

ELEMENTS OF THE DRAMATIC MODEL

I. MODELS IN HISTORY

By a *model* I understand some familiar kind of object the idea of which we extend by an analogy or metaphor in order to assist our understanding of other things. When we say, "All the world's a stage," we are using the familiar antics and attitudes of the theatre as a model for thinking about our woes and joys and our activities.

Sometimes a complex model is used by a thinker, by a group, or by a whole age as a guiding pattern suggesting ways of thinking in many areas. One model may even determine an inclusive view about the world from which derive emotional attitudes as well as ruling concepts and ways of thinking for our knowledge of the world. It is often said that the mechanism of a clock served in this way as a ruling model for much thought in the 17th and 18th centuries. Despite their novelty, clockworks were then becoming well known, and they were peculiarly fascinating. Reflection on them made very vivid such notions as regular motion, interchangeable parts, precise mechanical connection, influence by push and pull, and design for specific function. These elements of the clockwork model, it is said,

were extended as ways of looking at the facts of nature, at human activities, and at the motion of the heavens. To fundamental thinkers the clock suggested a mathematical universe acting by mechanical causation among least atomic parts, conceptions which were fruitfully applied in a new science. For some a Deity was needed to design and wind the clock, but the general program was to extend this mechanical image to all areas of human interest.

Historical theses which assert in this way that a fundamental metaphor dominates an epoch are extremely questionable. There are always dissenting thinkers. Also popular or journalistic interpretations happily muddle contrary ways of thinking, and both often lag behind original speculation by generations. Even systematic thinkers mix elements from various models, and it is doubtful that their mental processes are as simple as notions about a "ruling metaphor" might lead us to suppose. At best, all conceptions about "the spirit of the age" or 18th century thought" are gross simplifications. After the fact they are useful as rough mnemonic devices which cluster our generalizations even as they falsify.

Yet such summary notions are useful and revealing, and I wish to speak after this fashion about some facets of "20th century thought." The historical thesis which my paper presupposes is that several distinct lines of thought prevailing at the present time fit together under what I call "the dramatic model." However I do not wish to engage in historical argument. I wish only to show that there is a familiar sort of experience here which entails a fairly definite set of correlated elements. These might also serve as a model should a thinker, a group, or an age extend them to broader applications. It is sufficient here if plausible content and fruitful suggestion are added by my examples from current thought.

II. DRAMATIC SPACE AND TIME

When I speak of the *dramatic* model, I have special reference to the familiar experience of a performed play. A written play's peculiarly dramatic character lies in the presumption (which is

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sometimes false) that it might be staged. I thus take the staged play as the more fundamental phenomenon which can serve as a model.

By *elements* of a model I mean its parts or aspects as they are reinterpreted according to their place and function in that phenomenon. They may be factors which are quite familiar in other contexts and interpretations, but their meaning and logic are altered according to their role in a special model. The drama, for example, requires space, time, events, persons, conversations, and the like. But each of these familiar notions might be understood in many ways. When it is re-interpreted as part of a model, some one of these implications is selected for a controlling role. Thus any factor is subtly altered as it becomes an element in the dramatic model.

In drama, *space* is a scene of human action and a context stimulating and reflecting human character. The minimum stage direction, "A Desert Heath," is not a description of Scotland, but the setting which surrounds Mackbeth's action and perhaps a mood which anatomizes his state of soul. An able director is quite careful about these matters, and this is one sense in which the film intensifies dramatic perspectives. Such a conversion of general notions of space departs from alternative versions appropriate to other models. For example, it is not the neutral space in which characterless particles move, nor is it the field for literally descriptive correlations by the map-maker or the guidebook. Thus it is a special version, appropriate to the theatre, particularizing more general habits and familiarities from various common recognitions of space.

Time is likewise a general condition of human life which is translatable into dramatic terms. In models derived from other sources, time might be understood as providing calculation of intervals, as in the ticking of a watch; or as neutral to the operation of laws of nature summary of correlations occurring at any time. Or another model might subordinate time to some other order which is eternal or has no time, after the model of those rare moments when time seems to have a stop. Theatrical time, however, does not accommodate to either of these patterns. Most characteristically, it engages us in a sequence of actions going from some defined point which is a beginning

to another, an end. Our use of time in the theatre is to mark occasions of critical importance in the transition from one condition to another. Theatrical time is a movement from one event to another. It leads us to ask, "And then what happened?" As in human affairs (but not in scientific time) the tensions of expectation, hope and fear, are of the essence of time. This sense of the direction in time, out of the past into a novel future, has been much urged in recent thought, sometimes in reaction against seemingly impersonal scientific time. For example, both Bergson and Whitehead emphasized the involvement of all existence in temporal directionality. They criticize other versions of time as being special kinds of abstractions.

Space and time are thus two elements of the dramatic model which (though they are familiar in other senses from other contexts) undergo peculiar transformations as they are assimilated to their place in that pattern.

Thus our ordinary sense of dramatic time suggests a sequence which stimulates us to ask, "And then what happened?" But there are important exceptions. *The Three Sisters* of Chekov carefully evokes an impression of changelessness, boredom, and futility. *Waiting for Godot* also conjures up a directionless mood which is intensified by nearly exact duplications between the two acts. Many dramatic conventions deliberately defy or reconstruct normal time, both by compression (as in love-at-first-sight and instant conversions) and by stoppages (as in the soliloquy or the operatic aria). Modern drama toys with flashbacks and temporal dislocation, and much of Greek drama ignores natural time by compressions which encouraged the twenty-four hour rule supposedly derived from Aristotle. But both construct careful and meaningful sequences, and in both it is necessary that one event precedes another.

Similarly with space. Even so briefly descriptive a stage direction as "A Desert Heath" is rare in Shakespeare. Anyhow, it is hardly attainable in production, and it is a questionable theatrical asset according to both Elizabethan practice and current trends. Also, a deliberately characterless environment may be called for, as in *Waiting for Godot*. At the other extreme, the eye of the motion picture camera is frighteningly literal, and clever directors have made the most of its evocation of mood

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and its discovery of telling detail. But it is impossible to view a drama without spatial commitments. Even when the setting is minimized, it is recognized as a condition to which all human life is subject and to which significant drama must relate itself. The neutral setting of *Godot* is precisely a way of saying that we find ourselves Heaven-knows-where, and that the environment of human waiting is flat and insignificant. Shakespeare creates his appropriate space more usually by poetic devices or by sheer sweep of action, as in *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

But all of these exceptions are presented to us in the theatre in space and time. And they are adapted to the sense of space and time intimately characteristic of human life. Even Dante's literary tour through omnipresent eternity takes us through circles, cornices and spheres in a temporal sequence. Despite variations and frustrations of it, our sense of expectation and movement in time and our sense of location in a setting seem the norm of theatrical experience. They derive also from our personal experience as we live and act in space and time, and they are distinct from the ways we calculate about space and time for scientific purposes.

In quite similar senses, I will try to cite only elements which are part of a public notion of the theatre as its inevitable conditions, and to avoid special theories about the nature of theatrical experience. Such variation might indeed fit my thesis, and it might suggest interesting applications. For example it might be argued that the tragic flaw theory of drama motivates Freud's concern with the Oedipus myth. Thus there is a sort of unravelling of the flaw for civilization, as analyzed in *Totem and Taboo*. But these are variations on the theme citing specifics to which a general penchant for the dramatic model might lead, whereas I wish only to indicate fairly ubiquitous intellectual elements which seem to become almost obligatory insofar as one tends to operate within the dramatic model.

Another movement advocating a special theory of drama is contemporary "non-drama." If my implicit historical thesis is true, then it is ironic that dramaturgy itself is one area of thought which today defies the implications of the dramatic model. For current movements, such as the theatre of the absurd and the new non-drama, undertake an almost desperate effort

to dispense with traditions and conventions which have seemed in the past to define the dramatic art. The motivation is doubtless some combination of boredom, experimentation, and post-atomic malaise. These movements have their values, and they have produced fascinating works. But they do not undermine more usual dramatic notions. They only sort out inessentials. Their very effort to violate standard conventions accentuates our severe inability to escape them. In *Waiting for Godot*, space as relevant setting and time as significant transition are both frustrated. But it is a haunting play because it dramatizes the locus of our waiting. It shows us blankness of setting and futility of expectation. Our human sense of space and time are not thereby evaded, they are only shown to be excruciating. If anything, these unusual conventions intensify space and time as conditions of human life and as essentials of dramatic presentation, just as the curious misconnections of modern "anti-dialogue" show us some lack in our hopes for human communication.

III. DRAMATIC ACTION

(a) *Actions*

Whatever may be its detailed aims and subject matter, any drama is presented to us as an enactment of the speeches and deeds of persons in particular circumstance. Among these categories, *action* is peculiarly important. It is part of the medium, since the narrative progresses by displaying various actions. And both the whole unit and its parts are "enactments," a bringing into actuality. A drama is a re-enactment of actions. Indeed, the Greek origins of the word "drama" identify it with action.

Now although the notion of action is quite ordinary, yet as dramatic action it carries with it certain peculiarities. An action is always particular, in the sense that it is performed at a certain point in time and at its own spatial location. It is also performed by a particular person or a group of persons. In drama, of course, the actors and occasions may be representative of generalized persons or circumstances: the man may be every-

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man and the locale any space or the time eternity. We are interested in re-enacting the action just because it seems to us more than particular. In senses which have become trite, we expect it to mirror some aspects of our lives. But our generalized interest in dramatic action is not the same one we assume when we adopt a theorizing manner. In a science such as psychology, we often wish to abstract from particularities in order to speak about types or statistical averages. Our references to individual cases then supply proof or instance, but inessential details are sorted out, and we are often disinterested in particulars—unless, indeed, our psychological theory tends to adopt the dramatical model, in which case our theory (or at least our therapy) emphasizes the uniqueness of each case. For drama deals with actions in ways which require a lively sense of particularity, and it is deadened when a thesis is too prominent or when characters are reduced to the types of a favored theory.

Thus the action of drama peculiarly combines general and particular interests. An action is always individual, but dramatic action has general significance at least to the extent that it invites attention and reenactment. Also, normal action occurs at a present time, and dramatic action occurs at a pretended present time. The peculiarity of involvement in the present is that it is emerging out of the past which is given for it and moving toward a future. Even when we readers know the ending, as observing participants in drama, we look to consequences which are both uncertain and a matter of interest to us, for we want to make things come out this way rather than that. Contrast this stance with that of a purely historical investigation in which we know the outcome and we cultivate disinterested accuracy; or with a purely scientific investigation in which we seek to explain what always happens or to predict for purposes of test. Either discipline emphasizes things as they are, either in detail or in their regularities, whereas an actor is interested in the potentialities of a situation and in the attainments or horrors which may occur. Our interest is such also in daily life. Observed drama invites us so to participate in an event as if it were lived. Our vision shares in the tension of an undecided outcome, and it is brought to focus on the goals which are being realized. Drama thus engages us in a process

of realization. I suppose that it is for reasons such as these that there are ancient verbal connections between the words "action" and "actualization." An action is an actualization. Thus a dramatic perspective on the common notion of action brings forward such factors as suspense, aim, and achievement.

American pragmatism is an ideological movement which can be interpreted as reorganizing most of our fundamental categories so that they are redefined according to their place in the dramatic model. This movement is significant both for its saturation of the mentality of an age and for extensions and influence among an elder generation of academic philosophers. For popular purposes, it might be said that the keynote of pragmatism is an emphasis on the practical, on what can be done in action. Some vestige of this emphasis is imprinted on all of us, whatever our ideological allegiances. We tend as a culture to share some spirit of the frontier, some sense of rolling up our sleeves and getting things done, which helps account for more popular and perhaps vulgarized receptions of the pragmatic movement. Also, for most of us under the age of 35, some dilute juices of this outlook garnished our whole education process through progressive education. As the educationists had it, we "learn by doing." For present purposes, the focus of this position is on what can be done, on the processes by which we act to bring the future into being.

Academic philosophy has left pragmatism aside, and even at its zenith this viewpoint never permitted enthusiasm to be subordinated to precision and care. Yet the movement originated among philosophers, and its principles received ample elaboration and justification in technical circles. John Dewey, for example, besides his sprawling pronouncements and activities in the problems of his time, worked out careful analyses of the principles presenting action as the critical philosophic category and analyzing it in terms analogous to the dramatic model. In his more technical works, his argument almost invariably begins with a pseudobiological treatment of the live creature and its environment. All of his basic terms relate to the action whereby the organism undergoes stimuli and acts to alter existing conditions by realizing a new and preferred situation. The ultimate category is "interaction," doing and undergoing. The organism

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is acted upon by what is given from his past and he acts to implement an anticipated future. Many current popular uses of the word "adjustment" stem from this basic analysis. However, for Dewey these remarks are not mere incidental speculation on the psyche of an amoeba. They construct a minimum pattern for all human action, since all human goals are sought in a situation whose environment is partly social, and we act, with tools which are partly intellectual, to attain a new situation which is partly what we desired. Schematically, the same aspects are involved also in the activities of an Einstein, a Churchill, or a Michelangelo. Hence philosophic principles for the arts, for sciences, and for moral and political reconstruction all return to the same basic pattern. Despite obvious complications, what we are always, all of us, engaged in, is activity carrying out the past into a desired but uncertain future. Sciences, arts and laws all have reference to experience in this sense.

The details of Dewey's philosophy are no more than elaboration of this scheme or instances of it. Despite a pretended scientific basis in biological-psychology circa 1910, the vision of action is fundamentally dramatic. We are doing something, moving from one state to another. Indeed the very fact of taking principles from the patterns of action entails some elements of the dramatic metaphor. Accordingly, the organism is primarily an actor, the environment in which he finds himself is a setting bristling with stimuli and potentialities for his action, and the time in which he is interested is leading out of the given past into an outcome whose issue is uncertain. Even our histories and our theories derive from actions and are useful in actions, so that for Dewey "pure" history and "pure" science are impossible. Those partial separations which are possible require special abstractions. The concrete reality to which they refer is characterized by our experience as an actor in a situation looking to unknown events in the future. Also, like dramatic action, our resolution of a problem combines particular and general interest, for each situation has its own special problems, and our arts and sciences are significant because we can re-use them as tools in new activities.

Twentieth century philosopher-physicist Whitehead has not equaled Dewey in popular results or academic following. Yet

his critique of pre-relativity science and his program for a new science also spotlight action as a central category. His fundamental principles derive from processes implied by action in time. His argument is more generalized and difficult, being schematized as an interplay among subjects and objects related to each other in particular occasions. The fundamental character of these relations might loosely be called a feeling tone. The whole point of his analysis is to insist that this tone accompanies any active transformation of the given past into the future and that it is prior to more intellectual insights. It is the more basic fact to which scientific abstractions must be reduced. The givenness of the past we must work with and the potentiality of the future we envisage are made into fundamental characters of the world. They are trails of reality, as well as elements in our own response. Indeed, they are two aspects of God. Process is the fundamental metaphysical category, one which we find most readily exemplified in ourselves as we undertake actions in a present moment. Whitehead's philosophy is said to be obscure. But I believe it is only a very intricate attempt to point to the activity we are engaged in at any time and to insist that the dramatic character of our sense of involvement is more basic than any intellectualization we construct after the fact. Not only human experience, but the universe itself is first and foremost dramatic.

(b) *Directions*

I have spoken thus far of action as the medium in which a drama is presented, or as the most direct and basic sort of experience to which we must refer in designing philosophic principles according to the dramatic model. But when we think in terms of actions, our attention is turned to a sequence of actions and to an inclusive outcome of action. In ordering affairs, we are interested in seeing where our many actions are leading us and in how they add up to a life. Accordingly, action in the theatre has a *direction*. It is cumulative toward some climax, or it shows stages of degeneration. Our involvement as spectators invites us to a sense of order among many actions. It poses the constantly present question, "Where is the action leading us?"

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Accordingly, an age guided by the dramatic model will be peculiarly devoted to a historical viewpoint, to a developmental emphasis which asks about the sequences of our actions, where they have come from, where they are leading us, what order we might find among the actions in which we are enmeshed. The modern age takes for granted the importance of history. Yet it is a very special emphasis. Whole races of men, whole civilizations, have lacked what we call "the historical sense." Even when they kept their records straight, which often they did not, they felt no compulsion to take history seriously. They looked at their own past very rarely or only in highly imaginative terms, and they had little sense that their origins had made them what they were or that they were playing a special role on a world stage. Even in our own civilization, these emphases are relatively recent. In the days of what I have called the clockwork model, one looked to the past for laws and precepts about human behavior, for generalizations and examples, but not for insight into a special sequence of actions leading us from peculiar origins to some special attainment.

The latter I will call a developmental view of history. It is peculiarly dramatic, both in its sense of a special role played by individual, nation, or viewpoint, and in its attention to sequences of action and the directions in which they lead. The real popularity of such viewpoints begins with evolutionary theory. In evolutionary biology, we have a science in which time serves for more than calculation of changes of position. The sequence of developments is of the essence of knowledge. It tells a story of progress from simple elements toward culminating attainments, a story which is essentially dramatic in emphasizing direction, origins, and climax.

The success and notoriety of evolutionary biology have led us to treat practically everything in developmental terms. In the present day and age, it is almost impossible to teach a course in any order except an historical one. We use text books whose chapters reflect historical arrangements. Our sense of obligation toward coverage is historical, and we justify everything from presidential candidates to art forms on the grounds that they are true to our past or they are the "coming thing." We are led particularly to think of origins and culminations and to see

every action according to its work in transition. Even our scientific metaphors have moved away from those simple notions of underlying natural law which satisfied clockwork analogies. Physicists are peculiarly obsessed with the second law of thermodynamics and with the time-directionality which relativity seems to demand. Cosmic analyses have returned, after an interlude of relative disinterest, to inquiries about the origins of the universe and the question of its development by expansion. Our modern psychology is largely committed to developmental metaphors, when it traces meticulously the stages of growth of the child, after the manner of Piaget, or when it hunts for the traumatic experiences which have inhibited processes of maturation, after the manner of Freud. Around the turn of the century, almost all areas of thought, and especially anthropology, sociology and philosophy, adopted the evolutionary emphasis and were industriously turning all knowledge into a developmental theory. In some views which still have influence today, the notion of a set sequence of stages was rigidly elaborated into one drama which the universe was committed to perform. Marxism is a classic case, with its notion of a prevailing sequence of economic stages whose reenactment is necessary and moves progressively toward a dramatic resolution in a projected classless society. We scoff at such notions when they are presented in doctrinaire form by opposed ideologies, but we employ a species of the same developmental metaphor when we consider the historical order part of the essence of any area of knowledge or when we invoke fairly popular slogans envisaging progress. In one form or another, the dramatic image of progressive historical development is so much a part of us that we overlook its pervasive influence, just as we overlook the air we breath.

A developmental view of history intensifies our dramatic sense of the place of our present action in that developing drama. The categories which refer to the arrangement of stages of a drama lead us to speak of alternation of tension and relaxation or of heightened action and moving toward a climax. The climax is not a state, but a culminating action, a reversal or a recognition or both. Our sense of drama, even in the minimum sense of suspense, is enlarged by a mood of crisis, whereby we see the action as critical, as making or breaking

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characters with whom we have identified. Our popular intellectual vocabulary is loaded with terms derived from a dramatic vision of life when we speak perpetually of the crisis of our own times, and when we assess our present action according to its role in resolutions, in reverses of fortune, and in development toward a future. It is almost impossible today to make a speech without employing a sort of crisis psychology. Humanity has always been moving through a problem from a situation into a future which was in the making. But we are peculiarly sensitive today to rather breast-beating proclamations of "the crisis of the present." We are convinced that the rate of change is infinitely greater in the modern world than in past ages, and (despite our greater control over means) we are less certain what our goals might be. Perhaps also our sheer accumulation of knowledge reminds us that knowledge alone does not produce action. Whatever our predictive capacities, the future is always uncertain, and the present is always the crisis whereby we bring it about.

One sweeping current speculation which captures particularly this sense of crisis, and its place in a developing history, is the *Study of History* of Arnold Toynbee. Here the stage is the universe; the characters are civilizations, each with its own individual driving force, an energy which it often encapsulates in its preferred mythic-drama. Each civilization grows by stages which are typical but not quite determined. The individual developments and the mutual interactions between these persons constitute the argument of a universal drama. Dramatic terms are quite consistently used to account for the actions of history. The fate of a civilization finally depends on challenges it encounters and responses it undertakes. It is brought to focus by crises of transitions, by points at which action is demanded by circumstances. A civilization either acts to meet the challenge, thus entering on a new stage of growth, or it fails to act, thus inviting the fate of all heroes who fail to be adequate to the dramatic demands of their situation. Thus the history of a civilization reaches a climax in a crisis demanding creative action. The decision of a civilization at this moment of truth, like that of a character in a present crisis, amalgamates inescapable pressures from the past and creation for a new future. Critics attack

Toynbee, as they attack the philosophers who insist on the active situation, for confounding free-will and determinacy. But irrespective of what might be required for scientific exposition, drama almost invariably poses a double perspective on events to which both are important. For we are invited to watch the hero pondering possibilities and choosing among genuine alternatives which create his fate at the same time that we see the consequences as fated for him from the beginning by his circumstances, by his own virtues and vices, by jealous gods, or by stars hovering at his birth. When we lose either aspect, our dramatic vision is impoverished, irrespective of intellectual dilemmas which make it difficult to embrace them both. The dramatic model requires both, and its practitioners have not been intellectual cowards.

(c) *Enactment*

When we speak of action in a drama, we do not mean merely lots of things occurring. Chases, murders, intrigues and the like are part of the action. But we often speak of "the action" in a drama, meaning that central occurrence of inclusive accomplishment which orders whatever events we see. It is the *one* thing the protagonist does, which brings into focus his character, his situation, his choices, his fate. This central undertaking may be largely passive and lacking in movement. The action of *The Three Sisters*, for example, might be said to be talking-about-going-to-Moscow-without-doing-so. The overall action is the failure to cope with either ideals or realities. It is dramatized by showing trivial things the characters on stage do instead and by conveying the boredom and frustration which accompany their evasion. The inactive "action" of such a drama is analogous to some modern therapies whereby compulsion neuroses (or indeed even more complex pathological states) are identified as mechanical repetitions of an action (once successful, no doubt) which has become a mode of evasion of action or an inaction ill-adapted to present needs.

But more usually the central action of a drama is displayed as an advancement or degeneration. Hence we have secondary

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dramatic categories which refer to stages of success or failure of the action. The inclusive result is a single action, a dramatic unity which both informs many subsidiary occurrences and makes the central crisis an action exemplary of many actions. By this means it becomes a particular *enactment* of generalities about the processes of human living. The plot of a play has traditionally been called its "argument." The reference is not to personal conflicts or to uses of dialogue. It is rather that the details present a unified and intellectually complete process of transformation which is an image of a kind of human transition. In place of the logic of syllogisms and truth tables, we have a kind of deduction by images, by metaphorical actions, which are diversified in time and unified in an encompassing action. It also demonstrates in the ancient sense of "showing," though not by means of verbal proof. The action we are shown is never really one, but it shows a unified meaning in a whole action. The hero represents everyman not by being simple or by abstraction, but by engaging in an action which is representative of every engagement in action we undertake and which reveals the elements inevitable in human living.

In parallel senses, an analysis of human destiny which can emphasize the effects of our actions and the sequences of growth through which we attain to our best realization within the human condition will invoke some aspects of the dramatic model. Thus almost all psychiatric or educational analyses of processes of personal maturation and traumatic crisis are in part dramatic. So also are religious viewpoints which emphasize conversion or our journey through the dark night of the soul. Also anthropological studies wherein primitive beliefs and rituals are focussed on the *rites du passage*, the celebrations designed to enact and explicate the various transitions essential to human life.

The central action of this cosmic and inevitable drama is the action whereby we make a transition from a lower stage to a higher by some accomplishment of growth. The pattern in this central action can be expanded to include various states: innocence, call to adventure, a quest, a journey of the soul, an accomplishment and loss, a rebirth, and a showing forth of the new life. This is the argument of a universal plot, he maintains, though it undergoes infinite variations. The scale on which

the pattern is pursued may vary greatly. Rebirth may be a resurrection on Easter morning, an embrace signifying a new life for lovers, or Alice's maturation to the insight that the courtroom is "nothing but a pack of cards." Any stage may be more or less literal, as the journey may be through Heaven and Hell, or through the mountains of Spain, or through the recesses of the soul. Or one part of the cycle may be enlarged and the others foreshortened, as epic multiplies the quest and tragedy places accomplishment and loss in the foreground.

IV. DRAMATIC DIALOGUE

(a) *Language*

Even though action lies at the center of the dramatic model, we should not forget that in most dramatic forms even action is primarily presented by means of speech. In writing for the stage, the parenthetic stage direction is a relatively recent convention. In most traditions, both instructions and descriptions for staging are implicit in what is said by the characters. There may be impoverishment in more recent tendencies to subordinate what is said to directed action or to embroidery by scenery, music or visual effects. But even the movies have not completely sacrificed the niceties of human discourse in enlarging the visual field. Even amid degradation, the theatre remains an art of human speech. Its literary format is the playing script, despite written directions, Shavian prefaces, and photographic tricks.

Dialogue is a key term, for there is no drama unless persons speak to each other or undertake legitimate substitutes, such as gesture. Dialogue is also linked with the other elements of the dramatic model. For to speak is a kind of action, and it often instigates or indicates or summarizes other actions. Speech is subject to particularities of time and place. And it becomes dialogue when it is spoken by one person or group to another, so that characters are also involved.

Now twentieth century thought has been so massively interested in language and the arts of speech that I fear making my case for the dramatic model too strongly. For it must be

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remembered that neither mere linguistic interest nor intense concern with the arts of speech necessarily pursue the dramatic model. Language and speech are elements in the dramatic model only when the pattern by which they are analyzed visualizes that linguistic usage as dialogue, that is as speech which is between persons and which is employed to instigate or to remake action. Let me illustrate this difference by comparing two phases of linguistic analysis as it has been pursued in recent philosophy.

Logical positivism is a philosophic movement which flourished in the twenties and thirties of this century. Associated with it are such names as Rudolph Carnap, A. J. Ayer, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. For present purposes, Bertrand Russell can be mentioned here too, although he differs in important respects. In professional circles, the influence of this school is largely eclipsed now, although a popular caricature of its philosophic mode is still prevalent, and its hold on the quite different work of more recent language philosophy is stronger than is usually admitted. The interest in language characterizing this group has no affinities at all with the dramatic model. Their goal is to construct an ideal language which approximates as closely as possible to that of mathematics. The program seeks a language suitable to unambiguous and exact scientific statement. They thus study statement which is purely informative. This purification is attained by omitting the dramatic aspects of language whereby it varies according to speakers or hearers and it can serve also for incitive or lyrical purposes. Indeed, within this school of thought, the condemnation of ethical, theological or metaphysical uses of language consists in showing that they are "merely poetic."

As the influence of the positivist position has waned, it has been replaced by a newer language philosophy which reinstates non-scientific uses of language and defends the variability of linguistic goals and the wisdoms of ordinary usages. In doing so, the recent generation of language philosophers has progressively diverged from a mathematical ideal of language in the direction of something more suggestive of the dramatic model. The question of how we verify what our language purports to say has been replaced by an effort to assign different uses to different expressions. Thus the character of the person using the language

reenters consideration, and we can ask to whom he speaks, what he wants to accomplish, and what is the context within which he speaks. The emphasis is on the kind of antagonist visualized and to that extent it becomes the dramatic. Indeed, current writings by the Oxford philosophers are full of suppositional conversations, dotted with little circumlocutions like, "One might want to say 'so and so,'" or "Suppose we said...," or "It might be objected that..." The format is often a brief little playlet between disagreeing discussants set amid select relevant circumstances. It is a dialogue of gambits and ploys. Clarification of language remains the goal, but this is sought by sorting out distinct speech patterns or by indicating linguistic mistakes whereby we mislead one another or confuse our capacity to find our way about in actions in the world. This mode of philosophizing dominates the field in English speaking universities today, though its popular force is just beginning to be felt beyond professional philosophic circles. Indeed, my own use of the concept of a model, and my insistence that our theoretical language often contains hidden analogies, have affinities to some speculations in scientific theory which are being pursued according to this current type of linguistic analysis.

Although this type of language philosophy indulges in little imaginary dialogues and develops sensitivity to diverse linguistic nuances, it only partially adapts to the dramatic model. I should say that its overwhelming metaphor is rather something like a chess game. It is fashionable among these thinkers to speak of "making the proper moves," or of "following the rules." The other person is always a rather sportsmanlike competitor, and different languages are continuously analogized to different games. For these philosophers, it is considered bad form to generalize about the broader significance of philosophy or indeed to act as if playing this game had any point. We expect a drama to be headed somewhere, to have a central implication loaded with importance. But a game is played for its momentary diversion, and it is directed to arbitrary goals. But even so the affinities are not greatly distant. For example, consider the detective story, which is a very gamelike dramatic form. A detective story is like a game in being subject to rather strict conventions about such matters as providing clues or constructing

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end-games. Even though the apparent issue is often life or death, the mood usually prevents our becoming too much engaged or attributing too much importance to it. The stages are more like moves in a game, and the actors tend to be counters on one side or the other, though their identity may be ambiguous. But the detective story is a dramatic form which portrays actions by means of characters and dialogue, and it always hovers near the danger that we might encounter real characters or problems we take seriously. If I may indulge sectarian prophecy for the moment, I should say that recent phases of language philosophy are fast initiating a realignment which brings it nearer to the dramatic model. Perhaps it will soon develop sensitivities to its own origins and directions and to personal purposes among differing human interchanges.

(b) *Communication*

The efforts of technical philosophy both reflect and influence the guiding interests of an epoch. A deep conviction that language and general uses of symbols constitutes a sort of key to human affairs has been popularly assumed. It has also been pursued by many different sorts of speculation which have more or less approximated the dramatic model. A popular therapeutic movement called General Semantics has made the man on the street aware of linguistic traps, and it has given him a vague sense that clarification of language will remove many of his ills. Modern dictatorships and subtle analysis of our own political and commercial processes have made us aware of the influences of propaganda and ancient arts of persuasion. And we never quite escape the pathetic incapacities which freshman composition courses attempt to cure.

These diverse and generalized investigations of language arts approximate more and more to the dramatic model as they progressively emphasize both interchange between users of language and the persons, goals, and activities with respect to which language functions. In recent years, many types of linguistic investigation have been brought under a single heading by the devices of what is sometimes called "Communication Theory."

Except for one factor, by using communication as both ideal and model to be applied to a variety of areas linguistic analysis is brought closer to the dramatic model, for it suggests interchange and variety among purposes and activities.

There is no one thinker to be mentioned as synthesizing contemporary interest in communication under a broad intellectual scheme. Indeed, such general theory as there is comes from an unexpected source. Engineers interested primarily in the message-capacities of telephone circuits have concocted an elaborate mathematical scheme analyzing transfer of information. This analysis in turn has led to a massive re-investigation of the term "communication" and to its broad application as a model in almost every field of human interest. The basic metaphor here is expanded according to the minimum elements of a radio system: we speak of "transmitter," "messages," "signals," "receiver," "feedback." But notice that this metaphor can be accommodated to a part of the dramatic metaphor, at least if the receiver sends messages back to the transmitter. It is as if we found the dialogue element of the dramatic model written large, blown up and sheered of broader contexts for special investigation. Such a communication theory retains (and indeed expands) emphasis on linguistic devices, and it can also relate them to action, even though the communicants tend to be reduced to machines of some kind, rather than persons. This basic theory of communication has also been enormously suggestive in almost every field of human activity. Its fruitfulness in the modern world results in part from its adaptability, both as theory and as calculative aid, to automated devices and thinking machines of various sorts. To use them we must "speak their language" and translate their results back into the action we desire.

The useful expansion of this model as an analytic device has been tremendous. The genetic analysis of inherited characteristics is today conceived as a matter of "breaking the code" of a certain complex molecule. Biological analyses have tended to return toward organic theories by comparing bodily functions to the regulative adjustments of a homeostatic mechanism. The pathologies of personalities, societies, and institutions can be analyzed as a failure of communication. Conversely, the healthy

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operation of an organization can be analogized to a working system of communication. Witness, for example, the charts whereby administrative patterns and chains of command are explained to us, and consider the sense in which they represent a scheme of channels for communication. Psychotherapy can also be regarded as the re-establishment of communication, both between patient and society and among disordered and conflicting parts of his own psyche. It is not even unusual today to hear prayer spoken of as "dialogue with God" in religious circles.

In citing the way in which the communication model has been applied to many areas, we find also in miniature an example of the ways in which a successful model can work. The communication model is probably the most stimulating and widely distributed novelty in contemporary intellectual circles. It is not quite the same as the dramatic model, though the two overlap. It might also be argued that the dramatic model is the broader of the two, and that increased enlargement toward it might soften the harsh or limited tendencies of the communication sub-model. The latter originated in the context of "speech" to and from machines, and it has never quite adapted (as dramatic thinking must) to the senses in which parties to communication can be perverse, whimsical, joyful, or beloved. A drama occurs among persons, as my next section will indicate. It also pursues a whole or a culminating direction, whereas much communication theory neglects the full range of human goals in the process of attending to this or that limited problem. Non-directive psychotherapy or counseling, for example, is very sensitive to the nuances of human speech, just as playwrights are. But they are somewhat reluctant to envisage a full plot, and they are like current philosophical analysis in relating the playlet only to arbitrary ends.

(c) Symbols and Ambiguity

The tendency prevailing in this century to reduce all problems to questions about our use of linguistic symbols has also had its sway in literary circles. Literary critics and creative artists have both pursued new insights into the use of symbolic devices and poetic images. The earlier philosophy and the

mathematically oriented communication theory have analogized all discussion to the language of exact information between machine-like communicants. But almost by way of reaction, poets and critics have defended the respectability of non-cognitive communication between communicants who are highly idiosyncratic. At least their language analysis is complementary, and it has considerably enlarged our insights concerning usages which are evocative, cumulatively symbolic, ambiguous, and lyrical. Recall, for example, that one much discussed critical work is called *The Seven Types of Ambiguity*, and that "symbolist" and "imagist" movements have been prominent in this century. Despite a prevailing naturalism in the popular theatre, the novelties in drama have introduced such experiments as expressionism, abstractionism, loaded absurdity, and modernistic verse.

These movements amplify the dramatic model, for dramatic dialogue is not only a way of conveying information among characters or to an audience. Speech also instigates action, furthers antagonisms, and establishes communion. Thus the conception of dialogue is portrayed in ways more nearly approximating the richness of ordinary conversation as we attempt to capture it for the stage. Exclusively scientific formulation is not only supplemented by other modes of speech. Even informative communication is shown to depend in part on its place in the context of human actions and conflicts. It may be, as some recent theories about scientific processes suggest, that mathematical or informative language works always in conjunction with a decision to employ a certain metaphor as guiding or as fitting for the universe we seek to know. Thus, as in my own thesis concerning the influence of a model, scientific investigation may be a special and limited accomplishment under varying ruling analogies. If these analyses are correct, it is very important that the model we thus employ is relatively complete and that it approximates without too much distortion to our human condition. For a model selects what we can discuss intelligently, and it eliminates other things from our gaze. The language of an I.B.M. machine is a very useful language. But it also frustrates many human purposes instead of enlarging them. Human conversation and activities are im-

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poverished when this limited model guides our way of understanding them. Conversely, both limited informational transfer and rich human exchanges in all their variety can be preserved under the model of dramatic dialogue.

V. DRAMATIC CHARACTER

(a) *Persons*

Actions are undertaken and dialogue is spoken only by persons as characters. I do not say "human individuals," for characters in our dramas may include speaking animals, trees, vices, and gods. But for appearance in the drama, each of these is converted into a character, each is personified. This final element of the dramatic model correlates with transformations among the other elements mentioned. For space and time are related to a person as the situation in which he finds himself. Movement, remembrance and anticipation are the qualities of a person's situation. Even when the effect of dramatic action is to reconstitute the universe or the state of Denmark, drama leads us to a personal accomplishment. Accordingly, whereas the clockwork model tends toward a deistic theology which presents an impersonal God, the dramatic model tends toward a theism insisting on God's personality. Likewise events become actions when they are related to persons who originate them or are affected by them. Speech becomes dialogue when it is interchange between persons and we are able to see it as revealing the person or as serving personal goals.

The broader and more diverse conceptions of the person which replace mechanical models often share elements of the dramatic model. Some of its most energetic uses in recent years are to be found among different speculations within psychology. Despite the fact that much academic psychology current today is defensive in claiming scientific status for the field and in reducing discussion to isolatable problems such as perception or habit formation, the influential speculations of this century have searched for broader concepts. They have been concerned with whole personality formation, with pathological behavior, or with

styles and potentialities of human lives. Whereas until recently "psychology" has meant theories about association of ideas, about the machinery of perception, or about a kind of catalogue of states of mind, various modern movements have sought various devices to enlarge or revivify these elements by insights requiring broader conceptions of the person. In Gestalt psychology, cataloguing tendencies are criticized, and it is urged instead that mental functioning and human activities must be understood as organic wholes. The wholes proposed may be complex inter-functioning aspects of personality, or they may be the situational context in which its formation occurs, or they may be inclusive momentary perceptions, as we perceive a mood or a lost object. Accordingly two particular dramatic devices are introduced. First, to each individual is attributed a unique character which colors all mental traits or activities and incidents. Second, individual development is understood as a genuine history which has origins, direction, and outcome. Its formation is a complex of converging factors of diverse sorts, rather than a mere sequence of influences.

(b) *Roles*

The character in a drama is not simply a person, he is a person with a role to play. Thus as it occurs in the dramatic model this element requires a curious double perspective. We boggle before an analogous shifting of our focus when we see a friend whom we know well acting a part in a dramatic production. He is Joe or Jane, but he is now "playing" a role. He is a familiar individual, and yet he is acting as a generalized character, for he has undertaken a role which has its own individuality, responsibilities and momentum. But this curious identity within distinction extends beyond the duplicity of acting on the stage. Children fall into "playing a role" with much less embarrassment than adults do. But there is something of the ham in all of us, and we indulge a histrionic shift from role to role in each day's routine. Occasionally, perhaps at our highest moments, we are able to contemplate ourselves as acting a role even in our more serious activities. Joseph Campbell argues that

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the peculiar quality pervading Japanese civilization has at its core an engrained habit whereby individuals maintain a curious psychic distance from their own activity in a role they are playing out. Perhaps all graceful manners require some degree of irony. He enlarges his point by an etymological argument which is fascinating, though it may be spurious, whereby he traces common origins for the English word "play" and the German "Pflicht," which means "duty." These concepts seem opposed, but perhaps our duties are roles we have to play, and our saving grace is a certain amusement at our duties.

(c) *Encounter*

The moving spirit of drama is not persons or characters in isolation. Both energy and direction in drama require inter-relations among persons. A drama is a presentation of conflicts and encounters. Of these two, the encounter is prior. Most drama culminates in an encounter which resolves conflict or at least locates it in a higher scheme. This is one reason love between the sexes is a very nearly inevitable theme. One theory of drama has argued that the structure of any drama revolves around one *scène à faire*, one critical encounter to which each part of the action is directed. This generalization is too rigid. But often, and perhaps always in some symbolic sense, the climax and import of dramatic action is some redemptive meeting which is consummated or miscarried. Lovers are united, or sons are atoned with fathers, or the city is reconstituted, or the ways of God are justified to man, or Zeus accomplishes his will. Or else the lover is lost, or frustration flourishes, or we do not go to Moscow, or the operations of the Almighty become more grizzly. Often these latter cases all the more poignantly display the nature of the meeting or the encounter which the way of the world does not permit. Life in an ash can is indeed an "end-game. The point at issue is always unifying encounter. It is always love in some form, whether sexual, domestic, communal, or divine.

The importance of concepts of love in the most diverse types of modern thinking need hardly be mentioned. The theory of

sexuality in Freudian psychology, for example, has been publicly debated, and it has thoroughly infiltrated popular thinking. But it is not quite so obvious that in recent thought this schematic model of encounter in literal senses has been expanded and adapted to enlighten and include all kinds of love and all areas of human concern. Even within the psycho-analytic tradition, the term "love" has undergone transformations and expansion. For example, the Adlerian adaptations of Freud substitute another kind of encounter by speaking of human drives according to power motifs. Jungian psychology also discards the simple Freudian version of sexuality, but it does so precisely by adapting the pattern to include a whole catalogue of types of love and species of encounter. For Freud, "Eros" means sexual love. But the philosopher Whitehead, working from a very considerable Greek scholarship, to say nothing of profound intuitions, takes the same term, modeling it after what he takes to be Plato's meaning, and identifies it with a kind of universal persuasion luring civilizations and individuals to higher perfections. In *Adventures of Ideas*, his study of history and human thought, he equates Eros with another Greek term meaning love, as the argument wends its way through the dramas of civilization to the saying that God is Love.

Theologians also have rediscovered that God is Love, although they are perplexed as to the import of their discovery. Some very mushily romantic theology, not to mention somewhat carnal flirtations with Freudianism, can be concocted when the maxim is embraced too simply. Yet the saying is canonical. At the present time it is instigating some fascinating alteration in the Christianity we learnt in Sunday school. This revolution in theology is making much use of the language of encounter, speaking of the loving encounter with God, with fellow-men, and with oneself. In the process, the stylized approaches and the sinister inhibitions which have long been the substance of drama are translated into theological terms. Thus the term "salvation" is redefined—or else it is discovered that it has always been the principal argument of drama. This theological movement is not peculiarly Christian. Indeed, the most stark example I can propose is the title of a work by a Jewish theologian, Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. But even the most orthodox Christian thinkers have

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accommodated to the reflections from the dramatic model hidden in thinkers like Tillich, Marcel, Barth, or the brothers Niebuhr. The shock has been felt in institutions too, not only at seminaries, but also in pastoral practice and in the vocabulary of discussions among the laity. Recently a troubled account of these movements by an Anglican Bishop, *Honest to God*, has become a best seller, if not a scandalous success.

These theological uses of the dramatic model first reappeared among existentialist thinkers. What is common to the very diverse movements clustered under this title is commencement with the bare "I," the individual cast into an alien world. Human endeavor begins here, rather than with predetermined rules, or with a catalogued universe, or with an assigned role. What life is, what he is, is something to be created as he proceeds. The human situation is thus intrinsically dramatic, for its nature is being re-made by the march of the action. As a drama emerges, so we carve for ourselves a role and move in time into an uncertain future. This is why some existentialist thinkers write plays and novels with one hand and turgid philosophy with the other. But they disagree on the outcome of the drama. Atheistic existentialists and current movements toward an existentialist psychotherapy tend to see perpetual absurdity in a world which leaves our questions unanswered, our pursuits undesigned, and our encounters incomplete. Religious existentialists tend to see a curious salvation in a world recognized in the anguish of struggle, or in the pursuit of crucial encounter, or in loving relations which readily acquire divine overtones. The two positions may not be as distinct as their spokesmen insist, in view of their common participation in the uncertainties of dramatic direction.

VI. CONCLUSION

I should like to conclude with reflection on values and dangers in the dramatic model.

Any model employed for intellectual guidance at many levels functions like a lens: it magnifies some things and it overlooks or filters out others. It is dangerous because it distorts and alters, and it is useful because it permits us to see, it reveals. Perhaps

any use of our human intellectual equipment must share in the virtues and vices suggested by this metaphor. We see through a glass darkly, and a totally clear glass has not yet been invented. It is my opinion that the dramatic model is such a lens, as are the philosophies, sciences and popular speculations which share its elements. Through it we will accordingly see actual and important aspects of our world. We may overlook others, and we may for a moment mistake figures etched on the glass itself for the furniture of the world.

As when the telescope and microscope were first invented, our initial and salutary impulse is to turn the instrument on as many things as possible and to enjoy both new spectacles and familiar items freshly seen. But later attention turned back on these optical instruments themselves, and calculated the illusions they introduced and the perspectives ruling their vision. We must do likewise, insofar as one image dominates our modes of understanding. Whenever the overwhelming intellectual metaphor of one age is superseded, however gradually or spasmodically, by that of another, it is because the second shifts our gaze to new things for which the apparatus of the former did not serve so well. Or it is because we have perceived distortions and illusions in our earlier vision. Or it is because we have become bored and long for fresh insights. There is always reason for the transition, although the reason is never as inevitable or as destructive as its enthusiasts think.

I believe that the dramatic model throws invaluable light on aspects of human experience which have been obscured in recent centuries. But I do not believe it is the only model we might employ with truth. It will develop its own limitations and illusions, although we do not see them now. Time will take care of that, and for the interim, I propose three counsels of prudence.

The first is that we should not overlook the fact that for better or worse, this metaphor and its emphases are part of our intellectual atmosphere. They aid our own life processes and our communication with others as unobtrusively as does the air about us. This recommendation depends on the general historical thesis which I have declined to argue.

The second is that we should ardently exploit this metaphor

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for everything it can show us about the world and ourselves, however our ironic moods may suggest other ways of regarding things. This recommendation notes current tendencies, which I have spasmodically exemplified.

The third is that we should carefully discriminate the items and insights which are contributed by the world itself from those which are projected onto the world by the intellectual apparatus we have elected to use. We accomplish this by inspecting the model itself according to the logic of its own structure, so that we can note those elements which are bred of its own nature irrespective of this or that application. This reconstruction I hope I have advanced in this paper.

But my words should not be taken too seriously. They are a tissue of metaphors and fancies, of darting hunches, playful speculations, and passing identifications. They admit no proof, they propound dissolving theses, they ignore academic documentation. They are, like drama, "such things as dreams are made on," unless we gaze as in a mirror and see our own reflection.