...I don't know really...it's just different...to make it sound different...(And do you notice anything about the second two lines?)... 'first' and 'burst'...they sound alike... (And what effect does that have?)...dramatic ...(How?)...well,um...we were the first...it emphasizes that they really were the first... that ever burst...they really burst...it emphasizes what happened...(What about the sound of 'silent sea'?)...it sounds calm... (What is the difference that occurs in the second two lines?)...well, one sounds really dramatic and the other one sounds quiet.

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): (Is there a change in the way the words sound?) ...yes...(What kind of change is it?)...time... um, well, the first two lines are fast... because it's um...it's fast movement really what they're talking about...but in the second two lines, such as 'into that silent sea,' it's really slow...something that doesn't have to be fast...just quiet and slow.

Not only is it clear that these children could readily learn a basic critical language with which they might describe their auditory perceptions, but the mastery of such terms as "rhythmic duration," "internal rhyme" and "alliteration" would facilitate the formation of interpretations that were both more complete and more comprehensive than those given. The following protocol from John, provides an interpretation that is relatively complete (it is the most complete for this age-group) but it lacks sufficient comprehensiveness to account for the rhythmic change in the last line of the stanza.

John (11yr 4 mth): (What's being described in the first two lines?)...well, the wind's blowing them along and the foam off the top of the waves, it's um...sparkling along um...and all's good and the furrow...I suppose that's the furrow of the waves...the troughs of the waves...and it's following behind or something like that...(What do you mean by the furrow of the waves? What's a furrow?) ...ah, it's like...when they plough up the land, the furrow is the ditch...(But there's no plough here so how is the word being used?) ...um, it's used to describe the different... the tops of the waves, the swell...where it's reached the two high points and then there's the...gap in between...(Yes, and do you notice anything about the sounds of the words there?)...yes, they're fast, and they give the impression that all was good and they're moving along fairly fast...because the white foam's flying...(And what happens in the third line? 'We were the first that ever burst')...oh, well they were obviously the very first people to go into that part of the ocean and they...you know, they thought, oh, that was a great achievement...it was all... and it must have been quiet...they must have been in the middle of nowhere...(Do you notice any change in the sounds of the words when you come to that third line?)...yes, there is a bit of a change but...(What kind of a change?)...oh, it's hard to describe... um, it picks up...it goes slightly faster... maybe like that to give the impression that they're bursting...like they've just burst through a big wall into this ocean...

The explication of the visual metaphor in the above protocol has a structural wholeness and semantic coherence indicative of mastery over the analogical cognitive demands of this poetic image. The perception of fast movement at the auditory level (produced by the combination of alliteration and short vowel sounds) gives added vividness to the image, but the subject is unable to discriminate the change in rhythmic duration produced by the long vowel sounds in the third and fourth lines. He therefore incorrectly suggests that the rhythm "picks up" and "goes slightly faster" - an inference which is not consistent with the other elements in his interpretation. Were this subject to have a language with which to describe such auditory effects, the perceptual discriminations could be more consistently integrated into the whole interpretation.

This can be illustrated by one of the protocols from the oldest age-group. Not only does Tina have the term for describing the sound effect (i.e. alliteration) but she is aware that sound and rhythm are essential to the poetic meaning.

Tina (13yr 2 mth): (What do you notice about the sounds of the words here?)...there's lots of alliteration ...(Do you know what alliteration is?)... yes, the sounds of the words...the beginning of the words is the same...(And what effect does it have there?)...um, it has the feeling of flowing and it makes you notice what's being said...the repetition...(How is the ship moving there?)...well, it must have been pretty fast...then it burst into the sea... (And how do the words sound?)...um, they pass through your mind quickly...(Yes, and is there any change in that third line?)...well, there's a few 's's but...well, it seems that all of a sudden they came out of this wind and stopped dead...and the words seem to slow down.

At the 14 year level, there is little difficulty in perceiving that rhythm and sound have deliberate and particular functions in poetic language. Most subjects not only recognize the alliteration by describing it ("using lots of 'f's") but they also recognize that it is intended to produce certain effects, although what these effects are is generally not very clear. Interpretive comment for most subjects is limited to the following:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): ...to give it some sort of feeling...

Colin (14yr 0 mth): ...sort of flow maybe...and they all fit together...

Graham (14yr 1 mth): ...it gives it a flowing...gives it a flowing sound...

Chris (14yr 5 mth): ...well, it does make it seem all smooth and good, I suppose, because it all runs along together nicely...

For some, the interpretation goes a stage further, to suggest the movement of the ship, e.g.

Gaeleen (14yr 5 mth): ...to give a feeling of how fast the boat's going...

Once this connection has been made, further probing may reveal even finer discriminations. In the following protocol, for example, the synthesis of sound and sense is made even more explicit.

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): (What do you notice about the sounds of the words here?)...there's a rhythm to it...(And what about the words themselves?)...there's a lot of 'f's...(Is that deliberate, do you think?)...probably, yes, to make it sound better...um, it makes it...um, everything kind of blends together a bit more...(Why is it like that?)...um, because it describes the sea and those words are the ones that best fit it...(How is the ship moving here?)...oh, quite easily...it's just kind of gliding across the water...(And how do the words move

when you say them?)...they flow freely... like the ship...(Is there any change in the sounds at about the third line?)...yes, it sounds...it's describing the way that the ship burst into the sea...the same way that the words burst...they sort of change the rhythm.

While the questions (How is the ship moving here? And how do the words move when you say them?) insinuate an interpretation, they do not impose it. The subject is clearly capable of making the necessary discrimination herself and the resultant interpretation reflects a depth of understanding which would be outside the cognitive capabilities of most younger children. Even the following subject is capable of making the discrimination, though he lacks the critical language with which it might be clearly expressed and he struggles to articulate what is only tacitly perceived.

Blair (14yr 7 mth): (Is there any change in the sound of the words in that third line?)...yes...(How?)... they seem to rhyme differently than the first ones...they haven't got the same letters coming through...not letters, it's the sound ...like 'first' and 'burst'...(Does that fit the description at all?)...yes, it could be the sound of the sea and that as they're breaking through...it kind of makes it sound like they're actually breaking through something...

Some knowledge of how poets use rhythm and duration (poetic conventions) might enable the change of vowel sound to be recognized more precisely. This observation is further illustrated by the following protocol:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): ...well, the first two lines are describing what was happening and then the third line's describing what they were doing...(And what was happening in the first two lines?)...oh, it was describing how fast they were going... (And what happens in the third line?)...oh, well the sea's silent so it was probably calm ...(And does the sound of the words change?) yes, in some way I suppose...the 'f's have got something to do with the speed and then ...um, when they come into the silent sea, it was calmer and the words sound different ...sort of slower...(And what sound do we hear?)...the 's'...it's like 's' for silent ...you get a fast sound and then a slow sound...

On the basis of indications obtained from these clinical studies, it would seem that many older children have acquired a cognitive capacity to understand how certain poetic devices and conventions

function to control the auditory and visual qualities of words so that they articulate precise affective states.[9] One important aim of teaching poetic appreciation is to provide the conceptual apparatus with which the synthesis of sound and sense in the heightened language of poetry can be identified (or discriminated) and explicated (or discussed) within the context of a comprehensive interpretation.

3. Self-regulation in the Structures of Interpretive Reasoning

The third of the criteria for cognitive structure is a direct consequence of the equilibration process, the very mechanism by which development occurs.

In Piagetian theory, the process of equilibration not only produces transformations of cognitive structure but it ensures that as new elements are engendered they belong within the structure because they preserve its laws of composition through the principle of self-regulation (entailing self-maintenance and closure).

Piaget suggests that perfect laws of self-regulation are found in mathematical and logical structures (1971: 14-15) but there is also a more elementary kind of self-regulation in that class of structures whose transformations unfold in time (e g. linguistic structures, social structures, psychological structures, and so on). In these cases, laws of transformation "depend upon the interplay of anticipation and correction (feedback)." In cognitive development we find that equilibration accounts for this interplay by which function generates structure. Regulation is maintained by the process of assimilation, whereby an action is actively reproduced and comes to incorporate new objects into itself or by the process of accommodation, whereby the schemes of assimilation themselves become modified in being applied to a diversity of objects. At the final stages of development, these processes become "reversible operations" comparable to those that exist in mathematics and logic. Mischel summarizes the position as follows:

> What Piaget means by "equilibration" is, roughly, a process of self-regulation which maintains a balance between "assimilation" and "accommodation," compensates for internal and external disturbances, and in so doing leads to the development of more and more complex, integrated and balanced structures.
> (Mischel, 1971: 323)

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9 This conclusion is supported by other recent empirical research. See Eppel (1950); Gunn (1951); Britton (1954); Mason (1974); Jusczyk (1977).

Although Piaget has been concerned mainly with the self-regulation mechanisms that occur in the development of logical or scientific concepts (e.g. causality, conservation) he does suggest that rhythm is a process that pervades life at every level. He makes the important point that,

> Rhythm too is self-regulating, by virtue of symmetries and repetitions. Though the self-regulation that is here involved is of a much more elementary sort, it would not do to exclude rhythmic systems from the domain of structure.
> (Piaget, 1971: 16)

The importance of this mechanism for the self-regulation of aesthetic structures is obvious when we consider the fundamental place of rhythm in aesthetic experience and awareness. Had Piaget been concerned directly with the ontogenetic structure of aesthetic concepts, he might have accorded this mechanism the same degree of attention that has been given to regulations and operations in the logical domain.

Self-regulation, of course, does not function independently of the other two properties of cognitive structure, viz wholeness and transformation. To exemplify and illustrate how these three properties function within the activity of appreciation, the following discussion will make use of interview protocols taken from children's interpretations of the following relatively complex image from "The Ancient Mariner":

> And now the Storm-blast came, and he
> Was tyrannous and strong:
> He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
> And chased us south along.
>
> With sloping masts and dipping prow,
> As who pursued with yell and blow
> Still treads the shadow of his foe,
> And forward bends his head,
> The ship drove past, loud roared the blast,
> And southward aye we fled.

Warren (1947) in his authoritative analysis and interpretation of the poem, places great emphasis on the symbolic import of such images as this description of the storm. While admitting that exact equations are not possible, he argues that, for a full understanding of the meaning it is necessary to "attempt to disentangle, or rather to precipitate from the solution which is the poem, the elements participating in the import of the poem" (Warren, 1947: 282). But if in the poem as a whole, such an image of the wind and the storm is to be conceived as symbolic of vitality and creative force, as Warren's interpretation suggests, it is essential that the metaphoric structure of the image be understood. When questioned about this passage, however,

the children responded in terms of the meanings that were within their cognitive grasp.

For 9 - 10 year old children, the analogy contained in this image is too complex to be fully understood and of the ten subjects at this age-level, none was able to explicate the comparison between the wind and the giant bird. When asked what it was that was "tyrannous and strong" most answered: the mariner. The wings were thought to be those of a bird and 8 of the 10 children took this to be describing the albatross, although the albatross has not yet appeared at this stage in the poem. The following protocol illustrates the difficulty of comprehension that is typical at this level.

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): (What's a storm-blast?)...it could be a strong wind...(And what does it seem like?) ...it's blasting against the waves or the boat...(What about 'He struck with his o'ertaking wings' - what does the 'he' here refer to?)...pause...(Is that the storm-blast?)...no...(What are the wings? Whose wings are they?)...the mariner...(The mariner's wings?)...um...(Well, what was chasing them south?)...pause...(When it says 'And now the Storm-blast came and he was tyrannous and strong' - what does the 'he' refer to?)...some kind of...it could be an animal...(What could be an animal?)... whatever...it could be a bird...(But, what is it that could be a bird?)...pause...(Look at the words again.. What is it that was 'tyrannous and strong'?)...an albatross.

For Andrew, the quest for a semantic integration of this image founders on the initial misconception of the personification contained in the pronoun "he." Hence the analogous links between the storm and the giant bird are also misconceived, although some important aspects of the image (e.g. the relentless power of the wind) appear to be understood.

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): (Now, look back over those lines. What is he saying that the ship is like?)...it sounds like...whatever's making them go along... it's something strong and it's got a kind of a power to do it...(Yes)...it's something that they might be afraid of.

For others at this age-level, very little of the image is grasped accurately and only a vague impression is reported. For example,

Steven (10yr 7 mth): (Look at those first two lines. What does the 'he' refer to?)...the mariner...('He struck with his o'ertaking wings' - what is that referring to?)...the mariner...(Did the mariner have wings?)...no, the albatross... ('And chased us south along' - what is it that

chased them?)...the bird...('With sloping masts and dipping prow' - what is that describing?)...how the boat's moving... (What did it seem like?)...I don't know what a 'foe' is...(A foe is an enemy)...well it didn't seem too good...(What is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...with shame... you bend your head with shame...(Whose head does it refer to?)...the bird's.

Christine (9yr 11 mth): ...it was windy and...um...it was blowing the ship along to the South Pole...('and he was tyrannous and strong' - what does the 'he' refer to?)...um, the ancient mariner... ('He struck with his o'ertaking wings' - whose wings?)...the albatross...(What is this describing?)...the albatross...(What about the ship?)...it's chasing it and...ah...and that tells us how he gets to the South Pole and... cos um...the albatross chases him or something.

Tania (10yr 0 mth): ...he was worried about his ship's crew and getting out of the storm...('He struck with his o'ertaking wings' - what does that mean?) ...um, he wants to get his ship out of the storm...(What does the 'he' refer to?)...um, the ancient mariner...('And chased us south along' - what chased them?)...the albatross ...(Why?)...he struck with his wings...the wings of the albatross...('With sloping masts and dipping prow' - what's being described there?)...um, the ship in the storm...(And what is it like?)...um, it's rocking, you know, in the storm...(And is it being compared with anything?)...it's like the albatross flying... ('And forward bends his head' - what bends his head forward?)...the albatross.

None of these children has grasped the idea that the ship is being pursued by the storm which is likened to a giant enemy in the form of a bird. Their interpretations are dominated by the literal elements and the incongruities of each overall description appear not to be perceived. Self-regulation is therefore not possible. The only subject at this level to comprehend the metaphorical significance of the image achieves a partial synthesis of meaning but completeness and coherence of interpretation still elude her:

Joanne (9yr 11 mth): um...when it says 'and he was tyrannous and strong' are they referring to the old mariner or to the storm? (Well, what do you think?) ...um, I think they're referring to the old mariner...and he...stood still...and he stood strong...he won't let the wind blow him over... (And what does it mean, 'He struck with his o'ertaking wings'? Who struck with his o'ertaking wings?)...the storm...(And how can the storm have wings?)...oh, well really it's the wind...('And chased us south along' - what does that mean?)...um, it's pushing them

towards the South Pole...(And what does it seem like?)...um,it seems as though they're being chased...('With sloping masts and dipping prow' - what is that?)...the ship... ('As who pursued with yell and blow' - what's being pursued?)...the ship...(What by?)...um, the storm...(What is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...um, it could be the wind...it's a bit difficult to say...(What does the 'foe' refer to?)...I don't know, that's a bit too hard.

This subject shows some attempt to relate the various elements of the image into a coherent pattern and with direct teaching aimed at explicating the analogy between the moving ship and a person being pursued by an ominous foe, it is possible that a complete grasp of the image could be achieved. However, this interpretive response is atypical of the age-level.

For 11 - 12 year old children, the pattern of responses to this passage was far less consistent than for the younger age-group and the evidence suggests that this age-level coincides with a transitional stage of metaphoric comprehension. For half of this group, the interpretations were similar to those of the 9 - 10 year olds and the analogy between the Storm-blast and the gigantic bird seemed to require a connection of conceptual categories that was beyond their cognitive capacities, e.g.

Darren (12yr 0 mth): (What was tyrannous and strong?)...oh, he gave the orders because he was a kind of a captain...(And who or what was tyrannous and strong?)...the ancient mariner...('He struck with his o'ertaking wings, and chased us south along')...um, that would be the...um, albatross following them...(In the next few lines, what is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...the albatross...to look down on the ship...(What does it mean, 'And southward aye we fled'?)...go as fast as they can...(Yes, what doing?)...running away...(Who were they running away from then?)...the bird.

But for two of the 11 - 12 year old subjects there appeared to be a partial grasp of the image, indicating a transitional stage of cognitive development in which literal elements still dominate to prevent full metaphoric understanding. The following protocol illustrates this inconsistent stage of interpretation:

Julie (11yr 5 mth): (What's it describing? What was 'tyrannous and strong'?)...um, it's kind of taking them in the currents with them...(What is?)...the wind ...(The wind - what words there refer to the wind?)...I don't know - the whole lot sounds like...just like the wind...(When it says 'he' at the end of the first line, what does the

'he' refer to?)...the wind, I think...(What does 'storm-blast mean?)...well, it was pretty stormy...it was a stormy wind, I suppose...('He struck with his o'ertaking wings and chased us south along' - what does this 'he' refer to?)...the storm-blast... (And what did the storm-blast do?)...well, it pushed the ship along...(Is the storm-blast being compared with anything?)...not that I can see...(What has the wings here?) ...usually a bird has wings...(So what does it mean here that he 'struck with his o'ertaking wings'?)...I don't really know... (Further down what is being described? What is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...a bird...an albatross...(And what does it mean, 'southward aye we fled'?)...they're um... trying to escape...(What from?)...either the wind or a bird...I don't really know...(slight expression of amusement)

The above subject seems to be aware that her interpretation of the passage is incomplete; her expression of amusement at the end is indicative of mild cognitive dissonance produced by an image that almost but not quite crystallizes in her mind. When such a self-regulatory act, or crystallization does take place, as in the following protocol, a comprehensive, consistent and complete interpretation becomes possible:

John (11yr 4 mth): ...tyrannous and strong...um...would it have anything to do with being sort of...oh, let's see...sort of powerful over its...(And what's being referred to here?)...well, it had the power over the ship...it could do anything it wanted with the ship...(What could?)...the storm...it could um...throw it around in the sea...it could probably sink it...(It says, 'He struck with his o'ertaking wings, and chased us south along' - whose are the wings?) ...I would say it's the storm's wings...um, the wind...the strong south wind...(Yes, how can the storm have wings then?)...well, it's sort of the way he says it...um, the storm has wings sort of...engulfs them so...um, probably thinks...oh, it's hard to describe...(Is there a comparison there?)...yes...it could be a large bird of prey overtaking a smaller bird... (And further down, what is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...I would say it's the head of the ship...the front of the ship...um, bending sort of...(What does the ship seem to be doing?)...well, it seems to be going up and um...it's being blown around and it's going fast...it's getting thrown around in the sea... (And what does it mean, 'Still treads the shadow of his foe'?)...oh, well the ship...I suppose the ship is treading in the shadow of the foe...and the foe is the storm I suppose... ('And southward aye we fled' - what does that mean?)...um, to run away...(Why?)...um, they're

running away from the storm...to get away from it...the wind.

In his explication of the figurative language, John provides a description of each segment which is complete in the sense that it relates the contribution of each separate aspect to the higher level interpretation of the passage as a whole. With some critical vocabulary, even the term "personification" itself, he could extend further his ability to think about the text in terms other than those provided by the text itself and thus refine the discriminations necessary to a mature poetic appreciation. Similarly, the following subject is clearly ready to classify the image as a case of personification:

Allison (11yr 5 mth): ('And he was tyrannous and strong' - what does the 'he' refer to?)...the storm...(What would that mean?)...well, he didn't have any mercy ...he just blew them and buffeted them...('He struck with his o'ertaking wings, and chased us south along' - who chased them?)...the wind...(And whose are the wings?)...the wind's ...he has great wings and he flaps along... (Is the wind being compared in some way?)... I think...well, the sun is referred to as a 'he' and the moon as a 'she', so most of the forces are referred to as either female or male because they can't just call him 'it'...(What about the wings? Why does the wind have wings here?)...well, otherwise how would it move? What would it make all the force with?...(Yes, and what is it that 'forward bends his head'?) ...the ship...it probably means they could get sunk by the wind...if it busted off their mast.

At the 14 year level, comprehension of the passage is more likely to be complete. While three of the subjects showed a partial understanding of the image (similar to that of Julie above), seven were able to provide comprehensive and discriminating explications of which the following protocols are representative:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): (What was tyrannous and strong?)...the storm-blast...(Whose are the wings?)...the wings of the storm-blast...(And what is the storm-blast?) ...strong winds or something...(And are they being compared with anything?)...um, a bird... a very big bird...(And further down, what is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...the ship... (What does the ship appear to be doing?)...um, speeding up...(Why?)...because the wind is so strong...(What does it mean, 'And southward aye we fled'?)...well, it's as if they were fleeing from the wind.

Gaeleen (14yr 5 mth): (What is it that's being described here?)... it's a storm...it was windy and the boat was going pretty fast in the strong wind...so they...he was going...the boat was going along fast...(What is a storm-blast?)...a strong wind ...('And now the Storm-blast came and he was tyrannous and strong' - what does the 'he' refer to there?)...the wind...('Was tyrannous and strong' - what does 'tyrannous' mean?)...um, kind of vicious and cruel...(Yes, a tyrant. 'He struck with his o'ertaking wings' - who struck?)...the wind...(What do the wings refer to?)...the actual gusts of wind...going around ...('And chased us south along?)...it pushed the boat along...and the sails pushed it along ...(So, is there something being compared here?) ...comparing to a...person...(With wings?)...a bird...(What kind of bird?)...a big one...(And what does it seem to be doing to the ship?)... pushing it along and chasing it.

As this subject explicates her interpretation of the image, there is a steady movement towards integration of more and more elements accompanied by a self-regulation (from "person" to "bird") in the structural features of her thoughts. The protocol continues as follows:

Gaeleen (14yr 5 mth): ('As who pursued with yell and blow still treads the shadow of his foe' - what's being described there?)...like it's an enemy...and he's chasing him out...(Yes, and what is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...the wind again...no, the boat...(What is it that's being chased?)...the boat...or the men in the boat... ('And southward aye we fled' - why is that?)... well, if the wind's blowing them so they're going...moving...(So, how is the whole scene being described?)...as though a big bird is chasing the boat...it's like an enemy and it's chasing them away.

The self-regulation of interpretive structure can be a direct outcome of cognitive dissonance that occurs when a subject is required to make discriminations in the process of explicating the image. There is an inclination towards resolving such dissonance and this can have the function of producing a more consistent understanding, as can be observed in the following protocol:

Lorraine (14yr 2 mth): The wind...the wind is chasing them like a big bird...(What is it that 'pursued with yell and blow'?)...well, the storm...it's lightning I think...and it seems to be chasing them...(What is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...the storm...('The ship drove past, loud roared the blast, and southward aye we fled')...some of those words are really...you know, different...(What is it that seems to be chasing them?)...the storm-blast seems to

be chasing the ship...(And what does the ship seem to be doing?)...running...(So what is it that 'forward bends his head'?)...the ship.

The personification of the ship has been integrated with the whole image as a consequence of questioning which has led the subject into discriminating the elements of the "chasing" image more precisely. The result is a more complete interpretation of which the subject herself is aware. The protocol continues:

Lorraine (14yr 2 mth): (Did you find that you could understand that passage when you first heard it?)...well, now that I've talked about it, I can understand more of it...but I could understand some of it at first because I could sort of picture it in my mind...of what was happening...(But in talking about it you're able to come to understand it better?)...yes, because some of the words are different and I hadn't understood them before.

If an image is to have contextual validity, and if the structural demands of the image are within the cognitive capacity of the reader, the correctness of interpretation may depend simply on the availability of information. When this is provided, an interpretation which is incomplete and incorrect may suddenly achieve completeness and coherence, e.g.

Tina (13yr 2 mth): Well, I think the 'Storm-blast' would be the name of the boat...um, and the boat was...it was big...and very sort of...oh, I don't know whether the 'Storm-blast' would be the boat or the albatross...(Well, the albatross hasn't made its appearance yet)...well, the ship was ...was large and mighty...(Is there anything else that 'Storm-blast' could refer to?)... the weather...or the boat...(Well, what meaning seems to fit best there?)...oh, the wind chasing the boat...(Is the wind being compared to anything?)...the wind is being compared to a bird...a large bird...(And what does it seem to be doing?)...um, pushing the boat along...the wind comes behind and...um, pushes the boat along as if it was chasing it ...and the boat was running from it.

In this case, the information that the albatross has not yet appeared triggers a self-regulatory mechanism which produces structural transformation and a bisociative act (connecting the storm with "a large bird") that achieves wholeness within the verbal explication itself.

These protocols indicate how important the act of verbal explication can be to the processes of cognitive development. It is when children

articulate their interpretations of poetic texts that the cognitive limitations become identifiable and the mechanisms that produce development can be activated.

Summary and Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has been concerned with the cognitive-structural features of the individual's development of knowledge and understanding. It has been claimed that the principles of genetic epistemology, as exemplified in the development studies of Piaget, can make a fundamental contribution to the study of aesthetic development. Hence, the appreciation of art and literature, when construed from this perspective, is a domain of actions governed by the structural features of the human mind. To the extent that these features are less fully developed, as would be the case for all young children, for most older children or adolescents, and even for some adults, there will be qualitative limits on the cognitive actions that are possible and consequently on the breadth and depth of understanding that logically could ensue. To the extent that understanding is restricted or diminished, the act of appreciation remains incomplete and the teacher has a specific and important task to perform.

An educational theory of artistic appreciation, therefore, must take cognizance of the cognitive-developmental determinants of interpretive reasoning and the main criteria by which such determinants can be discerned. In this chapter, it has been shown that the interpretive reasoning involved in poetic appreciation manifests certain criteria related to the emergence of cognitive structure. These criteria can be found in the features of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation manifested by the interpretive utterances of children when responding to questions directed at their understanding of a poetic text.

But the act of appreciation entails much more than the wholeness, transformation and self-regulation of the cognitive structures that make interpretive reasoning possible. For while these are necessary conditions for interpretive reasoning and thus for appreciation, they are far from sufficient. The point of art is not merely that it be capable of being understood, but that what is understood should be meaningful in some special and important way. Structuralism can take us only so far, and theoretical structures, whether of cognitive acts, or of the symbol systems themselves, are not equivalent to the meanings

which they convey. Nor are the meanings reducible to the structures. Chiari is making this point when he says of structuralist analysis of art that it is

> ...neither philosophy nor art, but merely a metalanguage used to decode the semiological signs of the present or of the past, so as to discover their respective epistemological structures.
>
> (Chiari, 1977: 117)

A similar point is made by Martin when he argues that analyses of the linguistic structure of poems, as presented by many linguists, are limited because:

> They present us merely with structures; and the structures in different kinds of verse are yet very similar. Unless a close connection can be shown to hold between certain structures and certain meanings, the linguist's case is not made; and for this he needs to discuss meaning.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 252)

Likewise, the structural analysis of cognitive acts such as interpretation, while making an essential contribution to the explanation of <u>how</u> appreciation develops, must be linked to a theory of meaning and knowledge before it can generate educational principles.

Having examined some of the structural cognitive-developmental features of poetic understanding, therefore, it is necessary to complement this with an examination of some of the semantic features of poetic understanding. Having explained some of the cognitive mechanisms and capacities that make poetic appreciation possible, it is the task of the next chapter to argue for the educational value of developing these capabilities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE UNDERSTANDING OF POETIC MEANING

> We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other. (Any more than one musical theme can be replaced by another).
>
> In the one case the thought in the sentence is something common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions. (Understanding a poem).
>
> But in the second case how can one explain the expression, transmit one's comprehension? Ask yourself: How does one lead anyone to comprehension of a poem or of a theme? The answer to this tells us how meaning is explained here.
>
> (Wittgenstein, 1953: paras 531, 533)

The quest for the essential nature of poetry had its beginnings with Plato and Aristotle and has produced a long-standing and somewhat stormy debate that has engaged the minds of some of the world's greatest thinkers. Whether we take Wordsworth's declaration that poetry is "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge" or Hegel's assertion that poetry is "the original" grasp of truth, it is a debate that has been characterized, as Buchler suggests, by extreme views and extravagant claims:

> The art of poetry in particular bears the burden of employing as its most obvious medium language, about which everyone is intuitively expert....The art celebrated since classical antiquity as first among arts is the art distinguished by a historical parade of Defences and Apologies.
>
> (Buchler, 1974: 7)

In moving now to a consideration of poetic meaning, it is not intended, nor would it be possible, to compete with those many formidable eulogists of poetic art. The purpose of this discussion, therefore, is to do no more than provide a summary and a necessarily partial exploration of the nature of poetic understanding, in order to advance

the view that poetic appreciation is a cognitive activity and that the object of its cognition is language of a special kind.

The Distinctiveness of Poetic Discourse

The use of language in poetry is not essentially different from its use in ordinary life situations and "poetry cannot be marked off from other kinds of discourse in terms of some specific kind of meaning, feature or function of language predominant in it" (Hungerland, 1958: 43). It is, however, different in degree, both in the intensity and concentration of its meaning, from normal language. This point is made by Martin in an emphatic qualification of Hungerland's statement that all modes of meaning, features, and functions of everyday language are found in poetry:

> What distinguishes poetic language from normal language is not that it contains different varieties of meaning, features or functioning, but that it employs all those normal features at a higher level of intensity. Poetry is language where the meaning is packed more tightly than normal.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 247)

Another way of considering the special qualities of poetic language is to invoke the distinction between intension and extension of meaning in the relationship between words and things. While acknowledging that this is an area that is fraught with philosophical problems, it can be said that extensions correspond roughly to classes, and intensions to properties. Hence, the word "tree" denotes a class of particular things to which this word can be correctly applied (which includes all the sub-classes, e.g. conifers, evergreens, etc.). This entire class of particular things is the extension of the concept "tree", that is its denotation or referent. This relationship can be shown by means of the so-called semiotic triangle (cf. Ogden and Richards, 1923: 11) which can be represented graphically as in Figure 7 (page 184). Martin gives the following (admittedly oversimplified) account of the relationships between word, concept and referent:

> ...the word "tree" is the word as spoken or heard (its acoustic pattern). The concept "tree" is the idea we have of trees and/or the tree in question.... The referent tree is the actual object in the outside world to which we are referring.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 9)

The Semiotic Triangle

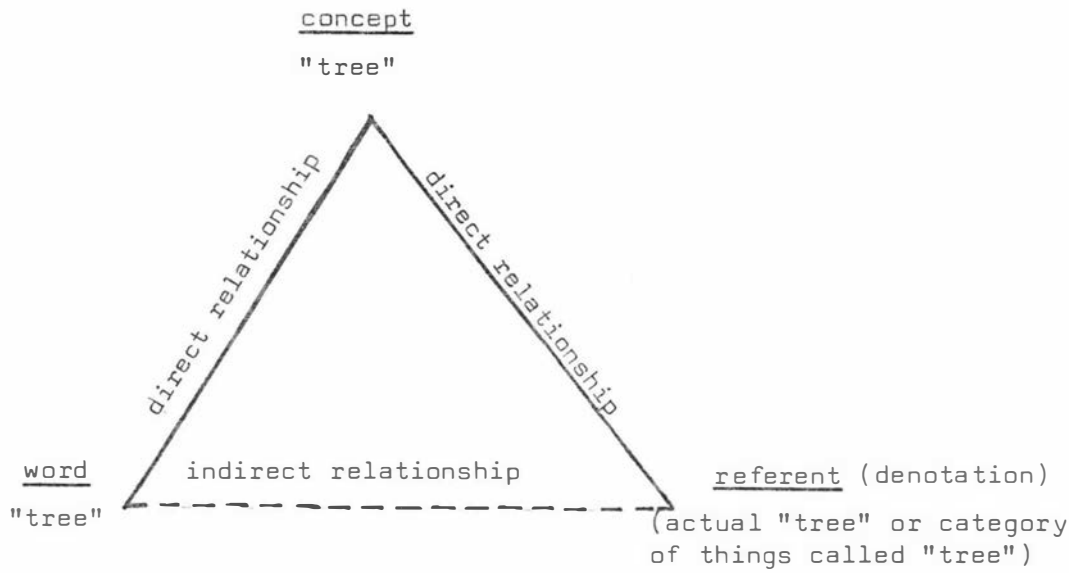

Figure 7

But the concept "tree" also carries with it an indefinite number of properties of trees (e.g. branches, leaves, greenness, shelter, etc.) which have become the connotations of the word "tree." Thus Martin defines connotations as:

> ...those properties we attribute to referents, which we use in determining the application of a word, or which are called to mind by its application.
> (Martin, 1975: 32)

It should be pointed out that this is a much wider sense of connotation than is sometimes taken[1] and covers "any element of meaning that is not explicit in, but is implied by, a particular use of words" (Martin, 1975: 50). Whereas the denotation is the basic "shell" of the concept, the connotations "are the conceptual elements into which the concept as a whole can be divided" (Martin, 1975: 39).

For example, the words "window" and "casement" may have the same

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1 The term "connotation" was used by John Stuart Mill (1906) in a much more restricted logical sense in his famous theory of denotation and connotation. In this sense (for which some American philosophers use the term designation) the connotations of a word would be the set of characteristics which a thing must have in order for the word to be applicable to it. The sense above, however, covers both these logical conditions of applicability and all the other implications, associations and overtones of the word.

referent and therefore the same explicit meaning (denotation) but they have different connotations or primary conceptual elements. Thus, in the following lines from Keats' Ode to a Nightingale (see p.72) -

> The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

- one could not replace "casements" with "windows" without substantially changing the meaning. In this sense then, connotations are not only actual properties of the referent or criterial attributes of a class to which the referent belongs, but they include all the suggestions, overtones and associations that have come about, either directly or indirectly, through experience of the referent and the related use of the word. As Martin explains,

> ...denotation is the basic "shell" of the concept, the concept reduced to its utmost possible simplicity, the concept as it refers to the object as a whole and without accretions. The object has parts, and the denotation implies those parts of course, but does not refer to them as such. The tree consists of leaves, branches, a trunk, etc., but it is only the tree as a whole that is referred to by the denotation. The tree has a context too, but the denotation refers only to the tree, and not to its surrounding fields, bluebells, woodpeckers or squirrels.
>
> The denotation is a unity, but the connotations are many...they are all either conditions of the tree's existence, or of our experience of seeing trees, or depend upon the tree in their turn (like the birds, for instance). "Tree" is thus enmeshed in a web of connotations whose relationships to it are of many different kinds: causal or contingent. There are however also connotations which depend upon our human attitudes to, and uses for, trees. We assault them with saws and axes, we hammer nails into their timbers, we burn them on fires and so know them to be combustible. We may also use trees for shade or shelter from the rain: we may associate them with particular landscapes - perhaps those that we particularly prefer, or with "home" for instance.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 40-41)

In a denotative use of language, such as we find in science, meaning is made as explicit as possible, for instance by defining the minimum number of connotations that will count as logical conditions or criteria for calling a tree a tree. On the other hand, in a connotative use of language, such as we find in poetry, meaning is deliberately implicit and unspecified, and words are used more for what they can suggest, for the connotations they can bring to conscious

awareness, rather than for their capability of receiving clear definition and general assent. The special quality of poetic discourse lies in its use of words to ensure that a certain chosen pattern of connotations, a pattern in which meaning is salient without being specified, is more than usually present to the mind. This is the distinctiveness of poetic discourse pointed to by Dewey, when he states that:

> While there is no difference that may be exactly defined between prose and poetry, there is a gulf between the prosaic and poetic as extreme limiting terms of tendencies in experience. One of them realizes the power of words to express what is in heaven and earth and under the seas by means of extension; the other by intension. The prosaic is an affair of description and narration, of details accumulated and relations elaborated. It spreads as it goes like a legal document or catalogue. The poetic reverses the process. It condenses and abbreviates, thus giving words an energy of expansion that is almost explosive.
> (Dewey, 1934: 241)

In scientific prose, the explicitness of "details accumulated and relations elaborated" is maximized, and because of the requirement for clarity of definition and general assent, it follows that scientific statements should be translatable with no loss of meaning from one language into another. Poetry, in contrast, is not able to be translated without loss of meaning, a characteristic that has led some to the view that the explanation must lie in a distinction between thought and emotion. I.A. Richards, for example, is one who takes this view and in his essay on science and poetry, he writes,

> Misunderstanding and under-estimation of poetry is mainly due to over-insistence on the thought in separation from the rest. We can see still more clearly that thought is not the prime factor if we consider for a moment not the experience of the reader but that of the poet. Why does the poet use these words and no others? Not because they stand for a series of thoughts which in themselves are what he is concerned to communicate. It is never what a poem says which matters, but what it is. The poet is not writing as a scientist.
> (Richards, 1935)

Richards' thesis here is close to the position advanced by John Stuart Mill (1965) who says that unlike science, which "addresses itself to the belief," poetry addresses itself "to the feelings." The function of poetry is not to assert propositions but to represent feeling "in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind." That Richards

construes the function of poetry in a similar way is clear from what follows:

> He (the poet) uses these words because the interests whose movement is the growth of the poem combine to bring them, just in this form, into his consciousness as a means of ordering, controlling and consolidating the uttered experience of which they are themselves a main part. The experience itself, the tide of impulses sweeping through the mind, is the source and the sanction of the words.
>
> (Richards, 1935)

Here, yet again, we have the dualistic fallacy, with its confused inner/outer dichotomy, which was first surfaced in Chapter 4 of the present thesis with reference to "expressionist" theories of art. Now it is to be found in these attempts by Mill and Richards, among others, to account for the untranslatability of poetic discourse, and here it is compounded by two further mistaken notions.

First, it is a mistake to conclude that poetic meaning is unique in some mystical (incomprehensible) sense because it is not possible to translate poetry into an identical prose equivalent. This point was considered in Chapter 4 with reference to the Urban/Langer disagreement (see p.57) and the distinction between "expression" and "interpretation." The same point is made by Hungerland when she states that:

> The reasoning underlying the position that poetry possesses a mysterious sort of supermeaning which defies rational understanding is of the following fallacious kind. From the premise that the meaning of a poem - taken widely as all the workings of its language - cannot be reproduced in a prose paraphrase, the conclusion is drawn that "poetic meaning" cannot be analyzed or explained. What should be said is that a paraphrase is only one kind of analysis applicable to only one aspect of a poem.
>
> (Hungerland, 1958: 43)

Second, it is a mistake to conclude that poetic understanding is non-cognitive because its concern is with feeling rather than reasoning. This is recognized by Walsh when he makes the following comment:

> It is a common misapprehension that we go to poetry not for reasoning but for feeling. The ground of this belief is our tendency to narrow the meaning of "reasoning" to the more abstract and technical uses of intelligence like the logician's or the scientist's.
>
> (Walsh, 1959: 122)

What should be emphasized is that the interpretation of a poem, the controlled awareness of its many connotations, the grasp and understanding of its meaning, is first and foremost a cognitive function. In saying

this, moreover, it is not implied that a poem's meaning could be reproduced in any literal prose equivalent. For, in the words of Roger Scruton,

> ...to understand a poem is not to understand what it literally means: Blake's poem The Sick Rose expresses a thought that could be grasped by anyone with a knowledge of the language...to understand the thought that Blake's poem expresses is to understand more than the literal (that is to say, paraphraseable) meaning. Poetic thought is more subtle, and has many levels beneath the literal surface. And yet it might be argued that understanding is none the less cognitive through being constrained beyond the merely literal significance of words.
>
> (Scruton, 1974: 183-4)

The connotations evoked by poetic language are not only linguistic but they include elements from the full range of our remembered experience, from the simplest sense data to the most abstract of ideas. These connotations are always "in touch with our mental models of the world" (Martin, 1975: 40). The appreciation of poetry, therefore, makes cognitive demands at two levels: first, because poetic understanding involves the cognitive grasp and control of connotations, both verbal and imagistic; and second, because interpretation itself, as was argued in Chapter 5, is an act of cognition, an act of knowing. Moreover, what is known in the interpretation of a poem, or at least a significant part of what is known, is the subject of the poem or, put another way, the object of poetic understanding.

The Object of Poetic Understanding

The understanding of poetic discourse is not to be achieved by attempting to force a separation between "form" and "content" - indeed, as has already been argued in Chapter 5 of this thesis, form and content are logically inseparable such that to alter the form of any work of art would be to change the criteria of both intention and interpretation, thus changing the meaning (see p.105). Roy Thomas makes this point with reference to poetry in the following way:

> It is essential to understand that any remark made about the language, imagery, or verse structure of a poem is in fact a comment upon its "substance," and that in order to appreciate fully the "meaning" of a poem we must understand the "form." I find a musical analogy useful here: any comment upon the way a musical theme is developed is readily understood to be a comment upon both form and subject-matter of the composition, for these are identical - they are names for the same thing.

> This is obvious when we are thinking in terms of music; that it is not so obvious to students when poetry is being considered is due to a misconception about the relation of thought to language, namely that it is possible to express exactly the same thought in more than one way.
>
> (Thomas, 1961: 26)

Nevertheless, there is an important distinction in poetic discourse to be made between "subject" and "poem" which is not to be confused with the false distinction between "substance" and "form".[2] In other words, contrary to Richards' assertion in the quotation given above, the important distinction is not between what a poem <u>says</u> and what a poem <u>is</u>, but between the unity that is each of these things and what the poem is <u>about</u>, that is its subject. It is in this relationship between a poem and its subject, moreover, that considerations of truth and falsity are sometimes involved. Thus, as R.K. Elliott has argued, in searching for a correct poetic interpretation,

> We are faced with the task of finding the phenomenon which the poetic sentences are seeking to delineate ....If the poet is successful the meaning of the poetic sentences extends to cover the phenomenon, or, to put it differently, the phenomenon is taken up into the meaning of the words....Our interpretation of the passage will not be acceptable if it does not cohere sufficiently well with the interpretation of other parts of the poem, and other criteria may have to be fulfilled. But these considerations do not alter the fact that here again verification of the poetic sentences is accomplished in the process of discovering their meaning.
>
> (Elliott, 1967: 83)

The attempt to describe what a passage of poetry is about, therefore, will be an interpretive description of both <u>what</u> the poem says and <u>how</u> it is said. Together, these comprise the <u>object</u> of poetic understanding. What should be remembered, however, is that a description is but a picture, an aspect of the thing it describes. While the description is necessary to the understanding of what is described, it is not sufficient for that understanding to occur. As Olsen points out, the description of any passage of literature could always be improved and expanded.

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2 This was first argued in one of A.C. Bradley's classic lectures on poetry (1909) entitled "Poetry for Poetry's Sake."

> The passage is described by using a set of terms and categories which are not referred to in the passage itself, but which the reader may apply to it, placing its subject and poetic devices on a conceptual map which he provides for it. The description has captured both the dimension of subject and some of the stylistic features.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 85-6)

One of the central aims for the education of poetic appreciation is to ensure that these "conceptual maps" by which both poetic subject and stylistic features can be understood, are made available to the developing mind. To say that such "conceptual maps" are "in the understanding" however, is not to imply that they belong to some mysterious inner world. As for cognitive structure, it is acts of discrimination or integration that constitute a "conceptual map" and to say that any act of discrimination or integration shows understanding is to say no more than that it <u>is</u> an act of discrimination or integration. If the significance of this point is not recognized, there can be no adequate conception of what it could mean to improve one's poetic understanding.

Some of the educational consequences of the above argument concerning the correct delineation of the object of poetic understanding can be derived from an examination of the interview protocols pertaining to the following two stanzas which occur near the beginning of "The Ancient Mariner":

> He holds him with his glittering eye -
> The Wedding-Guest stood still,
> And listens like a three years' child:
> The Mariner hath his will.
>
> The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
> He cannot choose but hear;
> And thus spake on that ancient man,
> The bright-eyed Mariner.

In these two stanzas, the hypnotic power that the Mariner has over the Wedding-Guest is the subject of the poetic discourse. It is a phenomenon that is delineated with a precision which results from the cumulative effect of certain key words. That the Mariner "holds" the Wedding-Guest with his "glittering eye"; that the latter "listens like a three years' child"; that the Mariner "hath his will" so that the Wedding-Guest "cannot choose" - the image is both clear and coherent to someone who is capable of forming the precise semantic integration that is required for a correct interpretation. Indeed, seven of the subjects in the 14 year age-group were able to interpret these lines with the

degree of clarity and precision that they are obviously intended to convey. The following protocol is representative of these:

Chris (14yr 5 mth): Well, he hasn't...he hasn't got any choice, that's what it says...('He holds him with his glittering eye' - what does that mean? How can he 'hold' him with his eye?)...well, he stands right over him so the man can't move away...he just has to keep staring at him...as if he's got him hypnotized or something. ('And listens like a three years' child' - how would that be?)...interested I suppose in what he's got to say...um maybe he's got a strange voice so that it's not just that he's got a lot to say but how he says it.

But the comparison of the Wedding-Guest's manner of listening with that of a "three years' child" can be interpreted in another way, as the following subject recognizes:

Lorraine (14yr 2 mth): ('listens like a three years' child' - what does that mean?)...um...it can be eager...or not very interested...it all depends...(What would it be here, do you think?)...um...not very interested...he wants to get to the wedding...impatient...

This interpretation, however, takes only part of the context into account and gives insufficient weight to the Mariner's influence over the Wedding-Guest's will. Impatience and lack of interest are not consistent with the image of someone who is held by a hypnotic power. Nevertheless, the following subject takes this interpretation even further:

Blair (14yr 7 mth): (The Wedding-Guest 'listens like a three years' child' - how would that be?)...to me it seems that he must be fidgeting or something like that...(Why?)...because a child three years old doesn't usually stay down and listen to a thing...sit down and listen...(Does the Wedding-Guest want to listen?)...no, he wants to get to the wedding and have a good time.

Taking the other alternative interpretation of this simile, the following subject also seems to miss the precise significance of the Wedding-Guest's bewitchment:

Colin (14yr 0 mth): ('And listens like a three years' child' - how would that be?)...very eager to find out what was happening...and they wanted to hear the story...(That would be like a three years' child?)...yes, ready to listen to a tale or something.

Most subjects at this level, however, interpret the simile with reference to the Mariner's fascination and strange interest for the Wedding-Guest.

Similarly, at the 11 - 12 year level, the overall coherence of this interpretation is observed to be within the grasp of all but one of the subjects. Typical comments at this level were: "it's just like a fairy tale...you've got to listen to the end," "he's fascinated... interested," "he just sat...like a good obedient little baby."

At the youngest age-level, however, the interpretations were more frequently divergent and unconnected with the semantic context that is invoked by the poetic subject. In the following protocol, for example, each element in the passage is interpreted separately and a full synthesis of meaning does not seem to occur:

Clare (9yr 7 mth): ('He holds him with his glittering eye' - what does that mean?)...um, he looks at him very closely...um, he stares at him like... (Who does?)...the Wedding-Guest...(Who has the glittering eye?)...the Wedding-Guest... (How does the Wedding-Guest listen?)...um, he listens very hard...(Why?)...because he probably wants to hear it...('And listens like a three years' child' - how would that be?)...oh, he would probably listen closely to learn...('He cannot choose but hear' - why?)...um, because the Mariner...well, he said he would listen, so he can't sort of break a promise.

While others at this level showed less general confusion than the above subject, most seemed to form only a partial understanding of the key metaphoric verb contained in the line, "He holds him with his glittering eye." Some associated it with a "hard stare," while others took it to mean that the Mariner kept looking at the Wedding-Guest or "held him in his sight" e.g.

Neil (10yr 6 mth): (What does it mean, 'He holds him with his glittering eye'?)...he holds him in his sight...(In what way?)...oh, keeps on looking at him.

The full transitive strength of the verb is missed in such an interpretation. Comprehension of the metaphor requires an "as if" inference which may well be beyond the cognitive capacity of most children at this level, although clearly not for the following subject:

Joanne (9yr 11 mth): (What does it mean, 'He holds him with his glittering eye'?)...um, he stares at him... or keeps on looking at him as if he's holding him...

Even where the transitive quality of the verb is partially recognized, as in the following protocol, this is not sufficiently integrated into the total internal context to control the interpretation of the simile

and there is a resultant loss of clarity and coherence in the overall description.

Kirsten (9yr 7 mth): (What does it mean, 'He holds him with his glittering eye'?)...um, 'He holds him with his glittering eye' could mean that he might make...he might give the Wedding-Guest a kind of hard stare or something...(Yes, can you tell me more about that?)...give him a hard stare...um...so make him like...like sometimes people would give you a hard stare ...and sometimes make you pretty nervous and make you stand still for a while...('And listens like a three years' child' - what's that like?)...like he might be listening like a child of three years old...(What would that be like?)...um, not really listening very well because children at three are not very good listeners and they don't get everything ...(And what does it mean, 'The Mariner hath his will'?)...I don't really know...('He cannot choose but hear' - what does that mean?)...he can't do anything else but he's got to hear what the Mariner...um...he's sitting on a stone listening...um...to the Mariner...(Why?)...because the Mariner holds him with his glittering eye.

What is missing from this child's interpretation of the poetic passage is not the ability to comprehend the discrete elements in the verbal picture, but rather the ability to interrelate these segments into a complete pattern. This capacity for what Olsen (1978) has called "multiple relatedness" is fundamental to the structure of literary understanding and is clearly dependent on the development of a deeper level of metaphoric understanding than would be indicated merely by an identification of the elements being compared. It is apparent from these protocols and from those included in the previous chapter, that as children's capacity for analogical reasoning matures, they become increasingly more able to make the necessary categorial connections entailed in metaphoric understanding and hence to interpret the meaning of poetry containing this form of language. At this point, therefore, it is necessary to consider more fully the nature of metaphor itself.

The Nature of Metaphor

The language of poetry, as Shelley said, "is vitally metaphorical" and no one would deny that metaphoric understanding is at the heart of poetic appreciation. It is not surprising, therefore, that theories of metaphor are many and varied. Nor is it surprising that some of these attempts to explicate the nature of metaphor have been as complex and as

profound as those that have attempted to capture the essence of poetry itself. It is not intended here to encompass this vast literature but some consideration has been already given in the present study to this important though difficult subject and, at this point, it is necessary to focus more directly on the metaphorical element of poetic understanding as it is one of the most powerful cognitive effects of poetic experience and is fundamental to the nature of poetic art. Indeed, it would not be possible to discuss poetry for very long without considering the central aesthetic function that metaphor has.

There is general agreement amongst literary theorists that metaphor is the primary means by which poetic meaning is produced, but few have attempted to explain the semantic process that is involved.[3] Undoubtedly this process is problematic and there may well be no clear boundary between literal and metaphoric uses of language. However, there are certain features of metaphorical language which can be delineated and these provide some pointers as to the nature of metaphoric understanding.

Black (1962) makes a distinction between two different ways of viewing metaphor: one he calls a comparison view, and the other he calls an interaction view.

A comparison view of metaphor, according to Black, is one which "holds that a metaphor consists in the presentation of the underlying analogy or similarity." He elaborates by saying,

> This is a view of metaphor as a condensed or elliptical simile. It will be noticed that a "comparison view" is a special case of a "substitution view." For it holds that the metaphorical statement might be replaced by an equivalent literal comparison.
>
> (Black, 1962: 35)

The earliest exponent of this view was Aristotle who wrote that "metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else" (Poetics). Thus, to understand a metaphor it is necessary to

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3 This observation can also be made of those who have claimed that metaphor is somehow essential to any form of human culture. Edmund Leach, for example, in his brief but authoritative commentary on the work of Levi-Strauss, points out that the latter takes his cue from Rousseau in regarding language as the distinguishing feature of man and further elaborates Rousseau's thesis that it is in metaphorical language that the origins of human development and culture lie:

> Man can only become self-conscious - aware of himself as a member of a we-group - when he becomes capable of employing metaphor as an instrument of contrast and comparison.
> (Leach, 1970: 38).

It is not clear what would count as evidence either for or against such a sweeping claim even if the concept of metaphor being used were to be more fully explained.

perceive the shift of reference from "something else" to what is named, and to recognize the specific property or properties that form the basis of the "substitution." Henle qualifies this as follows:

> It is apparent that the terms "thing" and "name" in Aristotle's account must be construed very broadly - "thing" referring not merely to physical objects but also to any topic of thought. Similarly, "name" must be used not in the restricted sense of proper or common names but must be taken as any sign whatever....Thus we may say that in a metaphor a sign having a conventional sense is used in a different sense.
>
> (Henle, 1958: 173-4)

But such a comparison view is limited, according to Black, because it fails to account for the uniqueness of metaphorical meaning. In recognizing that metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison, he observes that there are many cases in which it would be more illuminating to say "that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing" (Black, 1962: 37). An explanation of such cases requires what he calls an interaction view of metaphor, which holds that the elements entailed in the comparison "interact" to produce a meaning that is a resultant of that interaction.

Thus, in an interaction view, metaphor is the creation of meaning. It is a semantic integration which entails the transfer of ideas and associations from one level or frame of meaning to another, such that each level is perceived anew from the viewpoint of the other. It is this interactive meaning of a metaphor that elevates it to the poetic level so that metaphorical expression becomes the essence of poetry. Lewis illustrates how this is achieved with the following example:

> Metaphor, we must realize, is a three cornered relationship. When Ben Jonson called a lily "the plant and flower of light," he was primarily telling us something about lilies, and secondarily something about light: but also he was telling it in such a way that our own experience of lilies, if the image gets home to us, is enriched. So concentrated is this metaphor that three things - the meaning light gives to lily, the meaning lily gives to light, and the meaning of the lily-light relationship for each reader in the context of the poem - are woven inseparably into one.
>
> (C. Day Lewis, 1947: 35)

The major proponent of the interaction view of metaphor has been I.A. Richards who said of metaphor that,

> fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts.
>
> (Richards, 1936: 94)

The two separate thoughts or ideas are not simply added to each other, but they interact or "interpenetrate" one another with meaning. Richards refers to these two separate elements of a metaphor as the vehicle, which is the literal meaning, and the tenor, which is the figurative meaning. Thus, in the statement "man is a wolf," to use Black's example, the vehicle is the "wolf" and the tenor is "man having wolf-like attributes." In other words, some of the attributes (or connotations) of the vehicle are carried over to the tenor. Richards describes these shared connotations as the ground of the metaphor (1936: 117) and all metaphor, he claims, involves an implicit tension because the normal categories of language are deliberately disrupted. This tensive or interactive force produces a cognitive surprise, a dissonance which the mind seeks to resolve by understanding the meaning of the metaphor. Hence, the cognitive surprise and tension invoked by the deliberate disruption of normal denotative categories can only be resolved by an interpretive reaction to the metaphor - an integration of meaning on a new level. What we have then is a clear case of bisociation in Koestler's sense, a preservation of cognitive wholeness which is explicable in terms of the structural theory that was elaborated in the previous chapter. The function of metaphor, conceived of in this way, is much more than an ornamental or decorative one; its purpose is to produce much more than the pleasure of verbal play. From the perspective of an interaction theory, it is the cognitive-semantic status of metaphor that is emphasized. Metaphors are intended to be understood - they have a cognitive content.[4]

It is this cognitive-semantic function which gives metaphor its vital place in poetry, for it is both produced and comprehended by a cognitive capacity that is fundamental to all forms of art, that is "man's basic imaginative capacity for integrating two or more disparate

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[4] This view of metaphor, stemming from the early work of Richards and brought to notice with Black's influential paper, is now widely held and has recently attracted a large number of adherents whose work establishes an extensive contemporary literature on metaphor. See Beardsley, 1962; Wheelwright, 1962, 1968; McCloskey, 1964; Goodman, 1968; Ortony, 1975, 1976; MacCormac, 1976; Haynes, 1975, 1978; Ricoer, 1979; Polanyi and Prosch, 1975; Mooij, 1975.

matters into a single novel meaning" (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975: 79). In this way metaphor is essentially experiential rather than linguistic. By employing an interplay or juxtaposition of connotations it focusses our attention on meaning rather than conceptual categories of experience. Likewise, the function of poetry is to do the unexpected with words "in such a way that the process of ordinary language, the filing-away, pigeon-holing and classifying of the world into safe, well-understood categories, can no longer occur" (Martin, 1975: 162). In poetry, according to Martin, language "shows" us experience rather than "referring" to it - a function to which he gives the term apparency, and it is this feature of poetic language that makes it more adequate to the complexities of experience than normal utterances are. Apparency is produced by all the devices through which poetry breaks the normal code, including rhythmic, syntactical and phonic devices, but especially through the semantic device of metaphor.

Martin cites a French theoretician on the language of poetry, Jean Cohen (Structure du language poétique, Paris, 1966) who claims that the main purpose of metaphor in poetry is to interrupt the normal processes of understanding. Cohen sees the interruption of the normal decoding process, moreover, as the basic principle of poetry. Furthermore,

> If metaphor is necessary, if poetry is art, that is artifice, it is because the cognitive code is normal. The signifier (i.e. the Word) immediately evokes in its user the cognitive sense. The poet cannot simply say 'the moon' because this word automatically evokes in us the 'neutral' mode of awareness. And this is why prose is 'prosaic' and why poetry is art. To evoke the emotional image of the moon, the poet must resort to figurative language, he must violate the code, he must say: 'that golden sickle in a field of stars,' precisely because words cannot, according to the normal code, be thus associated.
>
> (Cohen, 1966: 224-5, cited in Martin, 1975: 166)

Hence metaphor functions to make the normal codes of language transparent, to make experience apparent and when metaphor itself becomes codified, it no longer functions as metaphor and, appropriately, we speak of dead metaphor (e.g. "the passage of time," "the bed of the river").

Another way of considering what is involved in metaphoric and poetic understanding is arrived at through Polanyi's distinction between focal and subsidiary awareness (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975: 33). Whereas

in ordinary discourse we attend to the denotations of language and we are only subsidiarily aware of the connotations, in poetic language we are focally aware of particular connotations while the denotations of the metaphoric "vehicles" become subsidiary. Thus, by interrupting the normal decoding processes, by focussing attention on certain connotations or on the sound of words, by deliberately chosen regularities (or irregularities) of rhythm and syntax, poetic language directs attention away from the denotations of words in order to ensure that there is an interaction between selected connotations to produce a semantic integration which has the immediacy and the vividness of an actual experience. To use Martin's words,

> Poetry's ability to transmit a sense of reality is due to the fact that the connotations it evokes are not merely linguistic but may be elements of our remembered experience. And they may of course belong to any element whatever of our experience, not merely to the sense data.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 210)

The Comprehension of Interactive Metaphor

This effect can be illustrated by the powerful image contained in the following stanza from "The Ancient Mariner":

> All in a hot and copper sky,
> The bloody Sun, at noon,
> Right up above the mast did stand,
> No bigger than the Moon.

The full effect of this image derives considerable meaning from the wider poetic context in that the sun and the moon are two of the most obvious and dominant symbols in the whole poem. It has long been recognized in critical commentaries that, throughout the poem, descriptions of the sun accompany experiences of guilt, punishment and suffering, while the moon is associated with experiences of relief and redemption (Clarke, 1933). The harshness of the sun is contrasted with the gentleness of the moon. Humphry House (1962: 100) comments that "the evil and disaster in the poem occur under the light of the sun, and the different phases of the redemption occur under the light of the moon." Robert Penn Warren interprets the sun as a symbol for practical reason (in contrast to the imaginative insight symbolized by the moon) and sees the "bloody Sun" in the above stanza as highly symbolic of the Mariner's crime in shooting the albatross.

The image also conveys an impression of the immense and awful anguish that results from the intense heat of the tropical sun. To

appreciate the full power of such an image is to be aware of more than the surface level of meaning however; it is to understand the deeper level at which the subsidiary meanings of the words "hot", "copper" and "bloody" combine. Such appreciation comes from an awareness of the full metaphorical meaning of the word "copper" which contains several elements or levels of connotation. What is important, aesthetically, about these connotations, however, is that they are not "free" or random projections of the reader's consciousness, but they are precise connotations of language that are embedded in a controlling context. Just as context in ordinary discursive language controls the precise sense of words, so context here controls the precise connotations intended. The semantic "oddness" of "copper" and "bloody" is not arbitrary, but represents a deliberate metaphorical use of words in order to ensure that certain chosen connotations are more than usually present to the mind. Thus, when Coleridge writes "All in a hot and copper sky," the assonance of "hot" and "copper" directs attention onto certain metaphoric connotations - the heat properties of copper, the colour, the hardness. These constitute the "ground" of the metaphor which can be analysed diagrammatically as in Figure 8.

Analysis of "copper sky" metaphor

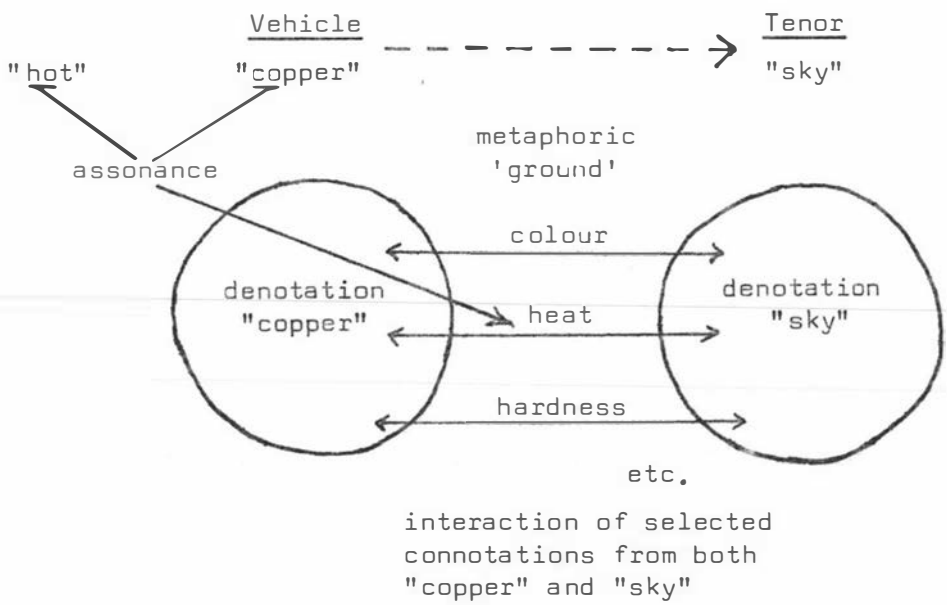

Figure 8

Similarly the assonance in "bloody Sun" reinforces the whole pattern of subsidiary meanings in which redness, heat, pain and violence

are all associated with the sun which has become a symbol for the Mariner's crime. It is a pattern that is as much experiential as it is linguistic but the appropriate connotations, if the image is fully appreciated, are nevertheless controlled by the contextual system of the poem.

The importance of taking context into account is something that has been strongly emphasized, of course, in the study of language itself. It is an undisputed linguistic fact that only by understanding context can we come to understand distinctions of tone, style and register in the various purposes for which language is used (Lyons, 1969). In literature, however, as Leech (1969: Chapter 11) points out, contextual constraints are more difficult to discern than in other uses of language because of the extent to which a literary text may be said to contain its own situational context, in a manner which is qualitatively different from the material situational settings of other modes of discourse. As Leech points out:

> Because poetry is virtually unfettered by the circumstances of the given situation - the world <u>outside</u> the poem - what is of interest in a poem is rather the situation, or sequence of situations, constructed within the poem, through implications of context.
>
> (Leech, 1969: 189)

It is within this implicit semantic context that poetic language must be understood but a full awareness of the context may itself present a cognitive demand which the reader is not able to meet. Indeed, this is precisely what could be observed in the interpretations of the above image given by 9 - 10 year old children. When asked what "copper" means in the line "All in a hot and copper sky," it is the colour connotations that are most dominant as the following protocol shows:

Neil (10yr 6 mth): ...oh, the hot copper sky would be sunset... red sunset...(Why was it copper?)...because copper's a kind of goldy colour...and hot copper would be a reddy gold...(What else does copper suggest to you?)...it would be still...(And why was it the 'bloody Sun'?) ...the sun is just straight up and it usually just shines down so hard...(And what else does bloody suggest to you?)...it's red...and brightness...(Why was it 'right up above the mast' and 'no bigger than the moon'?)... because um...the mast stood straight up and the sun was aiming straight down and that would be straight above them...

The association of "red sky" with "sunset" produces an inconsistency

within the context and although the sun "shines down so hard" the full pattern of connotations does not cohere into a complete interpretation and the import of the image is lost.

Aptness of connotations is clearly one criterion of poetic effectiveness (Martin, 1975: 236) and sometimes a metaphor is unsuccessful because the vehicle evokes a number of connotations which though inappropriate to the context are intrusive upon one's understanding because it is impossible to put them out of one's mind. This could be observed in the "sleep" metaphor contained in the lines by Charlotte Mew quoted and discussed in Chapter 6 (see p.130), where the inappropriate connotations clash inelegantly with the poet's intention. But where the language is effective and the contextual system of the poem "works," any failure to interpret the connotations correctly is a failure not of the poetry but of the reader's understanding. Hungerland illustrates this with the following example:

> Suppose that a professor of English literature who is exploring the effectiveness of "father" in the context of the last stanza of Dylan Thomas' "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" asks for the connotations of the word. If a student should reply, "Dry martinis and golf - my father always drinks the one and plays the other," the answer is clearly inappropriate, a good enough answer to another question, but not to this one.
>
> (Hungerland, 1958: 15-16)

But whether the contextual system of the poem "works" may depend on the cognitive maturity of the reader. Hence, there would appear to be a cognitive complexity factor in the ability to control the connotative range of such a strongly interactive metaphor as "copper sky" in the stanza quoted above. The following protocol shows restricted understanding in which the appropriate connotations are simply not evoked:

Tony (9yr 11 mth): (What does 'copper sky' mean?)...it's empty ...does it mean empty?...(What does the word 'copper' tell you?)...oh, it's a sort of coin...you can make coins out of it...out of copper...(Why is the sky copper?)...oh, it's like lead...it might look like lead...it might be cloudy but it's hot and steel looking... you know like the colour of copper...(And why 'the bloody Sun' - why is the sun bloody?)... oh, because it's getting a nuisance...it's getting so hot that it's a nuisance...(And what else does 'bloody' tell you?)...a swearing word um...oh, that they don't like the sun... they don't like it because it's been there so many times...

Only one subject in the youngest age-group mentioned "hardness" in addition to the red colour:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): (Why copper? Tell me about that word)... because it's kind of hard...(And why is it a copper sky?)...because it looks um...the red just looks as if it's all hard...

But other appropriate connotations of the word, such as the associations of the metal with objects that produce and conduct heat, were not perceived.

The full appreciation of such a condensed metaphor may require an ability to discriminate between fine nuances of language which has not yet developed in children of this age. At times the young child will misunderstand the poet's meaning because he is engaged in finding his own. The following protocol illustrates how clinical probing may elicit a random and highly idiosyncratic association:

Kirsten (9yr 7 mth): (When it says 'a hot and copper sky,' why the word 'copper'? What does that tell you?)... it was very bright or something...(Yes, and what else does it tell you?)...pause...(What do you think of when you think of copper?)... treasure...(Yes, and what else? What does it tell you about the sky?)...that it was um... oh, it was on the tip of my tongue then...(Do you think it's a good word to describe the sky?) ...yes...(Why?)...well, sometimes you think, you know, that copper's treasure and you might think that, you know, that God made the sky... earth...and you'd think that the sky was a kind of treasure to you or something.

While the egocentrism of such an interpretation could be explained in cognitive-developmental terms, there could also be a stylistic factor involved as well. Williams, Winter and Woods (1938), in a pioneering study of children's literary appreciation observed that:

> The child who displays poor appreciation of literary form is usually the child who is side-tracked (as his own remarks so often reveal) by personal associations aroused by the subject-matter or, still more frequently, by isolated items which attract his interest to the neglect of the composition as a whole.
>
> (Williams, Winter and Woods, 1938: 281)

It is significant, however, that in the present study this tendency was most apparent at the youngest age level, indicating that it is a phenomenon associated with cognitive decentration. Thus, for 11 - 12 year old children, further clinical probing is more likely to produce what Piaget calls "liberated convictions" because at this level there appears to be a greater capacity to control the connotations in relation to the total context of meaning. The following is an example of how this cognitive control is beginning to emerge:

Darren (12yr 0 mth): (Tell me what it was like)...oh, it was very hot and even though the sun was kind of small it was still hot...(It says 'All in a hot and copper sky' - why a 'copper' sky?)...because um...copper gets hot if it's heated...it gets very hot...(What else does copper suggest?)... it was a bright...kind of like a...like a... like one of those copper things...the colour of a copper...(Yes, what colour's that?)... it's like a brown...a burnt brown...(And that's the colour of the...)...sky.

The protocols at this level indicate a stronger awareness of the total pattern of connotations and the degree of consistency within the pattern.

John (11yr 4 mth): ...well, it's like it's sunset when it's red ...it was...it was obviously very hot and they were all hot and the sky was...the sky was um ...a coppery colour I suppose...(What does the word 'copper' suggest to you?)...copper it suggests um...well it just suggests sunset to me um...a red - because I've never seen a red sky before apart from it's sunset...(Is it sunset at this time?)...no it doesn't sound... it's noon...laughs...so I don't see...I don't really see how that...(Well, what is he trying to describe here?)...he's trying to describe ...I would say, the sun...because the sun is a coppery colour and that would be hot...you know ...(And why 'the bloody Sun'?)...oh, probably because the sun is red...(What else does it suggest?)...um, I don't know...hell maybe... hell...red...copper...hot.

Towards the end of this protocol, the symbolic coherence of the stanza is beginning to dawn for this subject - the connotations of the word "hell" provide a strong integrative pattern for the whole image. Similarly, in the following protocol, there is some understanding of the metaphor's interactive force and the symbolic import of the "bloody Sun":

Alison (11yr 5 mth): Well, the sun is right up above...and it's very red...not as yellow...it's very red... and it was about as big as the moon...and it was very very very hot...and it wasn't blue, it was red...the whole sky...(Why does it say, 'copper sky'? What does that suggest to you?) ...it sounds rather like an eclipse or...as though it was burning...(Why is the word 'copper' used?)...well, copper means a metallic sheen...and it has a strange colour that isn't red and isn't pink...it's just a mixture... (And why 'the bloody Sun'?)...it must have been a very deep red...(What else does it suggest?) well, probably wasn't a red...it was like blood ...they thought it symbolized blood...right at the very beginning of the day except it was at noon...(When you say 'it symbolized blood,' what do you mean by that?)...well, it would

have been very hot...very very very hot...
and their water was probably all gone...
and they thought that they were all going to
die.

As this capacity for cognitive control over metaphoric connotation develops, children may become more aware of the subtle ways in which poets use language in order to achieve an integration of meaning. They can begin to recognize particular effects but this recognition may need to be "brought into the open" in the clinical interview situation. Notice, for example, how the subject in the following protocol reveals that she is aware of how the relationship between heat and copper is reinforced by the assonance between the two words "hot" and "copper":

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): ...they're describing the sun and it's getting very red...the sun's getting very red...it's probably setting...there's a glow in the sky as it's setting...(Would it be setting?)...or coming up...(It says, 'the bloody Sun, at noon') ...oh, oh, it must be high noon then...and it must be very hot and the sun is very red...(Yes, and what does 'copper sky' mean?)...um, it's the colour...(What colour would it be?)... reddish brown...(Yes, and does the word 'copper' seem to be linked to any other word there?)... 'hot'...(How are those two words linked?)... because copper is a conductor of heat...and they're the same colours kind of...hot and copper are the same colours...(Yes, and what about the sound of the words?)...yes, the 'o' sounds the same in both of them...(And what effect does that have?)...it sort of brings the two words together in your mind.

For this subject, the image is not fully understood until the interpretation is actually articulated within the clinical interview itself. We can observe, for instance, the self-regulation by which the "sunset" association is discovered to be incorrect and the way the probe about the "sound of the words" is sufficient to "liberate" an understanding of how the connotative pattern is achieved. Likewise, with the following protocol:

Terry (13yr 11 mth): ...the hot sun shining down on them when there's no breeze...no clouds...not anything in the sky...(Why is it the 'copper sky'? What does 'copper' tell us?)...that it was a very bright red sky...like the sunset...(Yes, anything else?)...bloody...because copper... (Does the word 'copper' seem to be linked to any other word there?)...hot...because copper, when you first look at it, it does look like something that's red hot...(And what do you think of when you think of copper?)...oh, usually it's the metal or the colour...(And how does that describe the sky then?)...well, the colour of the sky was red like copper...

> (And how is it linked with the word 'hot'?) ...well, a copper is a thing that used to be used for boiling water...so it's a hot copper...(Yes, and what do you notice about the sound of the words?)...well, the first part of the words sounds the same...the 'cop' and the 'hot'...and it makes you think the copper is really hot...you think of hot copper.

One of the most revealing features of a protocol such as this is the evidence it provides of this child's cognitive readiness for the appreciation of poetic imagery in which a variety of effects are produced by apparently simple figurative language.

The Development of Metaphoric Competence

Metaphoric competence is central to poetic appreciation and it is clear from many of the protocols already discussed that metaphor functions at different levels depending on the kind of analogy that is involved and its degree of explicitness. For example, in the previous chapter it was noted that personification involves a comparatively complex form of analogic substitution which can be fully understood only when a certain degree of cognitive maturity has been acquired.

It has been suggested (Cohen and Margalit, 1972) that because metaphorical meaning cannot be predicted from the component parts and must always be inferred from the context, inductive reasoning is involved in metaphor appreciation. But the interpretation of a metaphor also involves an "as if" act of cognition (Hester, 1966) and may be considered to present a special kind of classificatory task (Billow, 1975). It is not surprising, therefore, that several empirical studies have suggested that there is a strong association between logical operational performance and competence of poetic or metaphoric comprehension along a continuum from literal comparison to highly complex semantic ambiguity.[5] Moreover, the development of this competence begins in early childhood (Gardner et al, 1975b; Leondar, 1975) with metaphoric production, progresses through middle childhood with metaphoric understanding (Winner et al, 1976) and continues to develop through adolescence and into adulthood with the ability to understand complex poetry (Mason, 1974; Hardy-Brown, 1979) and structurally ambiguous sentences (Brause, 1977).

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[5] For recent reviews of the empirical research on metaphor, see Billow (1977) and Ortony et al (1978).

Assessing the complexity of metaphorical language, however, is not a straightforward matter for, as Martin points out, metaphor has two aspects, the syntactic and the semantic:

> Syntactically, we may distinguish four stages in the movement away from literality: (1) juxtaposition; (2) parallelism; (3) comparison; (4) substitution. Each of these four stages asserts a stronger degree of identity between the two phenomena in question. Semantically, on the other hand, there may be widely differing degrees of correspondence and dissonance between the items being compared. It is evident that the two aspects, syntactic and semantic, do not go hand in hand.
>
> (Martin, 1975: 214-5)

This is clearly the case when one considers the difference between simile and metaphor. The common view that a simile is a simple similarity statement in which the comparison is made explicit, whereas a metaphor is a covert comparison or condensed simile, is grossly misleading (Shibles, 1974; Ortony, 1979). Syntactically, this distinction can be made and essentially a metaphor is a non-literal comparison either between objects or between relations between objects. But, as has already been shown, the comparison view of metaphor fails to account for the way in which the two elements of the comparison may somehow interact to produce a new emergent meaning. Furthermore, explaining the semantic aspect of some similes requires an account which,

> ...predicts that the terms in (these) similes will be perceived as being more similar than theories based on literal similarity alone would predict.
>
> (Ortony, 1979: 179)

What this means is that some degree of semantic integration can occur in a simile, just as it occurs in metaphor. Indeed, there are some poetic similes which have greater interactive force than their equivalent metaphor (e.g. "My love is like a red, red rose") and some where there is no apparent ground for comparison at all. Martin (1975: 212) quotes as examples of the latter, Eliot's famous:

> the evening is stretched out against the sky
> Like a patient etherised upon a table.

or

> The worlds revolve like ancient women
> Gathering fuel in vacant lots.
>
> (T.S. Eliot, <u>The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock</u>)

Martin comments that these two similes "are among the most striking and effective images in <u>Prufrock</u>, for they achieve that double vision which is supposed to be characteristic of the extreme or dissonant type of

metaphor." But images such as these, although they are similes, are not to be understood without considerable contextual knowledge and cognitive competence. Interpretation requires more than the explication of a literal analogy for the connotations are related to a complex pattern of associations extending throughout the entire poem and beyond.[6]

As a consequence, therefore, of such wide variations of semantic complexity, it has proven extremely difficult to distinguish between various developmental levels in the comprehension of figurative language (Pollio and Pollio, 1979). That there are developmental factors involved, however, is not disputed and there are strong indications of these to be found in the protocols obtained by the present investigation.

Where a simile contains an explicit comparison, especially if it contains strong visual elements, even relatively young children have little apparent difficulty in grasping the meaning, provided that both elements in the comparison lie within their domain of experience. This was evidenced in the responses made to the following stanza:

> Day after day, day after day,
> We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean.

This image was comprehended with very few difficulties and the following protocol from Tina is typical of the younger age-group:

Tina (9yr 6 mth): ...it means there was no wind and that...and the ship stayed still...(What is he saying it was like?)...it was just still...it wasn't moving...(How do you know that?)...when it says 'as idle as a painted ship' - well, that's being still...(Why'a painted ship'?)...because a painted ship doesn't move and it just stands still...(What about the ocean?)...probably for the same reason...because it didn't move... (What does the whole thing look like?)...a painted...a picture of a ship in the ocean.

This relatively simple visual comparison has been easily grasped but the inclination towards the literal level of meaning is always present with younger children it would seem. Such an observation is supported by Smith (1976: 239) who stated: "Younger children's interpretations of metaphor tend towards using relatively concrete

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6 Eliot's poetry is "packed" with literary allusions and subtle echoes which can only be appreciated by a reader who already has an extensive knowledge of literature (see Frye, 1963).

associations." Thus, in the present study, when asked why the words "day after day" are repeated, two of the younger subjects stated that the ship "must have remained there for four days."

Furthermore, even with a relatively direct comparison, such as contained within the above simile, the analogy may be misconstrued and give rise to an inappropriate interpretation, such as the following:

Alison (11yr 5 mth): ('As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean' - what does that mean?)...it means there was no movement, no ripple, no nothing ...(What's the reference to the painted ship and the painted ocean there?)...it means it's wooden...(It's wooden?)...if it's a painted ship, it must have been made of wood.

Smith observed similar interpretations amongst his younger subjects, whom he described as inflexible in that,

> ...they have fixated or centrated on an irrelevant aspect of meaning and do not make the necessary combinatorial link between the two diverse fields of experience.
>
> (Smith, 1976: 239)

Generally however, with more cognitive maturity such an image can give rise to much finer discriminations. Notice, for example, in the following protocol, how the subject shows some awareness of the sound effects although she is unable to explicate the effect fully:

Heather (11yr 11 mth): (What does it mean, 'As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean'?)...still...no movement...oh, there must be some but it's ...cos a ship can't move in a painting and that ship's not moving...and the sea's very calm...(Is there any particular word that stands out in those lines?)...um, 'stuck'... (Yes, why is that, Heather?)...it sounds dramatic...slight amusement...(Why might the poet have wanted that word to stand out?)... I don't know...but it just sounds good...we stuck, nor breath nor motion...it sort of helps refer to the 'nor breath nor motion.'

The following subject also recognizes the importance of the caesura but is unable to explain precisely what effect is achieved:

Julie (11yr 5 mth): ...it was very calm, um...the sea in a painting doesn't move and nor does the ship ...it probably means that there wasn't much wind and so they didn't move very far...and it was so calm...(Is there any word there that seems to stand out more?)...stuck...(Why does that word seem to stand out?)...the way it sounds...and it's got a comma after it... (Why would it stand out, do you think?)... because it's the key word...(How is it the key word?)...well, they just stayed there, didn't they?

Compare this with the following response from a subject who is two years older and is able to explain much more precisely how the integration of sound and sense is achieved:

Ann (13yr 6 mth): (What does it mean, 'As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean'?)...that means that it was um...well, a painted ship doesn't move, and it was...and the ship that he was on didn't move either...(Yes, and is there any word in those four lines that seems to stand out in some way?)...'day', because it's repeated so many times...and 'stuck'...(Why does that word seem to stand out?)...well, it's the pause after it, I think...that's got something to do with it...(Yes, there's a comma there, isn't there? Do you think that's deliberate?)...yes, it could be...if that word is important...(Why would it be important?)...well, they weren't moving and it was as if they were stuck to the ocean... in that one particular spot.

Here, there is not only a clear recognition that the caesura gives emphasis to the word "stuck" but that the connotations of this word are central to the whole image. Poetic understanding involves the recognition of a pattern (Skelton, 1978: 21) and because an image presents a pattern to which such devices as rhythm, alliteration, and rhyme all contribute, the full comprehension of a poetic image requires the discernment of this pattern amidst the ambiguities of the various parts. In a poem, because ambiguity serves an aesthetic function, the various meanings must work together and be integrated (Kaplan and Kris, 1948). However, while it is clear that cognitive competence is a necessary prerequisite to this integration, it may not be sufficient. Where this is the case, the teacher may be able to make a significant contribution.

Teaching Poetic Understanding

The notion that poetic understanding is amenable to direct teaching intervention is illuminated by the following protocol in which one of the older subjects, who clearly has the cognitive capacity to grasp the image, is initially misled because she attempts to integrate the pattern by selecting inappropriate connotations of the word "idle." When her attention is drawn to the much stronger connotations of the word "stuck", reinforced as they are by the sound and rhythm, the pattern of the whole image is finally understood.

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): What does it mean, 'As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean'?)...um that they're quite small and not noticeable in the big ocean...and they had not much to do...and it just seemed like, you know, a very small ship upon a large ocean...(And why a 'painted ship'

> and a 'painted ocean'?)...because it's um ...it's less...it doesn't mean as much when it's painted...(And what is it about the ship that is most noticeable?)...that it was idle...(And what is the connection with a painted ship and a painted ocean?)... because when you're idle, you paint...I don't know...(Well, what words stand out most to you?)...idle...(Any others?)...um stuck... (Why does that stand out?)...because you notice that word and think about it more than the rest of the verse...(Does that fit with the painted ship and the painted ocean in any way?)...no, not to me...(Well, what is it about the objects in a painting? Do they move?)...oh, I see, it seems as if they weren't getting anywhere because of the vastness of the sea...(Did you understand that at first?)...no...(And does the word 'stuck' fit now?)...yes, it's as if they were stuck...like on a painting...(And is that comma after the word 'stuck' important?)... yes, because it makes you pause and it makes the word stand out more...(And does the word 'idle' fit in now?)...yes, they were just standing still, as though there was nothing to do...(Did you understand those lines at first, before you talked about them?)...no, I didn't quite get the meaning at first.

This protocol shows how a pivotal question (Do they move?) can produce the "Eureka effect" which results from a sudden pattern recognition. Thus an understanding of the poetic meaning can be effected by a self-regulatory equilibration process by which the semantic pattern is re-organized.

A further implication of the example discussed above, is that verbal explication can be an efficient means to the achievement of poetic understanding. To say this, however, is not to underestimate the importance of the "immediacy" with which poetic meaning is very often comprehended. As Haynes comments in a discussion of metaphoric understanding,

> ...the cognitive appeal of metaphor depends to a large extent upon its tacit immediacy, which is nondiscursive and thus apparently nonrational. But this does not exclude it from ex post facto critical appraisal.
>
> (Haynes, 1978: 108)

Educationally, this distinction is crucial for it allows for something that can be taught. As Haynes goes on to point out,

> ...though metaphoric insight may be instantaneous, momentary, and irreversible, it is the product of a whole shared complex of antecedent behaviour, knowledge, and rules which are essentially normative.
>
> (Haynes, 1978: 109)

Thus, metaphoric insight is dependent not only on cognitive competence but also on accumulated knowledge. Where this knowledge is lacking, full metaphoric understanding will be unattainable. But if the cognitive capacity is there, ceteris paribus, the knowledge can be taught.

An example of this could be observed in the protocols obtained when children were asked to interpret the following image which refers to the way the sails of the ghost-ship appeared to the Mariner and crew:

> Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
> Like restless gossameres?

The word "gossameres" is uncommon and outside the vocabulary of most children even those in the older age-group. It is to be expected, therefore, that direct teaching of the meaning of this word will have a marked effect on the understanding of the image. For the following two subjects in the middle age-group, this is indeed what occurs:

John (11yr 4 mth): (Tell me how the sails are described)... what are gossameres?...(Gossameres are thin, filmy cobwebs, that are seen on grass or bushes or floating in the air in calm weather, especially in autumn. What is he saying then about the sails?)...um that they're...that the sun somehow is reflect...not reflecting, it's kind of glancing off it...it's coming through and making the sails look as though it's actually like reflecting off...and it's just um...it's not really...(And what is the reference to gossameres?)...well, the sails... they would be...if there was no wind...he was probably wondering why they were moving around like restless gossameres um...and therefore he thought they must have been very thin to move around in such little wind.

Alison (11yr 5 mth): (Do you know what gossameres are?)...I think it's a very fine material...I'm not sure... (Yes, it actually refers to thin filmy cobwebs that we see sometimes just hanging in the air or on grass or bushes on calm autumn days. Now, what do those two lines mean?)... he's wondering if they are the sails or something else...that aren't supposed to be there...(What does 'glance in the Sun' mean?) ...they're reflecting...moving...(What does the word 'glance' suggest to you?)...just a quick look...(And why are they like 'restless gossameres'?)...they're moving like very thin, silky things.

In this latter case, the subject has made a partially correct inference of the word's meaning but the confirmation and elaboration of this allows for

a much clearer understanding of the image. For other subjects, however, not knowing the meaning of the word "gossameres" is only one impediment to an understanding of the lines and where metaphoric competence is lacking, the explication of this particular word may have little effect on the subject's understanding of the total image. For example,

Steven (10yr 7 mth): (Tell me what those two lines mean)...that one's moving...(What are gossameres?)...I don't know...(Well, gossameres are fine filmy cobwebs, that are seen on grass or bushes or floating in the air in calm weather, especially in autumn. Now, tell me what the description's about.)...the boat's um... moving slowly...the boat's really moving quite slowly...(And what does it mean that the sails 'glance in the Sun'?)...it can um ...like when you're looking at the sun um... a whole lot of stripy things come out the side of it...('Like restless gossameres' - what does that mean?)...everyone's moving about...(What are gossameres?)...oh, they're cobwebs that float on water and that...(And why are they restless?)...um they're going to get the mariner's...they've come to get the mariner and the crew.

Where the capacity for metaphoric understanding is present, on the other hand, explaining the meaning of this word may evoke appropriate connotations which have not been given in the explanation. This can be observed in the following protocol with the subject's response about the sails seeming to be "unreal":

Blair (14yr 7 mth): (Tell me what those two lines mean)...oh, the sails...um those gossameres...I don't know what those are...(Well, gossameres are fine filmy cobwebs, that are seen on grass or bushes or floating in the air in calm weather, especially in autumn. Now, what do those two lines mean?)...well um...it doesn't seem real ...the sails don't seem real...(What does it mean that they 'glance in the Sun'?)...well um...the sun just glances off them...(What does that mean?)...um only in certain ways does it bounce off...('Like restless gossameres' - why 'restless'?)...well, they're um...like they were moving...(How?)...well, slightly I suppose...(Why are they like gossameres?)...well, the sails seem unreal... and very fine.

Such a protocol provides suggestive evidence of the power of context in determining metaphoric understanding. Given that the reader has both the relevant knowledge of word meanings and the cognitive competence to comprehend the language, it is often the wider poetic context which will

determine understanding. This implication is also supported by the research of Gardner and Winner, whose

> ...findings suggest that children are much more likely to decode metaphors successfully if they encounter them in some kind of situational context than if they have to draw, in isolation, upon their knowledge of the meanings of the words which constitute the trope.
>
> (Gardner and Winner, 1979: 130)

What this means, from an educational point of view, is that the development of metaphoric comprehension is not to be simply equated with the development of a transferable cognitive skill, because the cognitive processes themselves are dependent on the situation in which the metaphor is encountered. Thus, whether a poetic image is understood will be determined not only by a generalizable cognitive capacity but also by a specific sensitivity to the surrounding linguistic, aesthetic or situational context of the poem. This then becomes another important consideration both in selecting poems for children to interpret and in ascertaining, from a teaching point of view, the degree of appreciation that could be realistically expected from curriculum content in this area. For poetic appreciation is related psychologically not only to the emergence of cognitive competence, but also to the cumulative effects of literary experience.

Experience and Poetic Meaning

From the way in which poetic meaning has been construed and discussed in this chapter, it follows that while poetic appreciation is a cognitive activity and while the object of its knowing may be certain aspects of our affective life (Stein, 1979) the act of knowing is dependent to a large extent on what is already known, that is the experience and knowledge which the reader brings to the reading encounter. In the course of making this point in a much wider sense about art generally, Best quotes the following statement:

> You cannot seek knowledge unless you already have some knowledge, any more than you can set out to go somewhere without already being somewhere.... Both in theory and in practice we can start only where we are, and that means that we can never start from scratch....The aspiration to make <u>all</u> things new is incoherent...
>
> (Bambrough, 1973; cited in Best, 1974: 177)

It is in recognition of such a self-evident condition that emphasis is given to the relevance of prior experience for the full understanding of poetic meaning. It hardly needs saying that a poem can

have little meaning for us if it does not make some connections with elements of our remembered experience. But this is not to imply that for a full appreciation of poetry we need to have experienced what the poet is writing about (cf. Elliott, 1967: 84). It is often the case that language itself provides a substantial part of the experience that is necessary to an understanding of poetic meaning. There is an interaction between language and experience so that, as I.A. Richards (1938: ix) has argued, interpretation will not be complete "if past experience has not provided the required originative context." In elaborating further, however, Richards draws attention to the vital way in which language itself can modify and integrate certain features of experience.

> Here comes in the stress which teachers are so often forced to put upon the need for "actual experience" in the individual's past history if verbal representations are to be understood. The stressing is justified if it does not overlook the indirect ways in which words can analyze features of experience and recompound them into wholes which may never have occurred in the reader's history. It is these features of experience, not specific integral experience as distinct moments of being, which enter into contexts with words. If words - to be understood - must reinstate such integral experiences, the services of language to us would be far less than they are...
>
> (Richards, 1938: viii-ix)

Thus, on the one hand it can be argued that a full understanding of a poem, or indeed any work of art, presupposes some knowledge (sometimes a good deal of knowledge) of situations, occurrences and objects which are not described in the work;[7] while, on the other hand, it is neither necessary nor sufficient for a complete understanding of a work that one should have "actually experienced" the particular situation, occurrence or object that the work is about.

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[7] As Olsen points out:

> Most literary works rely on the reader's knowledge of matters outside the work concerning how objects and people look and behave, i.e. objects fall to the floor and not to the ceiling, people do not have wings, horses have four legs etc. Very often literary works require that a reader is able to fill in a frame of reference for himself from his knowledge of the cultural tradition....The intention is not to inform but to achieve some artistic goal by invoking what is presumably a body of shared knowledge. To fulfil their artistic intention authors have to rely on such shared knowledge not only of culture and reality but also of language.
>
> (Olsen, 1978: 78)

As it happens, "The Ancient Mariner" is a particularly appropriate work from which to demonstrate the contentions made above, especially considering that there is hardly one of the poem's most striking images which cannot be traced to an original, or more commonly to several originals in Coleridge's vast reading of journals and other writings about the travels and voyages of early explorers.[8] If the central events and places about which the poem has been written were not part of the "actual experience" of the poet, it is hardly credible that anyone should expect anything more direct in the personal history of the reader. Nevertheless, such a notion appears to be entertained by those who proclaim that such a poem cannot be fully appreciated by most children because it concerns events and places that will be inevitably remote from their direct experience.

Very few children, for example, would have direct experience of the tropical sun-set which marks the departure of the ghost-ship in the following image:

> The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
> At one stride comes the dark;
> With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
> Off-shot the spectre-bark.

However, while an understanding of this image presupposes some knowledge of a tropical sun-set, it is not necessary to have had direct experience of this phenomenon in order to grasp the meaning - it would be clearly sufficient to have learnt something <u>about</u> the nature of such an event, as the following protocol indicates:

Jody (11yr 11 mth): (What's being described here?)...it obviously means that the sun is going away and just as the sun's going away the stars are coming out...(Is that like the sunsets that you have seen?)...no...(How is it different?)...when the sun sets where we live it just goes down and all the sky is lit-up...the sky goes bright...it just goes down and then the night comes...but the stars don't come out before the dark does...it just comes out...sometimes the stars don't come out at all...(What does it mean, 'At one stride comes the dark'?)... it comes instantly...as quick as you can step it's out...as soon as the sun goes it's out ...it's a pretty quick sunset.

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8 This fact is well known following the classic research of Livingston-Lowes, 1927.

An interpretation of the image requires, for most children, that a contrast be made between their "actual experience" and the event they are trying to imagine. The "stride" metaphor would seem to provide the key to an appropriate interpretation. Notice, for example, how the following subject carefully distinguishes between his own experience and that of the Mariner in the situation of the poem:

John (11yr 4 mth): (What's being described here, John?)...well, um...well, the sun it's just about gone... then suddenly it goes down...then it's dark ...it gets dark very quickly and um...the stars...well they don't rush out but he sees ...he sees them um...with far-heard whisper over the sea...oh, I suppose he heard something...something...it could have been the waves...off-shot the spectre um...I don't really know about that...(What kind of sun-set is it?)...oh, it's a very um...quick one like they have in the tropics...that just...it's up and then bang...and then it's dark...(Is it like the sun-sets that you know?)...no, our sun-sets are slower...it gets darker and darker and darker...(And what does it mean, 'At one stride comes the dark'?)...well, he's talking in terms...like a person strides upon you...it's come...one great stride...it strode upon you...comes upon you quickly...(What is a stride?)...oh well, it's a large...a very large step and ...it came upon them in a large...just bang.

As this subject gradually develops his interpretation of the metaphor he draws on elements of his remembered experience as a means to a clearer understanding of the situation contained within the poem. Some children, however, appear to be unable to discriminate and select with this degree of detachment and precision. The result may be a more diffuse interpretation dominated by the subject's remembered experience, such as the following:

Tony (9yr 11 mth): (What's being described here?)...oh, um... since she'd won...because she yelled out that she'd won...all the things are coming...like the stars are rushing out...the sun goes down and it comes all dark and everything bad starts to happen...(What is the sun-set like?) ...it's just like a fairy tale because when it says (the Sun's rim dips,' well it would only be like that to those people on that ship... they would imagine it like that...(What does it mean that the stars 'rush out'?)...oh, the stars are going out because it's dark...(And what does it mean, 'At one stride comes the dark'?)...oh, um...when you're in...when the sun dips or something...you see it go behind

> a cloud...and you see the darkness just comes over...because once when we were playing cricket at school, it was all shining...and then the darkness just swept over and then it would go back to sunshine a while after...(And why is it 'At one stride'?)...because you can see the darkness moving up...you know, you can see it moving along the grass...it's moving up like a big stride or a...stepping over things.

Here the interpretation begins with an attempt to imagine what it would be like "to those people on that ship," but the memory of what happened when he was playing cricket brings with it some associations ("the darkness...moving along the grass") which do not fit the internal context of the poem. A correct interpretation will be much more readily grasped if there is some prior knowledge concerning tropical sun-sets, as is obviously the case for the following subject:

Ann (13yr 6 mth):

> ...it's sunset and the sun goes away...the stars come out and it becomes night...(What sort of sunset is it?)...um, one that comes over quickly...(How is it described?)...um, 'At one stride comes the dark'...(What does that mean?)...well, it kind of sweeps over ...(What is a stride?)...a step...it's as though the darkness is taking a step...and as its foot gets further on, you know... wherever its foot goes it becomes dark... (And is that like the sunsets that you've experienced?)...no...(Why is it different?) ...well, because our sunsets are slower...it gradually gets darker...and this is describing a sunset in a different part of the world...near the equator.

Without this specific knowledge, even older children may form an incorrect interpretation that is nevertheless consistent with elements of remembered experience. For example,

Colin (14yr 0 mth):

> Um, that the sun suddenly goes down and up jumps the dark...and all the stars come out ...and it's all dark...(What does it mean, 'At one stride comes the dark'?)...one leap or...as the sun goes down a cloud might have gone over it...or the ship might have gone back in front of it or the um...(What sort of sunset is it?)...a dark one...and all the stars suddenly burst out...normally they just come out one by one...(Is that like any sunset that you've experienced?)...oh, no I don't think so...(Why is it different?)... because of the ghost ship going in front of it...and ghosts normally are out at night... so she thinks...it just blots out the sun... like stepping on it all of a sudden.

In this case, the remembered experience of seeing the setting sun extinguished by a moving cloud, leads the subject away from a complete understanding of the image.

The implication to be taken from these examples is that poetic understanding can sometimes be achieved only when some aspects of the reader's remembered experience are "suspended" by a conscious cognitive control that is accompanied by an ability to attend to the internal context of the poem. It is apparent, furthermore, that this capacity for control and attention is generally lacking in younger readers and may exist, to varying degrees, in older ones.

Such an observation would be consistent with the early research findings of I.A. Richards (Practical Criticism, 1929) when he gathered essays from university English students reacting to poems of varying quality, with authorship concealed. Before detailing and exhibiting the numerous ways in which his students misconceived the meaning of the poems, Richards noted that:

> The most disturbing and impressive fact brought out by this experiment is that a large proportion of average-to-good (and in some cases, certainly, devoted) readers of poetry frequently and repeatedly fail to understand it, both as a statement and as an expression. They fail to make out its prose sense, its plain, overt meaning, as a set of ordinary, intelligible, English sentences, taken quite apart from any further poetic significance.
>
> (Richards, 1929: 12)

In many cases, the students attributed their own confusion to the poems so that their judgments of them depended on the meaning that they could derive, rather than any objective value of the poems according to aesthetic criteria or literary standards. Thus the capacity for poetic understanding was shown to be a major determinant of poetic preference.

Poetic Understanding and Poetic Preference

There is now strong empirical evidence that readers will indeed prefer the poetry that they can understand. Williams, Winter and Woods (1938) observed that for younger children (i.e. under 10 years) poems appeal for their subject-matter (narrative), sound effects and regular rhythm; whereas for older children (i.e. over 12 years) more complex literary qualities (imagery, theme, form) provide the basis for appeal. An overriding consideration, however, was whether the meaning could be understood.

> At almost every age clarity formed a recurrent ground for preference. Nonsense verses from Alice in Wonderland are frequently given a low place because (as one child puts it) "I cannot understand what this means."
>
> (Williams, Winter and Woods, 1938: 273)

Later studies also have indicated that poetic preference is subject to developmental changes. Younger, less experienced readers will prefer the simple poetry of direct statement, whereas older, more experienced, readers will prefer more complex poems where the emotion is controlled and the language more evocative and metaphorical (Eppel, 1950; Britton, 1954). Younger children will prefer poems which have a definite rhyme and rhythm (Jusczyk, 1977), whereas for older readers "the concept of Rhythm becomes less mechanical and more aesthetic" (Gunn, 1951: 101). It seems likely that such trends are related to cognitive growth and two recent studies (Mason, 1974; Hardy-Brown, 1979) have indicated that during the adolescent period the kinds of reasoning entailed in formulating judgments about poetry follow the same general developmental trend as for other cognitive areas.

In Mason's (1974) study, a sample of 140 adolescents of generally "above average" ability, ranging in age from 11.6 to 18.6 years, were asked to give written responses to 4 poems (from a total of 16 similar poems) on the question, "What do these poems mean to you?" It was found that, with increasing age, the number of responses showing lack of comprehension or "very limited attempts at understanding" sharply decreased, whereas the numbers of attempts showing partial, content dominated understanding simultaneously increased. At 15-16 years of age responses were more often explanatory in kind, containing an hypothesis deduced from stylistic or literary aspects, logical or referential elements, or generalizations about the poem as a whole. Mature judgment was not firmly established until beyond 17 years of age.

In the Hardy-Brown (1979) study, 30 college students were assessed as to logical operational ability on a Piagetian test and then required to perform a literary task of poetic interpretation. The findings suggested that concrete thinkers tend to focus upon literal objects or people, and on surface story-line in a poem, whereas formal thinkers show the ability to approach a poem hypothetically by consideration of several alternative interpretations of symbolic meaning and the ability to perceive the literal and symbolic levels separately, as well as appropriately synthesizing them when necessary.

These findings support a cognitive-developmental explanation for the relationship that has been widely observed (Terry, 1974) between degree of poetic understanding and judgments of preference. There is some evidence for this also in the present study where children reacted to the literal and symbolic elements in "The Ancient Mariner" and where they were asked to interpret the poem as a whole.

When 9 - 10 year old children were asked the question, "What does the whole poem mean to you?" they either described the story in a very literal sense or mentioned briefly some selected details of the surface story-line. Typical responses were as follows:

Andrew (9yr 7 mth): ...um, it means about the mariner's adventure...he had an adventure on the sea.

Clare (9yr 7 mth): ...it's about the tale of a mariner and how he gets almost shipwrecked and he has a dream, a type of dream where it all rains and um...he gets home to his own country in the end.

Tina (9yr 7 mth): ...it tells you what a sailor's life could be like...and it means that...that sailors have a very rough life at sea.

Tania (10yr 0 mth): ...it's about the wedding guest and the ancient mariner...and the ancient mariner goes away on his journey to the south pole ...and he returns with a tale about his trip.

Tony (9yr 11 mth): ...um, it's about a man who used to be a mariner and he used to go around on ships but now he um...now he goes around and he... just wanders about to...telling his tale.

Hence, their reasons for liking the poem related either to its narrative quality or to the especially heightened language. When asked, "What do you like best about the poem?" typical responses were as follows: "...it's got good describing words in it"; "...well, it does tell a good story that keeps your interest"; "...um, the way it's set out...the expression that's put into it and the way that it's got parts to it"; "...the story...it's interesting...there's some scary parts in it." The following protocol from Steven exemplifies the reasoning at this level:

Steven (10yr 7 mth): (What does the whole poem mean to you?)... it's about the mariner and the men who sailed on that ship...it tells you about what happened to them...(Does the poem have any other message to tell you?)...not really... (What do you like best about the poem?)... the part when the ghost lady comes over the horizon on that ship...(What about the poem overall?)...there was a lot of expression in it...it was a good story.

At the 11 - 12 year level, several interpretations of the poem as a whole attempted to relate the literal elements of the narrative to a symbolic level of meaning. Sometimes the act of explication itself facilitated understanding. For example,

John(11yr 4 mth): (What does the whole poem mean to you?)...I would think it's of um...the mariner...when he shot the albatross all his friends...all his friends...even though they might not have been friends...they were dead and he was left ...and he had no company...just because he shot this albatross and um...it gives you the impression of loneliness...I would think that that's what the main body of the story is about...about his loneliness and how hot it was...(And why does it say that the wedding guest woke the next day 'a sadder and a wiser man'?)...well, he would be sadder because he heard...because of the great suffering that the ancient mariner had gone through...and wiser...he probably would have been wiser not to shoot an albatross if he went sailing...oh, but I think he would be wiser at all the different points in the story...(What do you like best about the poem?)...I would think the part about when the dead lay at his feet um... and the other part would be when all the sea-snakes...they would be the two main parts that stood out...(Is there anything about the poem that you didn't like so much?)...oh well, the main thing that I didn't like was um...the old ...some of the old language...hard to understand...and some parts that um...well when I was listening to it, I found it was a bit hard to understand...and some of it I didn't quite catch...then when we went over it again, I suddenly realized what it was all about and um...the point of it became more clear...

In most cases, however, the symbolic meaning is either reduced to a simple maxim or interpreted in highly personal terms, as the following two protocols show:

Alison (11yr 5 mth): ...it means that if there is something...if you're in trouble and something or someone helps you then don't throw it away...be careful with it...and don't do anything you might regret later...because he killed the albatross ...and all his friends on his ship died...and he had all these visions...and he heard these things...and now he had to live the life of a tramp and go around...and he had to tell someone - anyone that he chose - his story before he could sleep...(What do you like best about the poem?)...well, it's very great descriptive powers...he describes everything that happened in minute detail...it's very long ...and it has a moral I think.

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): ...well, I can't really put it into words ...it's my own feeling, you know, that I have myself when I listen to it...but in some parts um...there's hatred towards the mariner from me because...like when he kills the albatross I think he's killed the albatross for no reason at all...I don't think...and I think it's mean, harsh and cruel...and I love animals and I send hatred to the mariner about that...but later on in the poem I feel sorry for him...you know...oh well, um, having to put up with all his dead crewmen...and living with this story for the rest of his life and um...having to um...live by himself and put up with a haunting ship...and just his men dying around him...and sometimes I don't think he... sometimes he self-pities himself but I don't think he overdoes that.

Although the above response is egocentric, there is considerable sensitivity to the symbolic meaning of the poem. But for some children in this transitional phase between concrete and formal reasoning, the symbolic elements may be assimilated into a literal interpretation. Consider, for example, the way in which Julie reacted to the supernatural elements in the poem:

Julie (11yr 5 mth): (Now the crew begin to rise and they man the ship which seems to be moved on from underneath by some kind of spirit or force...)...but they can't if they're dead...(Why do you say that, Julie?)...well, I suppose they can in the story, but they couldn't really...it's only a story but it's not a true story...it must be sort of like a fairy story with these ghosts and things like that.

Later in the interview, Julie indicates that this poses a specific obstacle for her achieving a coherent interpretation of the poem.

(What does the whole poem mean to you?)...well um, it doesn't seem to have much meaning to me ...I can't really see the meaning in it at all ...(Is there any suggestion as to what it means?) ...well, it says that he woke up the next morning a wiser man...that's the wedding guest who did...(Why would that be?)...I don't know ...maybe he could see some meaning in the story but I can't...when he shot that albatross I think that had meaning...but what happened after that well it couldn't happen in real life...but I suppose you can put anything in a poem... people just wouldn't believe it though...I still don't get that part about the ghost ship... (That is called a 'supernatural element' in the poem)...yes, well it seemed to be a very serious poem and then it had all those supernatural things in it and it didn't seem to be right....

(Why not?)...well, it didn't seem to suit the poem...I don't know...it seemed like he was imagining it...(Why do you say it was a serious poem?)...well, it was all about how this man suffered and he was pretty sad and unhappy most of the time...there was nothing funny that happened.

This interpretive problem, however, did not exist for any of the subjects in the oldest age-group. Indeed some were clearly capable of integrating most elements of the narrative into a coherent symbolic meaning:

Michelle (14yr 0 mth): (What does the whole poem mean to you?)...um, it's about the way he was alone...and he killed the bird and he didn't love the people...and he didn't love the bird...it was saying that if you love animals and people then everybody will love you too and that's better than being alone.

Blair (14yr 7 mth): (What does the whole poem mean to you?)...well that um...to respect every living thing...it seems to be...and um...to be happy with um... with the company you've got I suppose...or else you'll end up alone...we should respect living things...it's really about deep loneliness I suppose...and what it can be like...

Tina (13yr 2 mth): ...I'm not sure what the whole poem is referring to...it would have some meaning...it wasn't really just the story you know...different symbols would represent different things...(What sorts of things?)...well, it said that the wedding guest was sadder and wiser from hearing the tale...but I don't really know what he'd be wiser about or sadder about what...maybe at his foolishness at killing the albatross that was meant to bring good or...(What about the ghost-ship and the men rising up from the dead? Do you find that you can accept those parts of the poem?)...yes, I think they're important... because they show why the mariner had to suffer so much for what he'd done...killing the albatross wasn't just like killing an ordinary little bird...it was like destroying something that was meant to bring good from Nature and then he had to be punished for what he'd done ...so all the men died except him and when he was all alone he realized what he'd done... (What do you like best about the poem?)...well, um...just thinking about the ocean...and the sky um...I love the ocean...I don't know, because it's all to do with that and the way it describes it...it's a very good poem, well written...well, the story is a bit far-fetched and really old fashioned...(And is that acceptable?)...in a poem anything is acceptable according to me...a poem should have an effect on you and make you think about something... and this poem certainly does that.

Here is a child whose response to the poem shows the beginnings of a coherent and sensitive understanding. As for other children at this level, with appropriate guidance a more complete and comprehensive interpretation could readily be achieved.

The child's response to poetry then, is the starting point, not the end-point, in the process of poetic appreciation. If we are to teach the appreciation of poetry from the earliest age, we need to know much more than merely what poems children like or what preferences they tend to express. We need also to know something about how they can be taught to understand or comprehend poetic meaning. This implies much more than simply encouraging them to acquire meaning in their own subjective and idiosyncratic ways; it also implies that the teacher should stimulate and foster the development of those cognitive capacities that are an essential part of mature poetic appreciation and aesthetic judgment. In short, it implies that the teacher should assist the child to understand what the poem means. The following comments, spontaneously volunteered by one subject at the end of the interview, suggest that for the child, this may become an act of discovery:

Kendal (12yr 2 mth): ...when I first listened to it, I didn't really pick up much...I enjoyed it and didn't get bored or anything but I just didn't understand it all...it's different now because we've been through it but...(But I haven't really told you anything about it. You've told it all to me. So, how is it that you understand it better?) ...I don't know...but when I read things as well as listening to them...and you made me really think about it with all your questions ...and if you hadn't asked me I don't think I would have ever thought about some of those things.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the nature of poetic understanding. Without seeking to advance yet another defence of poetic art, the purpose has been to examine the main features of poetic language and to explain, in cognitive terms, what is required for its comprehension. Behind this analysis has been the assumption that because poetry is an art form in which meaning is produced by words that are put together in special ways, its appreciation necessarily requires an understanding of what those words mean. Only when understanding has been achieved could any subsequent judgments about the value of that meaning have any validity or point.

It has been argued that poetry is a way of using words aesthetically

to say things which could not possibly be said in any other way, things which in a sense do not exist until they are manifest in poetic form. With its emphasis on the connotative and intensional functions of words, poetic language both derives from and departs from the structure of ordinary language. Where it derives from ordinary language, it achieves through deliberate ambiguity and semantic density, a richness and immediacy of meaning that is at once more direct, more varied and more thickly textured than the language that is normally used in everyday situations. Where it departs from ordinary language, poetry consciously and pointedly breaks from the normal code of language in an effort to force our attention onto the words themselves, as upon the separate elements in a picture so that we perceive the whole in a new and dynamic way.

But, as Martin (1975: 188) makes clear, "the principle of oddness, that is of violence done to our normal perceptions, may not be indulged in arbitrarily." It is clear that poetry, like any other art, contains regularity within irregularity so that the internal context controls the precise associations intended. Thus, where ambiguity occurs, it is not arbitrary but purposeful, it is intended to achieve a poetic effect. Whatever else it achieves, poetry must convey meaning, it must offer a semantic content.

With this conception of poetry to the fore, the preceding discussion has focussed on two central aspects of poetic appreciation: the interpretive description of what a passage of poetry is about, that is its subject, and the comprehension of poetic language itself which generally involves the grasp of metaphoric meaning. Each of these, it has been argued, requires competencies that can be taught provided the relevant facts of cognitive development are taken into account. Just as linguistic competence enables us to understand sentences we have never heard before, so metaphorical competence enables us to construct meanings we have never understood before.

The core of poetic understanding, it has been suggested, is synonymous with the comprehension of interactive metaphor. Just as a metaphor, at the interactive level, creates a similarity, rather than points to a pre-existing similarity, so a poetic image creates a pattern of relationships and presents it for contemplation. What is being said here about the nature of poetic understanding is close in one sense to what Coleridge was saying when he distinguished between Fancy and Imagination, defining the latter as a "synthetic and magical power." Clearly, the more that the reader can imagine, the more connections and relationships he is capable of forming in his mind. Thus, the act of cognition involved in

poetic understanding can be characterized in exactly the same way as T.S. Eliot has so graphically portrayed the act of poetic creation:

> When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for his work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.
> (Eliot, 1932: 247)

But whereas the poet's mind forms these wholes, the reader's mind is required to interpret them. Interpretive redescription is constitutive of the reader's poetic understanding. While affective involvement may permeate the poetic experience, and while emotions and feelings are principal subjects of poetic art, emotional or affective involvement is not to be construed as an independent component. Rather, affective responses and expressions of preference can be considered valid only to the extent that they arise out of an understanding of what the poem means and a knowledge of how it is to be appropriately interpreted. Accordingly, a focus on cognition is central to the education of poetic appreciation.

The analysis of poetic understanding that has been developed in this chapter emphasizes, in accordance with the principal argument of the whole thesis, the centrality of knowledge and cognition to the process of coming to an appreciation of a poem as a work of art. In conclusion, however, it is necessary to reiterate the point that was more fully elaborated in Chapter 6: that is, in no way should the above discussion be taken as implying that knowledge is sufficient for an appreciation of poetry or that emotion is in any way less important or superfluous. Indeed, it is in the power of poetry to move us deeply that its greatest value most certainly lies. Knowing how to interpret a poem, moreover, even understanding what it means, may not in itself be sufficient to produce the appropriate aesthetic emotion (or any emotion at all for that matter); but unless the meaning can be understood, unless the reader can construct an interpretation of the poem, then any talk of getting aesthetic satisfaction from it is either ill-conceived or meaningless. It is on this premise that the whole theoretical framework of this thesis has been erected and it is appropriate that it should be re-stated as a precursor to the final chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EDUCATION OF POETIC APPRECIATION

This investigation provides a cognitive-developmental perspective on artistic and literary education. The approach taken is both philosophical and psychological in its methods and in the questions that are addressed. On one level, it comprises a general theoretical investigation of artistic appreciation from an educational point of view; while concurrently, on a more specific level, it involves a clinical investigation of children's understanding and appreciation of one poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The clinical interviews, by providing examples and illustrations, are used to illuminate the theoretical position that is advanced. It is now the purpose of this final chapter to summarise the general argument and to use it as the basis for defending a number of specific principles for the teaching of poetic appreciation and for the guidance of curriculum practice in this area of the arts.

The General Argument

In outline, the major argument behind the thesis is as follows:

Appreciation of art and literature is a cognitive ability in which knowledge and understanding have a central place. This knowledge is distinct from scientific knowledge but is no less substantive in its conceptual content, no less rational in its logical structure, and no less objective or rigorous in the critical procedures by which it is pursued.

While experience of and acquaintance with works of art and literature are essential to their appreciation, it is a mistake to assume that such experience is sufficient or that all experience of this kind will be educative. Indeed, because appreciation presupposes interpretation which entails "seeing" such works under an appropriate aspect and in a correct relationship to their context, artistic appreciation is not the result of "natural" responses to experience but requires an initiation into the understanding and knowledge of relevant concepts and criteria; it requires a gradual induction into the interpretive mode of reasoning. Thus, teaching artistic appreciation involves teaching how to think and talk <u>about</u> a work of art in order to make an appropriate interpretation of

it in terms of publicly identifiable criteria. It involves teaching how to recognize the bounds on what is relevant and how to put forward coherent, plausible reasons for construing a work under a particular interpretation. Only when these capacities have been developed can evaluation, or critical appreciation, of art and literature follow from them.

Furthermore, emotional responses to art and literature are not peculiarly "inner" subjective states but are themselves structured by cognition and therefore can be either appropriate or inappropriate to the objects which evoke them. Hence, making an appropriate emotional response presupposes public norms and the knowledge necessary to work with them. These can be acquired only through education and consequently an education of the emotions through the appreciation of art and literature is necessarily cognitive; indeed, there are no coherent grounds for marking the emotional off from the cognitive since there is a logical connection between them in that emotions are contextual and subject to cognitive appraisals.

Finally, as with the acquisition of all knowledge, artistic appreciation requires specific cognitive capacities (such as the ability for interpretive reasoning, metaphoric competence, perceptual discrimination) which are structured developmentally and emerge only gradually over time as a result of interaction between the child and his environment. The purpose of education, therefore, is to ensure that these capacities develop as fully as possible by the provision of appropriate experiences and the teaching of essential knowledge in such a way that these environmental demands are made within the structural constraints of the child's cognitive development. The development of interpretive reasoning and metaphoric comprehension will involve the progressive equilibration of cognitive structures, exhibiting the features of wholeness, transformation and self-regulation. Thus, it is only with the gradual growth of artistic understanding with its relevant knowledge and abilities that a mature and educated appreciation of the arts will be possible.

Before considering the more specific implications of this argument for the education of poetic appreciation, it is necessary to be clear about what the thesis, as a whole, is not intended to do. For, only when the particular focus of the investigation is acknowledged, can the principles that follow from it be put into a proper perspective. Moreover, while many points have been made in preceding chapters about

education in literature and the arts generally, there has been no intention to address this vast subject in a comprehensive or definitive way.

The Limits of the Argument

This thesis is concerned only with some aspects of appreciation in literature and the arts. Virtually nothing has been said about creativity in these areas but this does not imply that education for creativity is less important, nor that it is any less dependent on knowledge and cognitive ability. However, there is an underlying assumption, briefly examined in Chapter 1, that the teaching of appreciation is not synonymous with the fostering of creativity except insofar as each engages the imagination and each is aiming at an accomplishment requiring mastery and competence. It is true that much of the knowledge necessary to artistic appreciation, for instance knowledge of the appropriate traditions, is necessary also to artistic creativity, but the ends of this knowledge are different for each of these activities. While it is an important task of education for both the activities of appreciation and creativity to initiate children into the appropriate traditions, so that they may come to understand the nature of the activity in which they are to engage and to recognize and care for the standards and values implicit in it, the activity itself is different in each case. For there are many different ways to understand any given thing and although it may be the case that an artist can understand art in a way that a non-artist cannot, it does not follow that a non-artist's understanding is deficient or inferior. Indeed, the non-artist may develop an understanding in which finer discriminations and richer interpretations are possible because the perception is not that of an artist, who may have more selective, more focussed concerns. The point here is simply that artistic appreciation is not logically dependent on creative experience and one may arrive at a wide and discerning appreciation of art and literature without ever having learned the simplest skills of putting brush to canvas or composing lines of verse. What is important educationally, however, is that such appreciation does depend upon a rich store of experiential encounters with the world of art, the growth of an active imagination and the mastery of appropriate knowledge.

A second limitation that has been set on the scope of this thesis concerns the fundamental differences that exist between the various forms

of art. Nearly all of the examples used to illustrate the general argument have been taken from the domain of poetry. But this does not imply that an appreciation of poetry could be generalized into an appreciation of other art forms, nor that the cognitive abilities and knowledge pertaining to the appreciation of poetry might be directly transferable to appreciation of other kinds. Indeed, the very point of the argument is to show that appreciation is the appreciation of something, that is to say it is the object of appreciation that defines and gives meaning to what one is doing. It is the object of which we make a cognitive appraisal, an interpretation, a judgment; it is the object which is known. For this reason, differences between the arts are of crucial significance, especially for the education of appreciation. In advancing the general argument that appreciation is something that needs to be taught, poetry has been taken as the special case. But it is important to recognize that each art form is unique in the sense that some of its meaning can only be understood in terms of symbols and criteria for interpretation which do not belong to any other art form. Likewise, the criteria for aesthetic perception and appropriate affective responses are particular to each art form, and since the appropriate responses are logically connected to the art object itself, only those who have learned to understand the symbolic medium out of which the object is made, can experience these responses. There are two further important implications here for education.

The first concerns the distinction that is sometimes implied between the content and the process of learning. It is sometimes suggested, for instance, that content refers to a body of factual information pertaining to a substantive form of human knowledge whereas process is concerned more with doing than with knowing. The implication of this view is that education should emphasize process rather than content, that it should be more concerned with doing than with knowing, with principles and methods of inquiry rather than with the accumulation of facts, and with feelings, sensitivities, beliefs, attitudes and values rather than with the mastery of knowledge. But such a view rests upon a false dichotomy. Whether it be in the appreciation of the arts or any other area of human understanding, both process and content are complementary and important. For there can be no richness and depth of knowledge without the development of cognitive processes, and there can be no point to such processes without a solid basis of knowledge and understanding upon which they can operate. If this is true for poetic appreciation, as the preceding chapters have attempted to show, then it will have just as

much truth for music, dance, or any other forms of art.

The second implication for education to follow from the distinctiveness of different art forms concerns the relative priority given to each within the curriculum. If poetic appreciation, along with other aspects of the language arts, has a secure place within the English syllabus, what is its position in relation to the education of appreciation in the other art forms? The organization and structure of curricula in this area appear to lack a coherent underlying rationale. The appreciation of music and painting may be given a small place within the core curriculum or a slightly wider scope within various electives and options, but what of education for the appreciation of dance, architecture or sculpture? These are very important curriculum questions but they lie beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Questions about the relative priority of the arts reflect on an even more fundamental question concerning the ultimate value of art itself. In attempting to answer the question, "What does it mean to educate for artistic appreciation?" there is a prior assumption that the appreciation of art has an intrinsic value which will ensure that its place in the curriculum will be justified. However, important as it is, the complete examination of this assumption would comprise an undertaking that would extend beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Some consideration was given in Chapter 6 to the part that artistic appreciation can play in the education of the emotions and in Chapter 4 the comparison with science carries the implication that art as a way of knowing, as a form of knowledge, has the potential to open up new possibilities and more diverse world views. However, much more remains to be said about the cultural value of art than could possibly be encompassed within the present discussion.

One aspect of this, for instance, would be to consider the value of art in terms of the education of perception. All children will have their own individual perceptions and personal imagery but the teacher of art appreciation can take these as starting points for the encouragement and expansion of children's perceptual explorations. It is this aspect of aesthetic education which Harry S. Broudy (1972) has called "enlightened cherishing" and he regards it as an important consideration in justifying the place of art in the curriculum:

> My own preference...is not to rely on art to produce moral and intellectual excellence....Educationally, it is sufficient to argue for aesthetic education because imaginative perception and perceptive imagination are uniquely human powers and as such need to be cultivated

by all members of the school population.

(Broudy, 1976: 37)

But what could be meant by "imaginative perception" and "perceptive imagination"? Too often art educators invoke such concepts when offering a justification for the teaching of artistic appreciation without any clear indication of what they could mean in practical curriculum terms. The aim of this thesis has been to go some of the way towards overcoming that kind of inadequacy. More specifically, the aim has been to argue for a cognitive developmental approach to the education of poetic appreciation, and to propose a theoretical framework for teaching in this particular area of the arts curriculum.

The Structure of Poetic Appreciation

It is a consequence of the foregoing argument that an educational theory of poetic appreciation will yield sound teaching principles only by overcoming the philosophical pit-falls of dualism and relativism.

Dualism, with its reference to "inner states" (feelings, emotions, intentions) produces the belief that the experience of poetry in itself is sufficient for the development of appreciation. Knowledge about the poem or the poet or the context in which it was produced, are considered to be extraneous to the experience of "true appreciation." Furthermore, it is considered that any attempt by the reader to interpret, to paraphrase or in any other way to talk about the poem, is somehow destructive of the pristine purity of that "inner" response. The following statement from a recently published teachers' text typifies this view:

> Poems should be respected and enjoyed for what they are - imaginative constructs that are not translatable into utilitarian prose. No effort should be made to extract what is often erroneously called a poem's "real" meaning.
>
> The question, "What does it mean?" has no place in the study of poetry at any level, because it fails to make a necessary distinction between imaginative and discursive writing. What the poet meant to say is, literally, the poem itself; what he meant to say in any given passage is, in its literal meaning, part of the poem. It is a fruitless and wasteful procedure to translate or try to translate a poem into discursive commentary. Such teaching distorts the child's experience, giving him the confusing and erroneous belief that poetry exists only as a distortion of prose. Instead, the child should be helped to know, by means of the best examples and with enjoyment and experimentation, that poetry is a valid mode of thought. The poem is experienced as a whole, its "meaning" accepted as part of the whole.
>
> (Sloan, 1975: 59)

The basic premise here, that the meaning of poetry cannot be "translated" (in a strict sense) into discursive prose, is sound enough; but because it is connected to the dualistic assumption that "the poem is experienced as a whole" it leads to the totally mistaken assertion that a discursive commentary on the poem's meaning is a "fruitless and wasteful procedure" which "distorts the child's experience." It is precisely this kind of assertion that has such harmful consequences for the education of poetic appreciation. The implication that interpretation is incompatible with "enjoyment and experimentation" is grossly misleading.

The second problem to be overcome by an educational theory of poetic appreciation is the problem of relativism. This gives rise to the belief that there are ultimately no grounds for holding that one interpretation of a poem is more or less valid than another, nor any justification for saying that a response is correct or appropriate. In brief, the relativist holds that appreciation can be no more than the personal, subjective, even idiosyncratic, response that an individual makes to a poem. All talk of criteria for meaning and value are thus considered to be merely relative to individuals. This view is typified by the following statement from another recent text on the teaching of literature:

> The teacher encourages each person to express whatever his response might be, and encourages everyone to exchange responses or share in expressing a response freely. As people work together, they modify their individuality where it seems appropriate, retain it where it seems appropriate. As people work together, they find out about other people and about themselves. The teacher's role is to challenge people to justify, explain, and share their responses.
>
> Its aim is to have people come to a greater knowledge of why they are who they are, and thus approach new works of literature with greater self-confidence.
>
> Its aim is to affect people's perception of works of art (literary works), to affect their ability to articulate their responses, and to affect their tolerance of the diversity of human responses to similar objects.
>
> (Purves, 1972: 44)

The assumption here is that the poem may have as many different meanings as there are readers. The teacher's task is to encourage the articulation of these personal responses, not in relation to any criteria or standards concerning what is to count as poetic appreciation, but in order to enhance the self-images of the readers and encourage them

to be tolerant of any interpretation. Again, the educational consequences of such a view are very damaging in that the poem as a work of art tends to disappear in the midst of an amorphous exchange of subjective meanings.

Thus, both of the above fallacies, dualism and relativism, lead towards a subjectivist approach to poetry (see Figure 9) because in each case the poem's meaning is assigned to a private world, and therefore the act of interpreting, of making judgments, the giving of reasons, or any notions of correctness or appropriateness can make no sense. The education of poetic appreciation becomes impossible.

Subjectivist Account of Poetic Response

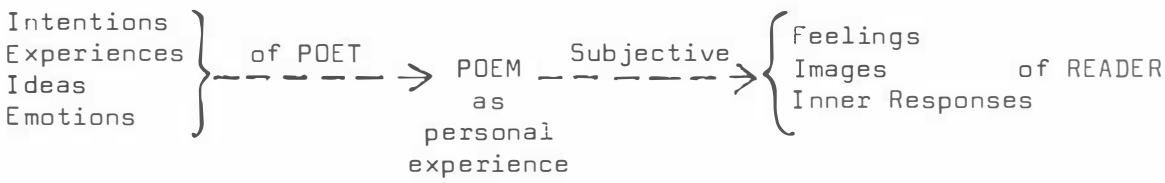

Figure 9

The point is that any poem, read or heard under any circumstances, can produce a poetic response. Such a response is subjective, personal and relative to the individual. It is the psychological effect of the poem as a verbal stimulus pattern, the result of an experience that is not necessarily educative.

But a poem is a literary work of art. Its meaning is produced by a unique integration of form (words, syntax, verse structure, sound) and content (connotation, metaphor, narrative) embedded in the context of public conventions concerning how that meaning is to be reached. The first stage in appreciation is to understand the poetic meaning and this is manifested in the total social/cultural/linguistic context at the centre of which is the poem as artefact (a literary work with observable features and many parts all of which are intended to contribute towards a coherent meaning). So the appreciation of poetry, even of a short lyric, must begin with the formulation of a hierarchy of interpretive descriptions based on an experience of the poem. There is no other way in which an artistic appreciation can be specified.

The very possibility of educating for poetic appreciation depends upon the objectivity of what it means to appreciate a poem. This objectivity derives from the cognitive nature of the criteria by which the act of appreciation itself is defined. On one side there are the interpretive criteria of the poem, derived from its semantic structure, its aesthetic features and its total literary context; on the other side are the criteria of understanding, derived from the verbal and non-verbal actions of the reader and bound by cognitive developmental structures. Poetic appreciation is structured by the inter-relationship between these two sets of criteria (see Figure 10).

The Structure of Poetic Appreciation

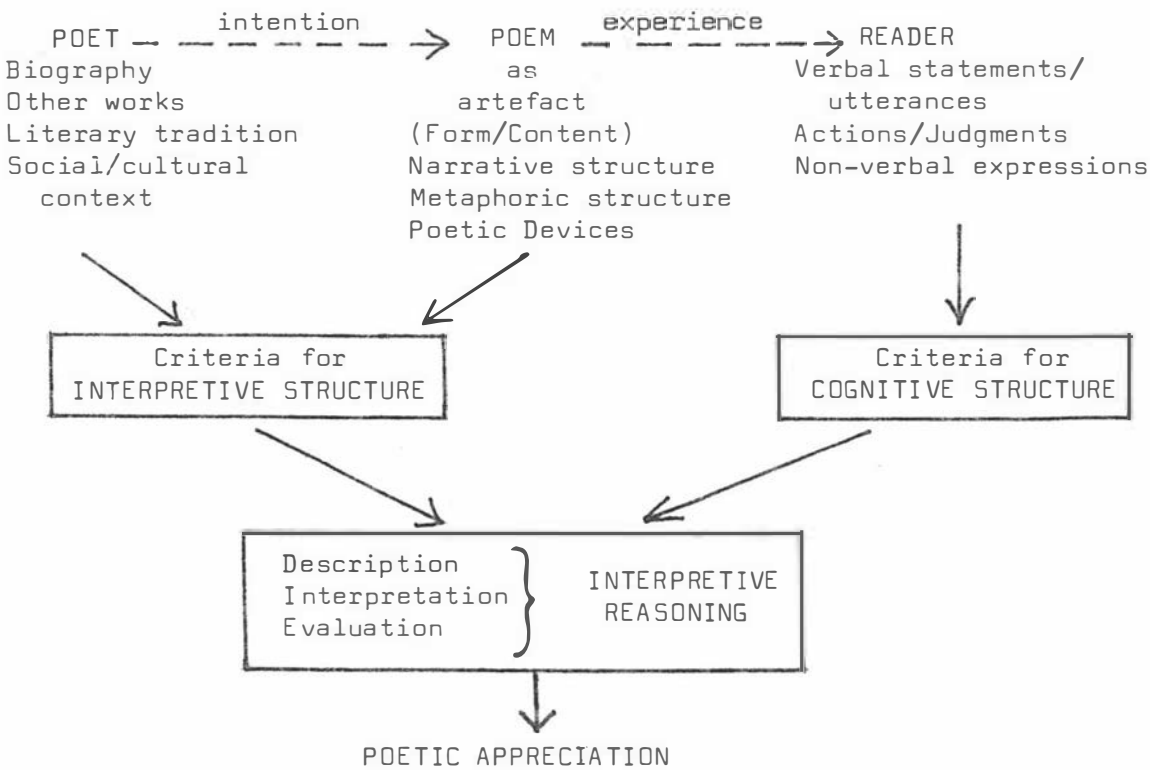

Figure 10

Because poetry is an art form in which words are used aesthetically to convey meaning in special ways, its appreciation necessarily requires some understanding of how poetic language functions and a capacity to derive meaning from poetic forms of discourse. This involves a recognition that poetic language is distinctively connotative and that

poetic meaning is almost always metaphorical to some degree. It implies, moreover, that just as all language acquires meaning within a context, so too metaphorical language can be fully understood only within a context. In the case of poetry, this context is a carefully constructed pattern contained within the poem itself, a pattern which has to be recognized and understood before it can properly function to control the reader's appreciation of what the poem means. It is towards the achievement of this understanding that the educational task is most significantly directed.

The education of poetic appreciation is the aim of teaching which sets out to perform two inter-related functions:

(i) to provide the conceptual content for interpretation (e.g. contextual knowledge, critical vocabulary, descriptive concepts)

(ii) to stimulate cognitive development by producing an optimal dissonance (or mismatch) between the interpretive structure of the poem and the cognitive capacities of the reader (especially in the areas of metaphoric comprehension and interpretive reasoning ability).

The teacher's task in fostering the development of appreciation is to guide the student towards an appropriate interpretive description of what a poem or a passage of poetry is about, that is its poetic subject, and towards a more complete, more discriminating comprehension of the poetic language itself which involves the capacity for metaphoric understanding along with a general knowledge of the relevant literary conventions and the socio-cultural context in which the poem is located. Each of these requires competencies that can be taught provided the relevant empirical features of cognitive development are taken into account. These empirical features can be seen to imply a sequence of stages in the emergence of poetic appreciation.

Initially, for young children, appreciation involves the comprehension of more simple poetic forms containing direct statement or explicit comparisons and where there may be a regular rhythm or a clear story-line. Metaphors may be comprehended by the young reader but not fully explained and interpretations tend to be limited and largely literal in nature. Gradually sound effects come to be noticed although conventional metaphors and explicitness of meaning are still preferred and connotations are frequently idiosyncratic or inappropriate because the contextual controls are not recognized.

From about 12 years on, however, there is an emerging capacity

for appreciating more complex literary qualities (imagery, theme, form) and for understanding more complex interactive metaphor in which connotation and emotion are controlled by the poetic context. Concurrently, there is an increasing perception of the specific poetic functions of rhythm and sound, a greater openness to a range of interpretive possibilities, a tendency towards finer discriminations of meaning, and a preference for semantic density and symbolic complexity. Interpretations become more comprehensive, more complete, and more unified around a single pattern.

This cognitive-developmental structure of poetic appreciation suggests a teaching model by which the practical educational objectives in this particular area of the literature curriculum might be achieved. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude with a summary statement of the model and a brief discussion of the underlying principles providing guidance for the teaching of poetic appreciation.

Model for the Teaching of Poetic Appreciation

In planning a literature curriculum which will foster the development of poetic appreciation, the teacher should:

(a) Provide opportunities for direct experience of poetry;

(b) Make available relevant knowledge about poetry;

(c) Teach pupils to interpret poetry; and,

(d) Monitor the appreciative performance of pupils.

Some discussion of each component in this four stage model will indicate its theoretical rationale in the light of the foregoing study.

1. The curriculum should provide opportunities for direct experience of a wide range of poetry.

It cannot be emphasized too much that the reading of poetry is an aesthetic experience which must involve a direct encounter between reader and art object. No amount of talk about a poem can have an equivalent effect to the poem itself. However, the motivation to read poetry is a psychological consequence of one's experience of reading it and nothing has a more damaging effect on this than the experience of reading poetry without understanding. In providing experience of poetry, therefore, a delicate compromise must be established between criteria based on pupil preference, criteria based on pupil competence (particularly metaphoric comprehension) and criteria based on educational value. If pupils already knew how to appreciate poetry, there would be

no problems here; but there is always a practical dilemma in education between the pupil's preferences and interests at a given time and the educational goals towards which the curriculum is directed. If we are thinking of the ultimate aims of teaching poetic appreciation, the experiential component is of first importance and at all levels it must provide the necessary basis from which to start. This point is made very clearly by Roy Thomas in a recent article on objectives in the teaching of literature:

> Knowledge about literature without experience of literature is the husk without the kernel. Indeed, in a Utopian situation literature teaching would consist simply in exposing the pupil to levels of poetry, fiction and drama appropriate to his level of development. Offering the pupil a poem, a novel or a play would be analogous to presenting a song, playing a recording of a symphony, broadcasting a dramatic piece. In short it would simply be a matter - though 'simply' is hardly the word - of choosing the material.
>
> (Thomas, 1978: 115-6)

But, as Thomas goes on to point out, choosing the material appropriate to the pupils' level of development is only the first stage in designing a literature curriculum. The second stage involves making relevant knowledge available.

2. The curriculum should embody relevant knowledge about poetry in order to provide criteria for relating poems to their socio-historical context and interpreting them within the relevant literary tradition.

The essential point here is that in order to understand any human phenomenon, whether it is a poem, a piece of music, a religious ceremony, a scientific discovery, or a political revolution, it must be seen against its historical background and its cultural setting. This implies that one learns how to appreciate poetry not from the acquisition of factual information, propositions or definitions, but by reading poems in an informed way, listening to and participating in the appropriate ways of talking about them, and engaging in the activity of interpreting them. To make sense of such experience is to be initiated into an artistic tradition and in learning about that tradition one also learns the values that are part of it - although one is not necessarily able to make these fully explicit.

The term "tradition" is often taken as implying something formal, unnecessarily constrained and unimaginative. It carries with it suggestions of being confined and restricted to the past and to

established past achievements. In part, these connotations may have been reinforced by teaching methods that have come to be called "traditional" (e.g. rote memorizing, scansion, sterile paraphrase) and rightly have been rejected.

But the above sense is not what is meant by a literary tradition providing the context for a poem's interpretation. Here we may even speak of a "living" tradition where there is a dynamic relationship between a particular poem and the historically and culturally established "standards of excellence" against which its aesthetic features can be understood (Schwartz, 1977). It is true that these features may be understood at an elementary level, especially for a poem such as "The Ancient Mariner" where there are several layers of meaning. But always at the higher levels of interpretation the words on their own are not sufficient without some understanding of the cultural context, awareness of interpretive concepts provided by the poet in the work, and knowledge of the literary conventions embodied in it.

3. The teacher's task is to invite pupils to interpret poems and to guide them towards interpretations that are appropriate and correct in relation to contextual criteria for the poem's meaning.

Interpretation, properly conceived, is not the arid intellectual exercise that it is sometimes made out to be. On the contrary, it is central to one's understanding of a literary work. Appreciation follows from the controlled and disciplined struggle to determine the artistic significance or purpose of each image, each line, and each stanza within the context of the work. In a close or intensive reading, this process can be repeated until all the elements are interrelated into an interpretation which articulates the "meaning" of the poem. This is not to say that such a process produces the meaning as though it were something final or absolute, but rather it will ensure that the meaning arrived at is not incorrect or inappropriate (cf. Osborne, 1970: 182). It will be as near to the intended meaning as it is possible for a particular reader, under given circumstances, to reach.

The fact that there is no final interpretation of a poem as rich and complex as "The Ancient Mariner" does not mean that the teacher's goal is unattainable. What the teacher who elicits an interpretation is saying in effect is something like this: "try reading these lines of poetry as you read this other sentence; try seeing it as having this sort of meaning, intention, effect." For in teaching children to

appreciate a great poem such as "The Ancient Mariner" we are not imposing upon them some preordained interpretive blueprint but rather, leading them, as Warren (1947: 271) suggests the critic does, in the "gradual exploration of deeper and deeper levels of meaning within the poem itself." The teacher does this by guiding the child's processes of interpretive reasoning, but always with a realization that the imagination may work more directly. For, as Warren adds, so insightfully:

> ...this process of exploration of deeper and deeper levels of the poem may be immediate and intuitive. The reader may be profoundly affected - his sense of the world may be greatly altered - even though he has not tried to frame in words the nature of the change wrought upon him, or having tried to do so, has failed (as all critics must fail in some degree, for the simple reason that the analysis cannot render the poem, the discursive activity cannot render the symbolical).
>
> (Warren, 1947: 271)

In the same way, children can often apprehend poetry in ways that they cannot fully articulate. In one of his early studies, Piaget (1926: 128ff) reports an experiment where he presented children with the task of matching proverbs to sentences that express their meaning in a different form (e.g. "Drunken once, will get drunk again" and "It is difficult to break old habits"). The children were asked to read the proverb and find a sentence to match its meaning. He found that many young children (9 and 10 year olds) were able to match correctly proverbs that they were unable to explain and he called this kind of intuitive mental leap syncretistic understanding. It seems to point to some kind of tacit comprehension or imaginative presentational awareness which is independent of analytical reasoning. Marjorie Hourd (1949) commented that this experiment reveals the "wholeness of thought in young children, an unconscious grasp of meanings beyond them on the analytical plane."

However, while it is a truism that no poem is precisely equivalent to a literal paraphrase of it, it is also true that our understanding can be improved by our ability to conceive some degree of interpretive commentary. If children are asked what a poem means and cannot even approach an interpretation, their understanding is necessarily incomplete; there is something yet to be learned before a full appreciation becomes possible. The teacher has a task to perform.

Moreover, poetry must produce meaning for children before it can produce feeling. This is not to deny the importance of feeling in the appreciation of poetry. But feeling can be much more than an

undifferentiated and passive inner state of pleasure or discomfort. It can be the refined product of a meaningful appraisal of experience: an appraisal which, though it produces emotion, is in itself largely cognitive in nature. In teaching poetic appreciation, therefore, the teacher's task is to ensure as far as possible that interpretation remains true to the poetry itself; for, as T.S. Eliot reminds us, the reader is responding "impurely" to poetry who is "unable to distinguish the poetry from an emotional state aroused in himself by the poetry, a state which may be merely an indulgence of his own emotions" (Eliot, 1928: 15).

4. The evaluation of teaching objectives involves monitoring the appreciative performance of pupils in terms of their actions, utterances and judgments in reading and interpreting poetry.

Objectives for teaching poetic appreciation are not specifiable as preformulated goals or endpoints (cf. Eisner, 1979: 103-7). Where knowledge about literature is concerned, the aim will be primarily to inform; where the experience of literature is concerned, the aim will be to present an educational encounter; where the interpretation of literature is concerned, the aim will be to provide occasions for exploration and evocation. Whether appreciation is achieved will depend on how far these three kinds of educational outcome can be integrated, and for this there is no single criterion or set of criteria that could be specified in advance. Ultimately, therefore, any evaluation that is to be made of teaching in this area must include an appraisal of the pupils' appreciative performance (what Eisner calls an expressive outcome). But there is no system of rules by which this can be carried out, neither is it equivalent to a logical deduction or an inductive inference - rather, it is a judgment which the teacher is called upon to make.

Judging the appreciative performance of pupils can be compared to judging the genuineness of expressions of feeling and on this Wittgenstein has commented with penetrating insight when he asks:

> Is there such a thing as "expert judgment" about the genuineness of expressions of feeling? - Even here, there are those whose judgment is "better" and those whose judgment is "worse."
>
> Correcter prognoses will generally issue from the judgments of those with better knowledge of mankind.
>
> Can one learn this knowledge? Yes; some can. Not, however, by taking a course in it, but through 'experience.' - Can someone else be a man's teacher in this? Certainly. From time to time he gives him

> the right tip. - This is what "learning" and "teaching" are like here. - What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules.
>
> (Wittgenstein, 1953: IIxi, 227e)

These comments can be applied without qualification to the appreciation of art and literature. This indeed is what "learning" and "teaching" are like here also. Both for the pupil appreciating the poem and for the teacher evaluating the appreciative performance of the pupil, there are guiding principles but not "calculating-rules." What is involved in each case is what Polanyi would call "an act of personal knowing" and it has as much relevance to the makers of art as it does to the appreciators of art and to the teachers of art appreciation. It involves not a set of skills or techniques so much as a commitment to principles, and the following comments apply to the appreciator and the teacher as much as to the maker:

> Art has no tests external to art. Its making and acceptance must therefore be ultimately grounded on the decision of its maker, interacting, it is true, with both tradition and the public's present inclinations, but nevertheless interacting by and through the maker's own judgments. The fact that the artist must labour to meet his self-set standards is sufficient warrant that he submits to these as being universal standards, not of his own arbitrary or willful making....
>
> Such is the structure of a responsible commitment as distinct from a purely subjective, arbitrary, fanciful "choice".
>
> (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975: 103-4)

The education of artistic appreciation cannot be achieved in the absence of this "responsible commitment." But this implies an artistic conception of teaching itself, a view of teaching which cannot be circumscribed in narrowly instrumental terms. For all teaching, but especially the teaching of appreciation, is itself a creative activity combining responsible commitment with what Eisner calls "the educational imagination," a conception of teaching entailing a much wider notion of rationality than that which is embedded in more static means-ends models. As Eisner points out,

> Rationality includes the capacity to play, to explore, to search for surprise and effective novelty. Such activities are not necessarily contrary to the exercise of human rationality, they may be its most compelling exemplification. What diminishes human rationality is the

> thwarting of flexible human intelligence by prescriptions that shackle the educational imagination.
>
> (Eisner, 1979: 163)

What is required therefore, if education is to liberate the appreciative imagination, is a recognition of the full range of human intelligence. Perhaps, as Eisner (1979: 281) suggests, intelligence has been conceived of in ways that are too narrow and limiting, and what is required is a conception of what William Walsh (1959) refers to as "the poetic intelligence" together with some educational understanding of how it might be developed. But such a quest, important as it is, extends well beyond the boundaries of what has been attempted in this study. In the preceding pages no more has been attempted than to make sense of what it means to educate for poetic appreciation. It is important to recognize, however, as William Walsh reminds us, that:

> The poetic intelligence...is not limited to the ratiocinative, and the world it works in has a thicker texture: here the organ of thought engages the widest reaches of personality, even its most divergent powers, so that in both the instrument and the act of poetic thinking there is productive discordance and fruitful controversy, while its object is the most varied and discrete experience, the chaos of actuality.
>
> (Walsh, 1959: 185)

In clarifying some aspects of how the poetic intelligence can be educated, this thesis has given emphasis to the contribution which can be made only by a teacher with an abiding and enlightened commitment to educational excellence. Child-centred education, from the time of Rousseau, has produced many good and desirable consequences, but in its extreme forms it can merely leave children uncaringly to their own devices, confined to the limits of their language and experiences. We cannot merely release children into the world of things and expect that they will discover the truths of science or mathematics for themselves; neither can we merely expose them to the world of words and expect that they will discover poetic truths for themselves. The quest for such truth is an accomplishment of the developing mind that requires the guiding influence of an educated teacher.

APPENDIX ONE

CLINICAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

(Used to provide the basic framework for each interview)

This poem is called 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' -

What is an 'ancient mariner'?

Why is it called that and not 'The Rime of the Old Sailor'?

Which do you think sounds better? Why?

Let's listen again to the meeting between the wedding guest and the ancient mariner.

TAPE EXCERPT 1

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three,
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

What is it about the mariner that stands out most?

Listen to these two verses and tell me in your own words what they are about.

TAPE EXCERPT 1 - CONT.

He holds him with his glittering eye:
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 1

What does it mean, 'He holds him with his glittering eye'?

What does 'listens like a three years' child' mean?

Why does it say, 'He cannot choose but hear'?

What does 'glittering eye' suggest?

Now, the mariner begins to tell a story about how he sailed in a ship towards the South Pole. What was it like?

Let's listen to the description.

TAPE EXCERPT 2

'And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong;
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treadsthe shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove past, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken -
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Now, look at these lines.

'And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove past, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 2

Tell me about that description. What is the Storm-blast?

When it says, 'and he was tyrannous and strong' - what does the 'he' refer to? Whose wings are they?

What does it mean, 'As who pursued etc.'?
'And forward bends his head' - whose head? What does that mean?
Why does it say, 'And southward aye we fled'?

Now the albatross appears and follows the ship. The men welcome it and give it food but the mariner does a terrible thing. He shoots the albatross. The ship turns and starts to move north. At first the men say that the mariner has done a very wrong thing for he has killed the bird which makes the breeze blow. Then, after a while, they agree with what he did because they think that the albatross brought the fog and mist.
Let's listen to the part just after that.

TAPE EXCERPT 3

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

Look at these lines.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 3

What sorts of things do you notice about the sounds of the words?
Do you notice any change in the third line?
What does it mean, 'The furrow followed free'? What is a 'furrow'?
(If not known, say: What is a plough? What does a plough do to the soil?)

Now, listen to these next verses. Look at them as you listen.

TAPE EXCERPT 3 - CONT.

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 4

Describe it to me. Why is the sky copper?
What else does the word copper suggest to you?
Why is the sun 'bloody'?
'Day after day, day after day' - why is it repeated like that?
Do any words stand out to you?
What does it mean, 'As idle etc.'?

Well, the ship remains still and all the men become parched and weary in the terrible heat. Then suddenly a strange ship appears. It is a kind of ghost ship or a 'spectre bark' and there are two ghostly figures on board who represent death and life-in-death. They cast dice for the souls of the mariner and the men.
Let's listen to that part from where the ghost-ship first appears.

TAPE EXCERPT 4

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!

Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 5

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!

Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 6

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 7

The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 8

Read these lines through and tell me what is being described.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 5)

What does it mean, 'When that strange shape etc.'?

What are the bars? What does the line in brackets mean?

What is the dungeon-grate? What is the 'broad and burning face'?

Now, look at these two lines.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 6)

Tell me how the sales are described.

What are gossameres? (If not known, say: gossameres are fine filmy cobwebs, seen on grass and bushes or floating in the air in calm weather, especially in autumn).

What does, 'glance in the Sun' mean?

Read these three lines and tell me how the ghost woman is described.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 7)

What does 'as white as leprosy mean'? Why do you think it means that?

Now, what do these lines describe?

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 8)

What's happening here?

What does, 'At one stride comes the dark' mean? Why?

After the ghost ship leaves, the crew begin to die one by one and only the mariner is left alive. At this point the wedding guest interrupts.

TAPE EXCERPT 5

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 9

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown!
'Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding Guest
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 10

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away:
I looked upon the rotting deck
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea
and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 11

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

Read this verse again.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 9)

How does he describe the ancient mariner?

What does it mean, 'As is the ribbed sea-sand'? Why do you think it means that?

Now, look at these lines here.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 10)

What are these lines about? What do they mean?

Why are the words repeated like that?

Now this verse.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 11)

What does it mean?

What do you notice about the sounds of the words? Why?

Well, the mariner finds that he cannot die and then the water-snakes are described. Let's listen again to the description.

TAPE EXCERPT 6

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 12

O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

What happens there? Why? What is the meaning of that?

Read these lines over again and you describe them to me in your own words.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 12)

How were the water-snakes described earlier?

What has changed?

Then, after the albatross falls into the sea, the mariner falls into a sleep, and what happens when he wakes? (It rains).

Earlier, when it had been very dry, it was described like this.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 13

What does that mean?

Now, these lines describe what it is like when he wakes.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 14

Describe the change and compare the two verses.

What do you notice about the sounds of the words?

The crew rise up and man the ship, which seems to be moved from beneath by some spirit or force. Let's listen again to that part.

TAPE EXCERPT 7

For when it dawned - they dropped their
arms
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

PROJECTOR
EXCERPT 15

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

Now, read this verse over again.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 15)

Tell me what the words mean here. Why do you think it means that?

Then, as the ship moves towards the mariner's own country, the poem goes like this. Let's listen again to that part.

TAPE EXCERPT 8

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
It's path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring -
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze -
On me alone it blew.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 16

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray -
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

PROJECTOR EXCERPT 17

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

Look at this verse.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 16)

What is being described there?

What do you notice about the sounds of the words?

Now, we have this piece of description.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 17)

Describe it to me in your own words.

What does it mean, 'The moonlight steeped etc.'?

Then, after the mariner returns to his own country, the story of the poem is over, except for the last brief conversation with the wedding guest. Let's listen to that part again through to the end of the poem.

TAPE EXCERPT 9

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper-bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer.'

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company -

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

What does the whole poem seem to mean? Why?

What parts of the poem appeal to you most? Why?

Why does the wedding guest wake the next day 'a sadder and a wiser man'?

APPENDIX TWO

SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript 8

Name: Tony

Age: 9yr 11 mth

Interviewer: This poem is called 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. What is an ancient mariner, Tony?

Tony: It's an old name for a sailor.

Int: Why do you think it has that title and not 'The Rime of the Old Sailor'?

T: Probably because it's an ancient poem and 'Sailor' is more modern and 'mariner' is ancient.

Int: Which title do you like best?

T: 'The Ancient Mariner'.

Int: Why?

T: Oh, probably because it's an ancient old poem and there are sort of sailing things and all that that he does.

Int: Good. Now, let's go right back to the beginning of the poem where the Ancient Mariner meets with a wedding guest who is on his way to a wedding. Let's listen to that part.

(TAPE EXCERPT 1)

Is the wedding guest wanting to get to the wedding?

T: Yes he was, because...um...if he wanted to go to the wedding then if he was saying and he would have to go to the wedding if he was invited...so if he was invited and he said yes, it wouldn't be very good if he didn't turn up.

Int: And what stops him?

T: Oh, probably because of...um...the voyage - the voyage - something happened on the voyage.

Int: Let's look at this verse then, Tony.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 1)

What does it mean, 'he holds him with his glittering eye'?

T: Oh, it could be that he's staring at him or something like that.

Int: Can you hold someone with your eye?

T: Yes...you can keep him in your sight.

Int: 'And listens like a three years' child' - what does that mean?

T: Oh, listens like a three year old - well you'd have to listen a lot to know how to pronounce words and so he listens very carefully.

Int: Yes, and why does the mariner have 'his will'? What does that mean?

T: The mariner wants to sail and go abroad.

Int: When it says 'he cannot choose but hear' - why can he not choose but hear?

T: Oh, he can hear but he can't choose what to do.

Int: What is it about the mariner that stands out?

T: Mm...that's a hard one.

Int: What is it that you remember most about the mariner?

T: Oh, that they have a hard life - you know, it's a hard life to sail around in these old boats that you get them days and everything.

Int: Well, what does 'glittering eye' suggest to you?

T: Oh, he can see well or something like that.

Int: Okay. Now the mariner begins to tell a story, doesn't he, about how a long time ago he sailed in a ship towards the South Pole. What was it like? Do you remember?

T: Oh, it was icy and ice was everywhere and it was really lonesome.

Int: Yes. Okay well let's listen again to that description.

(TAPE EXCERPT 2)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 2)

Let's just look at that piece of description there, Tony. You tell me what is being described. Just take the first two lines. Who was 'tyrannous and strong'?

T: Um...him...himself.

Int: Who's that?

T: Um...the mariner.

Int: Yes. What 'struck with his o'ertaking wings'?

T: That his strength...um...is it something to do with his strength?

Int: Yes...and what was it that 'chased' them 'south along'?

T: An albatross...and the wind.

Int: Okay, and then it continues 'With sloping mast etc.' What is it that bends its head forward?

T: Um...and forward bends <u>his</u> head - <u>his</u> head...mm...the mariner.

Int: And which line do you think is the best for describing a ship in a stormy sea?

T: 'The ship drove past, loud roared the blast'.

Int: Why do you think that's a good line, Tony?

T: Well, for one thing it's got 'ship' in it...um...'loud roared the blast' well...ah...most sea...sometimes when a ship is going quite fast there's a blast of water goes up you know and the water's going around...

Int: What sort of picture do you see here?

T: You see a ship that's being blown along by the wind and an albatross flying high above...and the roar of the sea nearby...

Int: Good. Now, do you know what an albatross is?

T: Yes, it's a sort of bird that you can find - you know - it's found in Iceland and you can get all different kinds from different parts of the world.

Int: Good. Well, an albatross appears and it follows the ship and the men welcome it and they give it food, but the mariner does a terrible thing...

T: He shoots it.

Int: Yes, he shoots it. And the ship turns and it starts to move north. At first the men say that the mariner has done a very wrong thing for he's killed the bird which 'makes the breeze to blow'.

T: Um...that stops the breeze and everything and makes it that all the other people on the ship die and he's the only one left so it's like him being punished...himself being lonesome and everything...like that.

Int: Yes...then after a while the men begin to agree with what the mariner did because they think that perhaps the albatross brought the fog and mist. But then something suddenly happens which they're not expecting. What happens?

T: The wind stops going and the...um...they run out of water and everything and all the rest of them die.

Int: Let's just listen to the part where it's described - as the ship moves along first.

(TAPE EXCERPT 3)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 3)

Just look at those lines, Tony, and tell me what they are describing.

T: Oh, when the breeze blew...um...and they, they went into the sea that was silent and no-one else bursts into it.

Int: Yes. Just look at the first two lines and work out what they mean.

T: Oh, it's sort of um...things about the sea...you know, what's happening around the sea...

Int: What's a furrow?

T: Not sure about that.

Int: Well, you know what a plough is?

T: Yes.

Int: What does a plough do to the soil?

T: Oh, um, all the dry soil on top gets dug in and it wets all the...the...the soil that is...um, damp underneath comes up onto the top...

Int: Well, there's no plough here, is there? So why does it say that the 'furrow followed free'?

T: Oh, I know what it is now...the...um, when the ship comes along there's white spread stuff comes out when...see once I was in a...on this Picton Ferry and you look out and...especially if you're on a speed-boat or something... if a speed-boat passes you there's all sorts of waves that rock the boat.

Int: Fine. Well, now do you see what these lines here mean? Do you notice anything about the sounds of the words?

T: Oh, well it's not stormy or anything...you know, it's just sort of a silent sea...there's nothing wrong with it ...there's not much waves or anything.

Int: And what happens in this third line, 'we were the first etc.'?

T: Oh, well they are the first ship ever to go into it.

Int: Do you notice anything about the sound of the words there?

T: Oh, there might be...um, when they say 'we were the first that ever burst into that silent sea'...well, um, the sort of...um, you know it seems...um,...I haven't got the word for it...(whispers)...'we were the first that ever burst' ...sort of...um...he says it longer...like 'we were the <u>first</u> that ever <u>burst</u> into that silent sea'...you know as if it's going into a creepy sea.

Int: Yes, good. Let's listen now to what happens.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 4)

Just look at that description there and tell me about it.

T: Oh, they're talking about the...um...sort of hazard... like all in a hot and copper sky the bloody sun at noon ...um, it's hot and their throats are dry and everything...

Int: What does 'copper sky' mean?

T: It's empty...does it mean empty?

Int: What does the word 'copper' tell you?

T: Oh, it's a sort of coin...you can make coins out of it... out of copper.

Int: Why is the sky copper?

T: Oh, it's like lead...it might look like lead...it might be cloudy but it's hot and steel looking...you know, like the colour of copper.

Int: And why 'the bloody sun' - why is the sun bloody?

T: Oh, because it's getting a nuisance...it's getting so hot that it's a nuisance...

Int: And what else does 'bloody' tell you?

T: ...a swearing word um...oh, that they don't like the sun ...they don't like it because it's been there so many times...

Int: Yes, and anything else?

T: No, I can't think of anything else.

Int: Why is the sun 'no bigger than the moon'?

T: Oh, it looks no bigger than the moon...when, you know, it's so far away it doesn't look as big as the moon - because the moon's um...closer but it doesn't look it.

Int: Good. Well, let's look at the next verse. What is he saying that it was like? (pause) Why does he say 'Day after day' twice?

T: Oh, because it's so many days - 'day after day, day after day' - four days.

Int: And in that second line, which word stands out most?

T: Stuck.

Int: Why?

T: Oh, because it would go like 'We stuck, nor breath nor motion' - it sort of sounds louder.

Int: And why does he say 'as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean'?

T: Oh well, it's as idle as...as if the ship's doing nothing on a pa...when you see a ship on a painting it's doing nothing and that's um...so idle means nothing so it would be doing nothing on the painting - a painted ship doing nothing on a painted ocean.

Int: Good. That's fine. Okay, now the ship remains still and all the men become parched and dry in the terrible heat - and they become very weary - and then suddenly a strange ship appears - it's a kind of ghost ship or a 'spectre bark' (that just means a ghost ship) - and there are two ghostly figures on board who represent death and life-in-death - and they cast dice for the souls of the mariner and the men. Let's listen to that description now.

(TAPE EXCERPT 4)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 5)

What's being described there, Tony?

T: Oh, he's looking into um...to the ship...he's looking at the ship and he seems to know that it's a ghost ship...

Int: What does it mean, 'And straight the sun was flecked with bars'?

T: Oh, life and death could be um...you know the actual bars ...the white part could be life and the black part of the bars could be the death.

Int: 'As if through a dungeon-grate he peered' - who peered?

T: Ah,...the ghostly figures.

Int: 'With broad and burning face' - whose face is that?

T: Oh, it's probably the life one...the one that's dicing for life.

Int: Okay. Now we have the description of the ship.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 6)

What do those two lines mean?

T: Well first, what does 'gossameres' mean?

Int: Gossameres are fine filmy cobwebs that you see on the grass or floating in the air on calm days - especially in autumn. What do the lines mean now that you know that?

T: Oh, the sails um...that you know it's the Shadow in the Sun...um they look like restless gossameres...you know like restless cobwebs...

Int: And why would they be restless - in what way?

T: Oh, cobwebs being blown about.

Int: And why do they 'glance in the sun'? What does that mean?

T: Um...I'm not sure about that...would it mean that the shadow of the thing would be...you know, quite effective.

Int: And does 'glance' suggest any other word to you?

T: It's looking into the sun.

Int: Yes, good. Now, we have the description of the ghost women.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 7)

You describe her to me in your own words.

T: Oh, she's a sort of person with um...Oh, you could call her posh...um...well, to the person describing her she's pretty...

Int: What about in the last line?

T: What's leprosy?

Int: Well, it's a terrible disease that makes you lose all your colour and begin to fade away. Now, what does that tell you?

T: Oh, well she's so white that it seems like she's dying of leprosy...

Int: What sort of feeling does that give you?

T: Ghostly...she's like a ghost - she looks like a ghost... it makes you feel horrible...she looks pretty at first but then she looks ghostly because of her skin.

Int: Okay, now the ghost ship leaves and we get this description.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 8)

What's being described here?

T: Oh, um...since she'd won...because she yelled out that she'd won...all the things are coming...like the stars are rushing out...the sun goes down and it comes all dark and everything bad starts to happen.

Int: What is the sunset like?

T: It's just like a fairy tale because when it says 'the Sun's rim dips' well, it would only be like that to those people on that ship...they would imagine it like that.

Int: What does it mean that the stars 'rush out'?

T: Oh, the stars are going out because it's dark.

Int: And what does it mean, 'At one stride comes the dark'?

T: Oh, um...when you're in...when the sun dips or something ...you see it go behind a cloud...and you see the darkness just comes over...because once when we were playing cricket at school, it was all shining...and then the darkness just swept over and then it would go back to sunshine a while after...

Int: And why is it 'At one stride'?

T: Because you can see the darkness moving up...you know, you can see it moving along the grass...It's moving up like a big Stride or a...stepping over things...

Int: Yes, good. Now after the ghost ship leaves, the crew begin to die, one-by-one, and only the mariner is left alive - now at this point the wedding guest interrupts. Let's listen to how the wedding guest describes the mariner.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 9)

What does he say about him?

T: He fears the ancient mariner...and he fears his skinny hand that is like a 'ribbed sea-sand'...

Int: What does that mean?

T: Oh, when the sand - if you see sand and it's like ribs then it's - you know, it's got wrinkles and everything.

Int: And what looks like that here?

T: Um...the mariner's hand...the ancient mariner's hand...

Int: Yes. And then the mariner goes on to describe what it was like and how he felt.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 10)

What sorts of feelings does the mariner talk about there?

T: Oh, he's in agony and he's...because um...he's the only one left in this wide wide sea and there's only water around and everything and all the rest have died.

Int: Why does he repeat all those words like that?

T: Because he's alone so much...you know, he can't say it enough to tell anybody...you know, 'alone, alone, all, all alone' sounds better because it really tells you how it felt.

Int: Yes. Now listen to some more of this description.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5 cont.)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 11)

What do you notice about the sound of the words there?

T: Oh, he seems sad because all these dead people are at his feet and...

Int: Why does he close his eyes?

T: Oh, probably because he's in agony so much that he doesn't want to see the dead people at his feet.

Int: What does it mean 'and the balls like pulses beat'?

T: I don't know - what sort of balls?

Int: Well, why does he say 'the sky and the sea etc.'? Why say it twice?

T: Oh, because it's such a big load for his weary eyes to look at. Oh, he's closing his lids because of the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky - are a load on his eye... you know, if he keeps on looking at them, he might go blind, just by looking at them so much.

Int: Alright, now the mariner finds that he cannot die. Then the water-snakes are described. Now, do you remember how the water-snakes were described before - what were they described as?

T: Um, slimy things I think...

Int: That's right, yes. Now listen to the way they're described this time.

(TAPE EXCERPT 6)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 12)

How are they being described, Tony?

T: Um...sort of slimy things going through the sea...they're nice when you see them but they look all slimy in the sea.

Int: Yes, and what else can you say about them?

T: And every track was a flash of golden fire.

Int: What does that mean?

T: Um...that would be...oh, they're leaving a sort of a golden fire behind them.

Int: Are they any different now from when they were described earlier as slimy, slimy things?

T: Oh, they're attractive, attractive to look at...but they're sort of slimy things um...I think they're supposed to be precious too.

Int: What happens to the mariner when he looks at them? Do you remember? Let's listen to that part.

(TAPE EXCERPT 6 cont.)

Now, what happened there?

T: Oh, when he felt some love...well, it made the albatross fall off...by blessing the snakes...because you see he was really punished by that boat coming by...and killing that albatross...but when he blessed that - them snakes - then it all come back again...you know, that the albatross would fall like lead into the sea and there would be...and then all that would be forgotten because...you know, he's um...because he's made up for the killing that he did of the albatross.

Int: Yes, that's a good interpretation...and then he falls asleep, doesn't he...and what happens when he wakes, do you remember?

T: He's um...all these people were back alive again as if - you know - as if it had never happened.

Int: Yes, and what else happens when he wakes?

T: Oh, the um...I think the stars go away and the Sun's out and everything like that.

Int: Well, do you remember how it rained?

T: Oh yes, it rained...and it gives them all water.

Int: But, do you remember early on when it was very, very dry - this is how it was described.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 13)

What was it like?

T: Oh, as if they were sort of dying from thirst.

Int: What does it mean, 'no more than if we had been choked with soot'?

T: They've been...um, their throats are dry...you know, it's like being choked with soot.

Int: Yes, then when it rains we get this description.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 14)

'My lips were wet etc.' What's it like there?

T: Oh, he thinks that it's a dream - that they've all come back alive and they've been drinking water.

Int: And where abouts do they feel the sensations?

T: Well, the first part is as if you were out in a desert or something 'and every tongue was withered at the root' - and the other part is if you were out in some place like California and it's pouring down like anything - and their lips and throat were all wet.

Int: Good. Now the crew rise up and they man the ship which seems to be moved on from beneath by some spirit or force - and the air is then filled with a pleasant sound. Let's listen to some of that part now.

(TAPE EXCERPT 7)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 15)

How is that noise being described, Tony?

T: Um...like when he was back in his home country or wherever he came from - it was a noise like a hidden brook that you couldn't see...in a...in a leafy month of June...

Int: Why a 'leafy' month of June?

T: Oh, I don't know that.

Int: Well, what is it that sings a quiet tune?

T: Oh, making it go to sleep.

Int: Yes, okay. Now, as the ship moves towards the mariner's own country, a breeze begins to blow. Listen to the way it is described.

(TAPE EXCERPT 8)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 16)

What do you notice about the words there?

T: On me alone...well, it's going into his country - you know, it's um sweetly...they've gone out of this terrible place and now it seems sweet...you know if you were going for a trip - it wouldn't seem so sweet - but if it's coming out of danger then you would think it was sweet.

Int: How does the ship seem to be moving?

T: Softly.

Int: Which words are most effective?

T: 'Swiftly, swiftly, flew the ship'.

Int: Why?

T: Um...probably because...well swiftly sounds...well, I like the sound of that word...and if you really want to express something well it sounds better if you use two words.

Int: Yes. Okay, well now we have the description of the harbour as the ship returns to his own country.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 17)

What sort of a picture do you see there, Tony?

T: Oh, you see sort of a harbour - a round harbour with cliffs around.

Int: Yes, can you tell me more about it?

T: It would be sort of...a place that wouldn't have much um ...it's a sort of...you know, it's only a little town and mostly cliffs around the harbour...

Int: Yes, and what sorts of things can you see?

T: Oh, he's so happy to go in there...um...probably most of the other ones wouldn't be so happy because I think when they went through that hard time...that he was um...he was the only one who would know about it when they came out because he was the only one awake then...you know they'd probably think...you know these ones would just carry on as if there was no minutes...no minutes had been wasted. When he...when he was the only one alive - they'd just carry on straight after when that ghost ship came.

Int: Yes. Okay now, looking back at this passage. What is a weathercock?

T: I don't know.

Int: Well, it's a rooster up on a roof - and it turns in the wind.

T: Oh, one of them - yes, it turns.

Int: Well, what does this mean, 'the moonlight steeped...'?

T: Um...steeped...

Int: Steeped means something like 'saturated'.

T: Oh, it might be wet...and it's um...when it says 'the moonlight steeped in silentness' I don't see how it goes on to the steady weathercock.

Int: Okay, now, after the mariner returns to his own country, the story part of the poem is over - except for the last brief conversation with the wedding guest - where he talks about how he now wanders from land to land telling his tale to certain people. Now, we're going to listen to it through to the end of the poem and I want you to think about what the whole poem is all about and what it means.

(TAPE EXCERPT 9)

Well now, first of all, Tony, why did he rise 'a sadder and a wiser man' on the next day?

T: Um...probably because he'd been through the experience... that experience of sailing...

Int: What effect did it have on the wedding guest?

T: I'm not sure really.

Int: Well, what do you think is the meaning of the whole poem?

T: Um, it's about a man who used to be a mariner and he used to go around on ships but now he um...now he goes around and he...just wanders about to...telling his tale...

Transcript 12

Name: Julie

Age: 11yr 5 mth

Interviewer: Now, Julie, this poem is called 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. Do you know what an ancient mariner is?

J: An old sea person.

Int: Now why do you think the poet called it 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and not 'The Rime of the Old Sailor'?

J: Mariner is probably a better word for it - to describe it...

Int: Why?

J: I don't know. It just sounds like a better word.

Int: Alright, let's go back to the very beginning where there's a meeting between the old sailor, or the ancient mariner, and a...

J: A bridegroom or something...

Int: ...He meets with a wedding guest...

J: Yes, a wedding guest...

Int: ...They're on the way to a wedding...Okay, well, let's go back and listen again to the description of the meeting between the wedding guest and the ancient mariner.

(TAPE EXCERPT 1)

Okay, just have a look at those last two verses there, Julie.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 1)

How is the mariner described?

J: Well, I don't think he can really take his eyes off him...

Int: And what part of the mariner seems to be most noticeable?

J: His eyes...

Int: What is there about his eyes?

J: ...their glitter...

Int: What does that mean?

J: Oh, they were bright eyes...

Int: And what effect did they have on the wedding guest?

J: Um...sort of hypnotised him...

Int: Yes. What does it mean 'holds him with his glittering eye'? How can he 'hold' someone with his eye?

J: ...You keep their attention...

Int: And why does the wedding guest listen 'like a three years' child'? What does that mean?

J: Well, three year old children usually stand there and take full advice, and stand and listen...

Int: So the wedding guest seems to be...

J: ...taking his advice on something...

Int: Yes, and it says 'he cannot choose but hear'. Why can't he choose?

J: Um...he probably has no choice but to stay...I'm not really sure...

Int: Does it mean that he really has no choice?

J: Well, he is so intrigued that he doesn't want to take the choice really...

Int: Now, the mariner begins to tell a story about how he sailed in a ship to the South Pole. Do you remember what it was like as they sailed south?

J: I can just remember about the ice.

Int: Well, let's listen to that description now.

(TAPE EXCERPT 2)

Alright, let's just look at that piece of description there.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 2)

What's it describing? What was 'tyrannous and strong'?

J: Um, it's kind of taking them in the currents with them...

Int: What is?

J: The wind...

Int: The wind - what words there refer to the wind?

J: I don't know - the whole lot sounds like...just like the wind...

Int: When it says 'he' at the end of the first line, what does the 'he' refer to?

J: The wind, I think.

Int: What does 'storm-blast' mean?

J: Well, it was pretty stormy...it was a stormy wind, I suppose.

Int: 'He struck with his o'ertaking wings and chased us south along' - what does this 'he' refer to?

J: The storm-blast.

Int: And what did the storm-blast do?

J: Well, it pushed the ship along.

Int: Is the storm-blast being compared with anything?

J: Not that I can sea.

Int: What has the wings here?

J: Usually a bird has wings.

Int: So what does it mean here that he 'struck with his o'ertaking wings'?

J: I don't really know.

Int: Further down, what is being described? What is it that 'forward bends his head'?

J: A bird...an albatross.

Int: And what does it mean, 'southward aye we fled'?

J: They're um...trying to escape.

Int: What from?

J: Either the wind or a bird...I don't really know (slight expression of amusement).

Int: It's either the wind or a bird...and the bird is a...

J: Albatross.

Int: Okay, well let's listen to some more of the description just past that point.

(TAPE EXCERPT 2 cont.)

What do you remember most about that description?

J: Oh, the main thing was the ice...

Int: And what in particular about the ice?

J: There was a lot of it...

Int: Yes.

J: ...and it was pretty misty.

Int: Are there any particular words that you remember?

J: Not really, I can just remember the ice being everywhere.

Int: Is it the appearance of the ice, or the sound of the ice?

J: Oh, it was crackling with ice, I think it was...

Int: Yes, good. Now, an albatross appears and follows the ship and the men welcome it and they give it food, but the mariner does a terrible thing...what does he do?

J: He shoots it.

Int: Yes, he shoots the albatross. And at that point the ship turns and starts to move north. At first the men say that the mariner has done a very wrong thing because he has killed the bird that made the breeze blow. But then they begin to agree with what he did because perhaps the bird might have been what brought the fog and mist. Then, at that point, something happens that they're not expecting. Do you remember what happens?

J: Oh, I'm not really sure.

Int: The breeze drops and there is no wind - so what happens to the ship?

J: Oh, it can't sail along.

Int: Yes, well, let's listen to the part where that first happens.

(TAPE EXCERPT 3)

Let's just look at that verse, Julie.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 3)

How is the movement described in those first two lines? How do they sound to you?

J: They sound kind of peaceful.

Int: Why?

J: Well, it was silent - the sea was silent - and the sea can be raging and that...so it sounded pretty calm...and there was only a fair breeze...that, you know, wasn't too strong...

Int: And what does it mean there 'the furrow followed free'? Do you know what a furrow is?

J: No.

Int: Well, do you know what a plough is...well, when a plough cuts through the soil, what does it do?

J: Um...it turns it up...

Int: Yes, it turns it up and makes a...

J: Well, it's all nicely turned over, you know...all chopped up...

Int: Yes, well that's called a furrow. Now, there's no plough here, is there? So, what does it mean 'the furrow followed free'.

J: Well, the ship sort of cuts a path...the trail of the ship ...it seems to follow because it's behind.

Int: Yes. And does anything change in that third line? Does anything seem to change?

J: Well, it looks calm and unspoiled...and then they came in and made their 'furrow line' or whatever it is - then they sort of came into the unspoiled sea and it was nice and calm.

Int: Right, well let's listen to what follows.

(TAPE EXCERPT 3 cont.)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 4)

Just look at that first verse and tell me what it describes.

J: Well, it was really hot because the sun was a copper colour...

Int: What does that mean, to say that the sky is 'copper'?

J: Because there's so much sun...

Int: And why 'copper'?

J: Well, it's a goldish colour...

Int: And what else does copper tell you?

J: Apart from policemen, nothing (laughs).

Int: Does that fit there?

J: No (amused), that's what I mean.

Int: Why 'the bloody sun at noon'?

J: It's red hot.

Int: How big was the sun?

J: Well, it says there 'no bigger than the moon'.

Int: Why was that?

J: Because it was so far up at noon...and it was so hot too...

Int: Now, in the next verse, why does it repeat 'day after day' like that?

J: Because it seemed like a very long time.

Int: And when it says 'as idle as a painted ship etc.' - what does that mean?

J: It was very calm,...um...the sea in a painting doesn't move and nor does the ship...it probably means that there wasn't much wind and so they didn't move very far...and it was so calm.

Int: Is there any word there that seems to stand out more?

J: Stuck.

Int: Why does that word seem to stand out?

J: The way it sounds...and it's got a comma after it...

Int: Why would it stand out, do you think?

J: Because it's a key word.

Int: How is it the key word?

J: Well, they just stayed there, didn't they?

Int: Yes. Okay, now the ship remains still and all the men become parched and very weary and very hot in the terrible heat. Then suddenly, a strange ghost ship appears - it's called a 'spectre bark' - and there are two ghostly figures on board who represent death and life-in-death and they begin casting dice for the souls of the mariner and the men. Let's listen to the way the ghost ship is described when it first appeared.

(TAPE EXCERPT 4)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 5)

Look at that description there, Julie. What is it like?

J: I don't really know because there's no such thing as a ghost (slight laughter) so there can't be a ghost ship.

Int: Well, in the story of the poem what is happening here?

J: Well, it moves in between them and the sun.

Int: And what does it look like? 'And straight the sun was flecked with bars' - what does that mean?

J: Oh, I suppose it was spooky looking - I don't really know.

Int: When it says 'as if through a dungeon-grate he peered with broad and burning face' - what is it that is peering?

J: He must be locked up.

Int: What would be locked up?

J: The person.

Int: Who?

J: I don't know.

Int: Well, what is it that has the 'broad and burning face'?

J: The sun.

Int: Yes, and what does it seem like?

J: That it's staring through the bars.

Int: And what are the bars?

J: Well, it says there 'as if it was a dungeon-grate'...um... so the bars are probably on the other ship...yes and the sun looks like a face staring through the bars.

Int: Now, look at these lines describing the ghost ship.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 6)

What does that mean?

J: The sails tilt slightly...I don't know...

Int: Do you know what gossameres are?

J: I wouldn't have a clue.

Int: Well, they're thin filmy cobwebs that can be seen in the air sometimes on autumn days or in the morning. Now, does that help you understand what it's saying here?

J: The sails are flittering and moving slightly - just wavering about sort of - just a little bit.

Int: Alright, and now the ghost woman is described.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 7)

How is she described?

J: She sounds very good looking.

Int; What about 'her skin was as white as leprosy'? Do you know what leprosy is?

J: Yes, it's a type of disease.

Int: So, how would she look?

J: Well, very white - it would make her red lips stand out - it makes her sound ghostly - she sounds as though she's got a pretty translucent sort of face.

Int: Good. Okay. Now let's listen to how the description continues.

(TAPE EXCERPT 4 cont.)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 8)

Those lines there are describing the sun-set. What sort of sun-set was it, Julie?

J: A colourful one...it sounds like a pretty quick one.

Int: How can the dark come 'with a stride'?

J: Very quickly.

Int: What is a stride?

J: It's a great big step.

Int: Well, how can the dark come with a great big step?

J: Well, it comes in different stages. Most sunsets take a long time but this one goes very quickly.

Int: And then the ghost ship disappears from sight. After the ghost-ship leaves, the crew begin to die one by one, and only the mariner is left remaining alive. At this point the wedding guest, who's listening, interrupts the mariner. Let's listen to the part where he interrupts the mariner.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 9)

How does the wedding guest describe the ancient mariner there, Julie?

J: Um...long and lanky and skinny hands...

Int: Could you explain that last line, 'as is the ribbed sea-sand'?

J: Well, he's very skinny.

Int: And what is the reference to the sea-sand?

J: Well, sea-sand um...sometimes the waves make an effect like that (moves hand)...you know, like ribs, sort of thing ...and if you're skinny you can see the bumps of the ribs.

Int: Yes, and then the mariner tells the wedding guest what it felt like.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 10)

How does the mariner express his feelings there?

J: He was very alone.

Int: Why does it not say, 'He was all alone on the wide sea'? Why is the word repeated like that?

J: Because the sea was so wide and there was just no-one... it seems like all his crew dying has an effect on him, a mental effect.

Int: Yes, and then he goes on to describe that effect further.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5 cont.)

(Gap on tape. No discussion of Excerpt 11)

(TAPE EXCERPT 6)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 12)

Which words stand out?

J: Um...shining...stands out...and 'elfish light' stands out to me...and 'hoary flakes'...

Int: And what are they like now compared with how they were described before?

J: Well, he doesn't seem to like them now.

Int: What does it mean 'they moved in tracks of shining white, and when they reared, the elfish light fell off in hoary flakes'?

J: I don't know what 'elfish light' and 'hoary flakes' means ...but 'they moved in tracks of shining white' - that means they left a path - sort of thing - like the ship did.

Int: Do you know what 'attire' is?

J: No.

Int: Well, it's clothing. How does that fit in there?

J: Oh, he's sort of imagining them as people with nice...you know, blue and glossy green and velvet black clothing...

Int: Yes...okay. And then, something happens as he's watching them.

(TAPE EXCERPT 6 cont.)

What happens there?

J: Well, he begins to like them...he doesn't hate them...and they go back down into the sea...and then the albatross falls into the sea.

Int: Yes, and after the albatross falls into the sea, the mariner falls into a deep sleep. Do you remember what happens when he wakes?

J: No, I can't remember.

Int: It starts to rain and the rain makes him all wet. Let's just look at a part describing how it had been when it was dry and how it had felt then.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 13)

'And every tongue etc.' - what was it like?

J: Well...um...their tongues were all dry...and they hadn't had a drink for ages and all their throats down there felt all blistered and they could hardly talk.

Int: Now, after it rains, it is described like this.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 14)

'My lips were wet etc.' - how is it different?

J: Well, now he's feeling much wetter (laughs) - you know - and his mouth has got all liquid again.

Int: Why does he refer to his throat?

J: Because that was the most parched place.

Int: Yes...okay. Now the crew begin to rise up and they man the ship which seems to be moved on from underneath by some kind of spirit or force...

J: But they can't if they're dead.

Int: Why do you say that, Julie?

J: Well, I suppose they can in the story, but they couldn't really...it's only a story but it's not a true story... it must be sort of like a fairy story with these ghosts and things like that...

Int: Yes...and in the story at this point the air begins to fill with a pleasant sound. Let's listen to that part.

(TAPE EXCERPT 7)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 15)

Let's just look at that verse there, Julie, where the sounds are being described. What is it like?

J: Oh, it sounded like the noise of a hidden brook and the leafy month of June.

Int: And what does the brook seem to be doing?

J: Singing a quiet tune...

Int: To the?

J: ...to the mariner, I suppose...

Int: What kinds of sounds are they?

J: Pleasant sounds.

Int: What makes them sound pleasant?

J: Because it was so quiet before and they hadn't heard much sound...they hadn't heard any sound...but now it's getting more hopeful.

Int: Yes. Now, the ship keeps moving back towards the mariner's own country.

(TAPE EXCERPT 7 cont.)

And as the ship moves towards the mariner's own country the breeze begins to blow.

(TAPE EXCERPT 8)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 16)

Just look at that verse, Julie, and tell me how it describes the ship and the breeze.

J: It's going along very smoothly.

Int: How do you know that? What tells you that it's moving smoothly?

J: Well, swiftly and softly...

Int: And do you notice anything about the sounds of the words here?

J: No, not really.

Int: Are there any words there that stand out?

J: 'Swiftly' stands out.

Int: Why does it stand out?

J: Because of the way it's said - the way it's expressed...

Int: Any other word?

J: 'Softly'.

Int: Yes...and then they move closer to the harbour and they begin to come into the harbour of the mariner's own country.

(TAPE EXCERPT 8 cont.)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 17)

In those two verses, Julie, there is a description of the harbour.

J: It's as clear as glass...

Int: Yes, could you describe the picture there?

J: It's smooth...and it's night-time and the moon was shining on it and it just sounds like a bay at night-time. It says 'so smoothly it was strewn'.

Int: What does that mean?

J: Well, it seems it was spread out evenly.
(pause)
What's a kirk?

Int: 'Kirk' is a word for church. Do you know what a weathercock is?

J: Yes, it's one of those things with...um...north, south, east and west on it.

Int: What does it mean then, 'the moonlight steeped in silentness the steady weathercock'?

J: The moonlight...I don't really know...what's the moonlight got to do with a weathercock?

Int: Do you know what 'steeped' means?

J: Oh, you know - slanting down.

Int: Yes, it can mean that, but it can also mean 'to soak or saturate' - if something is steeped in something that means it is soaked in it. What do you think it means here?

J: Well, that would mean that the moonlight soaked the steady weathercock...um...it sort of shined on it and covered it with light and made it stand out but it was very still and silent.

Int: Yes, good. Now, the story part of the poem is nearly over, except for the last brief conversation between the mariner and the wedding guest - where the mariner, who is now a very old man, says that he wanders from land to land stopping certain people and telling them his story. Now, we'll listen to the last part of the poem through to the end and I want you to think about what it tells us here about the meaning of the whole poem.

(TAPE EXCERPT 9)

Well now, what does the whole poem mean to you?

J: Well, um, it doesn't seem to have much meaning to me... I can't really see the meaning in it at all.

Int: Is there any suggestion as to what it means?

J: Well, it says that he woke up the next morning a wiser man...that's the wedding guest who did...

Int: Why would that be?

J: I don't know...maybe he could see some meaning in the story but I can't...when he shot that albatross I think that had meaning...but what happened after that well, it couldn't happen in real life...but I suppose you can put anything in a poem...people just wouldn't believe it though...I still don't get that part about the ghost ship...

Int: That is called a 'supernatural element' in the poem. Supernatural things are described as though they are real.

J: Yes, well it seemed to be a very serious poem and then it had all those supernatural things in it and it didn't seem to be right.

Int: Why not?

J: Well, it didn't seem to suit the poem...I don't know... it seemed like he was imagining it.

Int: Why do you say it was a serious poem?

J: Well, it was all about how this man suffered and he was pretty sad and unhappy most of the time...there was nothing funny that happened.

Transcript 22

Name: Tina

Age: 13yr 2 mth

Interviewer: Let's consider the title of the poem, Tina. It's called 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. Do you know what an 'ancient mariner' refers to?

Tina: Oh, an old sailor.

Int: Yes. Why do you think then that it's called 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and not say 'The Rime of the Old Sailor'?

T: Well, it's...I don't know, huh!

Int: Do you think it's a better title?

T: Yes, well it sounds more as if it was a poem...'The Rime of the Old Sailor' would sound a bit funny. It's a fairly old poem.

Int: Yes. We'll just listen again to the beginning of the poem now, where the wedding guest and the mariner first meet.

(TAPE EXCERPT 1)

What is it about the mariner that seems to stand out most?

T: Well, he's old...and he wants to talk about his adventures, or whatever it was...and all his mistakes, sort of warning them what not to do...as if they were actually going to make the same mistakes.

Int: Yes. Let's look at these two verses that we've just heard.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 1)

It says, 'He holds him with his glittering eye'. How can he 'hold' him with his eye? Explain what that means.

T: Oh, staring at them with, say, a pleasing look in his eye ...it makes people look at him.

Int: What does it mean 'and listens like a three years' child'?

T: He listens like a three year old.

Int: What would that be like?

T: Well, a three year old listening to a story is wide-eyed and probably believing every word he hears.

Int: Yes. 'The mariner hath his will'. What does that mean?

T: Um...he's going to listen to the mariner no matter what the mariner says...he's going to obey him.

Int: It says, 'he cannot choose but hear'...Why is that?

T: Oh, just something about the mariner makes him want to listen or...he holds him.

Int: How?

T: I don't know really. If someone like that stopped you you'd feel compelled to listen...I don't know what it would be about him.

Int: What part of the mariner's appearance is referred to?

T: His eyes.

Int: Yes, the eyes. Well then, the mariner begins to tell a story about how he sailed in a ship towards the South Pole a long time ago. What was it like? Do you recall?

T: Um, when he started out?

Int: Yes.

T: It was pretty fine, I think, but I don't remember much about it now.

Int: Well, we'll listen to the description.

(TAPE EXCERPT 2)

Now, let's look closely at this passage, Tina.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 2)

It says, 'And now the Storm-blast came etc.' Can you tell me in your own words what is being described here?

T: Well, I think the 'Storm-blast' would be the name of the boat...um, and the boat was...it was big and...very sort of...oh, I don't know whether the 'Storm-blast' would be the boat or the albatross...

Int: Well, the albatross hasn't made its appearance yet.

T: Well, the ship was...was large and mighty.

Int: Is there anything else that 'Storm-blast' could refer to?

T: The weather...or the boat...

Int: Well, what meaning seems to fit best there?

T: Oh, the wind chasing the boat.

Int: Is the wind being compared to anything?

T: The wind is being compared to a bird...a large bird.

Int: And what does it seem to be doing?

T: Um, pushing the boat along...the wind comes behind and... um, pushes the boat along as if it was chasing it...the boat was running from it.

Int: 'With sloping masts etc.' - what does that mean?

T: Well, the boat would have sloping masts and a dipping prow in the large waves...and 'as who pursued with yell and blow'...I think that would be the wind or the waves... carrying the boat.

Int: 'And forward bends his head' - what is it that's bending his head?

T: Um...it sounds like - I can picture it - the <u>masts</u> bending over.

Int: And what is 'bending his head'?

T: Well, it's like the ship bending his head, that is the mast.

Int: And what does it mean, 'southward aye we fled'?

T: Well, they didn't have much choice - the wind was pushing them - it was as if they were running from the wind.

Int: Good. Looking back over that passage, which line do you think is the best description of a ship in a stormy sea?

T: 'With sloping masts and dipping prow'.

Int: Why do you choose that line?

T: Because I can see the ship in the wind being blown along ...a large old sailing ship.

Int: Okay, and then the description continues like this.

(TAPE EXCERPT 2 cont.)

What do you remember most about the description there?

T: The roaring wind and the ice...there were a lot of icebergs and the ship is under the threat of being crushed by them or crashing into them.

Int: And any sounds?

T: Oh, the roaring of the waves, and the icebergs and the wind...it sort of makes strange sounds in amongst them.

Int: Yes. Now, at this point an albatross appears and follows the ship and the men welcome it and give it food, but the mariner does a terrible thing.

T: He shoots it.

Int: Yes. Then the ship turns and begins to move north. Now, at first the men say that the mariner has done a terrible thing, a very wrong thing, because he's killed the bird 'that makes the breeze to blow'. Then after a while, they begin to agree with what he did, because they think that the albatross might have brought the fog and mist. But then something suddenly happens that they're not expecting.

T: They get becalmed.

Int: Yes, but just prior to that they're moving along very quickly and smoothly. Let's just listen to that part before they come to the sudden change.

(TAPE EXCERPT 3)

Now, I'd like you to look at this verse, Tina.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 3)

What do you notice about the sounds of the words here?

T: There's lots of alliteration.

Int: Do you know what alliteration is?

T: Yes, the sounds of the words...the beginning of the word is the same...

Int: And what effect does it have there?

T: Um, it has the feeling of flowing and it makes you notice what's being said...the repetition...

Int: How is the ship moving there?

T: Well, it must have been pretty fast...then it burst into the sea.

Int: And how do the words sound?

T: Um, they pass through your mind quickly.

Int: Yes, and is there any change in that third line.

T: Well, there's a few 's's but...well, it seems that all of a sudden they came out of this wind and stopped dead... and the words seem to slow down.

Int: Good. Well, then it continues like this and we have the description of the sky and the sun.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 4)

What was it like?

T: Very hot, very dry and...the effect of orange, you know, the hot orangey-red and copper orangey-red and...the bloody sun orangey-red...

Int: You mention the colour, but what else does the word 'copper' suggest to you?

T: Well, the sky was very bright with the sun...it would have been pretty close to them.

Int: What sorts of things do you think about in relation to copper, though?

T: Well, it heats up pretty quickly and it shines.

Int: So you associate it with those things...and is there anything in the sound of the words there that helps you to make that connection?

T: Yes, the two 'o's - the 'o' sound in 'hot' and 'copper'.

Int: Yes, and it sort of brings the two words together in your mind. Now, what about the word 'bloody' there?

T: I think they could have left that out because it doesn't really show anything...because how could um...'bloody' gives you the picture of red anyway...and if it was a very hot and copper sky - copper is goldy-reddy but...I don't know, that just doesn't seem to fit.

Int: 'Right up above the mast did stand, no bigger than the moon' - why was that?

T: Well, they must have been in the tropics for it to have been right above them and...right above the mast and...I don't know the moon's pretty large so the sun would have been just in...you know...

Int: So, what is the whole scene like here?

T: Oh, looking at the sky...looking up and seeing the mast and all the rigging and...nothing but the sun and the goldy coloured sky.

Int: Yes. Then it continues, 'Day after day etc.' Tell me what those lines mean.

T: Um...'Day after day, day after day' is like that to give the effect that they were there, if not for a long time, it seemed like ages...um...well, they were totally becalmed, there was no movement...they were just sitting there on a very calm...sea just as it could have been painted there for the amount it moved.

Int: So there's a comparison there.

T: Yes...it could just be a painting.

Int: Is there any word there that seems to stand out as you hear it or read it?

T: Um...'motion'...and 'idle'...you can just see it sort of swaying up and down, going nowhere.

Int: In the line, 'We stuck, nor breath nor motion', does that comma after 'stuck' have any special effect?

T: Oh, just...um, it's even sitting there and...um, there was no breath and no motion either...you just get the feeling they were stopped and if you had a silent pause it would give you the effect that it had stopped...um... see there was no wind, no nothing.

Int: All right. Well, the ship remains still and the men become parched and very dry in the terrible heat. Then, suddenly, a strange ghost-ship appears - this is where the supernatural part comes into the poem - it's a kind of ghost-ship that's called a spectre-bark, which is just an old term for ghost-ship. And there are two ghostly figures on board who represent death and life-in-death, and they begin to cast dice for the souls of the mariner and the men. Now, let's just listen to the description of the ghost-ship when it first appears.

(TAPE EXCERPT 4)

Let's look more carefully at this piece of description here, Tina, and you tell me what is being described.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 5)

T: Well, they were looking out west and...there was nothing but the sun...then, all of a sudden, the strange shape became...they were looking out - the sun would have been at an angle at the time and the ship was...came in between suddenly.

Int: What was the strange shape?

T: The 'spectre-bark'.

Int: And it came between -

T: Them and the sun.

Int: 'And straight the sun was flecked with bars'.

T: Well, that would probably be their masts against the sun ...coming in between.

Int: And, what does it mean, 'Heaven's Mother send us grace'?

T: Well, they would be...um...I don't know.

Int: What effect did it have on them to see the ghost-ship?

T: They were very afraid.

Int: 'As if through a dungeon-grate he peered etc.' - what's that?

T: Um...the sun...looking through the masts.

Int: Yes. Well, then the ship is described in detail. Look closely at these two lines.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 6)

Tell me what they mean, in your own words.

T: Would you tell me what 'gossameres' means first.

Int: Yes. That's an old word and it means 'fine, filmy cobwebs, that are seen on grass or bushes or just floating in the air on autumn days or in calm weather'. Now, what do those lines mean?

T: Um...well, the sails would be pretty thin and ragged.

Int: What does it mean, 'glance in the sun'?

T: They'd shine but they'd catch the sun and...shine, I think, but...

Int: What does 'glance' mean there?

T: Well, you'd just get a...there, it would mean that they... would, um, catch the sun somehow and...brightly shine, just suddenly as the ship was moving.

Int: Why are they 'restless' gossameres?

T: Because they're moving - they're not always shining.

Int: What kind of movement is it?

T: Well, like the ship on the ocean...they're moving along and would be...have the rolling motion.

Int: Would they be moving a lot or just a little?

T: Just a little, with the motion of the ship.

Int: Okay. Well, then the ghost-woman is described in more detail.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 7)

You tell me what she is like.

T: Um...well, she made them pretty fearful...just looked something um...

Int: Why was that?

T: Well, she wasn't exactly...she...it sounds as if she looks very nice there but...in an evil sort of way.

Int: Yes. Can you explain why that is?

T: Um...I don't know. It just gives you a feeling - if you're thinking about it she must have been quite beautiful but...it gives you a feeling that she was something really evil.

Int: Where does the evil come into the description?

T: I don't know...um, with the comparisons, I think...and her looks were free and 'her skin was as white as leprosy' - that gives you the impression of something horrible, or something really evil.

Int: Are there two different feelings here then?

T: Yes, well, there's a feeling that she is quite nice, but then...as if she'd be quite beautiful...and then it comes to the...part where she's compared to something awful... which makes you think she is...something awful.

Int: Right. And then there is the casting of the dice and then the ghost-ship moves away.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 8)

What's being described there, Tina?

T: Well, all of a sudden it got quite dark - the sun was setting.

Int: Yes, and what sort of sunset was it?

T: Um...well, it went down behind the ocean and it would have left a glow with it for quite a while and then...Well, the stars started appearing.

Int: How did they appear?

T: Um, they rushed out, but it would seem that quite a few of them all came out together, instead of just the brightest ones coming out first.

Int: How can the dark come with a <u>stride</u>?

T: Well, the sun must have just disappeared very quickly and ...the dark would have just seemed to sweep over.

Int: Yes. What is a stride?

T: A step...a rather big step.

Int: So, how does the dark come with a stride?

T: It seems to be sweeping - rushing over from one side of the sky to the other.

Int: And the last two lines?

T: Well, the ghost-ship moves and makes a bit of a whish and then it just suddenly disappears.

Int: Yes. And after the ghost-ship disappears the men slowly begin to die, and, one by one, they fall down, until only the mariner is left alive. Now, at this point, the wedding guest, who's been listening all along, suddenly interrupts. Let's just listen to the part where he interrupts.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5)

Just look at that description of the mariner there, Tina.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 9)

You describe him in your own words.

T: Well, he must have been telling the story pretty um... well, vividly...even if he wasn't exaggerating and... the guest has started to fear him as if he's something ...evil...something bad...and um...because if he was rather skinny he'd look a bit like a skeleton which would seem like something supernatural.

Int: 'And thou art long, and lank, and brown, As is the ribbed sea-sand'. What does that mean?

T: Um...he'd be quite tall and...rather skinny...and he'd have a good tan up and...being round on the beach.

Int: What does that mean, 'as is the ribbed sea-sand'?

T: Well, when the um...it might be like a sort of when the tide goes out and there's the wave marks left on the shore.

Int: And why are they referred to here?

T: Well, it would be his hand - possibly - or his ribs.

Int: Yes. Well, then the mariner comes back and tells the wedding guest what it felt like when he was all alone.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 10)

What sorts of feelings does he describe there, Tina?

T: Um...well, everyone's been very hard on him...and he's really got it hard out there...all on his own...he's really getting across that he's alone and um...there's nothing to see but sea and...there's no-one to take pity on him, you know he just kept...he just kept alive.and... that's all.

Int: Why are the words repeated like that? Why doesn't he just say 'I was all alone on the wide sea'?

T: It gives you a feeling that there was absolutely nothing else around except him...there's that ship on the sea and there's nothing else.

Int: Do you think it says it very effectively?

T: Yes, with all the repetition.

Int: Okay. Well, then he describes further how it felt.

(TAPE EXCERPT 5 cont.)

Just look at this verse here, Tina, and tell me what he's describing.

T: His eyes were getting rather dry with all the brightness from the sun etcetera um...and the shimmering on the ocean ...and they were hurting his eyes and...he couldn't look anywhere else really...he was...with all the dead all around him there was nowhere to look.

Int: Why does it say 'For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky'? Why is it repeated like that?

T: It was all he could see...very monotonous.

Int: What about the sounds of the words here? Do you notice anything about the sounds? 'I closed my lids and kept them close etc.'

T: Um...well, when he closes his eyes the pain doesn't go away. He's pretty depressed and he'd rather be anywhere else but there.

Int: Yes. Now, the mariner finds that, in all of this, he cannot die. He is the only one left alive - and then the water-snakes are described. Now, do you remember how they'd been described earlier?

T: A thousand slimy things...

Int: Yes, a thousand, thousand slimy things lived on and so did I. Let's listen now to how they are described at this point.

(TAPE EXCERPT 6)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 12)

Well, how are they described there, Tina?

T: Um...they were...the sun was reflecting off them and um...he could see them quite clearly...they're the famous snakes and...well, the light flashed off when they moved - the light would sort of...fire off them not... just one coming off - it would come off in little bits sort of...

Int: What does he mean, 'I watched their rich attire'?

T: Well, in the shadow of the ship where there was no light, they would sort of look rather velvety.

Int: What is their attire? What does that refer to?

T: Um...well, their clothes sort of thing - it would be their skin...and...I don't know - in the shadow of the ship I don't know where he gets the flash of golden fire... because there wouldn't be any light there really.

Int: So where could the light be coming from?

T: From them, underneath.

Int: From the water-snakes?

T: Yes, that's what it seems like...but maybe they did catch a bit of light in the shadow.

Int: Right. Well, what happens when he sees them this time then?

T: Well, they seem to be quite powerful - big and powerful.

Int: Yes. Let's see what effect that has on him.

(TAPE EXCERPT 6 cont.)

Well, what effect did it have on him?

T: Well...they were alive and - so was he - but they were enjoying themselves and...snakes are always associated with bad things.

Int: But what did he express towards them?

T: He um...started to really like them...and he blessed them...

Int: And then what happened?

T: I don't really understand the next bit about the albatross suddenly coming back into it.

Int: Where was the albatross?

T: It was hanging around his neck and it dropped into the sea.

Int: Yes. And after the albatross falls into the sea, the mariner falls into a deep sleep and do you remember what happens?

T: No.

Int: Well, it begins to rain, and he thinks it's like a dream...

T: Oh, that's right.

Int: ...but the rain in fact comes. Now, earlier in the poem, he had described how very, very dry and parched it had been...and the heat was described like this.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 13)

'And every tongue, through utter drought etc.' You tell me what's being described there.

T: Well, their tongues had swollen and they couldn't talk with them...and it would have been a rather choking feeling ...to be so dry.

Int: And what does 'choked with soot' mean?

T: Well, being pretty dry and...a rasping feeling in your throat.

Int: Is there anything about the sounds of the words there? 'And every tongue etc.' How do these words sound?

T: Um...all bumpy, jerky...they don't go smoothly...

Int: Is that done purposefully, do you think?

T: Yes, because they wouldn't be able to talk smoothly. They'd only be able to...talk roughly and almost choking.

Int: Yes. Well, now after it rains he describes what it was like in these words.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 14)

'My lips were wet, my throat was cold etc.' What's it like now?

T: Well, it had stopped being so hot and...he had become cold all of a sudden...well, his garments had all become pretty salty or...very, very dry and starting to rot maybe and... with the water on them would would be rather dank and... he um thought he really had drunken in his dreams and thought that when he waked up it would still be dry but when he woke up he was wet.

Int: Compare those lines with the first ones, Tina, and what sorts of comparisons do you notice?

T: Well, they've got rather smooth rolling sounds in them with 'r's and 'm's whereas in the first verse there are the 'd's and 't's and 'k's which make it jerky and hard to say.

Int: And where does he feel the sensations most in the two verses?

T: Um...in his mouth.

Int: Why is that?

T: That would be the most noticeable place.

Int: Yes, good. Well, the crew rise up then, after this rain comes and they man the ship, which seems to be moved on from underneath by some kind of spirit or force. Then the air is filled with a pleasant sound. Let's listen to that part.

(TAPE EXCERPT 7)

Look carefully at this verse, Tina.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 15)

It's describing the sound that seemed to fill the air. What sort of sound was it?

T: It was a bubbling noise...rather a quiet noise...um soothing...

Int: What does it mean, 'a noise like of a hidden brook in the leafy month of June'?

T: Well, um June will depend on where it's being written from, whether it's winter or summer...which country.

Int: This would be the northern hemisphere...

T: So it would be summer up there - or autumn, yes it's leafy...that's when all the leaves dry up.

Int: And what is it that's singing the tune here?

T: I don't know - it sounds as if he could be dreaming - and it sounds as if it could be angels or something but...

Int: Something is singing a tune to the sleeping woods. What is it that would be singing the tune?

T: The brook.

Int: So what sort of sound is it here, that's being described?

T: Um...a sound that seems to fit into the surroundings though he doesn't know where it is coming from. It's just a very quiet soothing noise.

Int: Yes. Okay, now as the ship moves towards the mariner's own country, a breeze begins to blow. Let's listen now to the passage that describes the breeze.

(TAPE EXCERPT 8)

Let's look at this verse, Tina, describing the ship and the breeze.

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 16)

How are they being described?

T: Well, there's a lot of 's' alliteration there - with the 'swiftly', 'sailed softly' and 'ship'.

Int: Is that being used deliberately?

T: Yes, because you get the feeling of the boat sort of flowing through the water, softly and carefully...and he was enjoying the breeze...and because he was the only one it seemed to blow on and um...I don't know if it means that he was the only one there, he was the only one on the boat for it to blow on or if he was just imagining it.

Int: What do you think it's likely to mean there?

T: Well, it could be that he was the only one on the ship that felt the breeze or he was the only one on the ship to feel the breeze.

Int: Which words stand out most there?

T: Um...'sweetly' and 'swiftly' because they're both repeated.

Int: And is there any other way in which they stand out?

T: Well, they begin the same and they end the same.

Int: Do you think those lines are good poetry?

T: Yes...um...if I hadn't been sailing I could still understand what it was like with the boat moving along through the waves, sailing softly, but going along quite fast - the sea would have been quite calm - it just would have taken a little breeze for it to have gone quite quickly.

Int: Yes, and now as they move closer to the mariner's own country, they eventually come into the harbour. Let's listen to the description of the harbour.

(TAPE EXCERPT 8 cont.)

(PROJECTOR EXCERPT 17)

These two verses describe the harbour, Tina. You describe it for me in your own words.

T: Well, it's obviously at night and there's a lot of moonlight ...the moonlight sort of lay on it...it was actually very clear, otherwise the moonlight wouldn't be just laying there, it would be bouncing about...um, there wouldn't be any wind...it would be just a quiet moonlight night.

Int: What objects can you see?

T: Well, the moon and the land...coming into the land and the ...and you know just quiet sort of hills of the land and the sea all the way behind.

Int: Do you know what a kirk is?

T: A church isn't it?

Int: Yes. And a weathercock?

T: Yes, a weathervane.

Int: What does it mean, 'so smoothly it was strewn'? What does 'strewn' mean?

T: Um, thrown about...but sort of scattered...smoothly but ...there were no waves and there was no wind.

Int: And what is it that is scattered about?

T: Um, all the small ripples and um...

Int: 'And on the bay the moonlight lay and the shadow of the moon'.

T: The moonlight um...well, it wouldn't be sort of bouncing about, it would be sitting quite smoothly because there were no waves.

Int: 'The moonlight steeped in silentness' - what does 'steeped' mean?

T: Um...deep in it...I don't know, it sort of means being drenched in it.

Int: So, what does it mean 'the moonlight steeped in silentness the steady weathercock'?

T: Well, there was no wind, and the weathercock wasn't moving and...the moonlight wasn't making a sound...it was just... if it was moving, it was moving silently...everything was silent.

Int: Which line do you like best in those two verses?

T: I really like that line, 'The moonlight steeped in silentness'.

Int: What is it about that line that you particularly like?

T: I don't know, it gives you the feeling of sort of coming in silently and just a feeling of peacefulness.

Int: Yes. Okay, well now, after the mariner returns to his own country, the story part of the poem is over, except for the last brief conversation between the mariner and the wedding guest, where the mariner tells the wedding guest how he wanders from land to land telling his tale to certain people. Now, as we listen to this last part, Tina, I want you to think about what the poem means as a whole and I want to ask you about that at the end. See if there is anything in these last verses that tells us something about the meaning of the poem as a whole.

(TAPE EXCERPT 9)

Well, now, what would you say the whole poem really means?

T: Um...I don't know...I'm not sure what the whole poem is referring to...it would have some meaning...it wasn't really just the story you know...different symbols would represent different things.

Int: What sorts of things?

T: Well, it said that the wedding guest was sadder and wiser from hearing the tale...but I don't really know what he'd be wiser about or sadder about what...maybe at his foolishness at killing the albatross that was meant to bring good or...

Int: What about the ghost-ship and the men rising up from the dead? Do you find that you can accept those parts of the poem?

T: Yes, I think they're important...because they show why the mariner had to suffer so much for what he'd done... killing the albatross wasn't just like killing an ordinary little bird...it was like destroying something that was meant to bring good from nature and then he had to be punished for what he'd done...so all the men died except for him and when he was all alone he realized what he'd done...

Int: What do you like best about the poem?

T: Well, um...just thinking about the ocean...and the sky um ...I love the ocean...I don't know, because it's all to do with that and the way it describes it...it's a very good poem, well written...well, the story is a bit far-fetched and really old-fashioned...

Int: And is that acceptable?

T: In a poem anything is acceptable according to me...a poem should have an effect on you and make you think about something...and this poem certainly does that.

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