1970

I. A. Richards on Speculative Instruments.

Francis Martin Sibley

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/1749

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
SIBLEY, Francis Martin, 1930-
I. A. RICHARDS ON SPECULATIVE INSTRUMENTS.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1970
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED
I. A. RICHARDS ON SPECULATIVE INSTRUMENTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

Francis Martin Sibley
B. A., North Georgia College, 1953
B. A., Auburn University, 1957
M. A., Louisiana State University, 1961
January, 1970
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Fabian Gudas for his invaluable guidance and encouragement and for his infinite patience in his role as director of this thesis. I should also like to thank Dr. I. A. Richards for providing me, through correspondence and personal interviews, with relevant material otherwise unobtainable. I am grateful to The University of Puget Sound for a research grant and to my wife for typing and proofreading.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THINKING MACHINES AND COMPASSES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Foundations of Aesthetics</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Meaning of Meaning</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Principles of Literary Criticism</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Science and Poetry</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Practical Criticism</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MIRRORS AND WHETSTONES</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mencius on the Mind</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Basic Rules of Reason</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coleridge on Imagination</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CONTEXTS AS ORGANIC</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Philosophy of Rhetoric</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpretation in Teaching</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE FOUNDATIONS OF AUTHORITY:</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECULATIVE INSTRUMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. CONCLUSION: THE USES OF BECOMING

BIBLIOGRAPHY

VITA
ABSTRACT

I. A. Richards' infrequent but insistent use of the term "speculative instruments" presents a fourfold problem: first, what Richards means by the term; second, whether he always means the same thing by it; third, whether he had the concept in mind before he used the term and, if so, whether he changed the concept after he used the term; and fourth, whether a thorough investigation of the speculative instruments concept as used by Richards can lead to a clearer understanding of his work in literary criticism and educational theory.

The concept of speculative instruments is based upon the observation that any instrument is designed to do a specific job and the way the job is done depends upon the nature of the instrument. If we wish to perform a speculative or investigative task, we choose or devise a theoretical framework as an aid. The theoretical framework is a speculative instrument; and, as with other instruments, it is shaped by the nature of what is to be investigated, and its own nature helps shape the nature of the results of the investigation. This kind of interaction implies an ongoing change in the instrument and in the findings. Consequently,
in order to be suited to its task, a speculative instrument must be subject to continual refinement and furthermore open to revision or even replacement in the event that a more effective instrument can be devised. The resultant fluidity can be maintained by couching a speculative instrument in the conditional mode, thereby avoiding rigid certainties which may be illusory and which may stifle investigative curiosity.

Whenever Richards uses the term "speculative instruments," he means the same thing by it, but only if we understand "same thing" as a reminder that the concept of speculative instruments is itself a speculative instrument and hence fluid, not static. It is a concept which grows like an organism in Richards' ongoing work, and it can be identified as the same thing in its various occurrences in the way that any growing organism can be identified as the same thing at different stages of its development.

Richards used the speculative instruments concept as a guiding principle long before he gave it a name. After he gave it a name he changed it only in that he became less interested in its theoretical ramifications and more interested in its possibilities for practical application, particularly in education.
Richards hopes that the speculative instruments concept can be used to avoid dogma and to keep alive investigative curiosity by avoiding fixities and finalities. He also hopes that it can be used to mediate between rival views by fostering tolerance, on the grounds that dialectic is more fruitful than disputation, in philosophy as well as international politics. Since Richards attaches such importance to the speculative instruments concept, and since it appears most frequently in his work in literary criticism and educational theory, we might be able better to understand this work by a thorough investigation of the concept as he uses it.
INTRODUCTION

One of I. A. Richards' many contributions to theoretical literary criticism is the concept to which he gives the name "speculative instruments." He has made a deliberate effort to compress into this concept his whole theory of knowledge. He regards as a speculative instrument any book, essay, theory, definition, etc., which is used in the investigation of natural phenomena and/or theoretical concepts toward the end of furthering knowledge or heightening awareness. By this he means that whenever we investigate or speculate we require an instrument to do it with, that properties of the instrument affect the results of the investigation or speculation, that awareness of this effect will make us more cautious and less dogmatic, and hence that by speaking in expressed, or at least suppressed, conditionals rather than in statements of certainty we can reason more realistically and, by avoiding a sense of finality, keep alive an investigative curiosity. Since Richards has never seen nor does he foresee the development of a philosophy which can arrive at ultimate answers which one can stand upon with certainty, he is committed to an empirical-pragmatic-utilitarian philosophy designed not to search for such answers but instead to derive better ways of asking questions, constantly refining our methods and revising our answers, a method which
Richards takes to be the most fruitful one in the philosophical tradition.

Richards does not elucidate his speculative instruments concept in all of his works, but it is always there implicitly or explicitly: he sometimes dwells upon it at length, sometimes only mentions it, but nearly always demonstrates it by putting it to use; and the figure of the instrument or the machine as part of his characterization of speculative activity is one of the most frequently recurring metaphors in his work. That his most basic and most frequently presented concept has been almost universally ignored is of concern here.

The purpose of this investigation is to elucidate the speculative instruments concept as Richards uses it, showing what he means by it and what he has done with it. I will examine mainly those works by Richards in which he talks about the speculative instruments concept and those which are themselves speculative instruments or at least approximations of what he thinks speculative instruments ought to be.

I shall make no attempt to paraphrase all of Richards' works, because in the first place such a Herculean task would throw this investigation out of proportion and out of focus, and besides, this has already been done by others, particularly by
Stanley Edgar Hyman and in greater detail by W. H. N. Hotopf. Instead, I shall paraphrase sections of his work dealing with the speculative instruments concept, which Hyman and the others leave out. The intention is to examine Richards' work for illumination of the speculative instruments concept, and the method is a discussion of each of his relevant works in chronological order to show how the concept developed in time. The underlying thesis, which the discussions will demonstrate, is that he had the concept in mind before he used the term and that he did not change the concept when he did adopt the term. W. H. N. Hotopf holds that several concepts in Richards' work followed a similar pattern, that they were present as concepts in his early books before they were given names and systematic development in his later books. Hotopf uses as examples the terms "speculative instruments," "systematic ambiguity," and "metaphor," and he traces the development of the last of these three to support his thesis. It is my aim to do the same with "speculative instruments," which Hotopf is able only to mention, because of the much broader scope of his endeavor.

3Ibid., p. 225.
Richards first uses the term in *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), and his most systematic discussion of it appears, as one would suspect, in several essays reprinted in *Speculative Instruments* (1955). But the concept is fully, if not systematically, developed in *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) and exemplified by most of his books.

A tentative definition of "speculative instruments" is in order here. The concept of speculative instruments is based upon the principle that the nature of any instrument used for studying natural phenomena has a profound influence upon the findings resulting from its use. For example, when we use a microscope to study bacteria, the fact that we are observing them under conditions which we set up (conditions determined by the nature of the microscope) must be taken into consideration because these conditions are artificial, leading to the possibility, not to say inevitability, that the bacteria under study may display behavior markedly different from that which they might display were they observed under other circumstances, that is, with a different instrument. A supporting analogy is that students of primate behavior have reached entirely different conclusions upon studying apes in their natural habitat from those reached as a result of studying apes in a zoo.

Not only does the nature of the instrument partially
determine the nature of the findings, the nature of the instrument itself is partially determined by the philosophical milieu in which it was developed: Were it not for the world view of Western civilization and the progression of scientific theories propagated by it, microscopes, if we had them at all, would probably be very different kinds of instruments, and our interpretation of shapes, colors, textures viewed through them would be different.

If these conditions prevail in the investigation of natural phenomena, then doubly do they prevail in the investigation of theoretical concepts; for abstractions cannot be examined except under a metaphorical microscope. If we seek to discover the nature of beauty or of the good, for example, we have only theories, definitions, guesses, dogmas, etc. as the subject matter for our investigation; and the predicament is compounded because we have only theories, definitions, guesses, dogmas, etc. as instruments with which to investigate. Further, our theoretical concepts are couched in language, and our instruments for investigating them are also couched in language. We use language to study language and to report our findings. A careful study of the nature of language is therefore desirable, but it must be done with the awareness that the study itself is subject to the principle of the instrument and must itself be studied, this further study being subject. . . .

If infinite regress is implied here, then we must take the
consequences. The speculative instruments concept is Richards' recommendation for handling these consequences, and we are hopefully in a position now to examine a list of its attributes.

The concept of speculative instruments is built upon the Principle of Instrumental Dependence, a name which Richards gives to the kind of interaction described above, and upon three other principles—refinement, openness, and the expressed or suppressed conditional. "Refinement" follows from "instrumental dependence": As investigation proceeds, the instrument changes, and if the change is to be for the better, the nature of the instrument itself must be under constant study along with the results of investigation. That is to say that the instrument should change as the need for change arises. Thus any concept which is a speculative instrument is a concept which is open, that is, subject to change. It requires and generates a state of mind which makes us less prone to illusions of certainty concerning our findings, and this is what is meant by "openness." Openness may be retained best by use of the conditional in all investigative discourse. That is, all statements made in the process of such discourse are more easily kept open if they are stated in an "if . . . then" form. Since it would be awkward at best to use this expressed conditional, we may substitute statements in the indicative form, prefaced by an assertion that these sentences are to be read as though they were conditional—hence
"the expressed or suppressed conditional," a principle which we shall see Richards making more thorough use of as his work develops.

These four principles are identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument, and they can be known only by what they do. Each is an activity pointed toward achievement of what it describes, and together they are pointed toward achievement of a working speculative instruments theory of knowledge.

In advancing "speculative instruments" as an epistemological recommendation, Richards is not engaging in some sort of intellectual exercise or puzzle but is profoundly concerned, as will be abundantly documented below, with the betterment of each human being and of humanity collectively, for the four identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument are concepts which contribute to a theory of communication, or better, a desire for communication, which Richards hopes will achieve the humane ends just mentioned, mainly through the potential of the speculative instruments concept for settling, or better, for avoiding, disputes. We shall see this capacity for mediation develop gradually as the speculative instruments concept grows in Richards' thinking. This mediating function of a speculative instrument is a matter of making peace, if possible, between opposing views by avoiding disputation and attempting to arrive at authority by agreement, such a process
based upon the way in which authority is in fact achieved in language use.

The criteria for evaluating a speculative instrument and/or choosing among available speculative instruments arise from the concept itself as outlined here and may be presented as a series of questions which should be asked of a speculative instrument: (1) What is its task? (2) What place has this task in the hierarchy of tasks? (3) Is it irreplaceable? (4) How well does it do its task? (5) Will another instrument do the job?

These questions can serve not only for evaluating speculative instruments but also for classifying them, since, if we classify speculative tasks and then fit speculative instruments to them, we have an automatic classification of speculative instruments. Richards, as we shall see, does it by establishing a hierarchy of tasks and suggesting corresponding instruments.

A speculative instrument, then, is a book, essay, theory, or definition, which is used to investigate some subject matter. Its identifying characteristics are the principles of instrumental dependence, refinement (constant revision, change for the better), openness (avoidance of finality, thus keeping alive speculative interest), and the expressed or suppressed conditional (if . . . then . . . ; that is, epistemological honesty, requiring willingness to admit limitations of knowing). Its aims are to help us ask clearer
questions and to arrive at honest but tentative answers, answers which are the best we can get within our limitations, whatever these limitations might be, until the limitations are expanded, in which case the speculative instrument will change. The most effective aspect of Richards' speculative instruments epistemology is that it is a statement and exemplification of itself: It is a speculative instrument. Other examples of speculative instruments are Mencius on the Mind, Richards' essay "The Interactions of Words," the second law of thermodynamics (apologies, C. P. Snow), and this investigation.
CHAPTER I

THINKING MACHINES AND COMPASSES

This chapter reveals Richards, in his earlier books, developing the four principles which are to become identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument. Although he does not use the term "speculative instruments" in these books, he is developing a vocabulary with which to explain the concept, and he is actually employing the speculative instruments concept in its embryonic form. We shall see him discussing and developing what he calls machines to aid in thinking, and we shall see him insisting upon the importance of having better instruments for intellectual navigation. The relevance of these and related figures to "speculative instruments" is the major concern of this chapter.

1. The Foundations of Aesthetics

Although The Foundations of Aesthetics¹ (written in collaboration with C. K. Ogden and James Wood, and first published in 1922) does not use the term "speculative instruments" or provide an

explication of the concept, the book does display and develop the four identifying characteristics of "speculative instruments"; it employs multiple definition, a method which is to play a large part in the development of the speculative instruments concept; and it shows a marked tendency toward mediation among disparate views, at least theoretically.

The authors find that in the study of aesthetics "traditional methods of approach equally with vague philosophical speculations have been found inadequate, and the need for a new orientation is evident" (p. 6). The word "toward," only implicit here, will be seen later to play a very strong role in our investigation. The authors describe their goal and orientation thus: "In the following pages an attempt is made to present in a condensed form the greater part of accredited opinion on the subject, and to relate the views thus presented to the main positions from which the theory of art-criticism may proceed" (p. 6). As the quote shows, these main positions are not to be construed as finalities, but instead as beginnings for profitable reflection about aesthetics—the foundations of aesthetics, as it were. This is an explicit statement of what we have called openness, and it should be kept in mind as we read The Foundations of Aesthetics, especially when the authors seem to depart from it. They are insisting here that they wish to refine traditional theories and then present a theory which is itself
in need of further refinement.

The aim of the book, we are told, is "not to bring theories into opposition with one another, but by distinguishing them to allow to each its separate sphere of validity. If verbal conflicts are avoided, there will be seen to be many possible theories of Beauty, not one only, the understanding of which may help in the appreciation of art" (pp. 6-7). This quote exhibits the aim of what we have called mediation, and we will later find Richards showing how a speculative instrument can serve such an end by regarding various points of view on a particular subject not as parties to a conflict but rather as potential complementaries. "The attitude of tolerance which this treatment implies" (p. 7) is to be extended to all the different views examined, even when one of the views is tentatively adopted as a result of its having relatively more advantages and relatively fewer disadvantages than the other views under consideration.

The method of the book, multiple definition, is an example of a way in which a speculative instrument can work: The term to be defined is "beauty," and sixteen different definitions of the term are listed, these sixteen being lexical definitions, i.e., definitions of the term which have actually been used. After listing these definitions, the authors examine each one as regards its relative merits and disadvantages as a basis for a theory of art.
criticism and then recommend tentative adoption of the one among them which has the most merits and the fewest disadvantages comparatively. That the authors do not entirely discredit the other definitions is significant in that the tentativeness of their adoption is predicated upon a willingness to change when and if a better definition can be framed and when and if better criteria for defining can be formulated; this is the concept of refinement not only of theories already found to be inadequate but also of the theory being used.

The following definitions of "beauty" are listed and evaluated:

The Senses of Beauty

A

I Anything is beautiful—which possesses the simple quality of Beauty.
II Anything is beautiful—which has a specified Form.
III Anything is beautiful—which is an imitation of Nature.
IV Anything is beautiful—which results from successful exploitation of a Medium.
V Anything is beautiful—which is the work of Genius.

B

VI Anything is beautiful—which reveals (1) Truth, (2) the Spirit of Nature, (3) the Ideal, (4) the Universal, (5) the Typical.
VII Anything is beautiful—which produces Illusion.
VIII Anything is beautiful—which leads to desirable Social effects.
IX Anything is beautiful—which is an Expression.
X. Anything is beautiful—which causes Pleasure.
XI. Anything is beautiful—which excites Emotions.
XII. Anything is beautiful—which promotes Specific emotion.
XIII. Anything is beautiful—which involves the processes of Empathy.
XIV. Anything is beautiful—which heightens Vitality.
XV. Anything is beautiful—which brings us into touch with exceptional Personalities.
XVI. Anything is beautiful—which conduces to Synaesthesia (pp. 20-21).

The authors evaluate each of these definitions according to criteria which they do not always make explicit. Furthermore, their tone is that of exuberant precocity, and they make extreme demands upon the reader by expecting him to be acquainted with the better known aesthetic theories and the standard arguments against them. The most difficult part for the reader is their terse and frequently sarcastic comments about the definitions other than the one they select. Nevertheless, their selection of one of them is tentative, as explained above, in a way that shows the faint beginning of a "speculative instruments" epistemology even though Richards is only one of three authors of a breathtakingly laconic book about a frighteningly broad and difficult subject. In fact, The Foundations of Aesthetics is so compressed in style that it defies paraphrase. The only way to write about all of it clearly would be to write a much longer book. The aim here will be first to examine the reasons which the authors give for tentative rejection of fifteen
of the definitions and tentative acceptance of one of them and then to see whether the stated reasons square with the five evaluative questions to be asked of a speculative instrument.\(^2\)

Definitions I and II, constituting group A, have in common that they define beauty as an intrinsic quality which anything might possess. We may or may not contemplate whatever possesses the quality, and we may or may not perceive the quality; but, according to these definitions, the quality is there or not independently of our contemplating or perceiving.

Definitions III through IX, constituting group B, have in common that they define beauty as a quality inherent in a specific kind of activity: A person imitates, exploits, works, reveals, produces, leads to, or expresses, according to the respective definitions in this group, and in each case the beauty is attributed to the products of the kind of activity described by the definition.

Definitions X through XVI, constituting group C, are psychological definitions in that each of them places value in a particular response to a stimulus, and any stimulus which could produce the desired response would in each case be considered beautiful.

All of the definitions are considered valuable by the authors.

\(^2\)Supra, p. 10.
and each definition is considered to have its "sphere of validity."

The stated difficulties of fifteen of the definitions are:

I. (Anything is beautiful—which possesses the simple quality of Beauty). If we accept this definition, then "Beauty becomes an ultimate unanalysable idea, and no criticism or discussion is possible" (p. 24).

II. (Anything is beautiful—which has a specified Form). The problem here is that although we can discuss the specified form and its appropriateness, by so doing we are actually talking about our responses to the specified form, and "it is at least doubtful whether there is any sense in speaking of a preference for (the value of) things other than mental states or experiences" (p. 24). Preference for one form over another is a psychological view and tells us more about the person having the preference than it does about the significant form.

III. (Anything is beautiful—which is an imitation of Nature). Here, the artist is seriously challenged by the camera.

IV. (Anything is beautiful—which results from successful exploitation of a Medium). A medium may be successfully exploited in works of no merit. (The authors do not say here what constitutes merit). A further difficulty is that every medium has an effect on our impulses, which are shaped by the influence of past experience, and past experience is involved in all our experiences,
not just experiences of beauty.

V. (Anything is beautiful—which is the work of Genius). The difficulties here are that geniuses produce other things than works of art and that men with less impressive talent than what would be called genius produce works of art. (No criteria are given here for distinguishing art from not-art).

VI. (Anything is beautiful—which reveals (1) Truth, (2) the Spirit of Nature, (3) the Ideal, (4) the Universal, (5) the Typical). Each of these five entities is as difficult to define as is beauty.

VII. (Anything is beautiful—which produces Illusion). This amounts to defining art as a means of escape, and it is too narrow a definition because things not necessarily beautiful (for example, alcohol) can produce illusion.

VIII. (Anything is beautiful—which leads to desirable Social effects). This definition has as its primary function "the promotion of comfortable feeling in the hearts of men of good will" (p. 42), and as such has some value.

IX. (Anything is beautiful—which is an Expression). The main problem here is that "too many things become Art" (p. 44); for example, to the extent that a word, a comma, a pause, or a gesture is an expression, to that same extent it is a work of art.

X. (Anything is beautiful—which causes Pleasure). This definition has "too restricted a vocabulary" (p. 53); other things
besides works of art produce pleasure.

XI. (Anything is beautiful—which excites Emotions). "... it is not easy to ascribe the highest value to emotions in general, merely as emotions. They may often be experienced without particular significance, and have their place without necessarily being the concern of art" (p. 56).

XII. (Anything is beautiful—which promotes a Specific emotion). By "specific emotion" is meant aesthetic emotion, and the difficulty is that no emotion peculiarly aesthetic that is different in kind from other emotions has yet been satisfactorily isolated.

XIII. (Anything is beautiful—which involves the processes of Empathy). According to this definition, "we are supposed to ascribe movement to lines and shapes which in themselves are essentially stationary, just as we ascribe body to pictorial surfaces" (p. 65). We comprehend a tree, a building, a poem, or a piece of music by imaginatively projecting ourselves physically within it, i.e., empathizing with it. The difficulty is that this definition is not necessarily relevant to aesthetics, because it is essentially definition X Pleasure in disguise and suffers from the same limitations.

XIV. (Anything is beautiful—which heightens Vitality). Riding a bicycle could heighten our vitality without being necessarily aesthetic.
X V. (Anything is beautiful—which brings us into touch with exceptional Personalities). This is a variety of XIII Empathy and has the same limitations.

XVI. (Anything is beautiful—which conduces to Synaesthesis). The authors begin an explication of this definition by calling the reader's attention to a passage from Chinese philosophy, attributed to Confucius, which is printed as epigraph to The Foundations of Aesthetics:

My master the celebrated Chang says: "Having no leanings is called Chung, admitting of no change is called Yung. By Chung is denoted Equilibrium; Yung is the fixed principle regulating everything under heaven."

What heaven has ordained is man's Nature; an accordance with this is the Path; the regulation of it is Instruction.

There is nothing more visible than what is secret—nothing more manifest than what is minute. The superior man is careful: he is but one.

When anger, sorrow, joy, pleasure are in being but are not manifested, the mind may be said to be in a state of Equilibrium; when the feelings are stirred and co-operate in due degree the mind may be said to be in a state of Harmony. Equilibrium is the great principle.

If both Equilibrium and Harmony exist everything will occupy its proper place and all things will be nourished and flourish.3

The authors then give a brief account of equilibrium and

harmony (key terms in the passage from Chinese): Both equilibrium and harmony, as conducive to synaesthesis, have to do with the impulses which control the behavior and feeling of a human being at a given moment. Synaesthesis is an especially intense degree of experience, made intense by a certain organization of impulses. In equilibrium, the various impulses are systematized in such a way that each of them has free play and none of them is frustrated; in such a state there is no tendency to action, and any work of art which can induce so intense a systematization of impulses may be regarded as beautiful. Harmony, on the other hand, is a coordination of impulses such that they work together; in such a state there is a tendency to action, and any work of art which can induce this degree of coordination of impulses may be regarded as stimulative. Synaesthesis covers both equilibrium and harmony.

Synaesthesis is selected as preferable to the other fifteen definitions because it is thought to be in keeping with actual usage by "careful and sensitive persons not affected by special theories" (p. 72) and also because synaesthesis is beneficial to the human organism: "As we realise beauty we become more fully ourselves the more our impulses are engaged" (p. 78). Furthermore, "our individuality becomes differentiated or isolated from the individualities of things around us. . . . As we become more ourselves they become more themselves, because we are less dependent
upon the particular impulses which they each arouse in us" (p. 79).

And finally,

... the reason why equilibrium is a justification for the preference of one experience before another, is the fact that it brings into play all our faculties. In virtue of what we have called the synaesthetic character of the experience, we are enabled ... to appreciate relationships in a way which would not be possible under normal circumstances. Through no other experience can the full richness and complexity of our environment be realised. The ultimate value of equilibrium is that it is better to be fully than partially alive (p. 91).  

The various reasons given for tentative rejection of the fifteen definitions so rejected may be classified under five general headings as follows:

1. Stops investigation (I).
2. Studies response to the exclusion of stimulus (II).
3. Camera does better (III).
   a. Too broad (IX).
   b. Too narrow (VII).
5. Synonyms offered as definiens are as difficult to define

---

4Cf. discussion of Speculative Instruments, below. Here, it is interesting to note that the commitment to synaesthesia and Richards' more systematic development of the concept in Principles of Literary Criticism and Science and Poetry are
as is the definiendum (VI).

These headings may be compared with the five evaluative questions to be asked of a speculative instrument: First, What is its task? is asked of all sixteen definitions, and the answer in each case is "To define 'beauty'"; second, What place has this task in the hierarchy of tasks? is not explicitly asked of the endeavor to define "beauty," but such a task is implicitly regarded as relatively important; third, Is it irreplaceable? is asked of all sixteen definitions, and the answer is that none is totally irreplaceable but that the first fifteen are tentatively replaceable by XVI Synaesthesis; fourth, How well does it do its task? is asked of all sixteen definitions, and the answers fall into the five general headings listed above, except for synaesthesis, which is considered to do its task better than the other definitions; and fifth, Will another instrument do the job? corresponds with general heading 3., above.

Thus, although the criteria explicitly used in The Foundations of Aesthetics for choosing one definition of "beauty" (synaesthesis) as preferable to other available definitions of "beauty" are not precisely the same as the five evaluative questions to be asked of strikingly similar to John Dewey's characterization of art as "heightened experience" in his book Art as Experience.
a speculative instrument, a high degree of correspondence can be seen between these evaluative questions and the explicit criteria, once the latter are classified.

The commitment to synaesthesia is tentative, as befits the inherent openness of any speculative instrument. Although the authors say of the theory of synaesthesia that "as an explanation of the aesthetic experiences described by many of the greatest and most sensitive artists and critics of the past, it may perhaps be regarded as the theory of Beauty par excellence" (p. 7), they still insist that "no one explanation seems sufficient" (p. 17), and they urge an "attitude of tolerance" (p. 7), thereby demonstrating that their selected instrument is still subject to refinement.

As has been shown, refinement and openness, two identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument, can be found in the stated aim of The Foundations of Aesthetics. The very method of multiple definition proceeds by comparison and analogy, and the reader is expected to profit from reading and considering all the various definitions, even those which are found wanting. The main shortcoming of each of these latter is that it tends to discount others entirely: "Prof. Bosanquet and Dr. Santayana, Signor Croce and Clive Bell, not to mention Ruskin and Tolstoi, each in his own way dogmatic, enthusiastic and voluminous, each leaves his conclusions equally uncorrelated with those of his predecessors" (p. 15).
The desire in The Foundations of Aesthetics for each of the definitions to correlate with all the others is an example of mediation and might be called the "peace-making" consequence of a speculative instrument.

In The Foundations of Aesthetics, we have seen the principles of refinement and openness at work; and although we have not commented on the principles of instrumental dependence and the conditional, they have been at work, too. The tentativeness which invites openness and refinement also demonstrates the conditional, as does the very prose which establishes the tentativeness: For example, as we have just seen, the authors are suggesting how synaesthesis "may perhaps be regarded." Conditional, indeed. Such extreme caution, by curbing a potentially overassertive tone, invites the reader to consider possibilities rather than to engage in disputation.

The principle of instrumental dependence is implied by the entire discussion of the different definitions of "beauty." For the authors, beauty is not an ineffable abstract entity but rather a word which may be defined in different ways, depending upon the purposes of the framer of the definition. Since there are many purposes, different aestheticians may mean different things by the word "beauty." It is the correlation of purpose to definition which allows each definition its "separate sphere of validity," and this correlation
illustrates instrumental dependence: A commitment to a definition of "beauty" is a choice of a speculative instrument, and the instrument should be suited to its task. A further implication of instrumental dependence is that once a definition of "beauty" has been chosen, that particular speculative instrument restricts the vision of its chooser to whatever it will enable him to see.

It is of great significance to the present investigation as well as to any study of Richards' work that the very first of his books incorporates many of the salient features of his later ones: viz., avoidance of disputation, systematization of selected ideas from Chinese philosophy, multiple definition, and the four identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument.

2. The Meaning of Meaning

In The Meaning of Meaning\(^5\) (first published in 1923), the term "speculative instruments" is not used, although the concept to which it refers permeates the book; and while the concept is not systematically developed, it is presented often enough to warrant a careful scrutiny, such an undertaking being the purpose of this

section. It may be well to keep in mind that Richards is coauthor of *The Meaning of Meaning* (with C. K. Ogden). In many books of his own, he is more explicit about "speculative instruments."

In the preface to the first edition of *The Meaning of Meaning* (reprinted in the 8th ed. being considered here), the stated aim is to study the influence of language upon thought and to attack the corollary problem of meaning, which is called the equivalent of the relations of thought and language. Ogden and Richards regard the relations of thought and language as the most important problem in the study of meaning, and they attack this problem by developing a theory of signs and the interpretation of signs. The development of a theory of signs and their interpretation, the major endeavor of *The Meaning of Meaning*, is in effect the development of a very complex speculative instrument for the study of what Ogden and Richards call the symbolic use of language. Just what this particular use of language is, according to the authors, will become clearer when we examine their symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use and their triangle-of-reference diagram. For now, a quote from their Preface may prove helpful: Regarding verbal disputes, Ogden and Richards say that "sometimes the disputants are using the same words for different things, sometimes different words for the same things. . . . But frequently the disputants are using the same (or different) words for nothing" (p. viii). The
symbolic use of language is the use of words for something, not for nothing, or, as we shall see, a referential rather than a nonreferential use of language.

Ogden and Richards have found all previous attempts at studying the symbolic use of language inadequate, because no science has dealt directly with the relations of thought and language by developing a theory of signs and of the interpretation of signs. They cite grammar, philology, linguistics, philosophy, and psychology as examples of studies which have been lacking in this respect. These studies, say the authors, in addition to avoiding a careful study of the relations of thought and language, have failed to collaborate with each other, and the ensuing isolation has led to a breakdown of communication among them and also to a trend toward the abstract and away from the practical. The Meaning of Meaning attempts to reverse these tendencies by drawing upon all available fields of investigation which have yielded findings relevant to its aims and by underscoring possible practical applications of the theories developed along the way: For Ogden and Richards, language is "the most important of all the instruments of civilization" (p. x). And The Meaning of Meaning has a practical aim which is identical to that of much of Richards' later work: "The practical side of this undertaking is, if communication be taken in its widest sense, Education" (p. x).
In their attempt to make their study more complete than the studies found lacking, Ogden and Richards develop several theories, such as the triangle diagram of reference, the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use, the canons of symbolism, and the theory of definition, all of which function as speculative instruments within The Meaning of Meaning and elsewhere in Richards' work.

The concern with the influence of language upon thought in The Meaning of Meaning is similar to the analogous concern in The Foundations of Aesthetics, as discussed in the foregoing section; and this concern is once again an early ramification of the principle of instrumental dependence. For Ogden and Richards, language and theories couched in language are the instruments for describing whatever we apprehend. As instruments, they influence our perception of whatever we apprehend. Once again, we are told in effect that the limits of perception and the nature of perception are established by choice of instrument, particularly in the relation between language and thought. In keeping with the stated aim of the book, the first words of Chapter I are "The influence of Language upon Thought. . . " (p. 1).

In addition, The Meaning of Meaning was intended by Ogden and Richards to lay the groundwork for their future investigations. The authors set forth early in the book what they consider to be
advantages of a particular technique (which they call a theory of definition and which I plan to show was based upon the "speculative instruments" concept) and the kind of theory of knowledge which it at once depends upon and makes possible: "Such a technique can only be provided by a theory of knowing, or of reference, which will avoid, as current theories do not, the attribution to the knower of powers which it may be pleasant for him to suppose himself to possess, but which are not open to the only kind of investigation hitherto profitably pursued, the kind generally known as scientific investigation" (p. 15). In other words, a study of the influence of language upon thought and subsequent investigations fostered by that study are to be predicated upon a desire to achieve clarity, though at the expense of comfortable, unexamined (unrecognized!) complacency. The "technique" referred to is one "to keep the parties to an argument in contact and to clear up misunderstandings— or in other words, a Theory of Definition" (p. 15). If the parties to an argument are kept in contact and misunderstandings are cleared up, then the "peace-making" function of the speculative instruments concept will be fulfilled. In this stated desire to achieve clarity and clear up misunderstandings (particularly the kind of misunderstandings which are comfortable but which impede investigation), the epistemological aim, as elsewhere in Richards' work, is simply to make things as clear as possible without
deceiving ourselves, and this aim is the central feature of the speculative instruments concept.

To begin their study of the influence of language upon thought, Ogden and Richards present their now famous triangle diagram, itself an excellent example of a speculative instrument:

\[
\text{thought or reference} \\
\text{symbol} \quad \text{referent} \\
\text{symbol} \quad \text{referent} \\
\text{thought or reference}
\]

Notice that the lines connecting "thought or reference" with "symbol" and "thought or reference" with "referent" are solid, whereas the line connecting "symbol" with "referent" is broken, the solid lines signifying direct relationship and the broken line signifying indirect relationship. The purpose for the diagram is to stress that in using language we tend to forget that the relationship between symbol and referent is indirect, failing to recognize that we are using a convenient shorthand, assuming that the line between "symbol" and "referent" is unbroken and furthermore that there is no triangle at all. That is to say, we do not understand that the relation between symbol and referent is such that it requires mental and physiological processes ("thought") and is therefore indirect and subject to, indeed dependent upon,
interpretation.

Interpretation, here, is to be understood as a mental activity made possible by conditioned response based upon repeated experiences. The example given by the authors (pp. 55-57) is that of the well-known dog conditioned to come running at the sound of a bell with the expectation of getting food, even though he may have no direct sensory clues (smell, for example) that food is being prepared. This particular response to this particular stimulus is made possible by the dog's having experienced recurrent consistent clusters of events (ringing of bell in conjunction with presentation of food) to the extent that he is able to interpret the ringing of the bell as an indicator that food is to be expected, regardless of the absence of other clues. The stimulus-events in the dog's conditioning (ringings of bell in conjunction with presentations of food) occur initially in an "external context," outside the dog's previous experience, while the response-events in his conditioning (bell-food associations) occur in a "psychological context"; it is recurrence of the events in the external context which make possible the dog's ability to associate the bell with food in his psychological context. When he is able so to respond, his behavior is an example of interpretation: He interprets the bell as a symbol of which food is the referent.

The "interpretative dog" example shows how people behave in
a symbol-thought-referent situation. We are able to understand the connection between a symbol and its referent because we have experienced recurrent consistent clusters of events associating the symbol with its referent in an external context and have learned to make the association in a psychological context. Interpretation is a recurrence in a psychological context of former clusters of events which occurred in an external as well as a psychological context. Even in the strictest symbolic use of language, interpretation is required. For example, the word "table" is a symbol for any number of objects each of which may or may not qualify as a referent, that is, in this case, a table; and whether the object is or is not so qualified is a matter of interpretation on the part of the person responding to "table" as a stimulus. Of course the individual will no doubt have in mind the concept "table," but this is thought, not referent. Since interpretation is necessary, the relation between symbol and referent is indirect in a way of which we are not ordinarily aware. Ogden and Richards say that "between the symbol and referent there is no relevant relation other than the indirect one, which consists in its being used by someone to stand for a referent" (p. 11). Their point is that we should be aware that we are using ellipsis if and when we do so. My point is that awareness of the nature of our language uses points to the development of the principle of
instrumental dependence.

One of the most widely discussed features of *The Meaning of Meaning* is the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language functions, another example of a speculative instrument. The authors say that in ordinary everyday speech each phrase has not one but a number of functions. We shall in our final chapter classify these under five headings; but here a twofold division is more convenient, the division between the symbolic use of words and the emotive use. The symbolic use of words is statement; the recording, the support, the organization and the communication of references. The emotive use of words is a more simple matter, it is the use of words to express or excite feelings or attitudes (p. 149).

The reader may consult the triangle diagram above for aid (cf. "references"). One purpose of the dichotomy is to call attention to a distinction between a use of words which has as its end the communication of meaning and a use of words which has as its end the communication of emotions. It is important to notice that the authors explicitly do not consider the two mentioned uses of language exhaustive. The promised division of language into five functions is:

"(i) Symbolization of reference;

(ii) The expression of attitude to listener;

(iii) The expression of attitude to referent;

(iv) The promotion of effects intended;

(v) Support of reference" (pp. 226-227).
The authors say further that

the difference between the two uses may be more exactly characterized as follows: In symbolic speech the essential considerations are the correctness of the symbolization and the truth of the references. In evocative speech the essential consideration is the character of the attitude aroused. Symbolic statements may indeed be used as a means of evoking attitudes, but when this use is occurring it will be noticed that the truth or falsity of the statements is of no consequence provided that they are accepted by the hearer (p. 239).

Here they are getting at a further purpose than merely pointing out two different uses of words. They want to call attention to the confusing results of mixing the uses: Whereas discourse which purports to be symbolic can be rendered nonsymbolic by the incorporation of words used emotively, discourse which purports to be emotive can be misconstrued if it uses words symbolically without appropriately subordinating the symbolic use to the major intent. This sounds elementary and obvious, and it would be were it not for the fact that the different language uses frequently have the same grammatical form. For example, the utterance "Renoir was a French painter" is a symbolic use of words (being understood, of course, as an indication of his nationality, not of what he painted). As a statement, it is either true or false, its truth value is its most significant feature, and an appropriate response would be "Present your evidence." On the other hand, the utterance "Present your evidence" is not likely to evoke the response
"Present your evidence," since it is obviously not a statement to which truth and falsity are relevant but rather a request or demand, depending upon its intensity, in either case conveying attitude. These two extreme cases are clear, but such cases are rare. For example, the utterance "Renoir was a great painter" has the same grammatical form as the foregoing symbolic statement, and it could possibly be symbolic itself if we had access to incontrovertible criteria for greatness in painting. But, since we do not have such access, as the fluctuations of taste and fashion as well as the lack of agreement among "qualified" critics show, the utterance in question, according to Richards, can only be an emotive use of words—it conveys attitude. As shown above, no one is likely to respond to an obvious emotive utterance by asking for proof of it, but that nearly everyone is tempted to give such a response to an emotive utterance when it has the same grammatical form as a symbolic utterance is the cause of much confusion in communication. Ogden and Richards offer as a solution to this particular kind of problem the recommendation that we realize that there is a referent for "French" and none for "great." Consequently, what matters in the allegation of the painter's nationality is whether the allegation is true or false, whereas what matters in the allegation of his artistic merit is whether the feeling is conveyed. At this point, to explicate further would be to digress. Interested readers may
consult C. L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* for a fuller discussion.

Ogden and Richards offer their symbolic-emotive dichotomy as a more useful one than the usual prose-poetry distinction:

Instead therefore of an antithesis of prose and poetry we may substitute that of symbolic and emotive uses of language. In strict symbolic language the emotional effects of the words whether direct or indirect are irrelevant to their employment. In evocative language on the other hand all the means by which attitudes, moods, desires, feelings, emotions can be verbally incited in an audience are concerned (p. 235).

The authors insist that making the symbolic-emotive dichotomy does not minimize "the importance of the emotive aspects of language" (p. 10). It is, indeed, quite the other way around—the emotive use of language is considered worth careful study, as indicated by Richards' subsequent books. But even in *The Meaning of Meaning*, itself a study of the symbolic use of language, it is made clear repeatedly that the emotive use of language deserves systematic investigation and that *The Meaning of Meaning* is to lay the groundwork for such an investigation, as for example, the assertion that "the study of these evocative aspects leads naturally to an account of the resources of poetical language and of the means by which it may be distinguished, from symbolic or scientific statement. Thus

6(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).
the technique of Symbolism is one of the essential instruments of the aesthetics of literature" (p. 250). Here the figure of the instrument occurs again and in the context of one use of language being instrumental in the study of another, despite the fact that studies based upon these two uses have been antipathetic toward one another. The fact of the matter is that the expressed "wish to mediate between rival views" (p. 130) is not only a central aim in The Meaning of Meaning but also a hint at one activity a speculative instrument can perform.

For Ogden and Richards, not only are the two uses of language important, they are both necessary: "M. Bergson and the analysts are therefore both in the right, each maintaining the importance of one of the two functions of language. They are in the wrong only in not seeing clearly that language must have these two functions. It is as though a dispute arose whether the mouth should be for speaking or for eating" (p. 238). The necessity of both language uses is further supported by the following quotation:

. . . the speculative approach to this duality of the symbolic and evocative functions has been made recently under various disguises. . . . In general, any term or phrase . . . which is capable of being used either as a banner or as a bludgeon, or as both, needs, if it is to be handled without disaster, a constant and conscious understanding of these two functions of language. It is useless to try to sterilize our instruments without studying the habits of the bacteria (p. 153).

Here the term "speculative" and the term "instruments" are used in
the same passage, and the instruments mentioned are to be used to carry out a "speculative approach." They have to be "sterilized," made fit for their job, but not without "studying the habits of the bacteria," that is, examining both language functions for "subterfuges" (Richards' term) which may cause the user of the speculative approach to employ instruments (in this case, words) which by being unsterile may contaminate the object of the operation (in this case, both language uses). This is the concept of the nature of the instrument affecting the findings, particularly when the instrument is language and the object of investigation is language.

Although, as has been pointed out, Ogden and Richards do not use the term "speculative instruments," they use terms which are near synonyms, all employing the figure of the instrument, and all dealing with uses of language. Of course, language, when used as an instrument, may be used as some other kind of instrument than a speculative one. But when we do speculate with language, we are using it as a speculative instrument, and the principles of the instrument apply. Examples of near synonyms in The Meaning of Meaning are: Language used as an instrument for propaganda—"verbal machine" (p. 18n); language as an instrument for confusing the reader—"psychological apparatus" (p. 20n); language as having
the capacity of being used "as an instrument for the promotion of purposes" (p. 16); words as "instruments of thought" (p. 23)—(What is thought but speculation? Here, as elsewhere in The Meaning of Meaning, the authors come close to saying "speculative instruments" outright); and language as an instrument for communication—"symbolic apparatus" (p. 19). As these examples indicate, Richards frequently uses the terms "instrument," "machine," and "apparatus" interchangeably.

The reader may be reminded that in the introduction above, the following principles were listed as identifying characteristics of speculative instruments: (1) instrumental dependence, (2) refinement, (3) openness, and (4) the expressed or suppressed conditional. All four of these identifying characteristics are discussed in The Meaning of Meaning, though not yet under these labels, as the following examples will show:

First, instrumental dependence: We have already seen in the stated aims of The Meaning of Meaning a concern with the influence of language upon thought, specifically the dependence of thought upon the adequacy of its instrument, language. This concern is a clear example of instrumental dependence. Further, the authors say that

language, though often spoken of as a medium of communication, is best regarded as an instrument; and all instruments are extensions, or refinements,
of our sense-organs. The telescope, the telephone, the microscope, the microphone, and the galvanometer are, like the monocle or the eye itself, capable of distorting, that is, of introducing new relevant members into the contexts of our signs. And as receptive instruments extend our organs, so do manipulative instruments extend the scope of the motor activities (p. 98).

Notice that the authors say "all instruments." This would of course include speculative instruments, and we can then understand speculative instruments to be extensions of our sense organs. But although two different classes of instruments (receptive and manipulative) are mentioned in the analogy, no class is mentioned for language. And yet language is what is being talked about. It is as though Ogden and Richards were asking the reader, understanding thought to be a speculative activity, to fill out the elliptical last sentence of the quote thus: "And as receptive instruments extend our organs, so do manipulative instruments extend the scope of the motor activities; and similarly do speculative instruments extend the scope of our speculative activities." Obvious, perhaps, but not necessarily, not even to the authors. They are talking about the influence of language upon thought in a way which shows that language may be conveniently thought of as an instrument, and they are showing, by use of analogy with other kinds of instruments, how thought may be instrumentally dependent upon language if we do, as they recommend, think of language as an instrument. But they do
not say specifically what kind of instrument language is, nor do they use the term "instrumental dependence." This term, as well as "speculative instruments," appears much later in Richards' work. Nevertheless, we can see in this quotation from page 98 of The Meaning of Meaning (and, as has been shown, elsewhere in the book) a serious concern with what Richards is later to call the principle of instrumental dependence: Language, like other instruments, is capable not only of extending our abilities but also of distorting; and thought is instrumentally dependent upon language for its extension and its distortion. Recognition of this instrumental dependence is a major recommendation of the speculative instruments epistemology as we observe it in process of growth toward full expression.

Second, refinement: "Language is the most important instrument we possess. At present we attempt to acquire and to impart a knowledge of its use by mimicry, by intuition, or by rule of thumb, in contented ignorance of its nature" (p. 242). The pointing out what we do not do suggests what we should do—viz., study the nature of the instrument, whatever its use, toward a further end: "... there is no excuse for making a confused statement of an unsolved and difficult problem into a chief instrument of all our inquiries" (pp. 195-196). The inquiries here are of an investigative, that is, speculative, nature, and the instrument for making them is language. The instrument needs to be made better by
constant revision and refinement.

Third, openness:

The temptation to a philosopher when concerned with a subject in which he feels a passionate interest, to use all the words which are most likely to attract attention and excite belief in the importance of the subject is almost irresistible. Thus, any state of mind in which anyone takes a great interest is very likely to be called 'knowledge,' because no other word in psychology has such evocative virtue. If this state of mind is very unlike those usually so called, the new 'knowledge' will be set in opposition to the old and praised as of a superior, more real, and more essential nature (p. 157).

The open nature of the instrument is calculated to avoid the waste of time which would result from a self-defeating vested interest as described in the above quote, self-defeating because it leads to illusions of finality which kill the investigative spirit. It is in keeping with "speculative instruments" that there is in this quote an implicit suggestion that we not entirely discard outmoded or opposing viewpoints but rather use what we can of them, discard the rest, and refine what we keep. That Ogden and Richards regard The Meaning of Meaning itself as an open instrument is shown by their challenge to their readers to improve upon it: "Those who are not satisfied by the solutions of linguistic problems offered in these pages will, it is to be hoped, discover better" (p. 242).

Fourth, the expressed or suppressed conditional—The authors give ten relations employed in definitions: "1. Symbolization"
To explicate these relations would be to digress. The significant point here is the authors' statement that "the whole classification is on a pragmatic basis, and merely on the level of the most usual universes of discourse" (p. 120). May I speak for them by expansion: "If the limitations of knowledge about definition are what we take them to be (and we have studied them carefully), then we offer a tentative list of relations which will hopefully suffice until said limitations expand, at which time we shall revise our list accordingly." This is in the spirit of the part of the speculative instruments concept which cautions against dogmatism. Accordingly the authors caution that the practical aspect of the above list of routes of definition deserves to be insisted upon. The reason for using definitions at all is practical. We use them to make discussion profitable, to bring different thinkers into open agreement or disagreement with one another. There is, it is true, a more recondite use of definition derived from this simple primitive use. Definitions are of great importance in the construction of deductive, scientific systems, those automatic thinking-machines for which logic and mathematics are, as it were, the rules or instructions (p. 121).
A scientific system as a "thinking-machine"? Can we legitimately infer that Richards regards a scientific system as a speculative instrument? I think so. How, then, are we to regard The Meaning of Meaning, which purports to be a scientific system?

It was seen in the foregoing section that multiple definition was the modus operandi of The Foundations of Aesthetics, and the relationship between multiple definition as a method and speculative instruments as a controlling concept was shown. In The Meaning of Meaning, multiple definition is used, but in a more complex way than in The Foundations of Aesthetics. Chapter VII "The Meaning of Beauty" lists the same sixteen definitions of "beauty" (pp. 142-143) as does The Foundations of Aesthetics. However, rather than evaluate the different definitions and choose one among them, the authors refer the reader (p. 143n) to The Foundations of Aesthetics, where such evaluating and choosing has been done. They then proceed to discuss these sixteen definitions of "beauty" in terms of the ten relations employed in definitions, which they have developed in Chapter V "The Theory of Definition" (cf. list presented above). But Chapter IX "The Meaning of Meaning" is an analogue to The Foundations of Aesthetics in that it lists sixteen definitions of "meaning," discusses and evaluates each one, and makes a tentative acceptance of one of them as being relatively the best of the lot. The definitions listed and discussed are:
Meaning is—

A

I An Intrinsic property.
II A unique unanalysable Relation to other things.
III The other words annexed to a word in the Dictionary.
IV The Connotation of a word.
V An Essence.
VI An activity Projected into an object.
VII (a) An event Intended.
(b) A Volition.
VIII The Place of anything in a system.
IX The Practical Consequences of a thing in our future experience.
X The Theoretical consequences involved in or implied by a statement.
XI Emotion aroused by anything.
XII That which is Actually related to a sign by a chosen relation.
XIII (a) The Mnemic effects of a stimulus. Associations acquired.
(b) Some other occurrence to which the mnemic effects of any occurrence are Appropriate.
(c) That which a sign is Interpreted as being of.
(d) What anything suggests.

B

C

In the case of Symbols:
That to which the User of a Symbol actually refers.
XIV That to which the user of a symbol Ought to be referring.
XV That to which the user of a symbol Believes himself to be referring.
XVI That to which the Interpreter of a symbol (a) Refers.
(b) Believes himself to be referring.
(c) Believes the User to be referring (pp. 186-187).

Here, as in The Foundations of Aesthetics, the listed definitions are those which have actually been used by respected thinkers. In this case the list is an attempt at systematizing the apparent chaos which the immediately preceding Chapter "The Meaning of Philosophers" has exposed by showing that there is
great disparity in the usage of the concept of meaning by philosophers. "The Meaning of Meaning" as a title indicates to the reader that more is to be done with meaning than examining different usages, else the title would be "The Meanings of Meaning." The one definition in the list which the authors prefer is XIII, because it allows for a clearer and more workable account of meaning than any of the others, in their opinion. We can see the basis for their choice by examining the triangle diagram and the accompanying discussion, above. Where there is a symbol, there is a referent, so that when a person uses a word which is a symbol then he in fact means whatever the word symbolizes (indirectly, requiring interpretation: cf. triangle diagram), whether he likes it or not, because these circumstances generate symbolic use of language; hence the inclusion in definition XIII of "In the case of symbols." But where there is no referent, the word is not a symbol, and consequently its meaning is determined by the conditioning of the user of and/or responder to the word, because these circumstances generate emotive use of language; that is why parts (a), (b), (c), and (d) of definition XIII are couched in psychological terms, that is, in terms of reactions of human beings to stimuli. Synaesthesia was couched in such terms.

If we review the criteria for identifying and for evaluating speculative instruments, as presented in the introduction of this
investigation, we can see that Ogden and Richards, in Chapter IX "The Meaning of Meaning," have in effect chosen one speculative instrument among other available ones, using as their method multiple definition, itself a speculative instrument. The fact that they do not label what they are using here as multiple definition and speculative instruments may or may not be curious, but it is beside the point of the present investigation, except to the extent that it suggests that Richards was working from a particular epistemological orientation long before he gave it a name.

In the preface to the first edition of *The Meaning of Meaning*, Ogden and Richards call language "the most important of all the instruments of civilization." They don't call it a speculative instrument, but they do let us know that it is the instrument with which they are going to study (speculate upon?) the influence of language upon thought. Use of language to study language: the principle of the speculative instrument almost full blown, although not discussed as such, in Richards' first major book.

Of words, the authors say that "it is only when a thinker makes use of them that they stand for anything, or, in one sense, have 'meaning.' They are instruments" (p. 10). We are not told what kind of instruments words are, but this quote indicates that when words are used as instruments they are used by a thinker. Is it too far-fetched to infer "speculative instruments" here? Isn't
thinking a speculative activity? Wouldn't an instrument used by a person engaged in speculation be a speculative instrument if he used it as a means for conducting his activity? The point is that the concept is in Richards' work from the first.

In the course of their study of the influence of thought upon language, the authors develop what they call "Canons of Symbolism" and say of them that "in these six Canons, Singularity, Expansion, Definition, Actuality, Compatibility, and Individuality, we have the fundamental axioms, which determine the right use of Words in Reasoning. We have now a compass by the aid of which we may explore new fields" (p. 107). To explicate these Canons of Symbolism here would be irrelevant. What is pertinent is that they are said to provide us with a "compass" for exploring new fields. It is obvious that Ogden and Richards are not speaking of a literal compass or literal fields. Metaphorically, then, the compass is an instrument for investigating something, that something causally connected with "the right use of Words in Reasoning": language, then, used as an instrument for investigating. Is an investigative instrument very different from a speculative instrument?

As has been seen, Ogden and Richards do not use the term "speculative instruments" in The Meaning of Meaning, but they do deal profoundly with the concept. Whether they do this consciously or not presents a puzzle: If they were doing it consciously, why
didn't they say so by labelling their position? And if they were doing it unconsciously, how could they possibly have done such a thorough job of presenting (in piecemeal, yes, but with no parts missing) the very point of view which Richards was later to call "speculative instruments"? In this connection, may we examine a perhaps not unrelated quote:

It is certainly true that preoccupation with "expression" as the chief function of language has been disastrous. But this is not so much because of the neglect of the listener thereby induced as because of the curiously narcotic effect of the word "expression" itself. There are certain terms in scientific discussion which seem to make any advance impossible. They stupefy and bewilder, yet in a way satisfy, the inquiring mind, and though the despair of those who like to know what they have said, are the delight of all whose main concern with words is the avoidance of trouble (p. 231).

Far be it from me to say that this is the reason Richards does not overuse the term "speculative instruments." But I certainly would not wish to deny that he would not want any of his key terms to make impossible any advance in clarifying and improving our discussions and investigations, particularly the term which, when used by him, is concerned with fostering just such an advance.
3. Principles of Literary Criticism

The purpose of Principles of Literary Criticism (first published in 1924), as indicated in its preface and as predicted in The Meaning of Meaning, is to make a careful study of the emotive use of language. This study is to proceed through the development of a theory of value and a theory of communication, together with an attempt to understand the nature of experience, since Richards understands criticism to be "the endeavour to discriminate between experiences and to evaluate them" (p. 2). In studying the emotive use of language, he wishes to be as clear as possible, at the risk of disappointing readers who have certain expectations: "Critics and even theorists in criticism currently assume that their first duty is to be moving, to excite in the mind emotions appropriate to their august subject matter. This endeavour I have declined" (p. 3). That is, he intends in so far as possible to avoid using emotive language, since that is the object of his study; he will instead stick to the symbolic use of language in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, the kind of confusion which, as he pointed out in The Meaning of Meaning, results from mixing the two uses. Of such a mixture, he says further that "mixed modes of writing which enlist

the reader's feeling as well as his thinking are becoming dangerous to the modern consciousness with its increasing awareness of the distinction. Thought and feeling are able to mislead one another at present in ways which were hardly possible six centuries ago" (p. 3). The reader will recall that desire to avoid such dangers was the motivating factor for his making the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use in *The Meaning of Meaning* and showing how easy and how misleading it is to mix the two uses. The aim in *Principles of Literary Criticism* is to make possible a poetics of a kind more rigorous, clearer, and more directly applicable to practical criticism than any poetics yet developed.

Richards demonstrates that he has no illusions about the tentative nature of his findings; characteristically and consistently, he wishes to avoid any air of finality:

> It should be borne in mind that the knowledge which the men of A. D. 3000 will possess, if all goes well, may make all our aesthetics, all our psychology, all our modern theory of value, look pitiful. Poor indeed would be the prospect if this were not so. The thought, 'What shall we do with the powers, which we are so rapidly developing, and what will happen to us if we cannot learn to guide them in time?' already marks for many people the chief interest of existence. The controversies which the world has known in the past are as nothing to those which are ahead. I would wish this book to be regarded as a contribution towards these choices of the future (p. 4).

Examination of this quote will reveal an interest in keeping alive the spirit of investigation by changing our theories, or instru-
ments of investigation (of which *Principles of Literary Criticism* is an example), when change is necessary to make them better. Here are the principles of refinement and openness, two identifying characteristics of speculative instruments.

The purposes of the proposed theory of value in *Principles of Literary Criticism* are "to habilitate the critic, to defend accepted standards against Tolstoyan attacks, to narrow the interval between these standards and popular taste, to protect the arts against the crude moralities of Puritans and perverts" (p. 37). The presence in this quote of the terms "defend," "attacks," and "protect" requires examination, because they seem to be stated in a combative tone, to understate the case; and this kind of tone is very difficult to reconcile with an attitude of tolerance which a speculative instruments orientation should foster. The difficulties here are further compounded by the scorn with which Richards treats "the most famous utterances of Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Boileau, Dryden, Addison, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and some more modern authors" (p. 6), these "utterances" having to do with value theory in aesthetics:

But if we now turn to consider what are the results yielded by the best minds pondering these questions in the light of the eminently accessible experiences provided by the Arts, we discover an almost empty garner. A few conjectures, a supply of admonitions, many acute isolated observations, some brilliant guesses, much oratory and applied
poetry, inexhaustible confusion, a sufficiency of dogma, no small stock of prejudices, whimsies and crotchets, a profusion of mysticism, a little genuine speculation, sundry stray inspirations, pregnant hints and random apercus; of such as these, it may be said without exaggeration, is extant critical theory composed (p. 6).

Where is the mediating impulse? Where the suggestion that "the results yielded by the best minds" are to be treated as speculative instruments? Let us take a look at further characterization of these "results":

Such are the pinnacles, the apices of critical theory, the heights gained in the past by the best thinkers in their attempt to reach explanations of the value of the arts. Some of them, many of them indeed, are profitable starting-points for reflection, but neither together, nor singly, nor in any combination do they give what is required. . . . The central question, What is the value of the arts, why are they worth the devotion of the keenest hours of the best minds, and what is their place in the system of human endeavours? is left almost untouched, although without some clear view it would seem that even the most judicious critic must often lose his sense of position (p. 7).

Since neither attacking Richards nor defending him is part of my task, I do not have to "explain away" this tone, but I do have to acknowledge it, because of its bearing upon my thesis that the speculative instruments concept has been and is the guiding principle of his work. I should like to let Richards speak for himself on this matter of tone. First, we may recall that a similar tone was present in The Foundations of Aesthetics, but that multiple
definition was nevertheless at work. Second, when Richards much later, in 1948, spoke of Principles of Literary Criticism, he characterized it as a sermon: "As to Principles, I regard it still with a benevolent eye as being a better sermon than it knew itself to be. . . . In general, what influence the book has had would have been different if more of those who have discussed it had read it." All right. Let us by all means read the book, and let us begin with Richards' help: "... in rereading Principles . . . , I am more impressed by its anticipations of my later views than by the occurrence of anything to retract. I changed my vocabulary and my metaphors somewhat . . . to present much the same views again." Ah, but what a difference a change in vocabulary and metaphors may make! We shall return to these considerations later, particularly in the discussion of The Philosophy of Rhetoric, below.

At present, a very recent comment by Richards on the tone of his earlier work may prove illuminating. He reports that in 1918 he and Ogden "suddenly got together and went on having the most enormous fun, I believe, two people have ever had—writing The

9Ibid., p. 53n.
Meaning of Meaning. It doesn't perhaps look as though it was such fun, but it was much of it written in the spirit of 'Here's a nice half-brick, whom shall we throw it at?' This same brick-throwing spirit is in evidence in the quotes from Principles of Literary Criticism above, and we need to keep in mind that this spirit is in evidence before Richards came under the influence of Coleridge. He says that he began his detailed studies in Coleridge after he had published Principles of Literary Criticism and Practical Criticism: "If anyone looked carefully, they could see I didn't—then—know anything about Coleridge." We are soon to see quite a bit about Coleridge's influence upon Richards. But we have already seen the speculative instruments concept developed in The Meaning of Meaning, and our job here is to examine Principles of Literary Criticism for evidence as to whether or not the concept is growing toward expression of itself. My task is to see what Richards is doing in Principles of Literary Criticism and how much of that, if any, illuminates and/or demonstrates the speculative instruments concept. If, upon examination, we find in evidence the principles of instrumental dependence, refinement, openness, and the cond-

---

tional, and if these principles really are the identifying characteristics of speculative instruments, then we may be witnessing the presence of a developing guiding principle which is to generate a later difference of tone, through changes in vocabulary and metaphors—a tone which we may find more compatible with the "peace-making" potential of the speculative instruments concept.

The passages from pages 6 and 7 of *Principles of Literary Criticism*, quoted above, occur in Chapter I "The Chaos of Critical Theories" and are used by Richards to demonstrate the chaos described by the chapter title. In Chapter II "The Phantom Aesthetic State," he states what he takes to be the cause of the chaos as well as the major disadvantage of all the critical theories: "All modern aesthetics rests upon an assumption which has been strangely little discussed, the assumption that there is a distinct kind of mental activity present in what are called aesthetic experiences" (p. 11). Richards insists that this is a wrong assumption and that from it "arises the phantom problem of the aesthetic mode or aesthetic state, a legacy from the days of abstract investigation into the Good, the Beautiful and the True" (pp. 11-12). The relevance of all this to our investigation is that whatever else Richards is doing, he is showing that reexamination of the nature of what is to be investigated may change the nature of the investigating apparatus. And this, though brief, is a movement toward develop-
ment of the principle of instrumental dependence.

In Chapter III "The Language of Criticism," he holds that despite the chaos and the disadvantages, we are at least in better position to make some advance than we were before critical theories were able to employ scientific method: "Whatever the disadvantages of modern aesthetics as a basis for a theory of Criticism, the great advance made upon prescientific speculation into the nature of Beauty must also be recognised. That paralysing apparition Beauty, the ineffable, ultimate, unanalysable, simple idea, has at least been dismissed and with her have departed or will soon depart a flock of equally bogus entities" (p. 19). For an understanding of what bogus entities are, the reader may consult the triangle diagram in The Meaning of Meaning. What is of relevance here is that they are said to paralyze the investigator, in which case their absence will free him to give a better description of what is being investigated: another hint at instrumental dependence.

A few more quotes supply similar hints: If we continue to use terms which have no referent or which have a different referent from what we suppose, we are likely to become tyrannized by the very language we use, says Richards, because in such instances "the verbal apparatus comes between us and the things with which we are really dealing" (p. 22). The success or failure of investigation into the nature of the arts depends upon the degree to
which the investigator is freed from the tyranny of an inadequate and paralyzing "verbal apparatus," the argument proceeds, "for the difficulty which has always prevented the arts from being explained . . . is language" (p. 31). Of "bogus entities," Richards says further that "the temptation to introduce premature ultimates—Beauty in Aesthetics, the Mind and its faculties in psychology, Life in physiology, are representative examples—is especially great for believers in Abstract Entities. The objection to such Ultimates is that they bring an investigation to a dead end too suddenly" (pp. 40-41). In the face of the example given, we must conclude that something very like the principle of instrumental dependence is present, at least in embryo, in Principles of Literary Criticism.

In developing his theories of value and of communication in Principles of Literary Criticism, Richards gives an extended exposition of the aesthetic theory which was called synaesthesis in The Foundations of Aesthetics. The theories of value and of communication are to be based upon an analysis of the mind, and the mind is spoken of as an instrument: "A large part of the distinctive features of the mind are due to its being an instrument for communication" (p. 25). If the mind is an instrument for communication, then the proposed theory of communication is seen
to be linked to the proposed theory of value, which is based upon a description of the mind as a complex set of "appetencies" (interests, impulses). Value is defined as that "which satisfies an appetency or 'seeking after'" (p. 47). But many appetencies conflict with others. Consequently, a workable theory of value must account for this conflict. As a result, Richards arrives at the position that "anything is valuable which will satisfy an appetency without involving the frustration of some equal or more important appetency" (p. 48). But what is a more important appetency?

"The importance of an impulse . . . can be defined for our purposes as the extent of the disturbance of other impulses in the individual's activities which the thwarting of the impulse involves" (p. 51).

This is based on the concept "that a growing order is the principle of the mind" (p. 50).

A growing order requires equilibrium and harmony, as discussed in The Foundations of Aesthetics. In Principles of Literary Criticism, his promised investigation into the nature of experience follows his model of the mind as a complex set of appetencies, and he begins by asserting that aesthetic experiences are different from other experiences not in kind but in degree of complexity and organization: Aesthetic experiences "are closely similar to many other experiences, . . . they differ chiefly in the connections between their constituents, and . . . they are only
a further development, a finer organisation of ordinary experiences, and not in the least a new and different kind of thing" (p. 16). This is in accord with his discussion of synaesthesia in The Foundations of Aesthetics. And the relationship between Richards' theory of value and the nature of experience is that the value of the experience is in its degree of organization—the finer the organization, the more valuable the experience.

According to Richards, a high degree of organization of the mind is required to produce and to appreciate what we call the arts:

The arts are our storehouse of recorded values. They spring from and perpetuate hours in the lives of exceptional people, when their control and command of experience is at its highest, hours when the varying possibilities of existence are most clearly seen and the different activities which may arise are most exquisitely reconciled, hours when habitual narrowness of interests or confused bewilderment are replaced by an intricately wrought composure. . . . They record the most important judgments we possess as to the values of experience (p. 32).

This passage provides an excellent description of what can result from equilibrium and harmony in the mind. As we follow the development of Richards' ideas, we will find him applying the same value theory not only to the mind but also to the State, the Studies, and the World.

Whether Richards' analysis of the mind and theories of value
and of communication built upon it are right or wrong, serviceable to literary criticism or not, they look somewhat like speculative instruments and can perhaps be employed as such. They have been shown to have refinement and openness as attributes; and Richards, in choosing and developing his position, has in effect asked of his position the five questions which should be asked of a speculative instrument. He has shown: (1) what the task is, viz., to make a study of emotive language for the purposes stated above; (2) that its place in the hierarchy of tasks is exceedingly high; (3) that his position is hopefully replaceable but not until we know more about a variety of things, mainly psychology and the physiology of the mind; (4) that his position does its task better than other positions examined because it takes full advantage of the latest relevant findings in psychology; and (5) that the theories he espouses in *Principles of Literary Criticism* will do the designated task better than any other presently available theory or set of theories.

Up to this point, I have been concerned with showing how the purpose of *Principles of Literary Criticism* is related to the speculative instruments concept, but I have not mentioned the most relevant and yet the most confusing part of the book. We may as well come to grips with what is by now a familiar puzzle: Richards seems to expect his readers to understand all about speculative
instruments, although he has not yet even used the term and has developed the concept only obliquely in The Meaning of Meaning. The very first sentence in Principles of Literary Criticism, "A book is a machine to think with" (p. 1) and the first sentence of the last paragraph of the book, "The last movement of this machine to think with is now completed" (p. 287) are the only explicit clues that anything like a speculative instruments type of epistemology is being employed, and yet they are used as though they explain everything. Surprisingly enough, they may, if they serve as expressed conditional brackets, making everything in between a suppressed conditional, even though the bracketed material be stated in the indicative. This would give Principles of Literary Criticism the identifying characteristic of the principle of the expressed conditional in addition to the other three already demonstrated.

"A book is a machine to think with" is a universal statement which taken literally is obvious nonsense. A book is not really a machine, there are many different kinds of books written for many different purposes, and the ambiguity of the preposition "with" sets up a relation between thinker and machine which is enigmatic at best. But taken figuratively, the assertion may be meaningful, and a figurative reading is demanded by the presence
of the word "machine." Now a thinking machine would seem to be a very close relative to a speculative instrument, maybe even a fraternal twin. An examination of Richards' work, especially in the relevant sections of Chapter II, above, has led me to believe that he really intends "machine to think with" to be equivalent to "speculative instrument." If this be true, then it follows that Principles of Literary Criticism and by implication the other books Richards has written are regarded by him as tentative statements, the best he can do under the circumstances, certainly not as final statements; for final statements tend, if believed, to stop investigation and, if disbelieved, to lead to disputation, which is according to Richards an activity inimical to investigation because of its very nature. It is Richards' wish that we keep alive and cultivate our speculative curiosity and his belief that the surest way not to do it is to speak in terms of dogmatism or finality. His speculative instruments concept is his suggested way to achieve these ends. What is important is the quest itself.

However, I do not believe that when Richards wrote Principles of Literary Criticism he was fully aware of the direction in which his developing epistemology was taking him, and I think it appropriate for us not to overlook the sometimes scornful, sometimes superconfident, always exuberant tone of the book, a tone sufficient to disqualify Principles of Literary Criticism as a
model case of a speculative instrument. I think also that we shall see a change of tone as we observe the growth of "speculative instruments."

4. Science and Poetry

Science and Poetry\(^\text{12}\) (1926) is a presentation, in language more readily understandable by the layman, of ideas developed in The Foundations of Aesthetics, The Meaning of Meaning, and Principles of Literary Criticism, as well as a firm and clear restatement of ways in which these ideas may have practical application in the affairs of mankind. The opening sentence, "Man's prospects are not at present so rosy that he can neglect any means of improving them" (p. 9), establishes the tone of Science and Poetry as a machine to think with, a speculative instrument, by its promise of investigating ways of improving prospects by any means available, one might say by the use of any instruments available. The choosing among these instruments on the basis of their relative efficacy in effecting the desired changes is another illustration of Richards' ever-present method of proceeding by a constant scrutiny of available instruments and, through instrumental dependence among

---

the instruments and between them and himself, making a tentative choice of the most promising one and then working carefully to refine the instrument chosen (theory, etc.), the instrument for making the choice (Science and Poetry, for example), and the instrument responsible for making the choice (himself, in this case), toward the end of improvement of human beings, individually and collectively, said improvement calculated to redound upon itself for the further benefit of mankind. No panacea. Just a matter of practical aid in striving for order and appropriate growth. This is exactly the aim of the refinement characteristic of the speculative instruments concept.

Richards repeatedly underscores the urgency of paying attention to the condition of our instruments, speculative and otherwise, as for example his asking the question "Is it not possible that to the men of the future our life to-day will seem a continual, ceaseless disaster due only to our own stupidity, to the nervelessness with which we accept and transmit ideas which do not apply and never have applied to anything?" (p. 12). The men of the future, if the future is to be populated by men, will probably consider us stupid and our lives a ceaseless disaster, anyway. But if they think so because they can see that we do accept and transmit unapplicable ideas nervelessly, then they will have had to learn, somehow, the inappropriateness of such activity; a fortunate somehow, in this
case, would be our learning for ourselves (and thereby increasing their chances of learning it) how not to accept and transmit ideas which have no applicability. The speculative instruments concept is Richards' recommended method for this learning-teaching activity.

And if we as human beings do this, then each human being, like a speculative instrument, is in need of continual refinement. As Richards puts it, "To live reasonably is not to live by reason alone—the mistake is easy, and, if carried far, disastrous—but to live in a way of which reason, a clear full sense of the whole situation, would approve. And the most important part of the whole situation, as always, is ourselves, our own psychological make-up" (p. 13). This is Swift without satire, Pope without parody; a systematic development and application of "the proper study . . ." without dogma or pious pronouncements.

In *Science and Poetry*, Richards' growing interest in "peace-making" is in evidence, particularly in the form of mediation between rival views. As suggested by the title, the rivals (unfortunately) are science and poetry, and the book is a recommendation as to how these two could interact profitably and why they should do so. Richards builds his argument by drawing upon his account of synaesthesia in *The Foundations of Aesthetics* and his expansion of that account in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (although
he doesn't call it synaesthesia in *Principles of Literary Criticism* or in *Science and Poetry*). Science and poetry can and should interact, he says, in a way which will make possible a trend toward, rather than the present trend away from, cooperation:

When impulses in the mind are in conflict, there are two kinds of interaction between them which can remove the conflict—conquest of one over the other, and conciliation between the two. Conciliation is preferable to conquest, because conquest is narrowing, whereas conciliation leads to compatibility and growth. If we apply this model to the cultural body and find there that two impulses, science and poetry, are in conflict, then it is advisable to look for a mode of interaction between them conducive to conciliation rather than conquest, since Richards does not wish either science or poetry to conquer the other. The mode of interaction which Richards suggests is simply this: that poetry may be studied scientifically (or maybe not at all) and science may be sustained poetically (or maybe not at all). This will be elaborated upon below. Here, the significant point is that Richards does not want science and poetry to reach a state of equilibrium and then stop. We may recall that in *The Foundations of Aesthetics* synaesthesia embraced both equilibrium and harmony and that only the latter allowed for action, a "working together."

What Richards wants between science and poetry is an equilibrium
of interests and a harmony of motivations—a synaesthesia, that is (if we may take the liberty of using his earlier term, as I think we must), of science and poetry.

In order to achieve anything resembling equilibrium and harmony between science and poetry, we must begin by examining the nature of the conflict in order to discover what kind of conciliation is possible. Richards begins by pointing to the ongoing and almost complete change in world-view from Magical to Scientific and suggests that poetry may have grown from the Magical; as the Magical declines, he says, poetry may decline, but not if it can be shown scientifically that poetry is of practical value. This would be conciliation, not conquest. What he means is not that people generally know more about Science and less about Magic than ever before but rather that western civilization has developed scientistic (not scientific!) values, granting societal sanction only to those disciplines which have or seem to have practical value, hence the necessity for showing the practical value of poetry.

The practical value of poetry has been shown in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (cf. discussion above), and the use of psychology as a method in that "machine to think with" demonstrates the conciliatory kind of interaction recommended in *Science and Poetry*: Science can be used (as a speculative instrument?) for
discovering to some extent what poetry is. Conversely, Richards says in *Science and Poetry* that "the business of the poet . . . is to give order and coherence, and so freedom, to a body of experience" (p. 66). Could poetry be a speculative instrument? Why not? If a man has had a body of experience which was coherent and free, could he not behave more scientifically than otherwise? It is certainly Richards' hope that science and poetry can (and it is his conviction that they must) be mutually supporting.

Science and poetry are not the same kind of activities, though people engaged in one may display similar psychological dynamics to people engaged in the other, but rather they are, according to Richards, complementary activities, poetry being a way to order our minds and science being a way to arm our vision (taking Coleridge's cue) into the nature of poetry. Of course, science and poetry do more than this, but Richards is talking about a way in which they may interact profitably.

On this subject, *Science and Poetry* reiterates the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use in simpler terms: "symbolic" becomes "intellectual," and "emotive" becomes "emotional," because Richards is writing to a wider audience than before and he wishes to associate what he calls the intellectual stream of consciousness of the mind with science and the emotional stream of consciousness with poetry. He admits that such a scheme is an
oversimplification, an expositer's artifice, and he insists that actually these "streams" are connected by "tributaries" and that he wants the reader to realize that the two streams correspond roughly with two language uses, one serving science and the other serving poetry.

In identifying a speculative instrument, we look for the expressed conditional, and we find it in Science and Poetry where Richards says that the difference between good and evil "is the difference between free and wasteful organization, between fullness and narrowness of life. For if the mind is a system of interests, and if an experience is their play, the worth of any experience is a matter of the degree to which the mind, through this experience attains a complete equilibrium" (p. 38). For those familiar with The Foundations of Aesthetics and Principles of Literary Criticism, this passage needs no explication beyond a pointing to the "if . . . then" form of its second sentence. This is the expressed conditional nearly always present in Richards' work, but whether it applies to Science and Poetry as a whole is a question bearing upon openness.

Science and Poetry does not display openness as a characteristic to the degree to which it would need to in order to qualify as a full-fledged speculative instrument. But the book is not thereby to be condemned, for it does not purport to be anything other than
what it is, a kind of secular sermon, a persuasive instrument, one might say, with several attributes of a speculative instrument. Richards is showing how Arnold's prophecy about the immensity of poetry's future (quoted as epigraph to Science and Poetry) might be fulfilled in a scientistic culture.

Even so, whatever kind of instrument Science and Poetry is, it does display the attribute of refinement. According to Richards, science tells the how, but neither science, religion, nor philosophy tells the what and why; but this situation is not condemnatory of science, religion, or philosophy, since so-called questions about the what and why are not questions at all but pseudo-questions—requests for emotional satisfaction in the form of questions. Realization of this accompanies and contributes to the change of world-view from Magical to Scientific and leads to the crumbling of institutions about which Arnold was concerned. It is Richards' contention that poetry may fulfill Arnold's prophecy, but only if it functions as a growing, mind-ordering activity. (Otherwise it is not poetry, anyway, in Richards' estimation). Enough of this kind of activity can prepare us to meet the crisis resulting from the crumbling of those institutions which historically purported to answer questions about the what and the why, shown by science not really to have had these answers after all.

Science and Poetry turns out upon examination not to be
exactly a speculative instrument after all, despite the seeming
promise in the opening sentence. But a careful discussion of it
is nevertheless important in an investigation of the speculative
instruments concept, since it shows how an investigator may use
his instruments in some way other than speculative, when it seems
to him that time for speculation is shorter than one would wish.

Whether or not we share with Richards and Arnold the sense
of crisis in the face of crumbling institutions and the fear that
poetry may die out with the Magical world-view, we could perhaps
profit from an examination of poetic output since 1926 (using
"poetry" as a generic term for imaginative literature): Some
examples—Eliot, Frost, Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, and,
of particular relevance, I. A. Richards' own corpus of excellent
poetry. The existence of all this and more does not prove that
poetry is filling the place of crumbling institutions, but it does
show an immensity. The Magical world-view dies hard. Diana
is not so easily dragged from her car.
5. **Practical Criticism**

*Practical Criticism*¹³ (first published in 1929) has three expressed aims: (1) "to introduce a new kind of documentation to those who are interested in the contemporary state of culture"; (2) "to provide a new technique for those who wish to discover for themselves what they think and feel about poetry . . . and why they should like or dislike it"; and (3) "to prepare the way for educational methods more efficient than those we use now in developing discrimination and the power to understand what we hear and read" (p. 3). The first of these three aims is a practical one; the third aim shows explicitly why Richards refers to *Practical Criticism* (in the preface to *Principles of Literary Criticism*)¹⁴ as an educational instrument; and, as I hope to

---


¹⁴"Between the possession of ideas and their application there is a gulf. Every teacher winces when he remembers this. As an attempt to attack this difficulty, I am preparing a companion volume, *Practical Criticism*. Extremely good and extremely bad poems were put unsigned before a large and able audience. The comments they wrote at leisure give, as it were, a stereoscopic view of the poem and of possible opinion on it. This material when systematically analysed, provides, not only an interesting commentary upon the state of contemporary culture, but a new and powerful educational instrument" (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 4).
demonstrate, the second aim justifies calling Practical Criticism a speculative instrument. The three aims overlap throughout the book, the central concern being an analysis of a body of responses to certain printed poems in terms of relative appropriateness of the different responses.

Richards asked honors students in Literature at Cambridge to give anonymous and voluntary written responses to several printed poems which he gave to them without title, author, or date, the responses to be written only after careful perusal of the various printed poems. He then classified the responses into ten different categories on the basis of ten different causes for mis-readings of the poems.

The ten different categories of response, or "chief difficulties of criticism," which Richards compiles arise from his observations of ways in which people actually do read and misread poetry, the degree of appropriateness of response to stimulus determining the degree to which the poem is experienced and the degree of order in the structure of the response which the stimulus is able to call forth determining the value of the poem, as in Principles of Literary Criticism. The ten categories are: (1) making out the plain sense, (2) sensuous apprehension, (3) imagery, (4) mnemonic irrelevances, (5) stock responses, (6) sentimentality, (7) inhibition, (8) doctrinal adhesions,
(9) technical presuppositions, and (10) general critical presuppositions. A chapter-length discussion of each of these categories forms the central section of *Practical Criticism*.

His arrival at ten categories of response here is analogous to his listing of ten relations in definition in *The Meaning of Meaning* in that a similar technique is employed. That this technique has profound connections with the speculative instruments concept has already been strongly suggested. These difficulties of criticism are not to be construed as having necessarily pejorative connotations. For example, Richards shows that stock responses cause gross misreadings by his readers, i.e., failure on their part to respond appropriately to given stimuli by allowing a stock response to a particular word or phrase to trigger an association not relevant to the entire configuration as stimulus. But without a considerable set of conditioned stock responses to given stimuli, the responder would not be able to interpret and would consequently not be able to read at all. The critical difficulties are difficulties not because they are wrong but because they are necessary yet not sufficient in reading poetry: We must have stock responses, etc., but we must be careful not to let them lead us astray. The recommendation that we keep our instruments under constant scrutiny should by now be familiar to the reader. Richards wants it to apply to his own work: Although *Practical Criticism* is a
highly refined machine to think with, some of his own speculative instruments may be relatively crude; perhaps in a sense all of them are. And the greatest challenge of his speculative instruments epistemology is this avoidance of dogma and finality by asking us to take his own work and improve upon it. The first wheel was probably not quite round nor the first axe very sharp, and even today roundness and sharpness are concepts rather than achieved actualities, are they not? Otherwise how could we have manufacturers of automobile tires and of razor blades advancing claims and counter-claims in television advertisement about the nearness to these concepts achieved by their respective products?

Richards plans to give in Practical Criticism a practical study of poetry as an emotive use of language, applying the theoretical system worked out in Principles of Literary Criticism, his stated justification for the study of emotive discourse being that "to this world belongs everything about which civilized man cares most. I need only instance ethics, metaphysics, morals, religion, aesthetics, and the discussions surrounding liberty, nationality, justice, love, truth, faith and knowledge to make this plain. As a subject-matter for discussion, poetry is a central and a typical denizen of this world" (p. 5). This is one of his recurrent assertions that although the emotive use of language is more difficult to study systematically than the symbolic, such a study is
nevertheless necessary in view of the impact of the former on practical affairs.

If we are to study emotive uses of language, we have a further built-in difficulty to overcome in that these uses, in being emotive and in concerning themselves with things we care about very deeply, involve our emotions to the extent that disinterested investigation most frequently gives way to disputation, an extremely fruitless activity in Richards' opinion, as we could deduce from his insistence in *Science and Poetry* that conciliation is preferable to conquest. On this matter, Richards warns in *Practical Criticism* that "when views that seem to conflict with our own prepossessions are set before us, the impulse to refute, to combat or to reconstruct them, rather than to investigate them, is all but overwhelming" (p. 7). That is, unless we are extremely careful in our investigation into emotive uses of language, we are very likely to give in to our impulse to refute, which tends to precede our impulse to understand, in which case we find ourselves engaged in disputation rather than investigation. One advantage of regarding a book as a "machine to think with," a speculative instrument, is that we may thereby become enabled to avoid giving in to the impulse to refute and then to proceed with the investigation. Richards speaks further of "the futility of all argumentation that precedes understanding" (p. 8) and says that "we cannot profitably attack any opinion until
we have discovered what it expresses as well as what it states; and our present technique for investigating opinions must be admitted . . . to be woefully inadequate" (p. 8). He then urges that we improve this technique. Improving a technique is exactly what is meant by the refinement characteristic of the speculative instruments concept. In the above quote, what an opinion expresses is its emotive import and what it states is its symbolic import; Richards is still showing that the two language uses are (or ought to be) mutually supportive. Psychology is characterized in Practical Criticism as "the indispensable instrument for this inquiry" (p. 9). Here we have the figure of the instrument again as well as the assertion that science and poetry can and must be mutually supportive. Richards means that his focus in this book is upon why the reactions to the printed poems were what they were. He will then measure the responses against the printed poems as stimuli to determine which responses are appropriate and which are not, the authority being the printed poems themselves, very carefully analyzed.

Openness as an identifying characteristic of a speculative instrument is demonstrated repeatedly in Practical Criticism. The assertion that "navigation, in fact—the art of knowing where we are wherever, as mental travellers, we may go—is the main subject of the book" (p. 10) is reminiscent of the figure of the
compass in *The Meaning of Meaning*. In this navigation, says Richards, "our prime endeavour must be to get the relevant mental condition and then see what happens" (p. 10). Getting the relevant mental condition is, for Richards, learning to recognize and use what he is later to call a speculative instrument for what it is and not something else. He has insisted upon the concept, if not the term, in *The Meaning of Meaning* and *Principles of Literary Criticism*. The figure of the compass ties in with openness and the conditional as identifying characteristics in that the speculative instrument is a pointer, at once a starting point and a method for reflection, not a rigid set of prescriptions. Although Richards does not use the term "speculative instruments" in *Practical Criticism*, he does make a comment relevant to the point being made here: "There has hardly ever been a critical rule, principle or maxim which has not been for wise men a helpful guide but for fools a will-o' the-wisp" (pp. 10-11), and this is an example of his oft-repeated challenge to take his own rules, principles or maxims for helpful guides and not for something else. It is fascinating to see how near he continually comes to saying "speculative instruments" without actually using the term.

Richards holds that in reading poetry one aid is to remember that language has four kinds of meaning, so that when we ask of a poem what it means we will realize that we are asking a much more
complex question than we would otherwise suspect. The four kinds of meaning are Sense, Feeling, Tone, and Intention. Sense is what the speaker actually says. Feeling is his attitude toward what he is saying. Tone is his attitude toward his listener. And Intention is "his aim, conscious or unconscious, the effect he is endeavouring to promote. Ordinarily he speaks for a purpose, and his purpose modifies his speech. The understanding of it is part of the whole business of apprehending his meaning. Unless we know what he is trying to do, we can hardly estimate the measure of his success" (p. 176). Here, as elsewhere, Richards is in effect insisting that the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use is demonstrably incomplete and requires further refinement.

In Chapter 6 of Practical Criticism, "Sentimentality and Inhibition," a device which was used in The Foundations of Aesthetics and The Meaning of Meaning (and its relevance to speculative instruments shown in the discussions thereof) appears once more, viz., multiple definition. Richards gives three different definitions of "sentimentality" and then analyzes the third one in detail: "Sentimentality" is (I) sometimes a term of abuse, indicating only dislike; (II) sometimes a description, usually not clear, and (III) sometimes a denotation of an idea. This idea may be (1) vague, indicating that the feelings involved in a response are somehow (not precisely how) wrong; or (2) precise—in (a) a
quantitative sense, in which the emotional response is inappropriate to the occasion because it is too easily aroused and too great; in (b) a qualitative sense, in which the emotional response is inappropriate to the occasion because it is too crude, i.e., not sufficiently refined; and in (c) a psychologistic sense, in which the emotional response is inappropriate to the occasion because it is too narrow (called forth by only one of many presented and pertinent stimuli) or too unrealistic (reacting to imagined stimuli rather than to those presented). Further explication here would run the risk of being sentimental in sense III 2 c. The point is that multiple definition as used repeatedly by Richards is a substantiation of his belief that learning proceeds best by analogy and comparison.

Chapter 7 of Practical Criticism, "Doctrine in Poetry" is an analogue of The Foundations of Aesthetics in that Richards seeks a satisfactory definition of "sincerity," proceeds by multiple definition. He examines and evaluates several definitions and then chooses one among them, a very confusing one indeed, since he tries

15"Whatever it is, it is the quality we most insistently require in poetry. It is also the quality we most need as critics" (Practical Criticism, p. 265).
to make it clear by quoting and paraphrasing several passages from
the Chung Yung having to do with equilibrium and harmony, using
as a criterion the seeking of "a more perfect order within the
mind" (p. 270). Readers of Richards who have read only The
Meaning of Meaning, Principles of Literary Criticism and Science
and Poetry will be startled that a writer who has seemed to be an
empiricist would suddenly make honorific reference to Chinese
mysticism; but those readers who are acquainted with The
Foundations of Aesthetics (and consequently better acquainted with
the other books mentioned) will not be at all surprised and should
have little trouble seeing equilibrium and harmony as the adhesive,
as it were, of Richards' work as well as one of the main strivings
of a speculative instrument. In short, the sincere man is one who
has experienced and can yet again experience equilibrium and
harmony, as set forth in The Foundations of Aesthetics, Principles
of Literary Criticism, Science and Poetry, and Practical Criticism:
He is (Might we say?) a synaesthetic man. He also can recognize
and use a speculative instrument.
This may be a convenient place to pause to examine our investigation to see where it has taken us and where it is likely to lead, for we will then be allowing the investigation to advance in a way analogous to the development of Richards' thinking as revealed in his books. If, as I have been suggesting, the speculative instruments concept is the synthesizing principle (to use Aristotle's term) of Richards' work, the major key to understanding what he is getting at and what an appropriate response might be, then we may legitimately expect to discover it as a constant, a basic point of view from which he never really departs. But when we ask what kind of a constant, we discover that our question finds its answer in the resilient and organically developmental nature of the speculative instruments concept itself: It is not static. It is a fluid concept which grows and orders itself much like a living organism, as Richards' thinking advances. And why not? Instrumental dependence, refinement, openness, and the expressed (or at least suppressed) conditional are not, have not been, and are not likely to become prescriptions for ways in which we ought to behave when we speculate but instead
are descriptions of ways in which we do behave when we speculate fruitfully, that is, when our strivings eventuate in something of utility in facilitating their own further advance. These concepts may appropriately be used as prescriptions only in a conditional setting in which a certain aim is accepted, as a physician's prescription to a patient amounts to saying, "My diagnosis suggests that if you wish to achieve better health, you may find it helpful to follow my advice." There is no guarantee that the physician's advice will, if followed, lead the patient to better health, and there is scarcely a way for the physician to force the patient to follow his advice (hopefully, indeed, not even the desire: consider the possibility of erroneous diagnosis).

1. Mencius on the Mind

Pursuing this figure, we have in Mencius on the Mind¹ (1932) a conditional "prescription" for the betterment of the health of the cultural body. Mencius on the Mind is a recapitulation and clarification of Richards' former thinking as well as a framework and guide for further speculation. It incorporates many salient features of Richards' work: symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language

use, preference for conciliation rather than conquest, interest in Chinese philosophy, multiple definition, repeated use of the figure of the instrument or machine, and the speculative instruments concept fully explained and exemplified, though not yet called by the name "speculative instruments."

The subtitle of *Mencius on the Mind, Experiments in Multiple Definition*, is arresting because it suggests that Richards may at last devote expository effort to an aspect of his work which he has used repeatedly with little or no explanation of the thinking behind it. Although multiple definition has been a near self-explanatory device, we will nevertheless welcome an elucidation of its aims and potentialities. If, as I have been arguing, the speculative instruments concept is Richards' epistemological orientation, then we are likely to find, I think, that multiple definition is a methodological application of that concept.

We will do well to keep in mind that Richards' very frequent use of the term "instrument" (or "apparatus," or "machine"), nearly always with a qualifier ("speculative," "investigative," etc.), is most often figurative in a way which I should like to

---

2"instrument of exposition" (p. 21), "instruments in thinking" (p. 27), "machinery . . . by which to explore" (p. 49), "intellectual instruments" (p. 49), "logical machinery" (p. 89), "apparatus of universals" (p. 89), "instruments for general communication" (p. 93), "instrument in interpretation" (p. 125).
designate as quasi-metaphorical: "A machine to think with" is not entirely a metaphor, since the "machine" can actually function as a machine of a certain kind, though of a vastly different kind from which we are accustomed to thinking about; the effectiveness of this quasi-metaphor is that the machine is also of a vastly different kind from which we are accustomed to thinking with—hence the mental and psychic shock, as well as the extreme reluctance of most readers to believe that Richards really means what he says.

I should like at this point to call attention to the fact that "speculative instruments" (as yet not used as a term by Richards but nevertheless guiding his work as a concept) is plural, suggesting not only the possibility of more than one speculative instrument but also the possibility of more than one kind of speculative instrument, and conveniently so, since there would seem to be the likelihood of more than one purpose and more than one kind of purpose which would call for the use of a speculative instrument. A very good example of this is provided by the epigraph to Mencius on the Mind, a quotation from Troilus and Criseyde, Bk. I., in which Pandare tells Troilus that "A whetston is no kerving instrument, / And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis." A whetstone certainly has a different function from a carving tool and consequently a vastly different design, but it bears a relationship
to a carving tool which is reciprocal: The nature of the carving tool, need for sharpness, generates the nature of the whetstone, ability to sharpen; and the degree of excellence of the whetstone determines the degree of excellence of the carving tool. Here Richards is doing more than selecting an engaging epigraph—he is giving us a metaphorical clue to what he is doing: He is, as he later admits, not a thorough scholar of Chinese studies (i.e., not a very sharp carving tool) but he nevertheless hopes by using a certain basic comparative method (a whetstone) to improve further Chinese studies and related topics. A speculative instrument may be regarded metaphorically as a carving tool if certain ends are at hand; and multiple definition may be regarded as a whetstone for such a speculative instrument in which case multiple definition would itself be a speculative instrument with certain other ends at hand. In responding to "speculative instrument," "investigative apparatus," "machine to think with," etc. as quasi-metaphors, we will be well advised to understand that "refinement" is not synonymous with "sharpening" but rather with "making better suited for the uses for which the instrument is designed." In this sense, we may think of Mencius on the Mind as a metaphorical whetstone, a speculative instrument which uses as its method multiple definition for the sake of sharpening those speculative instruments to which "sharpening" as a metaphor is an appropriate
clue to the kind of refinement these instruments need. But we
must not forget that the whetstone itself needs refinement.

In Mencius on the Mind the peace-making urge is particularly
in evidence. It is the ever-present attempt by Richards to mediate
between rival views, to bring about conciliation rather than
conquest, to try to achieve equilibrium and harmony—whether
between individuals, groups, or nations or within individuals,
groups, or nations. What can be gained thereby is what Richards
later calls "bioptic vision," a metaphor based upon the phenomenon
of depth perception being gained only by the use of both eyes.

In Mencius on the Mind, Richards seeks to mediate between
exceedingly disparate world-views, Chinese and Western. He
chooses Mencius because of his reputation as a moralist and
philosopher second in reputation only to Confucius and because
Mencius has some passages of psychology which seem very close
to Richards' analogous formulations despite the differences in
world-view. Richards proceeds despite his limitations in Chinese
scholarship because his aims are more basic than Chinese scholar-
ship (in that if his aims are accomplished, Chinese scholarship
and other similar endeavors could benefit in many ways) and
because there is in ignorance the advantage that the more basic
problems are not likely to occur so acutely to a more facile
scholar. One is reminded of the outspoken and clear-sighted child
in the fable of the emperor's new clothes. One is also encouraged to pursue a study of Richards' work by bringing focus upon the basic problems there.

Richards, in the Foreword to Mencius on the Mind, advances the hope that his efforts will be justified despite the high probability that his commentary "may be a tissue of misconceptions" (p. xi). For he is attempting less to elucidate Mencius than to bring to our attention certain linguistic problems which are of extreme importance in the practical activities of translating from one language to another and in communicating one culture to another, these problems offering a challenge to those who are interested in these activities and their analogues at all levels of education.

The stated aims of Mencius on the Mind are (1) to examine Chinese modes of meaning, (2) to show difficulties of translation, (3) to examine our methods of controlling meaning, and (4) to offer a Chinese view of psychology which bears upon science and value. The only difference between these aims and the aims of most of Richards' other books is the presence of Chinese, serving only to make more specific what he has been doing all along. He urges us not to expect of the philosopher that he be "right" (in the sense of giving correct as opposed to incorrect answers) but rather that he be daring, willing to be "wrong" if necessary but also enabling us to benefit from his mistakes (refine instruments?), as some of
the most highly regarded philosophers have been.

Still in the Foreword, Richards asserts that in the "different movements of these speculations" (p. xiii)\(^3\) the interpretation of the whole and the interpretation of the parts will be mutually supportive in that the parts are to be thought of in relation to the overall aims (the requisite interpretation being of a kind familiar to the careful reader of any and/or all earlier works by Richards). He also insists upon the unlikelihood that the view of the mind which emerges, ostensibly that of Mencius, will be very much like the original because of the present limitations of method. Here we have, implied, as we might by now expect from Richards,

(1) [the expressed conditional] "If my assumptions are right, then my conclusions follow . . . ," (2) [openness] "until a better method can be devised . . . .," (3) [refinement] "and I am suggesting a way for a better method . . . .," (4) [instrumental dependence] "which will help us realize the drastic necessity of construing translation and mutual understanding as a two-way street," the four principles which are identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument.

Richards continues to write as though the matter of

\(^3\)Cf. "the last movement of this machine to think with" (Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 287).
speculative instruments has been settled. For example, he even
quotes from Shakespeare as epigraph to Chapter I of Mencius on
the Mind a passage from Troilus and Cressida, incorporating these
lines: "For speculation turns not to itself/Till it hath travell'd
and is mirrored there/Where it may see itself" (p. 1). A
mirror as an instrument for speculation may help us see more
about ourselves, and an examination of Chinese philosophy through
Western analytic methods may tell us more about our methods than
about Chinese philosophy. So much the better, but if the mirror
reveals a whetstone, let us exercise some caution in the manner
in which we allow these two instruments to interact.

"Interpretation" is used in Mencius on the Mind as a term
and concept in the same way it was used in The Meaning of Meaning.
Richards predicts that interpretation of Mencius is likely to be
"an adventure among possibilities of thought and feeling rather than
an encounter with facts" (p. 1), and he suggests that "perhaps this
should be so at present with all ancient or foreign utterances"
(p. 1). The hint here, in view of what Richards has said about
fact, thought, and feeling, may be that we should respond to most
utterances, including contemporary ones, as the kind of adventure
mentioned.

A major difficulty in interpreting Mencius is that Chinese
philosophy seems to bypass epistemology, having as its evident
purpose the propagation and inculcation of ways of thinking and behaving which have received societal sanction, there being no attempt at asking for evidence to support propositions. The fact that for Mencius there is no separation between human nature and external nature (the same word signifying both) serves as suggestion, says Richards, that the absence of the problem of knowledge in Chinese thought, as contrasted to its presence in Western thought, gives the Chinese a facility and fluency which we lack, whatever we gain otherwise. Consequently, as we compare various passages from Mencius with each other and discover that their method is that of the "indirectly controlled guess" (p. 7), a method used by poets (Shakespeare, for example), we may find it appropriate to regard Mencius more as a poet than as a systematic philosopher.

After all, Richards continues, we are concerned here not merely with translation but with interpretation and understanding as well. We want to know not just what Mencius probably said in its literal sense; we also want to know its tone, feeling and intention (cf. discussion of Practical Criticism). Such an "attempt to express ancient Chinese thinking with English as an instrument would be worth making if it did no more than demonstrate the disaccord between the two methods of thought and language" (p. 9). After using the figure of language as an interpretative instrument, Richards goes on to show that the mentioned attempt could help the
Chinese as much as it could help us not only in demonstrating disaccord but also in reflecting, mirroring, as it were, to them aspects of their own modes of thinking of which they would otherwise remain unaware. (It could do the same for us, of course: Cf. the stated aims of *Mencius on the Mind*). Be that as it may, when we attempt to translate, interpret, and understand Mencius, we must use characteristics of his thought which are strange to us (nonseparation of human and external nature, and absence of the problem of knowledge, for examples) as means of allowing us to take into consideration his intention in order not to misconstrue his sense. As Richards puts it, these characteristics should be "a cardinal point for our general estimate of the kind of thought Mencius represents, and should be noted as a warning against any interpretations which give his utterances a precision that his purposes did not require" (p. 11). It is the differences upon which we must focus our effort, for Mencius' arguments "are less demonstrations than instructions. If we wish to know what his conceptions of the mind were we must derive them, cautiously, from these edicts and be on our guard against mistaking the edicts for statements" (pp. 61-62).

This recommendation of a way to understand Mencius on the mind, viz., to try to take his utterances for what they purport to be and not something else, is exemplified particularly in Richards'
attempt to understand a certain concept which Mencius calls the ch'i. Richards begins by listing the different meanings which Mencius seems to apply to ch'i in various usages: "'vegetative-nature,' 'passion-nature,' 'spirit,' 'vapour,' 'breath,' 'animating principle,' or 'vital energies'" (p. 32). By thus clearing up the ambiguity of ch'i, Richards has developed a tentative multiple definition from which (and with which) to proceed. The next step is to try to understand the ch'i in relation to the mind, a task made difficult by Mencius' failure to distinguish clearly between "mind" and "will": they seem to be synonyms. At any rate, Mencius does say that the will is the ruler of the ch'i, and yet Mencius is respected by his disciples for his great skill in cultivating and developing his own ch'i; and Richards suggests that in this sense ch'i may be regarded as an impulse-system and that cultivating and developing it is a matter of having a growing order in the mind (cf. synaesthesia).

Mencius illustrates the ch'i by a parable (the parable of the man of Sung) in which a man grew impatient at the slow growth of vegetables which he had planted and pulled on them in an attempt to speed up their growth but succeeded only in pulling the plants out of the ground and killing them. The moral of the story, says Richards, is that "the ch'i should not be neglected, but equally it should not be interfered with: weeding is necessary, but forcing
is injurious" (p. 35). It is injurious, an impediment to the development of a growing order in the mind, to force the ch'i (impulse-system, etc) in either direction, inhibition or overencouragement. This is reminiscent of the comments in *Science and Poetry* about conciliation and conquest as well as the value theory in *Principles of Literary Criticism*. The will may be the ruler of the ch'i but some kind of conciliation between the will and the ch'i is preferable to conquest of the ch'i by the will, or so Mencius seems to be saying—just what kind of conciliation remains to be seen.

The value theory which such a consideration leads us to seems to be similar in Mencius to Richards' analogous view of the mind in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, where no outside moral criteria were used to evaluate mental states but rather the degree of ordered development which various mental states displayed. As with Richards, Mencius seems to hold that ordering and fulfillment of the mind are valuable because it is better to have an ordered and fulfilled mind than to have a lesser degree of development. Richards says that Mencius' conception of nature (human and external) and of value "was in terms of activity or incipient activity—an activity which, if permitted, tended always to self-development. This tendency to self-development—to the fulfillment of the mind—was what he meant by its goodness" (p. 71).

The ch'i is good because the body's well-being depends upon
it and its careful cultivation. Consequently, Richards interprets, "the will in controlling the ch'i must do it no violence" (p. 72). It would seem at first glance that Mencius is recommending that the ch'i be given free rein, or at least not be repressed, by the will. But so simple an interpretation does not do justice to Mencius; for Mencius seems to regard the mind's development as all important, he seems not to distinguish between mind and will, he posits inevitable conflict between will and ch'i, and he declares that the will is the ruler of the ch'i, all the while insisting that the ch'i and its development are as essential to the body's well-being as the mind and its development. We are brought back to the question of what kind of conciliation Mencius is recommending. Richards' interpretation is:

The sustaining of the mind may be the preservation of the mind's or will's integrity, its singleness. The adept, recognizing that his strength comes from his vast ch'i—the 'body of desire'—is careful not to frustrate any of his desires. But by 'not being what he is not' and 'not desiring what he does not desire' . . . , he contrives both to decrease the number of desires and to place himself—as the ch'i's commander—in the controlling position of being able to make all parties in the ch'i support his authority (pp. 73-74).

The plant is injured if stifled or forced, but it flourishes with careful watering, weeding, pruning, and fertilizing, and its growth can and should be guided.

This kind of "conciliation" may be readily understood by a gardener, but its application to philosophy and psychology by a
thinker conditioned by Western culture is unlikely because of its strangeness to him. On this matter Richards says of Mencius that adroitness rather than force, persuasion rather than bullying is his recommendation in the management of the wishes. His attitude to himself and to those factions in himself which might challenge his supremacy is markedly different from that which Judaism has given to the West. The Will is for him a Ruler and the Confucian conception of an ideal Ruler is always of one who rules by benevolence, by caring for the interests of the governed, by consent. To take up arms against his subjects is the mark of a bad Ruler, who has not performed his duties and deserves to be deposed. Mencius keeps the conception unchanged in applying it to the will (p. 74).

In this passage, and in the entire discussion of the ch'i, fulfilling the mind seems to be equivalent to equilibrium, and management of the ch'i seems to be equivalent to harmony, equilibrium and harmony (from the Chung Yung) being the necessary and sufficient ingredients for what is called sincerity in the Chung Yung (cf. Mencius on the Mind, p. 41, and discussion of Practical Criticism above) and synaesthesis in The Foundations of Aesthetics. The synaesthetic man, who has achieved the proper conciliation between his will and his ch'i, is also a sincere man; the same kind of conciliation is also appropriate for the nation which hopes to develop itself and for a world which hopes to guide and develop itself, taking into consideration the various interests of its various nations: For Richards as for Mencius, when one
speaks of the sincere, synaesthetic man, one is also speaking implicitly, mutatis mutandis, of sincere, synaesthetic nations and a sincere, synaesthetic world.

Multiple definition is a peculiarly well-suited instrument for studying Mencius because of the many ambiguities in his work, for example the nonseparation of human nature and external nature (or at least the use of the word "Hsing" to signify either or both) and the different possible meanings of "ch'i." But with multiple definition we do more than list variant possible readings—we use it as a process for making a tentative choice among them; and this process itself needs constant examination (for the sake of refinement). At best it is "a generalized technique by which meanings of all kinds on all necessary occasions can be systematically displayed" (p. 28). It is also appropriate because Mencius himself seems to be committed to a somewhat similar methodology: Richards quotes him as saying "'Why I dislike holding to one point is that it injures the tao (the way or principle). It takes up one point and disregards a hundred others'" (p. 35). Mencius does not exactly use multiple definition, but he does seem to be the kind of fluid philosopher Richards likes and tries to be, attempting to expand his understanding of an idea by comparing and contrasting its various senses.

Furthermore, we must not assume that the Chinese philosophers
were unaware of the ambiguities in their work or that the ambiguities did not have a purpose. Richards insists that "we are not likely to understand them if we suppose that they were merely doing what we would like them to be doing, but with a barbarously inadequate and confused terminology. It is much more probable that this employment of one word for so many uses had a purpose (if an unconscious one). It is our business, if we can, to discover what this purpose was" (p. 58). And our business, in this case is to apply (and to examine the nature of) multiple definition.

Richards calls multiple definition potentially a technique which may be used for comparative studies, especially as in translating, interpreting and, hopefully, understanding Mencius on the mind. It can be a particularly useful technique because it can help us solve such problems as how to prevent our understanding of an alien tradition from being merely our own conceptions in disguise or on the other hand whether it is necessary for us to unlearn a whole tradition and learn another and whether then we are not still left with a problem of translation. "To put it more precisely, can we maintain two systems of thinking in our minds without reciprocal infection and yet in some way mediate between them?" (p. 87). These problems are not new, but multiple definition may be able to get at them in a new way by bringing them out "into the field of arguable methodology" (p. 87); and since the technique for getting
the problem into methodology is itself a methodology, it invites constant examination of itself toward the end of refinement, repair, or replacement.

One problem in interpreting Mencius is that the symbolic function of language is frequently absent in his work. If, says Richards (referring to these distinctions made in Practical Criticism), we agree that most literary meanings have sense, tone, feeling, and intention, and if we agree that the symbolic use of language is covered by the first of these, we may find ourselves frequently having to get along as well as we can with the other three in such instances as Mencius' language use is purely emotive.

But here, as elsewhere, we must avoid dogmatic assumptions regarding analogies in different thinking systems. It would be unwise, says Richards, to fit Mencius' thought into a framework taken from Aristotle or Kant (or Richards); "and the assimilation of Buddhist or Vedanta philosophic apparatus to our Western machinery is probably not much wiser" (p. 90). Richards is alerting us to the potential incompatibility (cf. mirror and whetstone, above) of specific speculative instruments (Vedanta philosophic apparatus: Western [philosophic] machinery) and is offering as a way to overcome this incompatibility the principle of openness, an identifying characteristic of any speculative instrument, as revealed in a third speculative instrument, multiple definition,
"the habit . . . of accompanying any definition or distinction we make use of with a set of rival definitions in the background of the mind" (p. 90). This "ability to use logical apparatus tentatively" (p. 90) is the only way Richards sees to avoid dogma and keep alive the investigative impulse, and it is a method which he has been using all along: one need only instance The Foundations of Aesthetics, The Meaning of Meaning, and Practical Criticism.

Richards is not satisfied that multiple definition as he understands it and as he uses it is yet good enough to qualify as the kind of technique he has been advocating, but he does advance it as a plan for a technique and asks the reader to evaluate it as a plan. This gives the reader a chance to examine the plan on its merits as such and invites the reader to work out his own technique. And here we have one more of the numerous instances of Richards' asking the reader to do a little work, to develop a learning process of his own which is capable of checking up on itself, a "speculative instruments" outlook, as it were. It is perhaps not unpredictable that readers who do not like to be reminded that they may have to do some things for themselves would decline Richards' invitation.

Richards extends the invitation anyway and says that the acceptance of multiple definition as a plan for a technique for
comparative studies (in translation as well as in other activities where it has application) might bring about a revolutionary change for the better in philosophy by replacing combative disputation with dialogue in which the participants would work toward a mutual goal. The advantage would be "a strange peace in philosophy" (p. 93) much more efficient than the prevailing "combative habit," for "warfare in the intellectual world as in the physical is a wasteful survival" (p. 93).

Multiple definition, to be thorough, must include a listing not only of the senses (symbolic uses) of a word but also of the gestures (emotive uses) of the same word, Richards contends (p. 99), giving us a refinement of the concept of multiple definition heretofore unexpressed. He then demonstrates this refinement by first giving a multiple definition of the senses of the word "beautiful," much the same as in The Foundations of Aesthetics and The Meaning of Meaning. He then shows the necessity of considering the gestures as well as the senses, the necessity arising from the fact that utterances which are gestures ordinarily have the same grammatical form as do utterances which are senses and consequently require careful analysis. (Cf. discussion of the syntactically hidden imperative, The Meaning of Meaning). To show
how multiple definition might help us out of this predicament, he
lists the following

**Gestures of BEAUTIFUL.**

X is beautiful =

(1) 'Something here worth while!' The word is merely a signal to an attitude—
expectant attention; ready to develop, with
the persistence of the attention, into absorption
and critical attitudes of choice and affective
discrimination. All this can happen right up
to full acceptance or full rejection, without, it
seems, any but the merest and vaguest
sense-reference occurring.

(2) 'I have a certain 'feeling'!!' The feeling
can range from mere liking up to very finely
discriminating responses—from a condition for
which 'pretty!' 'lovely!' 'swell!' 'swell!' would be
accepted substitutes, to a response which would
reject any such substitute with violence. Often
the feeling is accompanied by generality and
validity feelings which support it, and give
confidence and sanction. 'I, and every decent
person too, would have this feeling!!'

(3) It is good that this exists! Impersonal
feeling of approval: 'Admirable!!' Or less
impersonal approval: 'Desirable!!'

(4) Tone gestures as in 'What a beautiful
baby!!' With or without ironic complications.

(5) Imperatives. 'Accept it, receive it, submit
to to it, explore it!!'

(6) Feeling of significance. 'Lo and behold!!'
It is not necessary for this that any sense of
what is signified should develop (pp. 103-104).

The major difference between his use of multiple definition
with respect to "beautiful" in Mencius on the Mind on the one hand
and The Foundations of Aesthetics and The Meaning of Meaning on
the other hand is that in Mencius on the Mind he separates the list
of senses from the list of gestures, whereas in the former books
gestures and senses were listed together (but distinguished: cf. relevant discussions above). What Richards wants us to realize is that the seeming inadequacy of any definition of the sense of a word is explainable in part by the "fashion in which the gesture functions invade the sense functions" (p. 104): The fact that words like "beautiful" do have emotive import makes unconvincing any definitions which fail to take this fact into account. However, no matter what we gain in the way of thoroughness through multiple definition, we nevertheless must not expect completeness or finality, as evidenced by Richards' injunction that "the essence of the method is its tentativeness and freedom" (p. 105). "The method" here may be understood as "multiple definition" and "speculative instruments," in the sense that openness is an attribute of both.

Richards then lists tentative multiple definitions of "knowledge" (senses), "truth" (senses and gestures, using the triangle diagram from The Meaning of Meaning), and "order" (senses). These multiple definitions make no claim to completeness but are rather done in the spirit of using and examining a "plan for a technique," and we are brought back to the concept of multiple definition as a whetstone: "Any considered lists, however imperfect, whose procedure was explicitly stated in discussable form would help enormously towards the preparation of better lists" (p. 124). As was pointed out above, a whetstone is an instrument, too.
Furthermore, it can dull as well as sharpen, depending upon the type of interaction with other instruments to which it is subjected. Richards hopes that as an "instrument in interpretation" multiple definition can dull the impulses to and means for conquest and sharpen the impulses to and means for conciliation: "Nothing could better conduce to understanding between the Chinese and the West than well-prepared tables of the ranges of our principal moral terms and theirs" (p. 125). This is an example of the peace-making potential of the speculative instruments concept as evidenced in multiple definition.

Richards argues (p. 127) that most epistemology fails to use instruments which are readily available and which would be helpful. His way of avoiding this mistake is to allow his own epistemology to avail itself of multiple definition as a helpful instrument: and what kind of an instrument?—"It [multiple definition] asks us to distribute our attention in an unwonted fashion, to watch our thoughts as well as think; and to notice their forms as much as their contents" (p. 129). I leave it to the reader to decide what kind of instrument might perform these services.
2. Basic Rules of Reason

*Basic Rules of Reason*[^1] (1933) is a demonstration in Basic English of some of the possible uses of multiple definition in philosophical investigation. Basic English is a topic requiring separate treatment; consequently, a discussion of it will not be undertaken here. But we would be nevertheless far off the mark should we entertain for a moment the idea that "separate" here means "different," for Richards' work in Basic English arises from and exemplifies many of the same concerns which guide him in his other work, especially conciliation and equilibrium-harmony: He wishes, by better communication, to "mediate between rival views."

*Basic Rules of Reason* does not use the term "multiple definition," but it employs multiple definition extensively, following the models in *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, *The Meaning of Meaning*, and *Practical Criticism* and utilizing the method as set forth in *Mencius on the Mind*. What the book amounts to is a very succinct and thorough framing of the key problems in semantics, epistemology (including meta-ethics and meta-aesthetics) and logic, without use of philosophical jargon and without recourse to


106
documentation; after all, the problems are public, and Basic Rules of Reason is designed to reach readers who may have little or no formal training in and perhaps no interest in philosophical method. An arresting by-product (maybe calculated) is that the book can reach readers who do have training and interest in philosophical method, and it can do so effectively and disarmingly by its refreshing avoidance of jargon and more particularly of disputation. The book uses a tone which will not threaten the layman, but it also displays erudition and analytic prowess which will astonish the expert.

A look at the chapter titles reveals no great change in Richards' major concerns or in his handling of them: Chapter I, "A Language Machine," Chapter II, "Theory of Knowledge," Chapter III, "Theory of Connections," and Chapter IV, "Theory of Instruments." Let us consider these titles briefly in reverse order. Since all of Richards' previous books have used the figure of the instrument, it should come as no surprise that he would develop a theory of instruments; a theory of connections would seem to follow from an interest in communication and mediation; a theory of knowledge has been the central concern of the speculative instruments concept all along; and a language machine would seem at first glance a near relative to a machine to think with.

Having taken a first glance, and wishing to look more closely,
we may find Richards' statement of purpose helpful. He says that "the purpose of this book is to give a clear account of how we may best put our thoughts in order, or if we are not able quite to do this, how we may best make a serious attempt in this direction" (p. 9). Putting our thoughts in order has been a goal in all of Richards' books which we have examined, beginning with his account of synaesthesia in *The Foundations of Aesthetics*; and recognizing our limitations, working as well as we can within them, and endeavoring to expand them, familiar characteristics all even to casual readers of Richards' work, are very much in evidence in the passage here quoted.

As further clarification of his purpose, Richards tells us that "to put our thoughts in order is to make them come into agreement with things, to make them give us a truer picture, a representative map or instrument for guiding our acts, so that men may give effect to as great a number of their desires as possible" (p. 9). Bringing our thoughts into agreement with things was a major consideration of *The Meaning of Meaning* (cf. triangle diagram), the figure of the map or guiding instrument was used as a compass for intellectual navigation in *Practical Criticism*, and giving effect to as great a number of desires as possible was discussed systematically in the sections on value in *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Science and Poetry*. Once again, we encounter the ever-present use
of the figure of the instrument as well as oblique reference to synaesthesia.

Richards gives the method for achieving his stated purpose the name "Logic," and he paraphrases Bentham and Peirce as agreeing that logic is the "theory of good behaviour in thought, in the sense in which good behaviour is the use of self-control for the purpose of making our desires come about" (p. 10). Coming upon this passage so soon after Mencius on the Mind, one is immediately reminded of the relationship between the will and the ch'i as discussed by Mencius: Are not "self-control" here equivalent to "will" and "desires" equivalent to "ch'i"? And isn't the relationship between self-control and desires the same as the relationship between the will and the ch'i? Richards says that self-control makes our desires come about, while Mencius says that the will is the ruler of the ch'i. I think that we can legitimately draw a parallel here, particularly if we keep in mind the parable of the man of Sung and Mencius' concept of a good ruler.

This parallel draws support from Richards' assertion that language is the only way to order and keep in control our thoughts. On this matter, he draws upon Bentham and Peirce again by paraphrasing them as agreeing that most of logic is "the theory and right use of the senses of our chief words—those upon which the ordering of the senses of our other words is dependent" (p. 10).
Keeping in mind the discussion of multiple definition in *Mencius* on the *Mind*, we can see multiple definition implicit here in the fact that "senses" is plural, and we are led to expect a listing of the various senses of these chief words, an analysis and evaluation of each sense, and recommendations as to right uses thereof.

Our expectations are fulfilled, for Richards selects "chief words" and examines each one by the method of multiple definition, showing how the various senses of one word overlap the senses of other words. The words thus examined are, by chapter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of Knowledge</th>
<th>Theory of Connections</th>
<th>Theory of Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought</td>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Part</td>
<td>Relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the chosen words, the figure of the instrument appears again as Richards says that "all words are instruments with which we keep control of their senses: but these words are instruments with whose senses in addition to this we keep control of the senses of other words" (p. 90)—words as rulers of their senses, and the senses of certain words as rulers of the senses of
other words: the will as ruler of the ch'i and certain ch'is as rulers of other ch'is? Not at all a far-fetched extension, if we remember the nature of the good ruler according to Mencius. In the above quote, "these words" means those listed under "Theory of Instruments," and Richards says of them that extreme caution must be exercised in the use of them—"more, it may be, than with any other words—we have to take care not to put the wrong questions about them" (pp. 89-90).

We avoid putting the wrong questions by using the rules of reason, which are discoverable in the interactions of words, especially those words chosen for examination in Basic Rules of Reason: "The senses of these chief words—and their ways of working with or against one another—are the rules of reason" (p. 10). But the rules are not separable from the senses of the words and their manner of interacting. "There are not (1) the senses and (2) rules for putting them together; but the senses themselves give us, in their ways of acting, the rules of reason" (p. 10). Here, the interactions of words is the instrument used for illustrating the rules of reason, and it is significant that here as elsewhere the nature of the instrument affects the nature of the findings—particularly significant in this case, since the instrument interacts with the findings in much the same way that different
parts of the instrument interact with each other, so that constant examination of the instrument itself is necessary if we are to understand its nature and the nature of its findings and if we are to make any improvements on the instrument.

It seems evident by now that we will miss most of what Richards has to offer if we take his calling a book a machine to think with as an indication that he is concerned primarily with thinking qua thinking or speculation qua speculation. For in Basic Rules of Reason, as in Richards' other thinking machines, we find repeated insistence that the thinking is for the purpose of some further practical end rather than being an end in itself. For example, he says of Basic Rules of Reason that "the machine which is put together in these pages is for the connection of different systems of thought—of different men, nations, government, sciences, religions, societies—with one another" (p. 25). Readers of Richards' other thinking machines, especially Science and Poetry and Mencius on the Mind, will recognize this quote as another example of the ever-present concern with conciliation. And since conciliation among rival impulses sets the model for conciliation among rival views, must we not speak not only of the synaesthetic man, but also of the synaesthetic university, the synaesthetic nation, and the synaesthetic world? Why not, since Richards repeatedly asks us to do the equivalent and since our job here is to
understand Richards? If we at the very least see the conciliatory potential of the speculative instruments concept and its intended impingement upon practical affairs as a major feature of Richards' work, we can perhaps be fortified for the multitudinous strange lamentations that Richards has abandoned literary criticism in favor of some cracked-brained scheme to save the world through panacea. (Cf., for example, Stanley Edgar Hyman's chapter on Richards in *The Armed Vision*). We shall discover later in this investigation that although Richards by his own proclamation made a change "From Criticism to Creation," the change is nevertheless to be regarded as a directional shift of focus of his basic concerns rather than an abandonment of anything.

Characteristically, *Basic Rules of Reason* displays numerous instances of the figurative use of machine-instrument-apparatus. Some examples are: (1) "apparatus of divisions" (p. 12 and p. 61)—here the divisions are divisions of senses, and multiple definition is implicit as in the comparable parts of Mencius on the Mind; (2) "instruments by which men give direction to thoughts" (p. 14)—the instruments here are words, and once again we have the figure of the instrument used with thought or speculation; (3) "a machine for separating the senses of other words when it is necessary to do so" (p. 23)—the machine here is "the apparatus" of multiple definition, as displayed in *Basic Rules of Reason* and
outlined in Mencius on the Mind, above; (4) the assertion that "a number of different machines are possible and necessary" (p. 24)—cf. discussion of Mencius on the Mind, above; and (5) "need of a better apparatus for controlling the senses of our words" (p. 21)—multiple definition is implicit here as in corollary passages in Mencius on the Mind.

Multiple definition becomes explicit as Richards puts it to use with his list of key words. Of particular interest is his discussion of the word "fiction": One definition of "fiction" is "a story not put forward as fact" (p. 37), or, more technically, "the invention of events in prose or verse" (p. 38). This definition usually gives us little trouble once we understand that a fiction of this kind purports to be only fiction in this sense, its aim being not to gain notional assent but rather to bring about a kind of willing suspension of disbelief, to use Coleridge's term, i.e., a sort of vicarious participation in the "story" as if it were to be believed—hence the concept of dancing without moving, singing without making a sound, etc. More troublesome but potentially very useful is the definition of "fiction" as "a thought used as if there was a thing in agreement with it, when there is, in fact, no such thing" (p. 38). The example Richards gives is that of a scientist speaking of electrons as if electrons actually existed
without actually believing in or being able to verify the existence of any such elusive entities. Presumably Richards regards his own various descriptions of the mind as an impulse-system, an appetency-complex, etc. as fictions in this sense. He is never saying that the mind actually is as he describes it but that it may be profitable to regard the mind as if it were that, until such time as better descriptions are available. Richards here is reminding us of the efficacy of the expressed conditional in helping to avoid dogma and keep alive investigative curiosity. Fiction in this sense is almost the same thing as the quasi-metaphor mentioned in the discussion of Mencius on the Mind above, and it tempts us to identify it as a speculative instrument. However, pending further investigation, let us avoid oversimplification and overconfidence at this point by holding tentatively to the position that for Richards a fiction is not necessarily a speculative instrument (although such fictions or quasi-metaphors as "a book is a machine to think with" may be used as speculative instruments) but the very concept of speculative instruments is a potentially useful fiction, in the second sense of "fiction" here presented. Richards holds (p. 40) that it is difficult to be certain that any of our thoughts are anything other than fictions in this sense.

Having discussed Basic Rules of Reason as a similar kind of "whetstone" to Mencius on the Mind, we are still not through, in
view of the purpose of the present investigation. It remains to examine *Basic Rules of Reason* for more specific indications that it may be controlled by the same epistemological orientation as other of Richards' thinking machines. We find Richards saying in *Basic Rules of Reason* of *Basic Rules of Reason* that it is a "machine for controlling thought which will let us do some things and keep us from doing other things. It is a good machine if it is of use to us; any changes which will make it of more use to us will make it better" (p. 24). I invite the reader to examine this quote to see if it warrants characterization as "speculative instruments in a nutshell."

Further, I invite attention to passages from *Basic Rules of Reason* which seem to exemplify what I have listed as the four principles which are identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument.

1. Instrumental dependence—"Every system of thought makes some attempt to take into account other and different systems. Its power to do this is limited by the errors in itself—in addition to the errors in them" (p. 128). Different systems of thought interact in the way that words interact and in the way that investigative instruments interact with the objects of investigation, the reciprocity of interaction establishing to a degree the nature of each interacting entity.
(2) Refinement—"It is the hope of everyone in whom thought about thought and its ways is a strong and frequent interest that by making one language-machine more complete, more clear, more delicate, room will be made for the senses and divisions of the other language-machines which are the servants of other purposes" (p. 128). Careful examination of those methods of refinement of one instrument which prove fruitful will hopefully aid us in devising methods of refinement of other instruments.

(3) Openness—"This gives us new chances for the control of our thought and for taking over the knowledge we have of one field into other fields" (p. 129). In this quote, the opening pronoun has reference to the benefit derived from multiple definition. Controlling our thought is to be done in the spirit of Mencius' ruler, viz., allowing our thought to grow, all the while aiding it toward an ordered growth, towards which it is striving anyway by its very nature. Openness is seen here in the nature of the control.

(4) Conditional—"What is important is to see that the senses of words may be taken in groups, and that if the form of one group of senses becomes clear to us, the form of other groups of senses, which we may not ever have put in connection with them, may become clear at the same time" (p. 129). If multiple definition has served us well in one area it might do so in another.

It will be readily observed that the quotes used as examples
here are interchangeable, each quote having all four of the listed identifying characteristics. This serves as further suggestion that the different identifying characteristics are not discrete: Instrumental dependence, refinement, openness, and the conditional all are instrumentally dependent, require refinement and are open and are conditional.

One concluding quote from Basic Rules of Reason may serve to show a further analogy between Basic Rules of Reason and Mencius on the Mind. Richards says that

the hard part of this work is to keep ourselves from taking the divisions between our thoughts for divisions between things—to keep a right balance between the questions: 'Which is the way of things?' and 'How may we best get our thoughts in order?' The special interest of much early Chinese teaching seems to have been in this balance between these two questions (pp. 44-45).

We may inquire whether whetstones require balancing and whether a balance between Chinese and Western thought, so frequently urged by Richards, can serve as a sample of the kind of job which can be done by a certain kind of instrument the name of which I refrain from using at this point, since Richards himself has not employed it yet in any of his machines to think with which have fallen under our scrutiny. At least we see Richards discovering that the seemingly smooth edge of certain cutting instruments does indeed, as Coleridge insisted, appear jagged upon careful
inspection. Is not a whetstone then in order?  

3. Coleridge on Imagination

Up to this point we have found Richards employing the concept of speculative instruments without using the exact term. At last, in Coleridge on Imagination (first published in 1935), he uses the term three times.

The first use occurs in Richards' discussion of Coleridge's distinction between Imagination and Fancy (and the further distinction between the Primary Imagination and the Secondary Imagination). He finds Coleridge's distinction of great potential usefulness in literary criticism but not yet widely or clearly understood, for "neither Coleridge's grounds for the distinction nor his applications of it have as yet entered our general intellectual tradition. When they do, the order of our universes will have been changed" (p. 72). If Coleridge's ideas, correctly understood and applied, can change the order of our universes (note the key word "order"), then either more than literary criticism is under consideration or more

---

5 Any reader whose response to this question is "No. A razor strop." is really getting the point.

is subsumed under literary criticism than one would suspect. Either way, the question, an answer to which has already been hinted at, about Richards' shift "From Criticism to Creation"\(^7\) arises once more, and we may discover that it has actually been before us all the time as a necessary adjunct to our investigation. Be that as it may, Richards holds that these distinctions made by Coleridge will have a better chance of realizing their potential usefulness "when the theory has become a clearly defined speculative instrument" (p. 73). Richards then proceeds to give Coleridge's theory what he calls "as explicit a formulation as I can contrive" (p. 73). But he does not say outright that giving a theory an explicit formulation is the same thing as making it into a clearly defined speculative instrument, nor does he say anything at all about what a speculative instrument is or where the term came from. Elsewhere, as we shall see later, he explicitly attributes the term to Coleridge, but here, in discussing Coleridge, he does not do so. For Richards thus to use the term "speculative instrument" in a way which seems to assume that the reader is already familiar with it is analogous to his use of "machine to think with" in the opening sentence of *Principles of Literary Criticism* and is supportive of the

\(^7\)Cf. discussion under *So Much Nearer*, below.
central thesis of this investigation as stated at the outset. He uses the term as though it has already been explained and as though he himself regards an understanding of it as essential to an understanding of his own thinking.

Richards prefers to formulate Coleridge's distinction between imagination and fancy in terms of parts of meanings and their interrelationship. In imagination "the parts of the meaning . . . mutually modify one another," whereas in fancy "the parts of the meaning are apprehended as though independent of their fellow-members," although in fancy the "parts together" do possess "a joint effect which is not what it would be if the assemblage were different" (pp. 86-87). Richards shows that to understand this we must first make clear to ourselves (1) how meanings can have parts, (2) how apprehension of a meaning is different from its effects (and hence of joint effects), (3) how the concept of mutual modification is to be construed, and (4) how joint effects differ from mutual modification. In attempting to clear up these points, "we are face to face with the chief difficulty of all such work, and can escape it only by holding firmly to this guiding principle: that we are not trying, in our descriptions, to say what happens, but framing a speculative apparatus to assist us in observing a difference" (p. 87). In this passage are we to construe "speculative apparatus" as different in meaning from "speculative
instrument"? We have seen that Richards frequently uses "instrument," "machine," and "apparatus" interchangeably, he has told us here that his aim is to develop a formulation of Coleridge's distinction which will make of it a more clearly defined speculative instrument, and the passage here which uses the term "speculative apparatus" is one which insists upon instrumental dependence (between the framed speculative apparatus and the observed distinction), refinement (of the apparatus and consequently of our understanding of the distinction), conditional (the more appropriate to the task our apparatus is, the more accurate our observations), and openness (in that we are not even striving for certainty about "what happens" but instead for as accurate an observation of the distinction under question as the nature of the apparatus which we develop will allow until it can be improved). Further, we must note that Richards calls the speculative apparatus (instrument) concept a "guiding principle." Are we to believe that he means that such a principle is something sudden, new, and unique, applying only to the particular problem of clearing up Coleridge's distinction or that such a principle has been guiding him all along? Even without his testimony here that this guiding principle is the only way to escape "the chief difficulty of all such work," we have already uncovered in our investigation adequate documentation to support the position (tentative, of course, and open to correction
that the speculative instruments concept has been, is, and will probably continue to be Richards' guiding principle.

In answer to the question of how meanings can have parts, Richards responds, "Meanings may be said to have any parts which, for our purposes, we find useful as instruments in comparing them" (pp. 87-88). He offers as useful parts (1) awareness of the words as words, (2) sense, (3) feeling, and (4) tone, and he means by these terms approximately what he meant by them in Practical Criticism, with the exception that "awareness of the words as words" here is not synonymous with "intention" in Practical Criticism. After discussing these parts of meaning, Richards asserts that we can find many other useful divisions under each of these four parts, "as we use higher and higher powers of the speculative analytic instrument" (p. 88). This, his second use of the term "speculative instrument," includes the qualifier "analytic," which seems less to cloud the issue than to help clear it up; for analysis of meanings and their "parts" has been the practical function of all the machines to think with which we have looked at so far in our present inquiry. (Emotive meanings are included as well as symbolic meanings, since here, as in Practical Criticism, sense, feeling, and tone are subsumed under "meaning"). And in this use of "speculative instrument," although there is no
accompanying explication, there is an ineluctable, though oblique, pull toward the idea of synaesthesia, since the striving to develop a more well-ordered speculative instrument is parallel to, and evidently calculated to achieve, the development of equilibrium and harmony in the mind. Hence, must we not suspect that striving for equilibrium and harmony within the mind-university-nation-world has been, is, and is likely to continue to be the practical aim of the speculative (investigative, analytic) instrument (machine, apparatus)?

Richards' third use of the term "speculative instruments" occurs as part of his attempt to show what Coleridge meant by "good sense," and it is once more rather abrupt: "The use of such distinctions as that between Fancy and Imagination in criticism may be stated compendiously by comparing them to speculative instruments" (p. 129). But just what are speculative instruments? Richards has not elucidated this term anywhere in Coleridge on Imagination or anywhere else up to now, and yet he seems actually to expect the reader to understand at this point what a speculative instrument is. I see no way for the reader to have such an understanding other than seeing the concept as developed in Richards' other work, particularly The Meaning of Meaning, but always, until Coleridge on Imagination, called by some other name, e. g., "machine to think with." The nearest thing we get to an
explicit hint in *Coleridge on Imagination* is Richards' citing
Coleridge's comparison of a critical theory to a microscope and
then commenting upon the resultant difficulty: "... though a
microscope may show us much that we could not see without it,
we still need a technique to recognize what we see with it and to
make sure that we are looking at what we think we are looking at,
what we need to look at, and nothing else. And this technique is
what Coleridge means by Good Sense" (pp. 129-130). Are we
then to construe the figure of the microscope as inadequate because
it is just an instrument and not a speculative one and further that
"Good Sense" as a technique for allowing us to make the recognitions
mentioned is a technique which must be called "speculative instru-
ments"? Of course, we are; for such a construction is inevitable
when we look closely at these passages in their context in *Coleridge
on Imagination* and at *Coleridge on Imagination* in its context in
Richards' canon, wherein we see the speculative instruments concept
in a process of steady growth, inchoate but inexorable, demonstrating
by that very process most of what we need to know about it.

Mencius is singularly applicable here. It is as though

---

1This application shows up later in "Learning . . . and
Looking," *Design for Escape* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World,
Inc., 1968) pp. 93-124, the order of the title words indicating that
we need a rather well-developed speculative instrument before we
"look" in order that we may interpret what we are looking at.
throughout Richards' work the speculative instruments concept were
the ch'i and Richards' prose composition were the will—small wonder,
then, if, when the concept is finally labelled, there seems to be
no immediate need for explication, since the concept has been
growing before our eyes all the time. Later elucidation may
profitably be regarded as merely further growth, lagniappe, as it
were, in a relationship between ruler and ruled of a kind and a
degree of which Mencius would approve.

Since it seems appropriate thus to regard the use of the
term "speculative instruments" in Coleridge on Imagination as a
symptom of steady and ordered growth, and since the term is not
accompanied by elucidation, we must still examine Coleridge on
Imagination, as we have done Richards' previous books, for
evidences of the presence of the speculative instruments concept as
a guiding principle and for indications of whether Coleridge on
Imagination is to be responded to as itself a machine to think
with—whether, that is, Coleridge on Imagination is statement and
exemplification of this guiding principle.

Richards begins by quoting Coleridge's testimony to the dis­
covery that poetry has its own kind of logic, "as severe as that of
science," and then uses the testimony as the basis for the subject
of Coleridge on Imagination: "Coleridge's studies in this severe
logic, his inquiry into these multiple and fugitive causes occupied
the best years of his life. The methods he employed and the results that he reached are the subject of this Essay" (p. 1).

But Richards intends to do more than describe Coleridge's methods and report the results; he intends to interpret the method and the results in order to make them more readily usable, such interpretation being necessary, since Coleridge

lived at a time when a deep and general change was occurring in man's conceptions of himself and of his world, and he spent his powers upon the elaboration of a speculative apparatus that would be a kind of microscope with which to study this change and others. It is not an easy instrument to use. It needs adjustment and perhaps some re-designing (p. 2).

We have already discussed how and why Richards regards Coleridge's figure of the microscope inadequate. Furthermore, anyone who has made a serious attempt to apply Coleridge's distinction between imagination and fancy to particular passages of poetry will readily understand (and recognize understatement in) Richards' assertion about the need for adjustment and re-design of Coleridge's "instrument." We are not to construe Richards' attitude toward Coleridge as in any way derogatory. Quite the reverse. He is simply unwilling to allow his reverence for Coleridge to obscure the need for refinement where the need arises, and I should like to advance his attitude here as a model for us to pursue in responding to Richards' own work.
Richards further clarifies his purpose thus:

I am not, in what follows, very much concerned to present Coleridge's theory in the exact form in which he built it. We can show, I think, more respect for his achievement and for the importance of the purposes to which he gave so much of his life by using his drafts and sketches to construct a derived instrument. But the principle will be his (p. 2).

The plan of using Coleridge's principles as the basis for constructing a derived instrument which we can employ profitably invites comparison with the analogous plan in Mencius on the Mind. It is not surprising or accidental that Richards would be interested in Coleridge (who, unlike Richards, involves himself deeply with metaphysics) and Mencius (who, unlike Richards, bypasses epistemology), if we recognize the natural affinities which outweigh the differences: Richards and Coleridge deal with epistemology, and Richards and Mencius bypass metaphysics, so that Richards is able to derive instruments relevant to his purposes from such seemingly disparate sources. From what we have discovered about Richards, we might reasonably predict his strenuous interest in bringing together views of extreme disparity. Characteristically, he avers that "the history of philosophy shows clearly enough that fruit comes most often from the cross-fertilization of enemy strains" (p. 71). Once again, we encounter the "peace-making" potential of the speculative instruments concept.

Richards states the scope of his method in Coleridge on
Imagination in the form of a proposal "to take all the parts of Coleridge's thinking that seem . . . relevant to his criticism, and to treat them as an exercise ground for interpretation" (p. 5). We have already examined what Richards means by "interpretation," and the parallel between his method in Coleridge on Imagination and the method of the present investigation should by now be apparent. Richards also makes the assumption "that Coleridge's great merit as a critic—a merit unique among English critics—is the strenuous persistence with which he reflected philosophically upon criticism" (p. 5). Richards does not mean that philosophical reflection is by itself a merit, nor does he mean that Coleridge was necessarily a good philosopher; Richards agrees that Coleridge made serious philosophical errors and further that philosophy unapplied runs the risk of being fashion-directed and evanescent. The value of philosophical thinking lies in the possibility that "we may regard philosophers in another way; and then they will not seem so fugacious. No careful, acute and resolute piece of thinking ever loses its value—its power to be of use to mankind" (p. 9). It is part of the good philosopher's job to make mistakes, since he will make them anyway, and it is also part of his job to benefit from the mistakes of other philosophers rather than discarding an entire philosophical system because of the mistakes in it, for "every good philosopher stands with Plato and Aristotle; his work
remains permanently as an aid in exploring the possibilities of our meanings. And often the very mistakes he made will be a large part of his value" (p. 10). The reader will see in this quote the guiding principle of Richards' work here and elsewhere and will hopefully apprehend the presence of a closely analogous guiding principle in the effort here to understand Richards.

In studying Coleridge, then, Richards is not trying to defend him or to refute him but rather to get him clear so that we may have the basis for deciding how to use his work. "Our aim," says Richards, "is to understand his opinions, if we can, and in so doing to understand our own. Whether we agree or not with them is, in comparison, of no importance" (p. 19). The recurrent guiding principle is evident in this passage, and Richards uses many of his characteristic devices in connection with it throughout the book. We find the instrument-machine-apparatus figure, multiple definition, the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use, indirect reference to (and exemplification of) the speculative instruments concept, and references to Chinese philosophy.

Some examples of the instrument-machine-apparatus figure are: (1)

What I shall try to do, so far as I can, is to use Coleridge's metaphysical machinery as machinery,
disregarding the undeniable fact that Coleridge himself so often took it to be much more. I shall take his constructions, that is, as 'concepts of the understanding' (to use his terminology) and use them, not as doctrines to be accepted, refuted or corrected (however great the temptations) but as instruments with which to explore the nature of poetry (p. 21).

This is not only further clarification of the aim to understand rather than to defend or refute (here and in all the other books studied so far—cf. Practical Criticism and Mencius on the Mind) but also another strong hint that use of the speculative instruments concept is the selected way to achieve this aim. If Richards is going to use Coleridge's "machinery," that is, his "constructions," as "instruments with which to explore the nature of poetry," and if poetry is, as Richards suggests (cf. discussion of Principles of Literary Criticism, above), a particular degree of human experience, then it is once more evident that Richards' major interest is not in literary criticism in a narrow or dogmatic way but is instead an interest in literary criticism and poetry as they speak to the human condition. He is keenly (and perhaps, of necessity, desperately?) concerned with the efficacy of these activities as they impinge upon and become part of the practical affairs of human beings.

(2) "these intricate treacherous abstract machines" (p. 22), a characterization of Coleridge's metaphysical "constructions."
(3) "an instrument to be used in his later descriptions (as a geometer may postulate a construction of lines as an instrument to be used in geometry)" (pp. 45-46). Here Richards is calling Coleridge's "first postulate of philosophy" (the most basic epistemological concept in Coleridge, the initial "act of contemplation" brought about by a "realizing intuition") an instrument with a descriptive use which turns out to be a speculative use:

We must be more than merely aware, we must be aware of our awareness, and of the form and mode of operation of our awareness. The rest of his philosophy is a verbal machine for exhibiting what the exercise of this postulate ["Know Thyself"] or this act of contemplation yielded. (As the geometer's drawn diagrams and written theorems are a machine for exhibiting his acts of realizing intuition. ) We must study it as a machine—with a recognition that in the nature of the case it must be a very inefficient machine—useful only so far as it helps us to go through the same realizing intuitions (p. 47).  

In Coleridge on Imagination there are three instances of

9 Other examples: (4) Coleridge's "subject-object machinery" is called "an instrument for noting, and insisting, that nothing of which we are in any way conscious is given to the mind" (pp. 56-57); (5) Coleridge's "conception of the mind as an active, self-forming, self-realizing system" is called "an instrument for exploring the most intricate and unified modes of mental activity" (p. 69); (6) Coleridge's "conception of Imagination" is called "the main instrument Coleridge uses" (p. 122); and (7) poetry is described by Richards as "the supreme use of language, man's chief co-ordinating instrument" (p. 230).
systematic use of multiple definition: The words "imagination" (p. 24 ff.), "word" (p. 103 ff.), and "nature" (p. 157 ff.) are so treated, and the second of these is of most relevance here because it occurs in the context of a discussion of fictions, thereby inviting comparison with the multiple definition of "fictions" which was discussed as part of our examination of Basic Rules of Reason.

"Words are not necessarily the units of meaning" (p. 101), says Richards, and by that he means that since a word, as ordinarily understood, is an abstraction taken from the context of a complete utterance, since criticism (reading, as it were) is concerned with utterances, and since the word taken from context has little or no meaning by itself as a result of having too many possible meanings, we had better subject the word "word" itself to multiple definition in order first that we may see the process and the significance of the interactions of words and second that we may establish a paradigm for many other words whose meanings have similar fluctuations, words such as "poem," "rhythm," and "thought." Hence he lists and discusses the following definitions of "word":

1. "A word" may indicate a particular occurrence of an act of speech, writing, hearing, or thought, which may be distinguished from other occurrences by its locus in space and time. We seldom use just this meaning.
2. "A word" more often means a very large number of words (particular speech-acts, sense 1) used by many people every day and over a period of years, these various individual speech-acts having sufficient similarity that we regard them as the same word. By so doing we are employing a convenient fiction to facilitate communication; but we will very likely misunderstand the nature of our communication if we do not recognize that words in sense 2 are fictions. (Here, we may compare our tentative conclusion in the preceding chapter that for Richards a fiction may be a speculative instrument: a word, if it is a fiction, can be a speculative instrument to the extent that a fiction can be).

Richards calls this definition of a word as fiction a "quasi-automatic abstractive machinery" (cf. our term "quasi-metaphor" in the discussion of Basic Rules of Reason), indicating that thinking of a word in this way is an activity which we perform naturally without always being aware of the convenient shorthand we are using. Thus, we must, says Richards, "re-examine . . . these . . . assumed instruments, and the method by which we have been given them" (p. 104). Re-examination is a matter of refinement of the instrument through multiple definition, which is itself a refining instrument in need of refinement. "The method by which we have been given" the shorthand of using this, the second definition of "word," is re-examined along with the third definition
of "word":

3. "A word" may mean a certain arrangement of marks on paper or a certain produced sound which we take as stimulus for the response which we label as understanding of the stimulus. "That is to say we can take, as the word, merely the sign. But we rarely do this. In the process of recognizing the signs we invest them with qualities which, as signs, they do not possess" (p. 106). The key word in this passage is "invest." Printed marks do not have sounds unless we agree to attribute sounds to them, that is, unless we invest them with sounds; sounds do not have denotation, connotation, nuance, etc., unless we invest them with these attributes; and this investing is the "method by which we have been given" the fictional mode of thinking of a word in sense 2.

4. "A word" may be taken to mean a sign which is or contains its own meaning, in which case we are investing unconsciously, as though the base of the triangle in The Meaning of Meaning were a solid line, the relationship between symbol and referent being understood as direct. As we have seen, Richards insists that the relationship between symbol and referent is indirect, requiring interpretation, thus the triangle diagram. Yet in our discussion of The Meaning of Meaning we saw that Richards regarded the convenient fiction of assuming a directness between
symbol and referent as a practical necessity and urged that while employing this useful fiction we recognize it as such. Here, in *Coleridge on Imagination,* he gives the analogous argument that "this investment of the words with a meaning is an essential part of the right reading of them" (p. 107); for without it, we couldn't read at all. We will do well, then, in employing this practical necessity of investment, to keep in mind the triangle diagram and the role of interpretation; symbol and referent interact indirectly, making interpretation necessary; words interact with words indirectly, etc.

Even a cursory look at *Coleridge on Imagination* will reveal many striking similarities between Coleridge and Richards. Examples abound: Richards quotes Coleridge as saying "'I laboured at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance'" (p. 3); Coleridge attempts consciously to lay a psychological foundation for his philosophical investigations, particularly in theoretical literary criticism, and, metaphysical differences apart, so does Richards, particularly in *Principles of Literary Criticism.*

In response to T. S. Eliot's assertion (in *The Use of Poetry*) that Coleridge owed less to his training in psychology and
philosophy than to his own very delicate and subtle insight as a practicing poet, Richards says

Yes. But is it an accident that this very peculiar kind of insight is found in Coleridge? His philosophic preoccupations cannot be separated from it. The speculations and the insight incessantly prompt one another. The insight was the stimulus to the speculation and the speculation the instrument of the insight (p. 4).

Not only do we have here the figure of the instrument in connection with the activity of speculation, but we also have a passage written by Richards about Coleridge which could accurately apply verbatim to Richards himself and which, if so applied, can show us much of what we need if we are to understand him, a philosopher-poet explicating a poet-philosopher. More of what we need is made explicit in another passage of commentary on Coleridge by Richards: "... we shall not realize what we might gain from Coleridge without some equivalent trouble. We can neither recapture what his insight gave him nor develop it further, unless, in new terms perhaps, we make a similar effort of thought" (pp. 4-5). And so once more we may apply Richards' recommendations about how to read Coleridge to our problem of how to read Richards. Who can undertake the "equivalent trouble" without feeling somewhat abashed? Richards has armed his vision (ours, too, if we can use his instruments) in so many formidable ways that one despairs of being able to go to the "equivalent trouble," when mere literacy is
difficult enough to acquire. But in this case, mere literacy may be nearly enough; for Richards has placed signposts along the ascent along with implements with instructions for their use (as well as suggestions for improvements on their design). The rest is a matter of whether and how strenuously we are motivated to climb.

Since, as our analysis has shown, *Coleridge on Imagination* uses the term "speculative instruments" and demonstrates more clearly than Richards' previous books the requisite characteristics of a speculative instrument, we must regard it as the best example of a speculative instrument encountered so far, as our scrutiny allows us to observe the growth and development of the concept.
CHAPTER III

CONTEXTS AS ORGANIC

Richards' work with Mencius and Coleridge helped make him more fully aware of the breadth of his interests and capabilities. Being thus more fully aware, he began to focus his energies more upon educational theory and less upon literary criticism, although a central concern with communication remained in evidence. The books examined in this chapter are the first major results of this shift in focus. And it is a shift in focus, not an abandonment of literary criticism. Richards remains interested in literary criticism, but he feels that without better education in reading, literary criticism is a superfluous activity and that without more effective communication throughout the world, literary criticism may become an impossible activity in the very likely absence of anyone to perform it. He thus regards education and communication as more basic than literary criticism and hence more deserving of his major efforts.

Having shifted the focus of his energies to the theory and practice of education, Richards develops more explicitly than before an organic view of the mind, the university, the state, and the world. This amounts to a more thorough drawing out of the
broader implications of synaesthesia, and the speculative instruments concept is more and more in evidence, particularly in its role of mediation. More specifically, in this chapter we shall witness further growth of the speculative instruments concept toward a more explicit formulation of the principle of instrumental dependence, through more detailed studies of metaphor and definition.

1. The Philosophy of Rhetoric

The Philosophy of Rhetoric\(^1\) (first published in 1936) has six chapters, each of which was one in a series of lectures given at Bryn Mawr College. Richards has made few changes in the written form of these lectures from the spoken form, since the latter seems to him best suited to the "tentative provisional spirit in which this subject should at present be treated" (p. viii). This quote from his Preface serves notice to the reader that a cautious tone will be adopted and that final answers are not to be expected. The reader who has followed Richards' work chronologically might reasonably expect a speculative instrument or two.

Although Richards does not use the term "speculative instruments" in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, as he did in Coleridge on

---

Imagination, he does stick to the "tentative provisional spirit" which is in keeping with the speculative instruments epistemology. The plan of the book is to redefine "rhetoric" so that it will be of more practical use in language study than it has been. This is accomplished by developing, from a careful study of the ways in which words interact, a speculative instrument which he calls the "context theorem of meaning" and which leads to and makes possible another speculative instrument, a theory of metaphor more usefully descriptive of the way words work in discourse than is available in traditional rhetoric.

The major reason for redefining "rhetoric" is to make possible a more effective study of language and language use. Richards urges that rhetoric "should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies" (p. 3). Since we don't have an adequate means of estimating just what our quantitative and qualitative losses in communication are, one of the aims of The Philosophy of Rhetoric is "to speculate about some of the measures we should require in attempting such estimates" (p. 3). This is very tentative and

---

This establishes the model and sets the precedent for his redefinitions of "rhetoric," "grammar," and "logic" in Interpretation in Teaching and of "philosophy" in Speculative Instruments.
provisional, indeed, the aim being speculation about the nature of a yet undeveloped estimating device. The central question which such an estimating device would be concerned with is "'How much and in how many ways may good communication differ from bad?'" (p. 3); however, "that," says Richards, "is too big and too complex a question to be answered as it stands, but we can at least try to work towards answering some parts of it; and these explanations would be the revived subject of Rhetoric" (pp. 3-4). The meticulous caution here is of significance in that it is in keeping with the stated spirit of The Philosophy of Rhetoric, and it helps establish a tone vastly different from that of Principles of Literary Criticism, a tone which we may discover to be partly a result of Richards' work with Mencius and Coleridge and partly a result of Richards' emergent realization of the full implications of his epistemological orientation. Notice that Richards makes use here of the word "towards." He is to make further and extensive use of it as his work grows, and we shall try to make note of these uses in order that we may thereby be helped along toward a better comprehension of speculative instruments.

Richards begins the discussion of his "new Rhetoric" by showing that the notion that there is a word on the one hand and on the other an idea or concept which can be understood apart
from the word is widespread but wrong: "Indeed an idea, or a notion, like the physicist's ultimate particles and rays, is only known by what it does. Apart from its dress or other signs it is not identifiable" (p. 5). Further, he insists that one of the main functions of rhetoric is "to consider much more closely how words work in discourse" (p. 5). Now the idea we are most concerned with is speculative instruments, and if an idea can be known only by what it does, then we need to find out what a speculative instrument does. For this idea we have several terms—particularly, "machine to think with," "investigative apparatus," and "speculative instrument"; and we have four identifying characteristics—"instrumental dependence," "refinement," "openness," and "the expressed or suppressed conditional." For our study we have to see how, for Richards, words work in discourse, and then we have to see particularly how the words within quotation marks in the immediately foregoing sentence work in discourse. And this is what we have been doing, almost of necessity, as a result of Richards' practice of presenting ideas by giving working models of them. Richards, with Yeats, doesn't understand how we can know the dancer from the dance.

And the main thing wrong with traditional rhetoric, the reason it needs redefining, is that it has been an attempt to know, as it were, the dancer from the dance. I offer here
several quotations from Richards to illustrate his opinions about what rhetoric should be as contrasted with what it has been, in order to get us a little farther along toward an understanding of his redefinition:

(1) Rhetoric should be "a philosophic inquiry into how words work in discourse" (p. 8). Instead, it has been a matter of obvious and crude recommendations about how to use words: "... be clear, yet don't be dry; be vivacious, use metaphors when they will be understood not otherwise; respect usage; don't be long-winded, on the other hand don't be gaspy; avoid ambiguity; prefer the energetic to the elegant; preserve unity and coherence" (p. 8). These recommendations are trivialities and have proven not to be helpful at all; but they are not just neutrally trivial—they are pernicious: "What is wrong with these too familiar attempts to discuss the working of words? How words work is a matter about which every user of language is, of necessity, avidly curious until these trivialities choke the flow of interest" (p. 8). We notice here a parallel with Richards' complaint in *Principles of Literary Criticism* that the air of finality of most aesthetic theories kills off investigative curiosity, and we also remember that a speculative instrument is supposed to prevent such murder. Indeed, we are soon to see Richards assigning certain of his key theories the role of policemen.
(2) Rhetoric should busy itself with "ventilating by inquiry the sources of the whole action of words" (p. 9). Instead, the trivialities of traditional rhetoric "merely play with generalizations about their effects, generalizations that are uninstructive and unimproving unless we go more deeply and by another route into these grounds" (p. 9). These generalizations stop investigative curiosity by taking the easy way out, giving a comfortingly panoramic ("macroscopic") view of language, thereby frustrating comprehension of the way words work in discourse; we need to supplement panorama with several close-ups, in the form of "an intimate or microscopic inquiry which endeavors to look into the structure of the meanings with which discourse is composed, not merely into the effects of various large-scale disposals of these meanings" (p. 9). That is to say that we may legitimately examine "the whole action of words," and we may do so profitably, but not until we have made careful inquiry into the sources thereof, enabling us better "to account for understanding and misunderstanding, [and] to study the efficiency of language and its conditions" (p. 9). Toward this more immediate end,

(3) Rhetoric should "renounce, for a while, the view that words just have their meanings and that what a discourse does is to be explained as a composition of these meanings—as a wall can
be represented as a composition of its bricks" (p. 9). For words do not even exist apart from their interactions with other words: They may have sound or appearance, taken alone, but they get their meanings from the context in which they are used, and thus their meanings are interdependent. By this Richards does not mean that words cannot have dictionary meanings which may be helpful to us, but he does mean that these dictionary meanings and any other meanings operate as meanings only in context and that meanings change as context changes. He is setting up his context theorem of meanings, and by "context" he means, as we shall discover, not only the literal context of the word, any particular occurrence with and interactions with other words, but also the historical context of the word, its past occurrences in literal contexts: the meanings of words are interdependent within literal context and within historical context. Consequently,

(4) Rhetoric should "think of a meaning as though it were a plant that has grown" (p. 12) in order to counteract "a chief cause of misunderstanding, . . . the Proper Meaning Superstition. That is, the common belief—encouraged officially by what lingers on in the school manuals as Rhetoric—that a word has a meaning of its own (ideally, only one) independent of and controlling its use and the purpose for which it should be uttered" (p. 11). Words do have something like "proper meanings," or else we would have
even greater difficulty in communicating with words than we do, but to assume that these agreed-upon meanings are any more stable than the contexts in which they occur is to make the proper meaning concept into a superstition which will blind us to the relative stability-fluidity of contexts and the consequent relative stability-fluidity of meanings which words acquire in contexts:

"Stability in a word's meaning is not something to be assumed, but always something to be explained" (p. 11). For a word is not as easily understood an entity as traditional theories have led us to suppose. A revived rhetoric will encourage us to think of a meaning not as something stipulated, prescribed, and static but rather as something like a growing, cultivated, organism, as described by the opening sentence of this paragraph.

But although Richards shows shortcomings in traditional theories of rhetoric, he nevertheless insists that we not entirely discard them: "We have to go beyond these theories, but however mistaken they may be, or however absurd their outcome may sometimes seem, we must not forget that they are beginnings, first steps in a great and novel venture, the attempt to explain in

---

3 Cf. discussion of "the interactions of words" in Basic Rules of Reason and the multiple definition of "word" in Coleridge on Imagination.
detail how language works and with it to improve communication" (pp. 17-18). If the traditional theories are "closed," in that their sense of finality stifles further investigation, then a new rhetoric should open them up by recognizing that they are part of the new rhetoric's context, that the new and the traditional are interdependent. Thus, in spite of their errors, they may be exceedingly helpful if we regard them as complementaries to our own theories, not necessarily rivals. We would then be regarding traditional theories of rhetoric (and, by implication, of aesthetics and related subjects) as thinking machines, whether they purport to be such or not. This explicit recognition by Richards of some of the fuller implications of interdependence among theories seems to arise from his study of the interdependence of the meanings of words, as our further examination of The Philosophy of Rhetoric may show; and, although Richards here, as in Principles of Literary Criticism, is advancing a theory which he regards as an improvement upon seemingly rival theories, he is now readier than before to respond to theories other than his own in a way more appropriate to what his "machine to think with" metaphor has committed him to. Whereas in Principles of Literary Criticism many literary theorists were treated with what appeared to be scorn, in The Philosophy of Rhetoric even the most patently absurd rhetoricians are treated with the sympathy and
tolerance urged in the passage just quoted.

Richards' work with Mencius and Coleridge may be a contributing factor to this difference of tone, but if an attitude of tolerance had not been underlying the earlier exuberance, how could Richards have turned seriously and open-mindedly to Mencius and Coleridge in the first place? I think we should not attach undue relevance to the earlier tone of seeming scorn or to the present tone of sympathy and tolerance. In Principles of Literary Criticism and in The Philosophy of Rhetoric Richards does the same thing: He develops theories which are calculated to have better practical application than other available theories. It is significant that Principles of Literary Criticism was followed by Practical Criticism, that The Philosophy of Rhetoric is followed by Interpretation in Teaching, and that Practical Criticism and Interpretation in Teaching are in many ways analogous, particularly in being practical applications of theoretical material. One reason for pointing out instrumental dependence and for insisting upon refinement, openness, and the conditional is to aid speculation in suiting itself better to practical applicability. As Richards puts it in The Philosophy of Rhetoric,

Whatever we may be studying we do so only through the growth of our meanings. To realize this turns some parts of this attempted direct study of the modes of growth and interaction between meanings . . . into a business of great practical importance. For
this study is theoretical only that it may become practical (p. 19).

For support here, Richards quotes Hobbes' paraphrase of Bacon on the subject, ending with the assertion that "the scope of all speculation is the performance of some action, or thing to be done" (p. 20).

A new rhetoric must examine its own assumptions and its own subject matter, and then it must take the results of these examinings and use them as the material for developing its own methods. One is reminded of Richards' attempt to make of Coleridge's theory of the imagination "an employable speculative instrument." In The Philosophy of Rhetoric, he says that "a revived Rhetoric, or study of verbal understanding and misunderstanding, must itself undertake its own inquiry into the modes of meaning . . . by using theorems about the structure of the fundamental conjectural units of meaning and the conditions through which they, and their interconnections, arise" (pp. 23-24). This is the basis from which Richards works toward his context theorem of meaning. In so doing, he reminds us that traditional rhetoric has many advantages, but he reports that these are mainly advantages in winning an argument: "The old Rhetoric was an offspring of dispute; it developed as the rationale of pleadings and
persuadings; it was the theory of the battle of words and has always been itself dominated by the combative impulse" (p. 24).

We are already familiar with Richards' views about how narrowing and blinding disputation is and why he would wish a new rhetoric, or any speculative instrument, to avoid disputation.

Still in keeping with the stated spirit of The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Richards predicts that any answers to our inquiries are likely to be unsatisfactory and needful of further refinement:

"... we shall not expect any answers which will be satisfactory. We must be content if the answers we get are to some degree useful—among other things in improving themselves" (p. 28).

Openness and refinement as characteristics of the redefined rhetoric? Redefined rhetoric a speculative instrument? My answer to both of these questions may be unsatisfactory, but it should be obvious.

Richards begins the development of his context theorem of meaning not by going directly to the interactions of words but by using an analogy between words and human beings. Just as he showed, earlier in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, that words are more fluid and complex than bricks, here he points out the differences in degree of complexity between human beings and thermometers: We, human beings, that is, are like words, not like bricks, in that "we are things peculiarly responsive to other
things" (p. 29). Synaesthesia may be a long way off here, but just how far, after all? We can see that Richards is going to compare language elements with growing organisms, and we may keep an eye out for what some of the relations are between the interactions of words and some principle of organicism, what relationship such a principle bears to synaesthesia, and whether any principle of organicism arising from observance of the interactions of words aids us in understanding the principle of instrumental dependence.

Not only are we "things peculiarly responsive to other things," the peculiarity of our responses is that they are highly complex, for "if we compare ourselves to thermometers, we see that our responses are of a different order of complexity" (p. 29). The thermometer's responses are to what happens in its present only, and it has no memory or conditioned response; its past existence as a thermometer does not enter into its responses, whereas our past experiences are the most significant contributing factor to the peculiarity, that is, highly complex character, of our responses. Any imaginary thermometer which could respond to certain changes in temperature in a way explainable only by reference to other things that happened to it during past occurrences of these certain changes in temperature "would be on the way to showing characteristics of the behavior
of living systems, of the systems which, we say, have a mind" (p. 29). For Richards thus to compare a word with a human being is to show what he meant by suggesting that we think of a meaning as a growing organism and also to lay the groundwork for the temporal as well as the spatial aspects of the special use he makes of the term "context" in the context theorem of meaning. A word's context is not just its "literal context," but also, and more important, what we have already tentatively called its "historical context." This latter must be stressed, if we are "to realize how far back into the past all our meanings go, how they grow out of one another much as an organism grows, and how inseparable they are from one another" (p. 30). This quote shows that the principle of organicism in language is based upon interdependence of meanings with other meanings and upon interdependence of literary context with historical context. Two questions which arise here, How close is this to instrumental dependence? and How does this apply to "speculative instruments"? will hopefully receive tentative answers or at least be asked more clearly as our investigation proceeds.

The context theorem of meaning holds that words, like other signs, are "substitutes exerting the powers of what is not there. They do this as other signs do it, though in more complex fashions, through their contexts" (p. 32). What isn't there, yet is giving
the word power, is its historical context, the growth of its meaning. The growth of the plant has made possible its mature fruitfulness: "meaning is delegated efficacy" (p. 32). The word and its meaning grow together, of course, and they display behavior like that of the imaginary thermometer with a memory. As Richards puts it,

... the modes of causal recurrence on which meaning depends are peculiar through that delegated efficacy I have been talking about. In these contexts one item—typically a word—takes over the duties of parts which can then be omitted from the recurrence. There is thus an abridgement of the context only shown in the behavior of living things, and most extensively and drastically shown by man. When this abridgement happens, what the sign or word—the item with these delegated powers—means is the missing parts of the context (p. 34).

In short, "what a word means is the missing parts of the contexts from which it draws its delegated efficacy" (p. 35). From this we can see that when Richards discusses the interactions of words he means something more complex than we would suspect. For him, words interact within contexts, literal and historical, and they do so like living organisms. They are dependent for their meanings upon their modes of interactions, and this means that they are interdependent with other words in their literal contexts and that they are interdependent with other events in their historical context.

To regard a meaning as an organism is to exhibit what I have
called the principle of organicism. "Speculative instruments" has such an organic meaning. Also, interdependence within context seems to be a very close analogue to the principle of instrumental dependence.

The context theorem of meaning is calculated to be a "policeman doctrine" (p. 38), and Richards classes it with other "theorems" of his own, which should be regarded as ideal policemen, rulers in the sense Mencius would urge—policemen who do not force us to do anything but who rather protect us and guide us so that we may pursue our best interests. Specifically, what the context theorem of meaning can do as a policeman doctrine is to discourage "our habit of behaving as though, if a passage means one thing it cannot at the same time mean another and an incompatible thing" (p. 38). Also, the context theorem of meaning offers us—by restraining the One and Only One True Meaning Superstition—a better hope, I believe, of profiting from the controversies. A controversy is normally an exploitation of a systematic set of misunderstandings for war-like purposes. This theorem suggests that the swords of dispute might be turned into plough shares (p. 39).

This particular policeman leads us calmly but firmly to the heart of the riot, assuring protection but insisting upon confrontation—away from disputation and toward comprehension. By restraining the One True Meaning Superstition, the context theorem of meaning prevents the murder and encourages the growth of natural
investigative curiosity. Our feeling that we might do well not to attach undue relevance to the shift in tone from *Principles of Literary Criticism* to *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* gains some support in that Richards explicitly calls the value theory of *Principles of Literary Criticism* a policeman doctrine in the same class with the context theorem of meaning: "The organization of impulses doctrine of values for literary criticism is in the same position" (p. 38).

The context theorem of meaning asserts not only that words interact and that their meanings are mutually dependent, but also that the degree of mutual dependence is dictated by the kind of interaction involved. Words don't just interact, they "interinanimate," says Richards, and their mutual dependence "varies evidently with the type of discourse" (p. 48). "Interinanimation" is a term much more strongly suggestive of interdependence than the weaker and broader "interaction," and in suggesting interdependence it also suggests a kind of interaction which admits of degrees. Richards holds that words are more interdependent in poetry than in prose and more so in emotive prose than in scientific prose. Nevertheless, in even the strictest scientific prose, words are mutually dependent for their total meaning; although the strict sense of a word such as "triangle"
may be fixed, the other words which occur with it in an utterance are not necessarily so fixed, and further, more than mere sense is likely to be involved in the total meaning of any word:
"... in most prose, and more than we ordinarily suppose, the opening words have to wait for those that follow to settle what they shall mean" (p. 50). This holds for what Richards here calls "the sense of the waiting words" (p. 50), "the feeling if any towards what I am talking about" (p. 50), "the relation towards my audience I want to establish" (p. 50), and "the confidence I have in the soundness of the remark" (p. 50). These are familiar language functions to readers of Richards, as is the point that they are all parts of the total meaning of a word or passage.

What is important and evident about words and their contexts is that "no word can be judged as to whether it is good or bad, correct or incorrect, beautiful or ugly, or anything else that matters to a writer, in isolation" (p. 51). Evident as this may be, it is contrary to the widely taught "doctrine of Usage," or the "doctrine that there is a right or a good use for every word and that literary virtue consists in making that good use of it" (p. 51). This Usage doctrine is actually an offspring of the Proper Meaning Superstition. When it pretends to establish rules of usage from examination of the usage of the best writers, it forgets that we have other criteria, which it does not even acknowledge, for
deciding how and why the best writers are the best. Not only this, but the Usage doctrine "blanks out and hides the interinanimation between words" (p. 52) by leading us to think that proper choice of words, following the best usage, removes the necessity for interpretation on the part of the reader, the necessary "inference and skilled guesswork" we have to employ in order to understand any writer. The Usage doctrine "takes the senses of an author's words to be things we know before we read him, fixed factors with which he has to build up the meaning of his sentences" (p. 55); that is, once again, words are thought of as being no more flexible or complex than bricks. We have to go beyond the Usage doctrine to see that meanings "are resultants which we arrive at only through the interplay of the interpretative possibilities of the whole utterance. In brief, we have to guess them and we guess much better when we realize we are guessing, and watch out for indications, than when we think we know" (p. 55). This passage shows that Richards wants to be and wants us to be at a high level of "vigilance," maybe even synaesthetic, when we interpret. At least, the speculative instruments concept, in keeping before us the principle of instrumental dependence, is supposed to keep us clear as to the nature of the activity we are pursuing, even if, and especially when, that activity be "guessing." In this case, we are trying to do some "inference and skilled guesswork" about what
Richards means by "speculative instruments," and we are interpreting from context, in Richards' special sense of the term "context."

By now we should not be surprised to hear Richards urging the development of a "habit of interpretation" which is "organic" (p. 56) rather than static, nor should we be surprised to hear him call an utterance an organism: ". . . a word is always a cooperative member of an organism, the utterance . . ." (p. 69). A principle of organicism has been more and more in evidence as a controlling factor in Richards' choice of metaphors, and I do not wish to assert that the growing control has not been reciprocal.

Now that metaphor has been mentioned, we might as well come to grips with Richards' theory of metaphor. It is implied by the context theorem of meaning, and it has a rather high position in Richards' hierarchy of theories, since he regards metaphor, in its broad sense, as the basis for all language use and for all learning. Consequently, and characteristically, Richards sets about an inquiry into the theory of metaphor as a major task towards developing a revived rhetoric.

Three particular assumptions, says Richards, have stifled investigation into the nature of metaphor:

(1) The first assumption is that seeing resemblances is something some people can do while others cannot. Granted that
some people have a better eye for resemblances than other people
do, "we all live, and speak, only through our eye for resemblances. Without it we should perish early" (p. 89).

(2) The second assumption is that seeing resemblances is something which cannot be taught, although perhaps everything else may be. Granted that there is some difficulty in such teaching, "as individuals we gain our command of metaphor just as we learn whatever else makes us distinctively human. It is all imparted to us from others, with and through the language we learn, language which is utterly unable to aid us except through the command of metaphor which it gives" (p. 90).

(3) The third assumption is "that metaphor is something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode of working" (p. 90). Granted that poets make explicit and sometimes ornate use of metaphor, they don't invent it: they get it from language as people use language, of which metaphor is "the omnipresent principle of all its free action" (p. 90).

These three stifling assumptions, all to the effect that metaphor is something rare and/or aberrant, have arisen from and contributed to lack of attention to the interactions of words, one aspect of which is that "we cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse" (p. 92) without using metaphor, and
attempts to do so wind up being wittingly or unwittingly a matter of substituting one metaphor for another. Richards does not support these generalizations with more specific examples yet, since he is making a theoretical recommendation about how a theory of metaphor more practical and accurate than any we now have might be developed. Supporting examples arise as the theory unfolds.

First of all, the context theorem of meaning, according to which meaning is delegated efficacy and a word's meaning is the missing part of its literal and historical context, "is itself a summary account of the principle of metaphor. In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (p. 93); and they interact in a way which shows that they are interdependent and in a much wider variety of modes than we are accustomed to noticing. The advantage of deriving a theory of metaphor from the context theorem of meaning is that the theory of metaphor will have a higher place in thought about language than traditional rhetoric has given it, and the advantage of giving the theory of metaphor a higher place than it has enjoyed in thought about language is that it can improve our use of language about thought.
Along these lines, the redefinition of metaphor proceeds:

"The traditional theory noticed only a few of the modes of metaphor; and limited its application of the term metaphor to a few of them only. And thereby it made metaphor seem to be a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words" (p. 94). Without these narrowing influences, we can take a closer look at the foundation for a new theory: "... fundamentally it [metaphor] is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom. To improve the theory of metaphor we must remember this" (p. 94). Keeping in mind Richards' highly complex use of "context," we have to be somewhat vigilant when he begins to talk about transactions between contexts. Are contexts organic? Are their transactions comparable to the interinanimations of words? To what degree and in what way are they interdependent?

Richards works toward supplying some answers by trying to devise better terms than we have had heretofore for the two members of a metaphor, since he finds that "the whole task is to compare the different relations which, in different cases, these two members of a metaphor hold to one another, and we are confused at the start if we do not know which of the two we are talking about" (p. 96). But how are we to be other than confused when we
use such clumsy terms to describe the two members of a metaphor? Examples: "'The original idea' and 'the borrowed one'; 'what is really being said or thought of' and 'what it is compared to'; 'the underlying idea' and 'the imagined nature'; 'the principal subject' and 'what it resembles' or, still more confusing, simply 'the meaning' and 'the metaphor' or 'the idea' and 'its image'" (p. 96).

Richards calls the two parts of a metaphor "tenor" and "vehicle." The tenor is "the underlying idea or principal subject" (p. 97), and the vehicle is the figure. For example, when we call a man a pig, the vehicle is the word "pig" and the tenor is the word "man." Richards prefers "tenor" and "vehicle" to such terminology as "the meaning" and "the metaphor," because these last two terms are names of wholes inappropriately applied to parts: The metaphor is the context in which tenor and vehicle interact, and the interaction of tenor and vehicle give the metaphor a meaning which is different from the separate meanings of the tenor and vehicle. Furthermore, tenor and vehicle interact in varying degrees—sometimes tenor is stronger than vehicle, and sometimes vehicle is stronger than tenor. For example, in calling a man a pig, we are using a metaphor in which the vehicle is so strong that it controls the tenor by suggesting the comic disparities between a man and a pig and applying these to the tenor as though
they were resemblances. At the other extreme, the "leg of a table" is a metaphor in which tenor is so much stronger than vehicle that we normally forget that it is a metaphor, hence the term "dead metaphor." Richards holds that a dead metaphor is really very much alive and that we are better off describing it in terms of degree of interaction between tenor and vehicle.

We are conditioned to think of a metaphor as having two parts which imply a resemblance, and it is the characteristics which the two parts have in common which we commonly call the ground of the metaphor. But Richards regards meanings as organic, as we have seen, and for him a word behaves like an organism, and so does an utterance. So does a metaphor. And an organic view of metaphor would show not just resemblances but also "interactions which do not work through resemblances between tenor and vehicle, but depend upon other relations between them including disparities" (p. 108): In the "leg of a table" metaphor, we can easily see the resemblances, which are implied by the metaphor, between the table's leg and the leg of, say, a man, or a horse. But in a metaphor in which the vehicle is stronger, such as in calling a man a pig, it is not literal resemblances which establish the ground of the metaphor, but the comic disparities—we do not mean that the man has hooves, a tail, and a snout or that he walks on all-fours and says "oink" or that he cannot read or speak or even
necessarily that he has a voracious appetite—yet the metaphor works. Richards puts it this way:

> We must not . . . suppose that the interactions of tenor and vehicle are to be confined to their resemblances. There is disparity action too. When Hamlet uses the word crawling its force comes not only from whatever resemblances to vermin it brings in but at least equally from the differences that resist and control the influences of their resemblances. The implication there is that man should not so crawl. Thus, talk about the identification or fusion that a metaphor effects is nearly always misleading and pernicious. In general, there are very few metaphors in which disparities between tenor and vehicle are not as much operative as the similarities (p. 127).

Here, Richards has reference to Hamlet's line "What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven," which he quotes in The Philosophy of Rhetoric (p. 119). He is showing that metaphor works sometimes through direct resemblance between tenor and vehicle as a result of "some common attitude which we may . . . take up towards them both" (p. 118), and that sometimes the common attitude towards tenor and vehicle may be brought about by disparities, as in the man-pig example.

It is not always easy, Richards says, to determine whether a word is being used literally or metaphorically: "If we cannot distinguish tenor from vehicle then we may provisionally take the word to be literal; if we can distinguish at least two co-operating uses, then we have metaphor" (p. 119). But further, and still
more troublesome or potentially useful, as the case may be, a word may be used literally and metaphorically at the same time, as for example, "when a man has a wooden leg, it is a metaphoric or a literal leg? The answer to this last is that it is both. It is literal in one set of respects, metaphoric in another" (p. 118).

The use of a word literally and metaphorically at the same time is an instance of what I have called quasi-metaphor, and many of Richards' key terms seem to behave this way. Our discussion of "machine to think with" as a quasi-metaphor in Chapter II, above, supports this view. The term "speculative instruments" operates literally once we understand its implications, since an aid to speculation can be understood as being literally an instrument. But "speculative instruments" is also metaphorical at the same time, at least in its context of Richards' use, since we can distinguish between tenor and vehicle: "speculative instruments" is the vehicle, and "theory, definition, investigation, etc." is the tenor. And the ground of the metaphor is the common attitude toward both tenor and vehicle urged by the set of identifying characteristics which we have isolated. This being the case, the metaphor works whether there is resemblance or disparity between tenor and vehicle. The metaphorical use of "speculative instruments" is difficult to discuss because vehicle is much
stronger than tenor. But we get help as a result of the term being literal too, in a sense, hence its status as a quasi-metaphor.

What is of most interest and relevance to our investigation in The Philosophy of Rhetoric is the principle of organicism which Richards develops from the "interinanimations" of words and which leads him to call words and utterances "organisms." In the next section of this chapter we shall return to a consideration of this principle and its relevance to the principle of instrumental dependence. Here, we may provisionally consider that Richards' organic view of metaphor, arising from the context theorem of meaning, and constituting the most salient feature of his redefinition of rhetoric, is a speculative instrument and that "speculative instruments" is a quasi-metaphor.

2. Interpretation in Teaching

Interpretation in Teaching⁴ (1938) is analogous to Practical Criticism in two ways. It is a practical application of theories developed in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, as Practical Criticism is

a practical application of theories developed in *Principles of Literary Criticism*; and its method is that of *Practical Criticism* applied to prose: whereas in *Practical Criticism* Richards analyzes written responses (or "protocols") to poems, in *Interpretation in Teaching* he analyzes written responses ("protocols" here, too) to prose passages, and in both books he classifies misunderstandings.

In *Interpretation in Teaching*, as in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* and other of Richards' thinking machines, the aim is a practical one and theory is present only for the sake of improving practice. If we could improve teaching without theory, Richards would dispense with theory. But he thinks that teaching can best be improved through better understanding of the role of interpretation in teaching, and a study of interpretation is a theoretical matter. Even so, here as elsewhere in Richards' work, the preposition "toward" is implicit—growth toward better comprehension, toward better communication, toward better practical application of theory: "The argument from time to time looks forward to the general achievement—in a perhaps not very distant future—of levels of intelligence in interpretation higher than those yet reached" (p. v). The protocols in *Interpretation in Teaching*, as in *Practical Criticism*, show that even the best students fail drastically in understanding what they hear and read. Their
failure results from ineptness in interpretation, and their ineptness results in turn from their lack of acquaintance with the concept of interpretation; and this lack is a theoretical weakness: "My main argument," says Richards,

indeed is that it is the pupil's theoretical weakness which halts him. He must amend it by exercise under guidance. We cannot give him better ideas, he must grow them; but the better our ideas about interpretation are, the more we may help him (p. vi).

We are to improve our ideas about interpretation by examining in more detail the theories sketched in The Philosophy of Rhetoric.

One reason for examining these theories in more detail is that they have been misunderstood. Most readers have failed to see that Richards was using "context" in the technical sense which we outlined in the foregoing section of this chapter and have understood it to mean simply "literary context," an understanding which makes of the statement "A word means the missing part of its context" a piece of sheer gobbledygook. To correct this misunderstanding Richards explains here more clearly than in The Philosophy of Rhetoric the technical sense of his use of "context":

(1) A word, like any other sign, gets whatever meaning it has through belonging to a recurrent group of events, which may be called its context. Thus a word's context, in this sense, is a certain recurrent pattern of past groups of events, and to say that its meaning depends upon its context would be to point to the process by which it has acquired its meaning (p. viii).
This is what we called "historical context" in our analysis, but Richards supplies the better term "originative context," and we will do well to adopt his term. For what we called "literal context" Richards supplies the term "setting," and he describes it thus:

"(2) In another, though in a connected, sense, a word's context is the words which surround it in the utterance, and the other contemporaneous signs which govern its interpretation" (p. viii). Understanding of whether interpretations succeed or fail depends upon our keeping in mind both senses, for to say (as Richards does) that words are interdependent within a context is to say that they are interdependent within a setting and also within an originative context: "... no care, however great, in observing the setting will secure good interpretation if past experience has not provided the required originative context" (p. viii). This is to say further that setting and originative context are interdependent:

The interactions of what I am calling the contexts and the settings are as intricate and as incessant as life itself. ... Sign-fields (or settings), by recurring, generate contexts (under certain conditions of interest structure); and which contexts are operative (how the signs are read) is determined later by the new settings. Thus the contexts which control meanings are always fluctuating with changes in the setting (p. ix).

Richards was talking this way as early as The Meaning of Meaning
and *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and our investigation may uncover a lingering, even growing, concern with equilibrium and harmony.

The discussion in *Interpretation in Teaching* is divided into three main parts: rhetoric, grammar, and logic. One of Richards' major purposes in these three parts is to give to these three traditional liberal arts new, more workable and less stultifying definitions than they have had in the past. Immediately we see refinement at work and at work toward the practical: Richards wants, by careful study and subsequent redefinition, to develop traditional theories of rhetoric, grammar, and logic into "employable speculative instruments" (to borrow his term from Coleridge on Imagination). But redefining the three one at a time, though a necessary expositor's artifice, runs the risk of suggesting that they are discrete, and Richards asks us to keep in mind that although we have to discuss them under separate headings, rhetoric, grammar, and logic are inextricably interwoven and, indeed, interdependent:

How to hand back the gains of the more experienced to the less experienced in the least hampering and most available form is the general problem. And, since language must be the medium, the three traditional modes of the study of language keep or renew their importance. They meet and mingle incessantly; they cannot . . . be separated without
frustration, and separation has historically been the most frequent cause of failure (p. 3).

Separating the three traditional modes of language study in order to subject each to further study, while at the same time keeping in mind their interconnections, may help remove a particular impediment:

The prime obstacle in general education is a feeling of helplessness before the unintelligible. Every problem is new to the mind which first meets it and it is baffling until he can recognize in it something which he has met and dealt with already. The all important difference between the mind which can clear itself by thought and the mind which remains bewildered . . . is in this power to recognize the new problem as, in part, an old conquest (p. 4).

This is very much like saying that a mind has an originative context with which any given setting is interdependent and that recognition of this interdependence can help toward development of a power which amounts to a growing order in the mind. At least, Richards' organic view of the mind in Principles of Literary Criticism seems to parallel his organic view of meaning in The Philosophy of Rhetoric; and in Interpretation in Teaching, learning is described as a growing power, and recognition that it is what it is affords motivation to the would-be learner, confronted with the unintelligible—recognition of a new problem as in part an old conquest:

The pupil meets with it all the time, and if he is being well taught he should be expecting it
and enjoying the sense of increasing power that his progressive mastery of it can afford. For this growth in power is, fundamentally, the vitalizing incentive with which education builds (p. 4).

The study of language as an opportunity for growth is nothing new for Richards, for we have seen it as a central concern of all of his speculative instruments which have come under our scrutiny. Here, predictably, he says that "as language, in its multiplicity of modes, and our always incomplete mastery of them, is the source of most of our preventable stultifications, so the study of how language works and fails is our great opportunity" (p. 5).

Richards leads us to expect his redefinitions in *Interpretation in Teaching* to be "policeman doctrines" which prevent the murder of innate speculative interest when he says that "the speculative interest—which is thought at work on its own most urgent needs—is often far stronger in the pupil than in the teacher, who cannot afford to be too patently out of his depth" (p. 7). The murderers in this case have been traditional rhetoric, traditional grammar, and traditional logic. Richards does not wish to murder the murderers. He wishes rather to rehabilitate them, or at least, failing that, to train his policemen not to be murderers. This rehabilitation and training are to be accomplished through acute awareness of the epistemological predicament that "there can be no pretence, of course, that how language works can be fully
explained. And there is much to be said for insisting early that in this as in everything else we have to start from as well as work towards the unintelligible" (p. 7). A multiply mixed metaphor suggests itself here: "A policeman doctrine is a speculative instrument." "Policeman doctrine" is the tenor, "speculative instrument" the vehicle, and "openness" the ground of the metaphor. If, as Richards has said in The Philosophy of Rhetoric and is to say again shortly, thought itself is metaphoric, then all metaphors are more or less mixed, anyway.

But once again, the theoretical is present only that it may become practical. Interpretation in teaching must never forget what teachers should do with students: "Our aim, to take the obvious examples, is not to produce Logicians, or Grammarians, but sound thinkers and clear writers, a different thing altogether" (pp. 11-12). Further, "the business of a teacher is . . . to stir his pupil . . . into caring seriously whether he understands what he reads and says or not" (p. 12); that is, begin by giving the student emotional support and then introduce him to his own speculative curiosity, which can in turn interinanimate within and between its own originative context and its series of settings, toward a growing order and power.

Richards sketches his plan in Interpretation in Teaching by offering some (hopefully relative) "unintelligibles" from which and
toward which he is to proceed, viz., his redefinitions of rhetoric, grammar, and logic and their interrelations.

Rhetoric is "the art by which discourse is adapted to its end" (p. 12).\(^5\) It is an art, not a science, and its most general task is to "distinguish the different sorts of ends, or aims, for which we use language, to teach how to pursue them separately and how to reconcile their diverse claims when, as is usual, the use of language is mixed" (p. 13); that is, "to give, not by dogmatic formula but by exercise in comparisons, an insight into the different modes of speech and their exchanges and disguises" (p. 14). One of the more special problems of rhetoric concerns figures of speech, many of which can be translated into language which is relatively nonfigurative, and this kind of translation can be a major activity of rhetoric as well as a key to the way in which rhetoric and logic are related:

Such translation exercises (if used with discretion; they can be paralyzing) are an invaluable device for redirecting attention to what is being said and how it is being understood. They lead naturally and insensibly into Logic. I might equally say that Logic, for our purposes, is just a more thorough inquiry into these translations (p. 15).

Careful examination of what we do when we translate from

---

\(^5\) Richards quotes this definition from George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, first published in 1776.
Figurative to nonfigurative language reveals the modes of analogy, comparison, and contrast by which all learning and all thought proceed: "For all thought is sorting, and we can think of nothing without taking it as of a sort. Logic is the Art or discipline of managing our sortings and it is of little use to study it only in an abstract science, if we have no command over the play of metaphor where logic should most intimately steer our thought" (p. 16). For this view of logic, Richards acknowledges his debt to C. S. Peirce, as he did in Basic Rules of Reason.

If rhetoric leads into logic, where does grammar fit into the plan? The answer is that "being, for our purposes, nothing but the study of the co-operation of words with one another in their contexts, it comes in everywhere" (p. 16). Keeping in mind, as Richards asks us to, his special use of "context," we are led to the conclusion that if he regards grammar as "the study of the co-operation of words with one another in their contexts," then he is taking an organic view of grammar, since the interinanimation of "setting" and "originative context" breathes life into, animates, or, might we say, organicizes, any definition in which it occurs. Our conclusion draws support:

It may seem a far cry from the elementary teaching of Grammar to the problem of the constitutive laws of development of an organism . . .; but when we learn anything we are quite obviously exemplifying biologic
laws. How we suppose we learn, then (and thus how we propose to teach), is not independent of our theories, or assumptions, as to the process of growth and the laws of development (p. 17).

It is understatement to call this an organic view of grammar.

For grammar is traditionally a set of rules, the teacher is traditionally a kind of ruler of the student, and the rules of grammar have been the instrument for implementing a ruler-ruled relationship. That we are back to Mencius' concept of a good ruler will come as a surprise only to the reader who thinks we have ever left it. Cultivate the student, says Richards, encourage him, motivate him, and watch him develop; but do not injure him by forcing and do not stifle him with rules, those traditional murderers of natural curiosity: "The only rules in intellectual discipline that a teacher may willingly make use of are records of the pupil's own helpful self-determinations" (p. 18). Mencius, indeed! "Beware the Sung man" (the impatient puller on plants), Richards is saying to teacher and student alike:

For, as a prime guiding principle, we have to remember that here, as in all teaching but more so, all that we can do is to provide opportunities for an extension and refinement of skills which are inexplicably, unimaginably and all-but-triumphantly, successful already. In the Confucian Chung Yung the clue to the self-completing growth of the mind is given in the aphorism:

In hewing an axe handle, in hewing an axe handle, the model for it is in our hand. (XIII, 2—See Practical Criticism, p. 284).
So here in this instance of language-study, the pupil, however stupid and inert he may seem, has already somehow learnt to talk, which is much more than we could teach him to do if he did not do it for himself. He comes to us with these uncanny powers already highly developed, and we have only, if we can, to help him to develop them a little further (p. 18).

The self-completing growth of the mind is a principle of organicism and was called synaesthesia in *The Foundations of Aesthetics*. The mediating function of a speculative instrument is a principle of organicism. As Richards follows his stated plan of starting from as well as working toward the unintelligible, he demonstrates the principles of openness and refinement: As one "unintelligible" is cleared up, refined, it is discovered to lead us to other "unintelligibles," since the refining process has opened up new fields of exploration. Each new field of exploration requires new instruments of exploration which will require refinement and, being refined, will open up further fields of exploration. This plan for the development and growth of ideas and skills shows an organic view of the principles of openness and refinement. In this instance the organic view derives from the way in which people learn to talk. As Richards works from "unintelligibles" to other "unintelligibles" he works also from one principle of organicism (synaesthesia) to another principle of organicism (speculative instruments): As in hewing an axe handle, in fashioning a speculative instrument, the model for it is in his hand; and we are likely to
discover not only that synaesthesis is a model for many of Richards' other speculative instruments but also that the interdependence of words, in their contextual interinanimations, provides a model for the principle of instrumental dependence, upon which the speculative instruments concept is founded.

In the section on rhetoric in Interpretation in Teaching, Richards refines one of the principal speculative instruments that he had formulated in The Philosophy of Rhetoric—his theory of metaphor. I should like to take two quotations from Interpretation in Teaching to show more clearly what Richards means by calling metaphor "the essence of thinking" and to explore some further implications of the terms "setting" and "originative context" and their interactions:

Thinking is radically metaphoric. Linkage by analogy is its constituent law or principle, its causal nexus, since meaning only arises through the causal contexts by which a sign stands for (takes the place of) an instance of a sort. To think of anything is to take it as of a sort (as a such and such) and that 'as' brings in (openly or in disguise) the analogy, the parallel, the metaphoric grapple or ground or grasp or draw by which alone the mind takes hold. It takes no hold if there is nothing for it to haul from, for its thinking is the haul, the attraction of likes (pp. 48-49).

My point is not that language is full of metaphors... It is that thought itself is metaphoric—not merely
that it expresses itself in linguistic metaphors. The metaphor that a thought is using need not correspond to the metaphor that its language displays, though usually it does, and the thought will often adopt the verbal metaphor when this is noticed. But equally often we discount and disown the metaphors in our speech, treat them as dead, or kill them as we go. We may then easily suppose that we are no longer using parallels and analogies because we are avoiding a particular set that our language might seem to bring in. We shall find none the less that we are using another set. Our thought in all cases is being guided by its causal context; and this is only another way of putting the matter (p. 49).

The second passage helps explain the first, and they both help explain some of the central points in The Philosophy of Rhetoric. "Thinking is metaphoric" is a metaphor—"metaphoric" is the vehicle, "thinking" the tenor, and "linkage by analogy" the ground. Consequently, the statement that metaphor is the essence of thinking exemplifies what it states. The reader will recall an earlier assertion that the subject of our present investigation does the same thing.

For Richards to talk about the futility of attempting to substitute nonmetaphorical language for metaphor is not for him to contradict his previous claims about the teaching-learning efficacy of translating figurative language into relatively nonfigurative language (note the key word "relatively") but rather to show one of the findings of such translation: The translating activity can show, by investigating analogies, just what role analogies play in
our thinking and learning. What he is arguing against here, as in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, is the idea that metaphor is mere decoration. The second passage in particular is, among other things, an attempt to show that remembering that "context" as Richards uses it means "'setting' plus 'originative context'" will make us aware that to say that words are interdependent within context is to use a metaphor which is at once spatial (in setting) and temporal (in originative context).

On avoiding fixities and certainties toward the end of maintaining openness and the possibility and desirability of refinement, Richards says: "Of the opposed risks—of being intolerably trite in my comments and of being indefensibly mistaken—I have taken the one, I expect, about as often as the other. It is in the nature of these risks that we run them most when we suppose we have escaped them" (p. 78). This is another example of Richards' continual insistence that it might be a good idea to evaluate his own work by its explicit and implicit evaluative criteria. As we have seen, Richards thinks that about the only thing he can be certain of in his work is that he will make mistakes. He hopes that we (and he) can profit from discovery of the mistakes, particularly by seeing how and why they were made. We do this by consciously preserving openness, not expecting too much of the answers to our questions: "To realize that a question has arisen
and what it is, may be as positive a result as to answer another question. Answers, after all, breed questions, or should. And as to conclusions, thinking is living and that has its conclusion right enough" (p. 249). This is not new to any investigator into "speculative instruments," but it affords a relevant insight:

Richards says that

in thinking about how we think, our aim must be to perceive as distinctly as possible what we are doing rather than to arrive at any final-looking positive theories. As we do so a great number of theories that are too crude to sustain the examination and have only at a distance been supposed to apply, are discarded; and to be rid of them is a great gain. We may be left without any theory, but we are at least freed from the interferences of mishandled abstractions (p. 249).

Richards may be less scornful than before of bogus entities (mishandled abstractions), but he still does not want murderers left at large. One of these, as we have seen in _The Philosophy of Rhetoric_, is the Usage doctrine, which tries to rule language in a different way but just as dictatorially as the One Proper Meaning Superstition, which it is calculated to replace. Here, as in _The Philosophy of Rhetoric_, he offers an organic principle of communication as a better rule for judging language use than usage or custom: "Custom is no criterion at all—unless it is the best custom—and we can tell which is the best custom, when we meet it or hit on it, only by using a standard with which custom has
nothing directly to do . . . but resides in us, as the active principle of communication, and is manifested in our developed skill with words" (p. 278). At this point I would not dare establish a seeming certainty. But I should like to suggest that the theory of communication here may have similarities with other theories of communication we have encountered along the way and that I may make subsequent reference to such seeming similarities in order to make further suggestions toward a tentative understanding of speculative instruments.

Interpretation in Teaching also makes an important contribution to another of Richards' speculative instruments—his theory of definition. We have already seen that a speculative instrument can take the form of a definition and that a definition can be a speculative instrument. In the chapter "Freedom in Definition," the last chapter in Interpretation in Teaching, Richards seems to be saying, indirectly, that a definition should be a speculative instrument and that a speculative instrument should be or at least imply a definition or definitions. We find him talking of a definition as though he were explicating the principle of instrumental dependence:

We want to do something and a definition is a means to doing it. If we want certain results, then we must use certain meanings (or definitions). But no definition has any authority apart from a
purpose, or to bar us from other purposes. And yet they endlessly do so. Who can doubt that we are often deprived of very useful thoughts merely because the words which might express them are being temporarily pre-empted by other meanings? Or that a development is often frustrated merely because we are sticking to a former definition of no service to the new purpose? (p. 384).

This shows some further implications of instrumental dependence. We are limited by the definition we choose, as shown in the quote here. We are limited by the instrument we choose, it being difficult to carve a steak with a whetstone or to observe bacteria with a telescope or to cut down a tree with a typewriter: in each case the trick is to choose or invent (and in each case, refine) instruments according to purpose, and hence arise the five evaluative questions we ask of a speculative instrument. Further, if we are limited by choice of literal instrument, what about the limitations involved in choice of teaching instrument? If our purpose is to teach grammar rules, then the traditional grammar books offer us an appropriate choice. But if our purpose is to teach understanding of the ways words work in discourse, then the traditional grammar books, with their rules, offer an inappropriate choice: "... as the history of grammar and logic in the schools display ad nauseam, rules are the enemy of understanding. Learning the rules is the fatal course, if we do not, by some other means, also learn to look behind them to the reasons which make them
useful" (p. 292). This is another way of stating what Richards regards as obvious to the point of oblivion, viz., that we are limited by our choice of speculative instrument—once we choose a definition or a theory we are limited to the accomplishment of only those tasks which the definition or theory can perform.

The burden of every book we have examined, from The Foundations of Aesthetics to Interpretation in Teaching has been essentially that of making this point.

Back now to "Freedom in Definition": "Subject only to our purpose—which, I need hardly say, includes communication—we are free to define our words as we please. This, of course, applies also to the word 'definition'; and I am availing myself of this freedom here" (p. 385). Freedom and the responsibility which, as Richards insists, accrues to it. Taking his cue, must I not call attention to my purpose? Subject only to my purpose—which, I need hardly say, is explication—I am free to define "speculative instruments" as I please. But since my purpose is explication, my freedom carries the responsibility of showing as well as I can what Richards' definition of the term is and how it works in his system (context?).

Richards offers two methods of defining: (1) definition by example and (2) definition by "equivalent expression." Definition by example is a matter of pointing to something and saying that
the word signifying it means the particular something and other
things like it. This has the advantage of immediacy, but it has
a disadvantage too. If we define "tragedy" by pointing to Oedipus
Rex, we have shown only one example, and the disadvantage is
that we do not stipulate in what respects other things must resemble
Oedipus Rex. The disadvantage can be ameliorated to some extent
by use of multiple examples, but this would still not give a complete
definition. Definition by equivalent expression is a matter of
deciding what expression may be substituted for another in any
given use: ". . . the two expressions are equivalent if whatever
we say with one can be said with the other" (p. 388). This method
is too restricted as it stands. If an expression had a meaning
apart from context, it might be considered a constant equivalent
of another; but even then strict equivalence would be no better
than definition by example, because it would amount to the same
thing as a result of having shown an example of equivalence without
establishing a defining principle. "Thus," says Richards, "as with
translation—it is the same problem—we should recognize that def-
inition is always partial" (p. 390).

If definition is always partial, why should we compound the
difficulty by sticking to one mode of definition? Might different
modes work rather well in conjunction with one another? When we
discover that "no expression whatever is entirely and in all respects equivalent to any other," we are likely to conclude that "there is then nothing lost but everything to be gained by using different sorts of definitions for different purposes, or giving the word 'definition' various senses, provided we know and can make clear if need be to others what we are doing. That making clear will be itself a process of defining, of showing how we are proceeding" (p. 390).

If all definitions are partial, then the appropriate mood for a definition, as for any speculative instrument, is the conditional, or a variety of it. Richards urges that in offering a definition we offer it as "itself an invitation, a request, or, on occasion, an imperative; but not a statement" (p. 390). This would be using the appropriate mood, which is not the indicative but the optative. So I should not say "A definition is a request" but "Come! let us understand by 'a definition' an invitation to regard a certain word as meaning so and so. Will you be so good as to accept?" (p. 391).

This calls our attention to the conditional and its relationship to openness. It also suggests a further advantage of constant awareness of the optative mood in defining: "If we recognized more frankly that how any word whatsoever is used is a matter of choice, of invitation and consent, not of regimentation, conformity and
compulsion, should we not then better understand how artificial are the imagined discrete senses of our words, how dependent they are on the meaning we give to the sentence" (p. 393). We may have freedom in definition, but we are dependent upon our purpose, the setting and originative context of the words we use, the motivation of the reader (his reading our definition supplies the setting, and his own originative context contributes to his motivation), and our own skill in choosing words and arranging them into a definition.

This may be a good place to summarize the various earlier hints as to the relationship between instrumental dependence and organicism. We have noticed a seeming analogy between them, and Richards supplies further clues. Metaphorically, we can think of the human eye, with its lens, as a speculative instrument ("specular," "spectacles"), and if we do we may see (hopefully without altering it for the worse) what Richards means by quoting Blake's saying that "'The eye altering, alters all,,'" and adding that "the eye—the intellectual organ that, in defining, determines the limits of things—is always altering, for worse there, for better here, we hope" (p. 396). Considering what we have come to understand so far about instrumental dependence, and considering also that the
principle of instrumental dependence will be more fully explicated in the next chapter, this quote hardly needs explaining. [Let us compare it with the newspaper headline MAN CAN'T HELP BUT CONTAMINATE THE MOON AND COMPLICATE THE STUDY OF HIS FINDINGS THERE (July 19, 1969)]. Richards is clearly discussing instrumental dependence. But the quote continues—

But no one eye, no one creative outlook, settles anything. Like the words in a sentence, we are meaningless unless we take our senses from one another. The individual, alone, is nothing; though the whole takes its value from the individuals within it. Society thus has a Grammar—the co-operation of its members. This breaks down easily unless the instruments of co-operation, the language of its members, serve and grow with it (p. 396).

This sounds like an organic view of instrumental dependence. Richards, in stating that the interdependence of words is a model for the interdependence of human beings and for any other things which can interinanimate, seems to be suggesting also that the interdependence of words is a model for instrumental dependence, or even better, that instrumental dependence is a special case of interdependence.

A review of some relevant ideas in Richards' work may aid in developing this suggestion. A metaphor has two parts, tenor and vehicle, which interact in a special way—they are interdependent, and that is what is meant by saying that they
interinanimate. A word has a setting and an originative context which interinanimate. An utterance has a setting (the words which interinanimate within it) and an originative context (its specific language) which interinanimate. A metaphor is a word and an utterance. Words, utterances, and metaphors may be evaluated by the efficacy with which they communicate their meanings, and communicative efficacy is a degree of interinanimation and of growth of meaning.

The mind has a setting (the human being, in which appetencies interinanimate) and an originative context (the specific culture in which the human being lives) which interinanimate. The mind may be evaluated by the degree in which it orders its interinanimations, and synaesthesia is a degree of interinanimation.

Human beings have a setting (the state or nation in which they as citizens interinanimate) and an originative context (the specific culture in which each of them develops) which interinanimate. Nations have a setting (the world in which they interinanimate politically and economically) and a context (their respective specific cultures) which interinanimate. Peace is a degree of interinanimation.

Communicative efficacy, synaesthesia, and peace all require equilibrium and harmony, and to say so is to assert a principle of
organicism. A speculative instrument is a means of working
toward equilibrium and harmony. And, since it is couched in
language and is therefore an utterance, and since it is also a
quasi-metaphor, it is as much an organism as any other utterance
or metaphor.

The principle of organicism is derived from observation of
the interactions of words and their interdependence within setting
and within originative context. The principle of instrumental
dependence is derived from observation of the interactions of inves-
tigative instruments with findings and their interdependence within
setting and within originative context.

Speculative instruments are interdependent with other spec-
culative instruments, and each speculative instrument is interdependent
with its earlier exemplifications. Since Richards regards a spec-
culative instrument metaphorically as an organism, and since he
regards an utterance metaphorically as an organism, the principle
of instrumental dependence as it works in the speculative instru-
ments concept is analogous to the principle of organicism as it
works in the interactions of words. Hence, both principles are
operative as spatial metaphors and as time metaphors—spatial in
that both have settings and temporal in that both are developmental,
and to say that they are developmental is another way of saying
that setting and originative context interinanimate.
I should like to close this chapter with a quotation from Richards. It is the last part of the last paragraph of Interpretation in Teaching, and it is a suggestion about how rhetoric, grammar, and logic, all redefined, can work together not only as policemen but also as physicians, diagnosing and treating any disruptive condition, or "contamination," which might impede growth toward communicative efficacy, synaesthesis, or any other species of equilibrium and harmony:

Rhetoric guards from these contaminations both Logic, and the deeper integrations of myth which speak for reason. It contains religion, as Logic contains science, and Grammar contains communication, and has the largest scope of the three. For in Rhetoric's care is that unity or, as Coleridge would have written, coadunation of the mind which is, whatever the deviations, the aim behind and before our strivings— an increasing organic interinanimation of meanings, the biologic growth of the mind in the individual and in a social inheritance maintaining the human advance (p. 396).
"High things are hard" (Speculative Instruments, p. 71), says Richards, in a sentence which I wrench out of context. The hardest of the high things (and, perhaps the highest of the hard things) to which our investigation takes us is Speculative Instruments\(^1\) (1955). We pick up the book avidly, hoping at last to find what its title seems to promise and what our study of Richards' work has led us to desire—viz., clear, straightforward explication of just what the term "speculative instruments" means and how the concept "speculative instruments" is to be understood as operating within Richards' system: Answers we want, support at last, for our thesis about these matters; and what weary investigator would not at this point think he deserved answer and support? Support we get, but not without similar "equivalent trouble" as in Coleridge on Imagination and throughout; and instead

\(^1\)I. A. Richards, Speculative Instruments (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955).
of answers we get more questions, "queries" indeed. Our task here is therefore twofold: to get at "speculative instruments" as well as we can by exercising "equivalent trouble" if we can, and to try to understand why we are supplied with questions rather than answers.

Speculative Instruments contains eighteen different "pieces," as Richards calls them in his Foreword—articles, lectures, notes for talks, etc., each to be construed (or so we must deduce, from the title of the book) as an example of a speculative instrument; but Richards does not say exactly this in his Foreword, itself a most high hard thing, tantalizing in its terse, oblique, and elliptical style and yet offering, almost in disguise, a rather complete picture of the speculative instruments concept. The reason for this kind of presentation is not at once evident, but there are some clues: this kind of presentation is not uncharacteristic of Richards, and we have discovered (especially in Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism, Mencius on the Mind, and Coleridge on Imagination) that Richards regards passive participation, in reading, as a contradiction in terms. He may be deliberately offering here, as elsewhere, a style which will allow active participation or else none at all, thereby demonstrating the necessary role of creative reading (or listening) in successful communication and the corollary advantage of keeping in mind the
indirectness inherent in successful interpretation. All writers are confronted with the problem of style, of course, and the hardest part of the problem is that of fitting style to content. John Dewey calls it a matter of intellectual honesty: he is unwilling to allow a lucidity of style to symbolize a specious simplicity in the subject matter being investigated (I almost said "invested," which would have probably been better, had I been paraphrasing Richards rather than Dewey). We might put it this way: If the nature of the instrument affects the nature of the findings, then if the instrument is suited to its task, the nature of what is to be found out affects the nature of the instrument. Lucidity is of course desirable, necessary indeed, for communication; but a "translucent" style, such as Richards frequently uses, is not a bar to lucidity but rather, in Richards' case, an aid to lucidity in the sense of showing that what is being studied is a complex matter indeed, not capable of treatment by an oversimplified style suggestive of unclear or devious thinking on the part of the writer.

Richards states that these pieces have "certain common purposes," leaving it to the reader to discover what these purposes

---

are and saying of them (1) that they "for the most part, are such that no one knows what preparation would be best or how we should equip ourselves to pursue them" (p. ix) and (2) that "my reader will see why I do not yet precisely name them" (p. ix). Not very comforting assertions, these. I do not "see why"; if I did, I might see why he took so long to "precisely name"

Speculative Instruments. But I thought I saw why in Coleridge on Imagination, and said so. Could it be that Richards' confident "my reader will see" juxtaposed with my desperate "I do not see" shows merely that I haven't yet qualified as a reader? Let us discover whether an attempt at "equivalent trouble" can bring about such a qualification. We have two immediate preliminary tasks: to discover why Richards does not give precise names to these common purposes and then to discover what these purposes are, even if the best answers we can arrive at are further questions, in which instance we might have an insight into the problem of why Richards offers us questions rather than answers.

Could it be that Richards refrains from precisely naming these purposes because (1) to name them would be to list the characteristics of speculative instruments, (2) to list the characteristics would be to give a definition of "speculative instruments," and (3) to offer examples of speculative instruments is, for
Richards, more effective than beginning with a definition?

Richards says of Shakespeare's use of language in *Troilus and Cressida* that it is "language become itself a translucent instance of what it would describe; it both says what it means and illustrates it" (p. 210). Can we not apply this to what Richards is doing with language? Is he not using a translucent style, one which calls attention to itself without obscuring what it is attempting to convey, which is largely itself? This consideration brings up once more the mirror image we encountered while discussing *Mencius on the Mind* and may encounter again, shortly.

What, then, are the purposes which the eighteen speculative instruments have in common? Shouldn't they include the clarification by example and theoretical discussion of the speculative instruments concept? The Foreword reveals the presence of all four of the identifying characteristics of speculative instruments. Instrumental dependence and the conditional, as we have come to understand them, appear in the same paragraph:

"The most central theme of these attempts may be the recognition that most ways of studying language use language and must expect to take the consequences. None of these pieces hopes to say what these consequences may be. The medium, the instrument through which we say, is not so simple as such a hope would imply (p. x)."

The first sentence of this quotation is a restatement of the concept that the nature of the instrument affects the nature of the findings.
This is later developed by Richards into what he calls explicitly the principle of instrumental dependence, which will be discussed below. The last two sentences of the above quotation amount to a reassertion of the ever-present caution in Richards' work—the expressed conditional. One might almost regard this instance, with words like "may," "hope," and "would," so prominent, as a "double" conditional (cf. "If we had some ham, we could have ham sandwiches, if we had some bread").

Refinement is revealed in the statement that "it is the aim of this collection of essays to increase . . . familiarity with situations in which we are trying to see what is being said and trying to separate it from what is not being said, situations above all in which we would, if we could, investigate our intellective instruments themselves, the tools with which we work in all investigation" (p. x). An attempt, as described in this quote, to gain increased familiarity with the situation is what Richards meant by the figure of navigation as he used it in Practical Criticism; and in the suggestion that we investigate our "intellective instruments" we are reminded of the now familiar images of the mirror and the whetstone.

In Richards' insistence that the central theme of these "pieces" is "not doctrine but discernment" (p. xi) and that "the concern of these pieces is with the questions they may awake
rather than with any answers they could impart" (p. xii), we have
not only the "openness" characteristic of speculative instruments
stressed once more, but also a suggestion as to the efficacy
(regarding openness) of questions, the latter suggestions supported
strongly by the "piece" entitled "Queries," a presentation given
at a meeting of the Harvard Philosophy Department in 1945,
consisting entirely of "sentences" ending with question marks. In
this "piece" he questions his own procedure by asking, "Wouldn't
it be more natural to start with a definition of a Theory (or
Proposition or Statement), or at least some sort of indication of
what a Theory is, and then from that go on to describe or define
a Query?" (p. 133). (Might we not substitute "Speculative
Instrument" for "Query" in this quote?). He then responds to
his query with others: "But why should we make Queries thus
parasitic upon Theories? Doesn't the converse really make better
sense?" (p. 133); further, "Might it not be a mistake in strategy
from the outset to develop an Inquiry into Querying through any­
thing but Queries?" (p. 134). (What about the mistake in strategy
of a similar procedure with Speculative Instruments?); and still
further, "Have we any means of inquiring, with any hope of valid
results, into the questioning process? . . . And what would valid
results be? Other queries?" (pp. 135-136). Have we reached
tentative answers or at least clearer questions about Richards'
method in Speculative Instruments? Have we discovered the identifying characteristics of speculative instruments in the "hard" Foreword? Are these characteristics really what a speculative instrument amounts to? Can a query be a speculative instrument?

Finally, mediation appears as a "common purpose" in Richards' assertion that the "pieces" in Speculative Instruments are held together by "their common concern with interpretation, with the politics of the divided mind and with the resolutions which generate intelligibility and comprehension" (p. ix). We need do no more than turn at random to our discussion of any of Richards' previous books to see how "interpretation" (e. g., The Meaning of Meaning), "the politics of the divided mind" (conciliation, e. g., Science and Poetry), and "the resolutions which generate intelligibility and comprehension" (communication theory and practice, e. g., Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism, Interpretation in Teaching, and Mencius on the Mind) are subsumed under the concept of mediation as a practical application of speculative instruments.

Most of the "pieces" in Speculative Instruments are in effect maps and charts along with strategical plans for getting somewhere or at least for getting a start toward a somewhere. The most
symbolized by the word "toward" in the titles of the essays; and even those essays which do not include the word in the title are susceptible to subtitles which would include it. For example, "Notes toward an Agreement Between Literary Criticism and Some of the Sciences," "Toward a Theory of Comprehending," "Toward Practice in Interpretation," and "Toward a More Synoptic View" incorporate the directionally verbing preposition itself, and many of the other essays imply it. For example, "Emotive Meaning Again" is pointed toward comprehension of and mediation between emotive and symbolic meaning, "The Future of the Humanities in General Education" aims at similar understanding between the humanities and forces which are at war with them from within and without, and "The Idea of a University" orients toward a more synoptic view, using the term and the concept from Plato which suggest the now familiar mind-university-state-world analogy, establish the title of the central essay of Speculative Instruments, and "orient" beyond Plato, since the inexorable trending is toward a somewhere so synaesthetic in its pure unserene that were we to arrive there we might be curiously aware of having achieved a state of equilibrium and harmony reminiscent of something upon which aesthetics was once founded.

The procedure in the rest of this chapter will be to discuss the features relevant to the speculative instruments concept as they
appear in several of the "pieces" (I shall call them essays), one essay at a time, taking them not in order of appearance but in order of degree of complexity, saving until last "Toward a More Synoptic View," for reasons which will be obvious.

In "Notes toward Agreement between Literary Criticism and Some of the Sciences," Richards considers several "approaches" toward such agreement: "May, may, indeed, be the first and the last word in any such approaches—if it may!" (p. 3), declares a one-sentence paragraph. The point here is that the conditional appears as a major factor in appropriate understanding of instrumental dependence, a point which supports our earlier discovery that the four identifying characteristics of speculative instruments are not discrete—they are all mutually interdependent. This special case of instrumental dependence proceeds conditionally: "Any such approaches" refers to any instrumentally dependent, mediating endeavors; and the sentence, by beginning and ending with the word "may," illustrates what it asserts, viz., the desirability of bracketing each assertion with at least an understood conditional in order to preserve the epistemological honesty mentioned at the beginning of our investigation. Since expressing a conditional with each assertion would impede communication, we must eschew such an awkward method of exposition, but we will do well to retain
the tone of the conditional:

Within such 'may . . . may' brackets (which are dually permissive and probabilist) we may use what will look like straight indicatives . . . . But our 'may . . . may' brackets may remind us that any meaning any word may have floats upon a primitive raft of consents. It can mean what it may only for those who will let it (p. 4).

That is to say that authority has its source in agreement, not force. Here, Richards seems to be recommending that our language behavior ought to be ruled in a way of which Mencius would approve; and he may be so doing, but the main point is that in fact (by choice, as we shall see later) at the level of meaning, language behavior is ruled by the authority of agreement. For example, Richards states in a very similar passage in "Toward a Theory of Comprehending" that "everything which seems to be said in the indicative floats on a raft of optative invitations to mean in such wise. Any theory of meanings which can serve as authority . . . is concerned with the mutual tension of whatever can be put together to serve as that raft" (p. 20). By "everything" Richards refers to everything said in the work in which the sentence occurs. But it also applies to "everything which seems to be said in the indicative" anywhere, since authority in meanings is based upon agreement. He is taking his observations about the existence of communication in language and the way in which such communication operates as a model for better communication in other instrumentally
dependent endeavors, most of which use language anyway: That is to say that if authority in meanings arises through agreement, thereby yielding a communicative efficacy unattainable otherwise, it might be a good idea to try to achieve authority through agreement rather than through some other means in affairs of the mind, the university, and the state. And this is in no way a naturalistic ethic. It is an open, conditional recommendation about how we might get pointed toward a more synoptic view; it is a prediction, or, better, a hypothesis, subject to replacement and/or refinement after experimentation. If Richards' description of language resembles Mencius' recommendation of appropriate relationship between ruler and ruled, such resemblance is of the most extreme historical and cultural significance; but it is beside the point of what Richards is getting at in Speculative Instruments: viz., that if a method works at one level, we had better try it at higher levels when all other methods tried heretofore have failed and when the very real possibility exists that the world situation is such that authority through agreement is the only alternative to total annihilation or, worse, total tyranny.

In "Language and Value," Richards refers to language as "our chief exerciser of Choice" (p. 137). This is related to the conditional as discussed above, using the "may . . . may" brackets
as example, in that it helps to show further just how agreement in language arises. Richards holds that facts are based upon choice, and by that he means that presentations of what we call fact are in fact couched in language, which communicates, when and if it does communicate, by virtue of the fact that we choose, consciously or unconsciously, to agree upon what the words in the language we use do in fact and by choice mean. Hence, matters of fact, when and if they are separable from matters of choice, are based upon choice in the use of language for stating them. As Richards puts it, "to a much greater extent than we profess we communicate through offerings of CHOICES, not through presentations of FACT" (p. 139). If Richards' reader responds to this by saying that the very comment on language made here may be choice rather than fact, then he is responding appropriately to a speculative instrument; the trick is to get him to see the appropriateness of his response.

In his discussion of agreement in language and its relationship to fact and choice, Richards uses the raft metaphor again:

Our statements of fact themselves must be buoyed up, if they are to float at all, on invitations to consent to CHOICES of meaning. The indicative (or assertive) is an abbreviating device for coordinating our CHOICES and the optative is the indispensable mood (p. 139).

This is not only to reiterate the idea (fact/choice) that authority in language meanings comes through agreement but also to show once
again that thorough consideration of the conditional takes us to a concern with instrumental dependence and with refinement; for what Richards has in effect been doing here is taking the dictum "Know thyself" and applying it to the speculative instruments concept. We must realize, he says, "that this question: 'What are we doing?' MOST needs to be asked about our attempts to answer it" (p. 142). This amounts to a recommendation that we choose to examine the nature of our speculative instruments toward the end of refinement, that we choose to refine them if refinement seems in order (and it should, if the speculative instruments have not lost their openness, an identifying characteristic of speculative instruments, anyway), and that we choose the most appropriate among the available means of refinement. We have heard a good deal of this and shall hear more.

"Poetry as an Instrument of Research" is an essay which incorporates the figure of the instrument in its title and which was elicited primarily as a response to those readers of Richards' earlier work who thought he was using "pseudo-statement" as a pejorative term, particularly in *Science and Poetry*. In fact and by choice, he was simply showing that in the symbolic-emotive dichotomy of language use, sentences which incorporate emotive elements are neither true nor false in the sense that symbolic
sentences are. This is not to demean poetry in any way but rather to point out that emotive use of language is "fluid" by comparison with the more "rigid" symbolic use and thus more resourceful for the imagination; or, in his words, "In fluid language a great many very precise meanings may be free to dispose themselves in a multiplicity of diverse ways" (pp. 148-149). This resourcefulness of the emotive use of language gives poets the opportunity to express themselves in ways which the symbolic use of language would prevent.

But the main point of interest of this essay is that it takes poetry and research, two traditionally antagonistic activities, and shows how they might profitably interact. In Richards' words, To put two such lively words together and feel their tensions and interactions—in the ghostly schemas of the possible settings they can conjure up—while trying meanwhile to find some way of recording the drama, or at least of indicating the different roles and relations their meanings assume: this is Poetry at work as an Instrument of Research. There is no technique for it as yet (p. 151).

There is no need to elaborate here upon the relevance of the term "Instrument" in this passage or of the characteristic technique-seeking. He is attempting to mediate between rival views and to let the nature of his investigative endeavors be shaped by the nature of his task, or, in other words, to choose among available instruments the one best suited to do the desired job.
Specifically, the suggestion in this essay is that a poetic question may demand a poetic answer, or at least that a poetic query may appropriately lead to further queries, themselves poetic in nature; and here Richards means that an emotive use of language may upon occasion provide a better way of studying emotive language than would a symbolic use. This does not indicate that studies of poems should necessarily be poems themselves but rather that we might profitably take up "a poetic concern with the interactions of words—not to produce more poems but to induce a heightened and clarified sort of observation of the poetic process at work" (p. 152).

This concern with choosing the most appropriate among available instruments and with fitting the chosen instrument to its task is part of what we have called a matter of the nature of the investigative instrument affecting the nature of the findings and vice versa. It points us toward what Richards is to call the principle of instrumental dependence, a concept which we will discuss in more detail when we find Richards using the term. Here, we get a multiple definition of the word "Instrument": "a tool, an agency, a means, a stage in a process, a circumstance, something in which or with which or through which or by which some outcome may be forwarded" (p. 152). This is of course not an exhaustive list. It is a suggestion that almost anything can
be called an instrument, even his method here for classifying instruments: "Instruments might be divided into endless kinds and the modes set up for these dividings (the principles of classification) could be highly various. But further, these modes, these principles themselves would be instruments and so would any procedures we might use for sorting or ordering them" (p. 152). Are we then to lament having so many instruments to choose from? Certainly not, if we are willing still to consider poetry as a possible instrument of research, for

if so the super-problem is to find means of making the greatest possible variety of means available: the widest and freest choice of instruments. For instruments enter into the work and shape not only the success attained but also the end pursued (p. 153).

If such dependence as this does exist, then choice of instrument is of crucial importance, in which case we need more, not fewer instruments among which to choose. And poetry seems to offer more choices than other modes of language, because it employs a use of words which, "being clear of prose engagement, are still as yet free to experiment with one another as to which meanings they may jointly support..." (pp. 153-154). Poetry, then, as an instrument of research, is useful not only in offering us wider choices, but also in \textit{slowing down} our propensity to leap before we look—in finding us fresh Instruments all the way up
toward the endless arch-inquiry: What are we and what are we trying to become?" (p. 154). Is there a better example than this of a poetic question?

"Toward a Theory of Comprehending" is an attempt to make clearer what Richards was getting at in *Mencius on the Mind*, particularly in its last chapter, "Towards a Technique for Comparative Studies." This is a clear example of a speculative instrument being refined. It also is concerned with mediation. The focus here is upon comprehending per se more than upon comparative scholarship for the very good reason, which was also mentioned in *Mencius on the Mind*, that the difficulties of comparing meanings between two languages are compounded by the difficulties in understanding meanings within one language:

How may we compare what a sentence in English may mean with what a sentence in Chinese may mean? The only sound traditional answer is in terms of two scholarships—one in English, the other in Chinese. But a scepticism which can be liberating rather than paralysing may make us doubtful of the sufficiency of our techniques for comparing meanings even within one tradition (p. 20).

Richards' answer to this question is predictably that we begin by re-examining our traditional answer, and, by discovering methods which have been before our eyes all the time, arrive at a schema for the development of an untraditional answer, or, more
accurately, a better way of asking the question. Might we not take him to be trying to construct a better query?

His argument runs something like this: If we are to comprehend comparing, then we may begin by taking a look at comprehending itself. If we find that comprehending is done best by comparing, then a careful study of the nature of comparing may help us get started toward a theory of comprehending. More specifically, Richards sees a "know thyself" dictum necessarily inherent in any genuine effort to comprehend, a principle of refinement by which such an effort keeps itself going. Of any striving to comprehend, Richards says that

a first condition of the endeavour is a recognition of its inherent wilfulness. It is purposive; it seeks. If asked what it seeks, its only just answer should be: 'Itself.' It seeks to comprehend what comprehending may be. What is sought is the search.

Yet it advances (p. 18).

And it advances because of its inherent tendency toward refinement: "The process of refining its assumptions must be just as endless as the endeavour itself" (p. 18).

Refinement in the endeavor to comprehend comprehending proceeds, as in most learning activities, by comparing; in this case, the endeavor compares its own exploratory instruments with the ground of exploration and with each other:
Whatever it compares is compared in a respect or in respects. These respects are the instruments of the exploration. And it is with them as with the instruments of investigation in physics but more so: the properties of the instruments enter into the account of the investigation (p. 18).

This way of talking about instruments appeared as early as *The Meaning of Meaning* and has been present ever since. It is shortly to be called by Richards the principle of instrumental dependence and will then be discussed as promised. But we are not through with our consideration of comparing as a means of refinement. Richards continues:

> There is thus at the heart of any theory of meanings a principle of the instrument. The exploration of comprehension is the task of devising a system of instruments for comparing meanings. But these systems, these instruments are themselves comparable (pp. 18-19).

Although this account is highly abstract, we do not have far to seek for concrete supportive examples. One need only instance the various exercises in multiple definition which have been repeatedly in evidence since *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, the study of communication and values in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and the biological type classification of the "protocols" in *Practical Criticism*.

This account of comparing has taken us back to the concept of choice. We compare instruments for the sake of making a
choice among them, the criterion being fitness of the instrument to
do the job for which it was designed:

In brief, we make an instrument and try it out. Only by trying it out can we discover what it
can do for us. Likewise, only such trial can
develop our comprehending of what it is with
which we seek to explore comprehending (pp. 21-22).

Toward the immediate end of such exploring, Richards
presents a diagram of the way communication works, an expansion
of the diagram, showing how comparison operates in communication,
and then a diagram of seven different activities present in success-
ful communication. To reproduce these diagrams here would be
to digress. For it is not our purpose to judge the efficacy of
such diagrams but rather to see how Richards would have us
proceed if we did undertake such judging. Further, it is not
even part of our purpose here to judge the efficacy of the specu-
lat ive instruments concept itself but rather to clear it up if
possible. Richards warns repeatedly that the impulse to defend
or refute nearly always precedes the impulse to understand; and
not only has he verified this observation in Practical Criticism
and Interpretation in Teaching, but also responses to Richards
have proclaimed it. We would wish this investigation to resist
consistently any such impulse. The triangle diagram from The
Meaning of Meaning as well as the listing of various exercises
in multiple definition will have to suffice as examples; and to
the extent that these examples may have been unconsciously
defended or refuted, to that extent this investigation is in more
drastic need of refinement than its caretaker knows.

In "Emotive Meaning Again," as in "Poetry as an
Instrument of Research," Richards says that he never intended to
demean the emotive use of language and further that in choosing
instruments suited to jobs, an emotive use of language may
sometimes be a more appropriate choice than a symbolic use.
"I am asking," he says,

whether any prose theory designed on traditional
and current lines can be or provide a suitable
instrument. And by stressing prose so I have
implied (by means which would elude a strictly
logical analysis) that poetic theory might supply
what is lacking. It would not be a prose account
of poetry so much as a poetic account of prose . . .
(p. 41).

This idea has been examined above. The significance here is
that in connection with the speculation that poetry might be use-
ful as an investigative instrument Richards uses the term
"speculative instrument" when he asks the question "Can any
present-day, logico-analytic inquiry give us a useful picture (an
employable 'speculative instrument') for improving our handling of
language?" (p. 41). The key question to keep in mind while
attempting to develop such an instrument has to do with its purpose: "With what do we most need help in our handling of language?" (p. 45). What we most need help with is something which habitual neglect of this key question has led us to take for granted, viz., the ways in which words interact. Although some of the problems of "the interactions of words" have been examined above, we need to see how Richards restates them here, in order that we may better understand what follows. He says that "the conventions of writing, by separating words, have made them seem to be quasi-independent units possessing—we now imagine—separate 'meanings' which are then modified by their settings. But in practice they get their 'meaning' through the settings they occur in" (p. 45). Hence, an employable speculative instrument for improving our handling of language would be one which could help us understand that "the problem 'how a series of symbols comes to have the peculiar type of unit associated with sentences' is standing on its head. We should be asking instead how a separated symbol comes to be taken as having a meaning of its own" (p. 46). The answer to a question like this is not necessarily a statement but may be a further question. It does not have to be stated in either symbolic or emotive uses of language exclusively. And efforts to force such an answer to serve a strictly symbolic purpose or, on the other hand, a strictly
emotive purpose, have historically gotten us nowhere. Consequently, it is profitable to realize that "the speculative instrument we are in quest of must suit both purposes, which brings us back to our key questions: For what do we need this instrument? and What sort of an instrument therefore should it be?" (p. 48).

Richards holds that any satisfactory answer to the first of these two questions turns us back to our quest for an instrument, since a symbolic account of the two sorts of meaning "sacrifices emotive meaning by example" (p. 49), an emotive account would run the risk of being merely a sermon, and a mixture of the two would compound these difficulties. Consequently, answering the second of the above questions first may be a better way to continue our quest for an instrument. "This instrument," Richards avers, "must be able to mediate, it must have a foot in each boat and yet be run away with by neither. And yet again, it must leave both functions free, in the sense that it is their creature and has no support or authority which does not derive in the end from them" (p. 49). Mediation. Freedom to develop. Authority based upon agreement. Mencius on the relationship between the will and the ch' i. Plato on the guardians in the Republic. Richards on speculative instruments.
At last Richards gives a name to the speculative instrument which might conceivably be a good choice for performing the desired tasks: "To distinguish, relate, and mediate between the modes of language, or the species of meaning, we need no more than, and no less than, Philosophy" (p. 50). This is not to say that philosophy has in fact done these jobs but that, redefined, it might do them if anything could.

The main reason philosophy needs redefining is that it has encouraged disputation, an activity which in Richards' opinion is self-defeating. Philosophy has encouraged disputation predictably and rather naturally, since "argumentative prowess, versatility in intellectual manoeuvre, and trenchancy in abstract debate offer temptations hard to resist. Whence it comes that academic exercises in philosophy have rarely had more to do with inquiry into truth than training for the tournament or the prize ring" (p. 52). The irony, then, is that disputation, an activity fostered by philosophy (or at least, rarely turned out-of-doors by philosophy), thwarts philosophical enterprise. Consequently, the desired speculative instrument, philosophy redefined, should have nothing to do with disputation. But just exactly how, one may ask, does disputation thwart philosophical enterprise? Richards' answer is that
no verbal institution has done more than disputation to frustrate man, to prevent the referential and emotive functions coming to terms, and to warp the conduct of language—in its highest self-administering activities most of all. For a very clear reason. The disputant's interpretations are controlled by immediate specific purposes. He is commonly too busy making his points to see what they are. He is in the worst possible condition to observe what is taking place. And seeing what is taking place is no small part of the business of learning how to keep things in their places (p. 52).

Learning how to keep things in their places is largely a matter of equilibrium and harmony. Disputation upsets both by calling attention to itself and away from the issue: the disputants become more interested in winning the argument than in clearing up the issue. Our desired speculative instrument, philosophy redefined, can help avoid disputation if it is fashioned to fit its task, "keeping things in their proper places" (p. 51): i.e., through mediation, to call our attention away from disputation and back to the issue and also to aid in keeping the impulse to understand in front of the impulse to defend or to refute.

Although Richards' redefinition of philosophy was done in the context of a discussion of emotive meaning, in which context its mediating task was between emotive and symbolic uses of language, the mediating tasks which we can legitimately ask this
speculative instrument to help us perform are many and far-reaching. In "The Idea of a University," Richards illustrates this by holding up as a model case Plato's idea of what a university should be and do. Plato's scheme for university studies in the Republic, says Richards, is so familiar to us that we are likely to overlook its main point:

This inquiry into 'What is justice?' comes down actually to an inquiry into 'What would a just man be?' and 'How could we produce him?' A just man (or woman) is one with all his or her bits and parts and talents and abilities in their right places, doing their own work and not getting in the way of one another (p. 107).

Does this not sound like equilibrium and harmony? We have examined no book by Richards, from The Foundations of Aesthetics to Speculative Instruments, which did not at one point or another advance similar suggestions seriously, and we have nearly always found his books (thinking machines, as he would have them called) investigating the question of how best to reconcile conflicting interests of all kinds, especially Principles of Literary Criticism and Mencius on the Mind. Here, we seem to be getting the idea of synaesthesia via Plato rather than Mencius; for Plato's prescription for producing just men is to give them a course of study at the University in which "they will take the arts and sciences they have been educated in at school and put them into connection, in a comprehensive synoptic view of
their relations with one another and with what truly is' 
(Republic, 537)" (p. 108).

But Richards is interested not so much in the synoptic view itself as in the nature of the endeavor toward it. The endeavor is not only to reach a synoptic view, but also "to create the organ of comprehending which can do that" (p. 110). Synoptic: seeing together with. The richness is in the "with"—seeing together with alternate and/or opposing points of view and also (and more important) seeing together with the organ of comprehending, the routine eye improved by the mediating, refining, conditional, and open speculative instrument. All very high sounding and wonderful, indeed, considering the possible applications to science, the liberal arts, world politics, and mental health. The problem is how, after redefining philosophy, we can get people to recognize and to use this speculative instrument; and the recommended solution is to strive toward achieving authority through agreement, based upon the model of the way language achieves its authority, as outlined above. If we should so solve this problem,

We would have authority: an authority which would have behind it all that man knows in all his modes of knowing and all that he would will to become through all his quests for being. It would be an authority which could wholly be respected and accepted, because it would represent the whole man, not any party or pressure group among his interests. All authority derives from
the consent of those who acknowledge it. (Any other government rests on coercion merely, not authority. The fears are a faction only in our minds.) The authority which Plato's synoptic view would try to give us could gain our complete consent, could be wholly persuasive, because it would unify us (p. 112).

Once again we encounter the mind-world analogy, the consistent use of the key word "interests," the use of "government" as a guiding metaphor, and the concept of the benign ruler (as in Mencius on the Mind). Could it be that the speculative instruments concept has grown like a biological organism, that now that it has reached its full growth we can see its present form implicit in the genes, as it were, of The Foundations of Aesthetics and The Meaning of Meaning?

"Toward a More Synoptic View" is the name of the essay following "The Idea of a University" as well as the name of the direction in which philosophy as a speculative instrument should take us, especially in its mediating role: "I take Philosophy," says Richards, "to be most usefully the overall name nowadays of the diplomatic services between the studies" (p. 113). This is the speculative instrument he derived in "Emotive Meaning Again," and once more the principle arises of the nature of the investigative instrument affecting the nature of the findings and vice
versa, a principle which we have considered basic to the speculative instruments concept and which Richards finally attaches a name to, here. He calls it the principle of "Instrumental Dependence" (p. 115), and he restates the principle by asserting that "the very instruments we use if we try to say anything which is not trivial about language embody in themselves the very problems we hope to use them to explore" (p. 114). This is not new, and at this point it is familiar enough not to require paraphrase or expansion. The main point he is making here is that such instrumental dependence is not peculiar to language or to speculative instruments but is present in any investigative activity. To illustrate this he quotes J. R. Oppenheimer's paraphrase of Bohr's principle of complementarity from Scientific American, September 1950, p. 22:

"The basic finding was that in the atomic world it is not possible to describe the atomic system under investigation in abstraction from the apparatus used for the investigation by a single, unique objective model. Rather, a variety of models, each corresponding to a possible experimental arrangement and all required for a complete description of possible physical experience, stand in a complementarity relation to one another, in that the actual realization of any one model excludes the realization of others, yet each is a necessary part of the complete description of experience in the atomic world. It is ... not yet fully clear how characteristically or how frequently we shall meet instances ... in other fields, above all in the study of biological, psychological and cultural problems" (pp. 114-115).
The similarities between this quote and what Richards has been saying all along are remarkable. The discovery that "in the atomic world it is not possible to describe the atomic system under investigation in abstraction from the apparatus used for the investigation" lends empirical support to what Richards has been insisting from the outset of his publishing career, and the speculation that similar phenomena may arise in other fields, particularly "in the study of biological, psychological and cultural problems" shows that Richards is not alone in his concern with interdependence between what is being investigated and the instruments of investigation in language study as well as physics.

The principle of complementarity, or, as Richards calls it, the principle of instrumental dependence, is more important in the study of psychological and cultural problems than in physics because the former, being more complex, require more complex speculative instruments. Hence, Richards sets up a scale of speculative instruments, from relatively simple to relatively complex, to correspond with a similarly arranged scale of studies: "Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Poetics, Dialectic" (p. 115). He does not mean that mathematics is not complex but that the other studies are more complex than it is, since they demand more of the investigator's mental faculties. As Richards puts it, "The
higher up you go on the scale of complexity, the MORE of the mind you bring in as apparatus or instrument of the inquiry" (p. 115).

After setting up the scale of studies and asserting that each of them has its characteristic use of language (employable speculative instrument), Richards returns to a concern with mediation and with philosophy as mediator. Having placed poetics next to the top and dialectic at the top, he explains that dialectic in his scheme is "concerned with the relations of Poetics with all the other studies and with their relations to one another. Dialectics would thus be the supreme study, with Philosophy as its Diplomatic Agent" (p. 115). Here we recognize philosophy in its redefined status as the most important speculative instrument. The principle of instrumental dependence, then, is derived from the observation which Richards began with and still holds to, viz., that "there is no study which is not a language study, concerned with the speculative instruments it employs" (p. 116).

A more synoptic view, then, is what philosophy as a speculative instrument can point us toward. The synoptic view itself may be as unattainable as Plato's world of being; but, just as Plato talked of advancing toward a better comprehension of what such a conceptual world may be like by deciding, through dialectic, how to judge between relatively good and relatively poor imitations
of that world, Richards suggests that as we strive toward a
goal, a compass might be a better navigational instrument than
an anchor or a bludgeon, that ability to judge between relatively
good and relatively poor compasses is desirable, and that ability
and willingness to improve compasses and even to replace them
with better navigational devices are necessary, if not sufficient,
attributes for the striver to possess.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION: THE USES OF BECOMING

We have seen the concept of speculative instruments grow from an implicit underlying epistemology in The Foundations of Aesthetics and the other books examined in Chapters I and II, above, through explicit use as a term in Coleridge on Imagination, to a thoroughly developed epistemological recommendation in the book which has as its title the name of the concept. To attribute to "speculative instruments" the four identifying characteristics and five evaluative criteria used throughout this investigation is somewhat risky because (1) Richards himself does not do so explicitly, (2) openness may appear to be lost, and (3) disputation may be invited. These risks have been taken in the hope that doing so may help clear up a basic and neglected aspect of Richards' work.

The identifying characteristics and the evaluative criteria of speculative instruments were formulated on the basis of analyses of many examples of books, theories, and devices which Richards calls speculative instruments, including an examination of Richards' hierarchy of speculative instruments corresponding to an analogous hierarchy of speculative activities.
Richards, directly and indirectly, has called several of his speculative instruments whetstones, mirrors, compasses, thinking machines, etc.; and I have called these figurative names quasi-metaphors. To understand the concept of speculative instruments more fully, we may find it helpful to regard "speculative instruments" also as a quasi-metaphor. For Richards, a speculative instrument is not a static or even a stable thing, as a result of the fluidity engendered and kept alive by its openness. Furthermore, nothing is a speculative instrument apart from its use, and this consideration makes it necessary for us to include the attitude of the user of a speculative instrument as part of its meaning and efficacy. For example, if we should look for a set of identifying characteristics which a thing must have to qualify as a speculative instrument and further to see what the common denominator is for all the things which have been designated as speculative instruments, we would very likely be doomed to failure. Such an attempt would almost certainly close and rigidify the concept of speculative instruments for the person making the attempt and would thereby lead to misunderstanding on his part. Why not carry out the idea of interinanimation consistently? Anything which has the four identifying characteristics of a speculative instrument is interdependent with its user: We need to go beyond choice of a speculative instrument to considerations of the attitude of the user
of a speculative instrument once he has chosen one. Such considerations are implied by all four of the identifying characteristics. How, for example, can anything be and remain instrumentally dependent, refinable, open and conditional apart from the attitude of its user? Perhaps we can understand "speculative instruments" better by remembering that it is a kind of thing which is active. To help us remember this, I suggest that we think of a speculative instrument as a "thing-activity." ("An active thing" might do, but I doubt it, since this designation could suggest that all the activity is on the part of the thing, and once again the user would be left out). "Speculative instruments" is itself a quasi-metaphor in the same sense that the others are. It is the name of a class or set of classes of things. It also implies and encourages an attitude, a frame of mind, an outlook. It is a theory of knowledge which is not static: It points and propels, since it yet concerns itself with equilibrium and harmony and with the will and the ch'i. Thus, a concern with what the things which qualify as speculative instruments have in common is also a concern with what the engendered activities have in uncommon. Although the speculative instruments concept is not something new, it is uncommon, as witnessed by Richards' own laconic style when dealing with it. Nevertheless, instruments are to be used, and speculation is an activity; and the gerundive
insistence of "speculative instruments" carries the day: It is not just the inherent characteristics of a thing which make it a speculative instrument. In the interdependence between speculative instrument and framer, chooser, and/or user, the four identifying characteristics are as much invested as they are inherent.

Consequently, "speculative instruments," thus understood, is and does a lot of things: As a quasi-metaphor, it is the name for a thing-activity which is a recommendation for improvement of epistemological and communicative efficacy. Taken as such a recommendation, it is not exactly a theory of knowledge so much as it is what we might call "meta-epistemology." Its identifying characteristics are instrumental dependence, refinement, openness, and the expressed or at least suppressed conditional. And this set of characteristics is offered conditionally and openly, is instrumentally dependent, and requires refining. Hence, any entity which is this kind of thing-activity (prime example: Philosophy, as Richards redefines it) may be a speculative instrument, depending upon the attitude of its user. It may be judged as better or worse on the basis of what its task is, what place its task has in the hierarchy of tasks, whether it is irreplaceable, how well it does its task, and whether another instrument will do the job.

With this particular understanding of the speculative instruments concept, I have used the term "speculative instruments" to
denote such things as books, essays, experiments, theories, definitions, the concept of speculative instruments itself, the symbolic-emotive dichotomy, the Collingwood-Croce expression theory of art, the second law of thermodynamics, my investigation, each human being, science, poetry, the synaesthetic man, multiple definition, and fictions. I do not mean that all these things are necessarily speculative instruments any more than Richards means that all books are necessarily machines to think with. I mean rather that anything which displays the four identifying characteristics can be used as a speculative instrument and can be compared with other speculative instruments on the basis of the five evaluative criteria.

It is not my intention to make it appear that "speculative instruments" is all that Richards has been concerned with. He has indeed been active at many things besides devising speculative instruments and talking about them. He has published a whole series of "language through pictures" books,¹ he has done a great deal of work with Basic English, and he has been very active as a practicing poet. Although my guiding interest has been that of

¹Cf. Bibliography, below.
showing the relevance of "speculative instruments" to Richards' work in literary criticism and closely related studies, a different or more ambitious treatise could show its relevance to Richards' work in Basic English, language learning, and poetry.

Richards' two most recently published books show that he is still very much concerned with the speculative instruments concept and that although he has not given this concept further explication since the publication of Speculative Instruments, he nevertheless still employs it as a guiding principle no matter what he is talking about.

First of all, So Much Nearer² (1967) includes in its subtitle, Essays Toward a World English, the preposition to which we have devoted so much attention, and it is concerned with making a practical application of Basic English along lines suggested in Interpretation in Teaching. So Much Nearer is a collection of essays which have as their common theme "what man collectively could be doing for himself and what in this he should be doing first" (p. vii); their direction is, predictably, "toward construction" (p. vii) of suggestions about how man might proceed toward achievement of the stated what's. The central question of

So Much Nearer is "How can utterance defend itself from misconception?" (p. viii). What then is new, if common theme, direction, and central question are essentially the same as what they have been, more and more overtly, throughout the thinking machines we have examined? How far are we from literary criticism after all? "So Much Nearer" must be taken in more than one sense: It is an example of aposiopesis the fulfillment of which depends upon how mankind answers the central question raised, a question explored in the essay entitled "The Future of Poetry." This essay title provides another example of the same aposiopesis, not necessarily to be filled out in the supremely confident tone of Matthew Arnold's passage to which it alludes.

Has Richards really left literary criticism, or has he rather just broadened his scope? In "The Future of Poetry" Richards says,

3"The collocation here of interplanetary and other gulfs comes from Robert Frost, who gives me my epigraph and title.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces Between stars—on stars, where no human race is. I have it in me so much nearer home To scare myself with my own desert places." (p. viii).
"Somehow I have for the last few decades been . . . out of Poetics and Literary Criticism. But, you know, it is the same everywhere" (p. 178). It is? Synaesthesia, communicative efficacy, peace? If so, are we to make much more of Richards' shift "From Criticism to Creation" (the name of the first essay in So Much Nearer) than we did of his shift of tone from that of Principles of Literary Criticism to that of The Philosophy of Rhetoric?

A look at "From Criticism to Creation" may be helpful here. Speaking of Plato's comparison of the individual to the state, Richards says that "such comparisons can be—to use Coleridge's phrase—'speculative instruments' of extraordinary suggestiveness" (p. 3) but that "they will never get to the real truth via this parable but will have to take a longer and harder way round—by a labor in dialectic which some would say has barely yet begun" (p. 3). Familiarities, these: Coleridge, speculative instruments, the declaration of the need for equivalent trouble, beginnings rather than finalities.

Richards explains his shift of focus like this:

I let Coleridge lead me out of literary criticism . . . out of criticism into creation, out of comment on endeavors into a new endeavor . . . . better to turn from criticism to a more remedial way of serving its cause, to turn from appraisal to construction, specifically, to attempts to construct more effective,
because more carefully designed, instruments of instruction (pp. 6-7).

From this may we reasonably assume that Richards intends Interpretation in Teaching, for example, as an instrument of instruction which serves the cause of literary criticism in a more remedial way than Principles of Literary Criticism, for example? If so, then the shift from criticism to creation has been a shift from less to more, a quantitative "shift" which looks more like a growth than a shift. Certainly we find in "From Criticism to Creation" a familiar organicism: Richards characterizes reading as "the growth of an instrument for comparing and controlling meanings" (p. 6); he quotes from L. L. Whyte's Internal Factors in Evolution the passage where Whyte discusses the theory of evolution

"in terms not of struggle and competition, but of the system's capacity for coordinated activity. The Darwinian criterion of fitness for external competition has to be supplemented by another: that of good internal coordination. Internal coadaptation is necessary as well as external adaptation" (p. 4).

And he uses the quotation from Whyte to show that "major analogies work both ways" (p. 4), that whether the analogy be between mind and state, religion and marriage, or a cell and a sentence, in both sides of the analogy "the interdependencies of parts and wholes become ever more evident as skill in conceiving them improves" (p. 4). We would be ill advised to overlook the pun on
"conceiving" here. It is partly what Richards meant earlier by "investing," and it gives us a clue to a better understanding of what he means by the word order in the title of his essay "Learning . . . and Looking" in Design for Escape, which we will take a look at presently.

"From Criticism to Creation" concerns itself with instrumental dependence. Richards presents an argument between B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky and says of it that disputatious assertions such as these—especially when their manifest content appears to spring from concern for correct method—have in certain lights a queer air. It is as though the price of a percipience were a blindness, or as though what they see must, like any screen or filter, occult or distort by selection what they are professedly examining (p. 13).

As in other cases of disputation, the disputants are limited by their activity: "... each, in his own way, cultivates his own neglect of the processes by which his facts are obtained" (p. 14); and this neglect is a failure to realize that "the instruments of any inquiry enter and become part of the problems" (p. 15), a failure which, as we have seen, Richards regards as being widespread and devastating.

And the same essay presents a value theory predicated upon mediation, development of potentialities, and growth from the theoretical to the practical as well as from the unrealized to the
realized, all this reminiscent of Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism, Science and Poetry, Mencius on the Mind, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, and Interpretation in Teaching: "Why should not man, taking to heart a lesson from his unborn self, divert a little of his spare energy to trying, scientifically, to make the best of himself?" (p. 17). Here, "his unborn self" is allusion to G. W. Corner's Ourselves Unborn, which Richards discusses earlier in the essay, but the organic view as the basis for value theory is nothing new (cf. synaesthesia, communicative efficacy, etc.). It has to do with a design: "I have to add a word upon my title. Creation, as used there, is participation in a design beyond any we can conceive" (p. 17). What about this design and the repeated use of "conceive" in a way which demands a double reading? Is the design a design for escape? Perhaps. Maybe it is an organic design which would figure in any conceiving. Maybe it is what Richards calls, in the essay "The Technological Crisis," the Principle of Growth:

Think of any plant or animal. All its growth, from the very start, comes about through what it has already. The whole plant grows in each step of its growth. The seedling can grow only because what it already is can take in and use what it needs—to become what it will be. We don't help it by giving it things it cannot use (p. 40).

This is for the man of Sung, and other gardeners, especially the
classroom variety.

With such essay titles as "Meanings Anew" and "Mencius Through the Looking-Glass," *So Much Nearer* needs a fuller explication; but, as the examples I have given have shown, a fuller explication here would involve much repetition and would either take us too far from our topic or would suggest that our topic plays a different role in Richards' work than it in fact and by choice does. However, it is of relevance to our investigation that in *So Much Nearer* Richards calls the classification of modes of meaning in his essay in *Speculative Instruments* "Toward a Theory of Comprehending" by far "the most enterprising speculative instrument I have been concerned to design" (p. 63).

*Design for Escape*[^4] (1968) also needs full explication outside this investigation, but it does show evidences of the influence of the speculative instruments concept. I shall present some examples of this in order to substantiate my position and also to hint that *Design for Escape* is more than just a practical

application of Basic English. It is that, of course, but So Much Nearer and Design for Escape concern themselves primarily with redesigning Basic English for better practical application to world affairs and to make of it a better instrument for examining meanings, and both of these books lay the groundwork for Richards' book in progress, Learning Everyman's English: Principles of Language Control. Just as Richards points out in Interpretation in Teaching that in learning we proceed from the unintelligible to the unintelligible and appropriately so, considering that continued growth is thereby implied, here we see his growth from criticism to creation proceeding from a concern with language control in The Meaning of Meaning to a concern with language control in Learning Everyman's English.

In Design for Escape, Richards says that, among other things, he will try "to suggest through the machinery of description I use, certain intellectual devices—'speculative instruments' as Coleridge called them—which may perhaps help us to see what we ourselves and our fellows are doing with language from case to case as needs and circumstances change" (p. 32). This quote is from the essay "Grounds for Responsibility," and it seems to square with what we have come to understand by "speculative instruments." One of the "intellectual devices"
which Richards uses in this essay is a quote from Shakespeare which he has used earlier but which is here changed significantly, as his comment upon it points out:

nor doth the eye itself,
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
Not going from itself . . .
For speculation turns not to itself
Till it hath travell'd and is married there
Where it may view itself.

_Troilus and Cressida, III, iii, 105._

Married. Nineteenth-century editors, wanting to make Shakespeare obvious, took out married and put mirror'd in its place. That tells us quite a bit about them—just as Shakespeare's use of married here tells us something about his view of marriage (p. 46).

For Richards to call this intellectual device a speculative instrument is for him to tell us something about mediation, among other things. What, more than a marriage, requires refinement and mediation?

Two more quotations from the same essay shed light upon Richards' ideas concerning definition and disputation:

Many definitions are battle cries. Any talk about definition raises every combative instinct in mankind. A definition is the weapon in debate. If you can get your audience to accept your definitions, you've got them. You've got them fighting on ground which is unfamiliar to them and putting their foot into unsuspected holes everywhere. So, naturally, the battle-hinge tends to turn on a definition. Can I push you on to my definition ground, or will you push me? (pp. 48-49).

I want to suggest, and it is rather paradoxical, that definitions are very fine if you have enough of them. No important theme can be handled with
less than 57 definitions, only you must use the right definition for the right purpose. You make up a definition to help you get along in a discussion but you mustn't expect any definition will serve all possible purposes and exigencies of discussion. So never be afraid of having another definition and remember the other ones that other people are using and don't outrage them. In fact be humane in the matter of using this tremendous intellectual weapon, the definition (p. 50).

This too is familiar: Disputation as stifling; fitting definition (or other speculative instrument) to purpose; and mediation in the form of regarding different points of view as complements rather than rivals.

Another essay in Design for Escape, "Learning and Looking," implies by the order of the words in its title what we need speculative instruments for. Richards asks "Why do I so often look and look and yet fail to learn? Isn't it perhaps that I haven't learned how to look?" (p. 93). This again is the query, the rhetorical question, the aposiopesis, proceeding from unintelligibility to unintelligibility, but hopefully demonstrating gains toward comprehension, toward a more synoptic view, in the proceeding growth.

Thus, although Richards has made a shift from literary criticism to a study of the uses of language for world-wide communication and education, he nevertheless is still using the
speculative instruments concept as his guiding principle. The growth of the concept and the growth of his awareness of its implications have shown him different and more urgent ways to apply the theoretical to the practical. Such application is implicit in the speculative instruments concept from the beginning, and as the concept grows it changes; but the change is a change from potentiality toward actuality, the kind of organic change exhibited by any growing organism.

What we have witnessed in our investigation is a series of becomings—a quasi-metaphor becoming an epistemology, a literary theory becoming an educational tool, a literary theorist becoming a cultural engineer. Richards wants the speculative instruments concept to be used where it is most needed; and, as we have seen, he has grown toward the realization that instrumental dependence, refinement, openness, and the conditional, as they contribute to equilibrium and harmony through mediation, need most desperately and immediately to be applied to the world and the states and individuals within it. Just how much nearer we are to having a design for escape from disaster in politics, mental health, and the continuance of homo sapiens on
the earth is, for Richards, a matter of how well we can and will understand, develop, evaluate, choose, and apply speculative instruments.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected Works by Richards


243


Selected Writings Pertinent to "Speculative Instruments"


VITA

Francis Martin Sibley was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on February 20, 1930. He is the son of the late Alfred M. Sibley and Perla (Nettles) Sibley, who now lives in Decatur, Georgia. He is married to Lucy (Roy) Sibley of Auburn, Alabama, and they have a son, Kenneth, age 7. He holds the B. A. degree in English from North Georgia College (1953), B. A. in Music from Auburn University (1957), and M. A. in English from Louisiana State University (1961). His military service includes active duty with the Infantry from 1953 to 1955 (R. O. T. C. commission from North Georgia College). He is a member of the American Federation of Musicians and has performed with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic. His teaching positions have been Graduate Teaching Assistant at Louisiana State University, Assistant Professor of English at Fresno State College, and Assistant Professor of English at The University of Puget Sound. He currently holds the position of Associate Professor of Literature at Park College in Kansas City, Missouri. He is a member of the American Studies Association and the American Association of University Professors.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Francis Martin Biddle

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: I. A. Richards on Speculative Instruments

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]
Thomas J. Watson

[Signature]
John V. Street

[Signature]
Thomas A. King

[Signature]
Dana C. Hille

Date of Examination:

December 17, 1969