1 Interaction

§ 1

'All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon.'[1]

The first thing to say is that Lawrence's protest deserves honest respect. If one had to make an exclusive choice between that version of 'criticism' which confines itself to the technical and the typical, and a kind that sees as its task assessment of particulars unfettered by reference, even, to types and to any sort of technical consideration: if one must choose, one must choose the latter. Comparative inarticulacy is preferable to a decreative sophistication.

And the second thing to say is that we need not make such a choice. Our ability to confront literature fruitfully – to be creative – requires articulacy; and true articulacy requires the direction of the recreative mind. But must articulacy imply classification and analysis? It must, whether overtly or not, since language, without which there is no articulacy, is itself a classificatory and analytical system, although in any articulate use of language the classification and analysis need not be in any real sense overt, but may be presupposed. The question now becomes one of emphasis and tact. When, if at all, should the classifying and analysing be more rather than less overt? And, in particular, are there situations or causes for which such activities should be actively pursued? There surely are; and the chief is progress towards a finer articulacy.

The critical mode that Lawrence is attacking could reasonably be called the classical or neo-classical: here belong Demetrius' *On Style*, Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* and Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. Any literary judgement, any intelligent comment about literature, is ultimately based on an appeal, implicit or explicit, to particular relations or effects: this relates to that in a certain way; this has this effect, that has that. And the rationale of 'classical' criticism is to make the appeal explicit in order to illuminate such relations and effects and, thereby, make the judgement itself more substantial and more deserving to be called articulate.

'Dull jargon' is not inevitable: even Lawrence only said 'mostly'. In this respect a mode of criticism is as good as its practitioners make it. As for

'mere impertinence', my conviction is that if the classical mode is to have much chance of going beyond that, it should involve not merely making the implicit appeal explicit, but a genuinely active pursuit of the explication in an evolutionary or, if need be, revolutionary spirit. That is, its categories should be constantly open to refinement or redefinition in such a way that each work of 'classification and analysis' might in some degree aspire to be a contribution to theory. And by 'theory' is meant the organization and apparatus of the available, provisional answers to the questions, *what sorts of thing can literature do or be? how does it operate to do or be them?* But the sorts of thing literature does or is, and the way it operates, these mean only what it has done, has been, how it has operated in specific instances. Therefore, a contribution to theory is only conceivable through the study of actual instances, that is of practice, the theory being the summary product of such study.

1 D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix* (ed. E. D. McDonald), London, 1936, p. 539.

§2

In accordance with such an aspiration, which need not seem pretentious, this study is a sketch of a 'classical' literary theory, albeit one of modest scope, based on particular literary practice. The general subject is imagery: imagery as a matter of words; imagery in its 'micro-contextual' aspect, to use the possibly dull and certainly scientific jargon of the linguists. My attention, therefore, is not directed essentially towards the rôle of the image within the complete work; not towards its broad, perhaps thematic, significance; but towards its local significance, or rather, those aspects of its local significance that concern interaction. And the 'practice' is that of the early Greek lyric and dramatic poets up to, and including, Aeschylus, Pindar, and Bacchylides.

Interaction is not the whole of imagery, and in concentrating exclusively on it I am not suggesting that it is necessarily, or even often, the most important feature of imagery; for a start, many images do not involve interaction in my sense. Concentration on anything inevitably distorts its importance; but when a general possibility has been consistently undermentioned or partially misunderstood, or when reference to its particular manifestations has been inadequate for want of the corrective or stimulus of a systematic discussion, then distortion of this sort is legitimate and even necessary.

§3

By imagery I mean primarily metaphor, simile and the various forms of *comparatio*; the tropes and schemes, that is, based on analogy or similarity. 'Based', of course, refers to the logical basis: πάντες γὰρ οἱ μεταφέροντες κατά τινα ὁμοιότητα μεταφέρουσιν (Arist. *Top.* 140a.10f.). It does not imply that the logical basis, or pretext, for a literary image is necessarily to be equated with the interest or 'point' of the image. As has been repeatedly demonstrated,[1] this interest characteristically derives from the unlikeness as much as from the likeness; and indeed without a sufficient unlikeness, all 'point' in the true sense tends to disappear: as Johnson remarked of a passage in Dryden's *Eleonora*, 'there is so much likeness in the initial comparison that there is no illustration'.[2] Contrast the positive relevance of the unlikeness in *Il.* 8.306ff., where Gorgythion in his death is compared to a 'droop-headed' poppy – drooping under the weight of its seed and the spring rain:

> μήκων δ' ὡς ἑτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἥ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
> καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτίῃσί τε εἰαρινῇσιν.

Plainly, the point of similarity (the tilt of the man's head and the poppy's head) makes possible a fine sensory effect. But equally plainly, that single point is outweighed in interest by the points of dissimilarity, the contrast. The poppy is alive and flourishing in a peaceful garden; Gorgythion is dead on the battlefield. Life and maturity, evoked by the specific circumstantial detail of seed and rain – the poignancy of the contrast needs no labouring. Nonetheless, the likeness remains logically prior: the force of the unlikeness depends on it. Without any substantial likeness, an 'image' tends to be gratuitous and idle: Edith Sitwell's 'the light is braying like an ass'. But the principle of 'relevant unlikeness' is not affected by this caveat; and, as will appear in due course, such unlikeness has a special relevance for one of my categories.[3]

Under the heading 'imagery' I shall also include, on occasion, certain other stylistic modes, notably the omen, which, in the form widely used in ancient poetry, has obvious affinities with imagery proper:

> Full of his god, the reverend Chalcas cried,
> 'Ye Grecian warriors! lay your fears aside.
> This wondrous signal Jove himself displays
> Of long, long labours, but eternal praise.
> As many birds as by the snake were slain,
> So many years the toils of Greece remain.'
>
> (*Iliad* 2.322ff., trans. Pope)

I shall not be concerned either with symbolism, where this means something other than imagery as interpreted above, or with metonymy; and my use of the words 'metonymy' and 'metonymic', I should add, follows the precedent of the eighteenth-century rhetorician George Campbell. By metonymy I mean any of the tropes based on contiguity:[4] notably the kinds traditionally distinguished as synecdoche,[5] enallage (transferred epithet) and metonymy proper.[6] Hence none of the following count as instances of imagery:

> And *drowsy* tinklings lull the distant folds
> I am *gall*, I am *heartburn*
> O for a beaker full of the *warm south*
> I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am *dust and ashes*

Other considerations relating to my practical definition of imagery will be discussed later. For the moment, the discussion will centre on metaphor and the aspect of metaphor that concerns interaction.

1 Explicity by e.g. Richards 127, Leavis *IM* 232f., Nowottny 53, Waldron 176f., Ricks 127ff. Not so often by Hellenists, though Fränkel *HG* moved somewhat along these lines apropos the Homeric simile (most obviously in the case of the explicit 'contrast function', as exemplified in *Il.*11.86ff. – Fränkel 106); and Ed. Fraenkel pointed excellently to the 'contrast that intensifies the horror' in some Aeschylean imagery (on *Ag.*437ff., similarly on *Ag.*65); cf. also Stanford *AS* 109 on A.*Eu.*253.

2 Johnson 1.441. Cf. his remarks on Cowley, 1.20.

3 Link.

4 On this term see Wellek–Warren 194f., Ullmann *LS* 177f.

5 *Nec procul ab hoc genere* [sc. synecdoche] *discedit metonymia*, Quintil.8.6.23.

6 I had hoped to add that, as a rule, I would not be dealing with catachresis (*abusio*) either, but eventually decided that I can neither define the trope in question, nor confidently identify examples of it, nor, in particular, distinguish it from metaphor. (See further Appendix II.) Presumably, then, I shall be including as instances of imagery what some would regard as catachresis.

§4

Aristotle's celebrated definition of metaphor has, as Mrs Nowottny notes,[1] a certain emphasis on what might be called its terminological aspect: 'applying to a thing a word that belongs to something else'.[2] The emphasis is more explicit in her own paraphrase: 'speaking of *X* in terminology proper to *Y*'. Where poetic metaphor is concerned, this is not, one might comment, an especially popular emphasis; or at least it has not been so since the

Romantic revolution. More typical of modern attitudes is the non-verbal, even anti-verbal, emphasis apparent in, for instance, Lorca's somewhat extreme manifesto, 'la métaphore unit deux mondes antagonistes dans le saut équestre de l'imagination',[3] or in I. A. Richards' more restrained comment, 'fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts'.[4] That 'fundamentally' is provocative and symptomatic of a reaction. The shift to 'mondes' and 'l'imagination' and 'thoughts' is certainly not in itself illegitimate or unwelcome. The tone of post-Romanticism is less prosaic and its formulations are, in an obvious sense, more impressive than Aristotle's – but in what sense can its definitions claim to be more 'fundamental'? Poetry, like all language, is made of words, and nothing can be more fundamental than that.

Here are two Hellenists at work: 'Das Epitheton ἐρεμνός befremdet für Eros, denn das ist ja bei Homer die αἰγίς und die λαῖλαψ: Eros ist nicht finster.'[5] And: 'A second, archetypal image is that of the road or way, ὁδός or κέλευθος. It is used of behaviour by Hesiod.'[6] The value of these particular specimens depends, of course, on where the discussions go from there. But so far there can be little doubt that the emphasis of the first (Wilamowitz) is terminological or verbal, that of the second (Bowra) conceptual;[7] and that the former is closer to 'fundamentals'. One notes that, for a conceptualist, not only is the word not primary; it may not even matter *which* word ('ὁδός or κέλευθος'). The 'it' that is used by Hesiod is a notional relation, at a remove from any specific and concrete sequence of words. 'The image' is thoughts or, as might have been said, ideas or areas of experience, irrespective of the particular words used.

Now plainly, if one is ever to pursue or invoke or even merely presuppose any of such obviously important matters as the propriety or suggestiveness or originality of an image-relationship, one must have this conceptual emphasis behind one. There are certainly occasions when one reasonably wants to say that 'the image' κακῶν πέλαγος (A.*Pe.*433) 'recurs' in the form κλύδων κακῶν (599), despite only a partial verbal resemblance; or that Shakespeare's 'sea of troubles' and Aeschylus' κακῶν πέλαγος are 'the same' image, in that they bring into metaphoric relation the same areas of experience. But if one's purpose required the more fundamental, verbal conception of imagery, one would, at the very least, feel obliged to say 'corresponding', not 'same', in such a case. And if one's purpose did require it, as mine does, one would resent the appropriation of 'fundamentals' by the conceptualist.

At all events, it is clear that 'thoughts' and 'words' represent two possible and different emphases. To vary the example, it is important to be able to say

that ἀνάγκης ἐς ζυγὸν καθέσταμεν (E.*Or.*1330) has something in common with ἀνάγκας ἕδυ λέπαδνον (A.*Ag.*218), but it is at least as important to make the distinction that whereas the one phrase is trite,[8] the other is novel and striking.[9] It is true that the areas of experience, the conceptual relations, involved are hardly distinguishable. It is also true that for effect the verbal sequences are to be contrasted rather than compared. The phraseology that encourages us to equate the two as 'the same image' or 'the image of. . .' can be seriously misleading.

Note, therefore, the convenience of the expression 'the image' for anything that may be called a conceptual approach to metaphor. By contrast, any verbal orientation, and especially any that involves an active interest in the question of 'terminology', has not been well served. Terms that promote, or at least suit, such an emphasis have not, until fairly recently, been forthcoming. As is well known,[10] technical (or non-technical) terms for the two basic constituents of metaphor have generally been unfortunate expedients and hardly conducive to any serious purpose. The chief problem has been to avoid terms that invite confusion between the figurative element and the image as a whole. Such well-established terms for the former as 'figure', 'comparison' and 'image' itself create just such a confusion. (Besides which, 'figure' and 'image' – not to mention 'picture' – are in any case tainted with visual associations: tainted, because the largely eighteenth-century assumption that there is something in the nature of poetic imagery to create a demand for a specifically visual or pictorial effect is not defensible.[11]) Another problem has been to find terms to make clear that the non-figurative element is not the same thing as the total meaning that arises from the two elements in combination; hence the inconvenience of such terms as 'meaning' and 'referent'. Ironically enough, the pair of terms most amenable to my purpose was invented with thoughts and ideas, *not* words, in mind. 'A first step', wrote I. A. Richards in 1936,[12] 'is to introduce two technical terms to assist us in distinguishing from one another what Dr Johnson called the two ideas that any metaphor, at its simplest, gives us. Let me call them the tenor and the vehicle.'[13]

1 Nowottny 49. Let me acknowledge here that it was through Mrs Nowottny's discussion of metaphor (pp.49ff.) that I first perceived the potential utility of the word 'terminology' for the study of imagery.
2 Arist.*Po.*1457b.7.
3 Quoted by Ullmann *LS* 174.
4 Richards 94.
5 Wilamowitz *SS* 124, on Ibyc.1.11 Bergk (= 5.11 Page).
6 Bowra, *Pindar* 252.

7 The term 'conceptual' is convenient, although the antithesis could be misleading. Concepts and words are not opposites nor happily separable.
8 See below, p. 67.
9 And presumably Aeschylus' invention.
10 See in particular Richards 96ff., and cf. Johansen *GR* 20 (with n.18). The problem is not peculiar to modern criticism: cf. McCall 217 and 221f. on Quintil. 8.3.77.
11 Cf. e.g. Richards 16f. and 98.
12 Since which time his terms have been widely used by English-speaking students of imagery, though rarely by British Isles Hellenists.
13 Richards 96.

§5[1]

As used by Richards, the tenor is 'the underlying idea', and the vehicle the other idea, the one brought in from outside, so to speak, the one to which the tenor is, in logical terms, compared.[2] The same writer suggested in addition the term 'ground' to denote the likeness, the feature or features held in common between tenor and vehicle. This 'ground' might seem to be inherently a conceptual, not a verbal, matter.[3] On the other hand, tenor and vehicle can be reinterpreted as matters of words. Thus, taking Aeschylus' κλύδων κακῶν, one might say that the vehicle is 'rough sea', conceptually understood, or that the vehicle is the actual word κλύδων. Similarly, one might say that the tenor is 'impending series of disasters' (or whatever), or, if the tenor is conceived as words, – but here a difficulty presents itself, beginning with a problem of formulation. The verbal tenor must evidently contain, in the first place, the word κακῶν and, secondly, the word or words that could have been used instead of κλύδων had there been no metaphor: the literal equivalent, if any, which has, in a sense, been suppressed under, or presupposed by, κλύδων. Or rather, 'in the first place' should apply not to κακῶν but to this literal equivalent which is the nominal object of 'comparison'. One might in fact wish to confine 'tenor' strictly to this suppressed equivalent or (if a conceptualist) to the concept in question, 'impending series'. The importance of the alternative – 'κακῶν plus' or merely 'plus'? – will emerge shortly.[4] As for the question, 'what is the ground?', this seems to demand, as I say, an answer in conceptual terms. 'The ground is whatever is held in common between the impending series of disasters and a rough sea'; or '...between impending series and a rough sea'. In any event, however we chose to formulate the tenor and the ground, it would be necessary to insist that the tenor is distinct from the product of tenor and vehicle combined, the total meaning; and that the ground is similarly distinct.[5] Likeness, to repeat, is not the be-all and end-all of imagery.

Mrs Nowottny's discussion of metaphor may be invoked at this point, making as it does a clear and relevant distinction between ideas or concepts and words. 'Metaphor directs us to the *sense*, not to the exact term. The directions lead us not to...[any one of the available literal formulations]... but to that which...is the common target of all these verbal shots... Metaphor indicates how to find or to construct the target, but it does not contaminate the mental image of the target by using any one of the literal terms available in ordinary language for referring to such a target.'[6] Evidently this 'target' has something to do with 'the product of tenor and vehicle combined'. It is not the same as any of the literal equivalents,[7] i.e. the 'suppressed tenor'. And, without any question, it is inherently and necessarily non-verbal.

We have, then, adequately defined for present purposes tenor, vehicle, ground and target. As may have been divined, I intend to make use of Richards' main terms, tenor and vehicle, and to use them not as their maker meant them, but as referring to words. Henceforth, the ground and, in particular, the target will not, on the whole, concern me directly.

1 The mode and direction of the analysis in this section are indebted to Nowottny 55ff., though I would not subscribe to every detail in her discussion.
2 My paraphrase. Richards gives no formal definition.
3 It is certainly true that other names for the ground tend to be used of the concept – e.g. the German *Vergleichungspunkt* and the scholastic *tertium comparationis*, an unwieldy expression mercifully out of fashion (and so bizarrely misunderstood by Taillardat 24, with n.6, and 473ff., who thinks it means the vehicle).
4 It does not appear that the distinction between these alternatives has occupied much attention. Richards does not give enough detailed analysis to make it clear what his own answer would be.
5 See Richards 110 and cf. Stanford's discussion of Hermogenes' definition of metaphor, *GM* 14f. and 20f.
6 Nowottny 59.
7 If it is, the vehicle must be mere surface ornament (cf. Richards 100); or else mere subterfuge, as sometimes in Delphic utterances.

§6

I shall now return to κλύδων κακῶν to continue the exposition and thereby, *inter alia*, explain my intermittent bandying about of the cumbrous words 'terminology' and 'terminological'. Cumbrous, but valuable, if, as I hope, they evoke the difference between my tenor and vehicle and Richards' and,

incipiently perhaps, hint at the perceptual significance of the difference. His dualism, with its orientation towards abstractions, is *logical*. In logical terms, metaphor, as Hermogenes noted[1] in the second century A.D., involves a 'subject at issue' (Richards' tenor) and an 'extraneous object of reference' (Richards' vehicle). But, as Hermogenes also noted, metaphor involves them not simply as such, but as elements of what I have already casually alluded to in speaking of 'the total meaning', which he called a 'composite concept' and which, as 'composite' suggests, must represent a new *unity*, and, surely, a unity *felt* or feelable as a unity by its audience; but a unity which Richards' logical bias is likely to undermine. A Richards-based mode of analysis, therefore, would tend to go against the hearer's perception, the *feel* of the thing. My dualism and analysis, not logical but *terminological*, and so dealing with the immediate words we hear, aspire to explicate and, modestly, enhance perception, rather than replace it.

In κλύδων κακῶν, the two words belong to different terminological contexts. One is in marine or nautical terminology, the other is in the terminology of human affairs in general. As far as the quotation goes, κλύδων is the representative, the sole representative, of the vehicle. κλύδων, and only κλύδων, is in the marine terminology of the vehicle; or, as I have indicated I would say, *is* the vehicle. (The terminological emphasis is thus implicit.) And the tenor here, as already stated, consists first of a suppressed literal 'equivalent' to κλύδων, say, for the sake of argument, πλῆθος,[2] and secondly of κακῶν. κακῶν and the suppressed element, πλῆθος, cohere terminologically; both are also 'predictable' in a sense and a direction that κλύδων is not; and it is κακῶν, in its significance as the predictably literal context, that determines our awareness that there is a 'suppression', something presupposed, and our awareness of the implicit coherence. By itself, taken as a single word *in vacuo*, κλύδων does not presuppose anything, does not imply any suppression. In the light of κακῶν, κλύδων does presuppose. But note: if we say that κλύδων presupposes something in the 'human affairs' terminology, e.g. πλῆθος, we find no corresponding necessity to say that κακῶν presupposes anything in the marine terminology of the vehicle, λάβρος for instance. The feasibility of saying this does not arise, because κακῶν is there by right, as it were, there being nothing in the context to make us take it at other than its face value. The tenor, in short, is the norm; the vehicle is a departure from the norm; and under normal circumstances we follow the dictates of the norm. And the norm is 'there' all the time.

It would, therefore, appear undesirable to think of tenor and vehicle as exact opposites, if the tenor is liable to be 'there' all the time, sometimes in verbal embodiment, sometimes presupposed, whereas the vehicle is 'there'

only part of the time.[3] Exact opposition, one might add, is not suggested by the names 'tenor' and 'vehicle', whereas it is implicit in such alternatives as *le comparé/le comparant* and *illustrans/illustrandum*.[4]

This appearance of disparity is readily confirmed if we look at the context preceding κλύδων κακῶν in the same analytical way:

> φίλοι, κακῶν μὲν ὅστις ἔμπειρος κυρεῖ
> ἐπίσταται βροτοῖσιν ὡς, ὅταν κλύδων
> κακῶν...

If we are to say that the second κακῶν is 'in the terminology of the tenor' or, perhaps, is 'part of' the tenor, we may find it impossible to deny such titles to the first κακῶν or, indeed, to the sequence κακῶν...βροτοῖσιν as a whole. For clearly this sequence coheres terminologically with the second κακῶν as against κλύδων. And on similar though somewhat less cogent grounds, one could extend the use of 'tenor' to φίλοι and probably to whatever precedes φίλοι, depending, naturally, on what it is.

It emerges, then, that the tenor may be conceived of as a sequence which the vehicle interrupts and presupposes in part. The word 'tenor' is certainly well suited to such a conception; we speak, for instance, of 'the whole tenor' of a work. And a vehicle, terminologically abnormal and unpredictable, represents the interruption of such a sequence and the suppression of part of it in favour of 'extraneous' material, material not 'at issue'. Once again, although less obviously, we are only pressing a non-technical use of a current term: one speaks of something as a 'vehicle for' something else; and Dr Johnson, for instance, found occasion to criticize those unable 'to separate propositions or images from the vehicles by which they are conveyed to the understanding'.[5]

It is, of course, true that φίλοι does not relate to, or cohere with, the tenor terminology as closely as the first κακῶν does; nor does this κακῶν cohere as closely as the second κακῶν, which has a greater immediacy of relation; and the second κακῶν is itself not on a par with the 'suppressed equivalent'. There are, if one needs to say so, degrees of tenor-ness, and we might wish to distinguish between (1) the suppressed tenor, πλῆθος, (2) the immediate tenor, the second κακῶν, (3) the wider tenor, which in this instance is the rest of the passage, although one would probably ignore the 'empty' words, ὡς and ὅταν, as being effectively in no terminology at all. If and when such distinctions seem to be useful, one can use them. For the moment we need say no more than that 'tenor', *pace* Richards, not only refers to 'words' not 'ideas', but also to words which would often not be reckoned as having much to do with 'the image' at all.

1 Hermogenes II.254 Spengel, as translated by Stanford *GM* 14.

2 'For the sake of argument' and to minimize obscurity at this stage in the discussion. I regret the need to spell out what should not, indeed cannot, be spelt out in this way, and have deliberately chosen an obviously inadequate 'equivalent', lest any virtue be made of this necessity.

3 Any context in which the vehicle might be said similarly to be 'always there' would represent abnormal circumstances, such as sustained allegory; or a passage in which it was clear thet there was an image, but not clear what was tenor and what vehicle, so that both would be constantly in the interpreter's mind.

4 The former pair is used by some French linguists. The latter was coined by Johansen (*GR* 20) and approved by Kamerbeek (*Mnemos.* 1961, p.43) and Ole Smith (p.12). It was, to be fair, coined with reference to analogy, not to metaphor.

5 In *The Rambler* no.168, apropos *Macbeth*.

§7

But why pervert the word 'tenor' in this way? Why not rather use 'literal', for instance, perhaps in antithesis with 'figurative'? I have apparently been stating the obvious at some length – 'in a metaphor there are figurative words and also words used literally' – but without using the obvious terms. But there are statements and there are restatements. It would be adequate simply to answer that it is impossible to speak of 'immediate' and 'wider' literal elements; that 'literal' does not imply an image orientation in the way that 'tenor' does – 'literal' might contrast with 'hyperbolic', for instance; and again that some, though not I, would be reluctant to use 'literal' for a tenor element which happened to be a 'dead metaphor'. Nor are any other existing alternatives much more satisfactory in these respects; nor in fact do they have the various other advantages of 'tenor' and 'vehicle' which have already been mentioned: 'tenor' does not suggest that tenor and target might be the same thing, but actively suggests the relationship with a wider sequence that the vehicle does not have; 'vehicle' avoids confusion with the image as a whole, the total product of vehicle and tenor, and has no irrelevant pictorial associations; both 'tenor' and 'vehicle' are words in general use in comparable, non-technical ways, but, as a pair, they are not inherently antithetical, hence do not suggest that the two constituents of the image are on an equal footing.

I. A. Richards' two terms, then, have important advantages for the study of metaphor. But I am not dealing with metaphor only, but with imagery as a whole; and for my purpose it is an overriding advantage that these terms can be employed with equal ease in the analysis of the formally distinct types of 'explicit imagery',[1] whether epic simile, short simile, comparison, or what

Dornseiff[2] called *Vergleich ohne wie*, the paratactic analogy. 'Literal' and 'figurative', of course, cannot be used in such a connection at all. As Mrs Nowottny puts it: 'metaphor, unlike simile,...conveys a relation...by using a word (or words) figuratively instead of literally'.[3] This characteristic of literal phraseology is precisely what distinguishes simile and all the schemes of explicit imagery from the trope metaphor. But the distinction is not necessarily of central importance.[4] Like metaphor, explicit imagery brings in something 'extraneous' and brings it in 'for comparison'. And this is merely to say that explicit imagery involves a vehicle which, as is, or will be, immediately apparent, is formally and also terminologically distinct. And if it involves a vehicle, it involves also a tenor; this is what the vehicle is distinct from.

1 On this expression and its implications, see Ullmann (*LS* 179ff.), who, like others, does indeed use 'tenor' and 'vehicle' of imagery in general (184ff.).
2 Dornseiff 97f.
3 Nowottny 52.
4 Depending on one's purpose, naturally. For some purposes the distinction is crucial: cf. the complaints voiced by Brooke-Rose 13ff. and Stanford *GM* 28ff., and in general see Nowottny 51 and 66, Leavis *EU* 78, Tuve 100f., Ullmann *LS* 179ff.

§8

Consider first an epic simile, *Il.*16.364ff.:[1]

> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀπ' Οὐλύμπου νέφος ἔρχεται οὐρανὸν εἴσω
> αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης ὅτε τε Ζεὺς λαίλαπα τείνῃ,
> ὣς τῶν ἐκ νηῶν γένετο ἰαχή τε φόβος τε.

No difficulties present themselves. Evidently, the νέφος and the λαίλαπα, though set out 'literally', have as much and as little to do with the terminology of the ἰαχὴ ἐκ νηῶν as Aeschylus' κλύδων had with κακῶν. Here, then, the same justification exists for speaking of tenor and vehicle, terminologically understood. The vehicle is ὡς..., and the tenor – or the visible part of it – is ὣς.... It is also evident that here there is, in an important sense, no actual suppressed element,[2] although there is still a lacuna in the sequence of the tenor for the duration of ὡς...τείνῃ, and indeed that lacuna may be thought to contain something relating to the tenor which is not explicit in the ὣς clause. We might wish to think of ὡς... as the 'immediate tenor' leaving it open whether there is also a 'suppressed tenor'. Hermann Fränkel dubbed the epic simile's immediate tenor *Sostück* and its vehicle *Wiestück*,[3]

a prosaic but useful pair of terms, as suggesting that remaining distinctive feature of such a simile, the formal frame that marks off the terminologies. ὡς and ὥς, the parallel markers that demarcate *Wiestück* and *Sostück*, are themselves, it may be remarked, 'empty' and colourless as far as terminological colour is concerned.

I may at this point be suspected of an attempt at deception. It may be felt that the epic simile just discussed is in some relevant way not typical of its kind. Before I confront suspicion openly by demonstrating the validity of the feeling, let me turn from simile to analogy. Take E.*fr.*1047:

> ἅπας μὲν ἀὴρ αἰετῷ περάσιμος,
> ἅπασα δὲ χθὼν ἀνδρὶ γενναίῳ πατρίς.

Up to a point, analysis presents us with nothing new. ἅπας μὲν... is the vehicle, ἅπασα δὲ... its immediate tenor. There is, of course, no formal marker of the ὡς/ὥς type ('Vergleich *ohne* wie'), although the 'empty' and terminologically colourless μέν and δέ incline towards that function. More important, there is a very obvious parallelism between ἅπας, nominally a term of the vehicle, and ἅπασα, nominally a tenor term. I say 'nominally', because while the two words are not wholly of the order of the epic ὡς and ὥς, they are hardly less 'empty', hardly more *of* their terminology. None the less, they differ from the epic pair inasmuch as their collective presence is not predictable; this parallelism is not obligatory. And though it might not be easy off the cuff to say with any precision what this parallelism does for the image, it is clear that it brings tenor and vehicle, formally separate, together.

It appears, then, that the possibility exists of modifying the outward separateness of tenor and vehicle. The forms that such 'modifying' can take in this and in other types of imagery, the effects it can produce in creative hands, make up the subject of the present investigation.

1 A remarkable 'impressionistic' image (blindly done down by D. J. N. Lee 7ff.), whose ground seemingly takes the form of what Richards (117f.) called 'a common attitude' on our part towards tenor and vehicle.
2 Cf. Nowottny 55f.
3 Fränkel *HG* 4. In scholastic circles, the sombre names 'protasis' (vehicle) and 'apodosis' (tenor) are also used.

§9

To continue the examination of explicit imagery, consider another epic simile, *Il.*16.428ff. The extent of my 'deception' can now be laid bare.

> οἱ δ' ὥς τ' αἰγυπιοὶ γαμψώνυχες ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι
> πέτρῃ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ μεγάλα κλάζοντε μάχωνται,
> ὣς οἱ κεκλήγοντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ὄρουσαν.

The basic pattern is a familiar one – this is the point.[1] What was absent from the simile discussed above was the kind of parallelism represented here by κλάζοντε/κεκλήγοντες, a parallelism one recognizes immediately as characteristic of the simile in its epic form. And in this instance the parallel elements are in no sense 'empty'. Unlike ἅπας/ἅπασα, and quite unlike ὡς/ὥς, they have a full terminological coloration. Each is an important part of its *Stück*, and the reference of each varies properly in accordance with the particular 'area of experience' evoked; the κλάζειν of αἰγυπιοί and the κλάζειν of οἱ are not the same kind of κλάζειν. The passage is organized in such a way as to exploit the verb's potential dual reference.[2]

It can be said without hesitation that such a repetition of elements identical, or virtually identical, in form, but different in precise meaning, is a simple means of enforcing the tenor–vehicle relation. The repeated element is a distinctive one, distinctive by virtue of a terminological status that can be called *neutral*,[3] and it carries with it a distinctive effect.

And what of the 'short' similes? – those less stylized forms whose outward distinguishing mark has not, in fact, much to do with length but with the absence of a *so* from the *Sostück*. It is possible to produce examples containing a parallelism corresponding exactly to the epic type, as *Il.*13.389:[4]

> ἤριπε δ' ὡς ὅτε τις δρῦς ἤριπεν...

But one might again suspect that such parallelism is not particularly common and, more important, that these similes characteristically have something not identical with epic parallelism but analogous to it, *mutatis mutandis*. One would be right. Take A.*Ag.*48ff. (the Atridae):

> μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη
> τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν, οἵτε...

τρόπον 'empty' marker; αἰγυπιῶν οἵτε... the vehicle; everything else, no doubt, tenor terminology – except for κλάζοντες. One cannot fail to recall the phraseology and the structure of Homer's ὥς τ' αἰγυπιοὶ...κλάζοντε...,

ὡς οἱ κεκλήγοντες. . . . It can now be said that if Aeschylus' simile is characteristic of its kind, the analogue that this kind presents to epic parallelism is a compression: neutral terminology but without repetition. And there is no doubt that this simile *is* characteristic of its kind. Here are three among many instances from many Greek sources:

Anacr.92[5] ἔφυγον ὥστε κόκκυξ
Thgn.568 κείσομαι ὥστε λίθος
A.*Eu.*111 (Orestes) οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην

The terminological movement is instinctively familiar,[6] familiar as almost a normal, unheightened language-pattern:

then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard
(*As You Like It* II.2)

a small drop of ink
Falling like dew
(Byron, *Don Juan* III)

'Bearded' soldiers, 'bearded' leopards; people can φεύγειν, birds can φεύγειν[7] – and so on.

For the purposes of these and similar analyses, some abbreviations may be useful. When formulaic brevity seems desirable, I shall call any tenor term, or uninterrupted sequence of tenor terms, *T*; any vehicle term or sequence *V*; any neutral term or sequence *N*. Hence

Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard

represents in nucleus *T*–*N*–*V*, while

ἔφυγον ὥστε κόκκυξ

is *N*–*V*, and

μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη
τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν

is *T*–*N* (κλάζοντες)–*T* (Ἄρη)–*V*. Each item in its context, in other words, is terminologically ascribable to the tenor, to the vehicle, or to both. And these three possibilities must be the only ones – with two qualifications that can be noted here without further examples. A word may be in a different terminology of its own, as would result from a second image with its own independent vehicle; or in no terminology at all, as we have already seen in the case of 'empty' markers. On the last point, a terminological analysis can reasonably ignore 'empty' words, on the whole, without any complication resulting – including empty words that mark off an image. In the Aeschylus,

for instance, it makes no difference whether one counts τρόπον as part of the vehicle or simply ignores it entirely.

1 Among other examples one might note Emped.84, briefly discussed by Lloyd 326f. On similar parallelism in Homeric 'descriptive applications', see Johansen *GR* 104.

2 κλάζειν of birds: *Il.*10.276; Hes.*Op.*449; Stesich.32.1.5 (prob.); S.*Ant.*112. Of men: *Il.*2.222, 5.591; *Od.* 12.256; Hes.*Sc.*379; Alcm.30; A.*Pe.*948. Both lists are selective. (N.B. the verb is rare in prose.)

3 Or 'ambiguous'. But here and throughout I have avoided the generalized twentieth-century use of the words 'ambiguous' and 'ambiguity'. Good reasons for doing this are given by Nowottny 150ff.

4 My point is not affected by the fact that the vehicle of this 'short' simile is subsequently developed at length and then followed by a formal ὡς.... The simile begins as a 'short' simile.

5 Text as suggested by Page.

6 Although often misrepresented by analysts (as *V–V* instead of *N–V*) and never, apparently, properly related to, or distinguished from, the other 'movements' already dealt with and those to come.

7 Thphr.*Sign.*40 ἐὰν ἐκ πελάγους ὄρνιθες φεύγωσι, χειμῶνα σημαίνουσι. Likewise (of birds), *Il.*3.4, Hdt.2.68.4, A.*Pe.*205. With the Theognis, similarly, κεῖσθαι is what stones do (*Il.*7.264f. λίθον...κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ) as well as what dead people do (Hdt.8.25.2 χίλιοι ἐφαίνοντο νεκροὶ κείμενοι). With the Aeschylus, οἴχεσθαι is used of animals (e.g. Antipho *fr.*58, A.*Eu.*147, Ar.*Pax* 721) as of people.

§10

Consider now the continuation of the fawn simile from the *Eumenides*:

οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην
καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων.

One detail invites comment: the closing phrase, ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων, is in the same terminology as νεβροῦ, vehicle terminology, although it comes well after the nominal close of the *Wiestück*. In more conventional language, the simile leads into a corresponding metaphor, once more a familiar development:[1]

his delights
Were dolphin-like: they showed his back above
The element they lived in. (*Antony and Cleopatra* v.2)

The opposite kind of movement, metaphor to simile, is, incidentally, equally familiar:

ἔοικεν εὔρις ἡ ξένη κυνὸς δίκην
εἶναι (of Cassandra, A.*Ag.*1093f.)

Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail (Yeats, *The Tower*)

I have already indicated that my coming concern is with 'modifyings' of the separateness of tenor and vehicle, and these shifts might be thought to embody just such. That would be misleading. Without any disparagement, one should rather say that the shifts involve not any modifying of the separation, but a recapitulating of it: from vehicle back to vehicle (*V–V*), with or without a tenor intervention (strictly, *V–T–V*) as well.

One more simile to consider, a new one, A.*Pe.*424ff., from the Persian messenger's account of the disaster at Salamis:

τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἤ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον
ἀγαῖσι κωπῶν θραύμασίν τ' ἐρειπίων
ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον.

The vehicle is θύννους...βόλον, the tenor τοί and ἀγαῖσι...ἐρειπίων; and ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον is neutral,[2] like οἴχεται – but not like οἴχεται. The effect is a new one – an altogether more decisive effect, let us say, than any other yet produced – and the formal structure is also new: *V–T–N*, in formulary terms, not *N–V*. Such a difference is perceptible and analysable – as also is the fundamental relatedness: these instances, and the others of their type, are all interactive, albeit, in some cases, at a pretty rudimentary level. Equally perceptible is the disparity between the interactive images collectively and the *V–V* group whose mode of effective operation is surely different in kind.

1 The movement is indeed so familiar that commentators 'expect' it, as Dodds on E.*Ba.*778f.

2 In common with men and other animals, fish have a ῥάχις (e.g. Arist.*PA* 655a.37); and one can ῥαχίζειν (a very rare verb) a human victim (e.g. S.*Aj.*56) as well as an animal (e.g. S.*Aj.*299, cf. Eub.15.4).

§11

Finally, comparisons. In some ways, one might well have started with comparisons. As it is, one can say that their formal nucleus tends very clearly to resemble that of the short similes, except for being more highly stereotyped – often to the point of triviality: in Greek, a comparative adjective and a noun in the genitive case is the commonest pattern. And the simple, relevant truth is that in this guise, as in other guises, the comparison has a built-in interactive basis. It has a neutral element – the comparative adjective is, of course, the neutral element – as a predictable norm. Thus:

Alc.372 (subject, presumably, 'warriors') Ἄρευος στροτιωτέροις
Sapph.31.14 (subject 'I') χλωροτέρα ποίας
Thgn.715 (subject 'you') ὠκύτερος . . . Ἁρπυιῶν

Warriors are warlike, Ares is warlike; I am pale, grass is pale; and so on. Another common form, equally interactive and, if anything, still more trivial, is exemplified by Theognis in the verse preceding the last instance,

γλῶσσαν ἔχων ἀγαθὴν Νέστορος,

the neutral element here being γλῶσσαν ἀγαθήν, corresponding to the comparative adjective of the first three instances.

Stereotyped form is not to be thought of as a Greek peculiarity. English comparisons, including, symptomatically, a large number of proverbial expressions, most commonly take the form '(as) *N* as *V*'. 'White as snow', predicable of a good many things, is typical and in its pristine, stereotyped simplicity could claim, as plausibly as any of its Greek counterparts, to represent interaction at its most rudimentary. But even rudiments may permit some variation. One notable variety of the English '*N* as *V*' comparison, especially in proverbs, has the relation of the neutral term to the 'vehicle' pointed by alliteration (if one may speak, licentiously, of vehicles in respect of what are, being proverbial, barely images): 'good as gold', 'plain as a pikestaff', 'bold as brass', 'dead as a doornail', 'cool as a cucumber', 'pleased as Punch', 'blind as a bat', 'fit as a fiddle', 'proud as a peacock', 'brown as a berry', 'pretty as a picture', 'dull as ditch-water', 'right as rain', 'dead as the dodo', 'thick as thieves', 'large as life', 'dry as dust'.[1] A more fundamental variation emerges from these examples: a few of them are not actually '*N* as *V*' at all. Take 'good as gold' and with it contrast a particularly clear instance, 'dead as a doornail'. Babies (or whatever) may be *good* and likewise gold may be; so '*N* as *V*'. But whereas people (*T*) may be *dead*, doornails can't be;[2] so, in fact, only '*T* as *V*'. And another, less disturbing, variation: looking at the instances where the adjective *does* work both ways, one finds some with the adjective used, as we would casually say, 'in the same sense'; e.g. 'her face was as brown as a berry' (to give an instance a plausible context), where 'brown face' and 'brown berry' seem to involve the 'same sense' of *brown*. Whereas in other cases, one might want to speak of a *pun*, the adjective being used in 'different senses': e.g. 'he's as dry as dust', where *dry* means impassively pedantic (of 'he') and moistureless (of 'dust'). The place that such differentiations have in the comprehension of less rudimentary and more creative interactions will appear later.

To return to the Greek forms and the main line of the exposition: the

pattern 'more *N* than *V*' (or 'the *N* of *V*') is stable, as is an intimate relationship between the neutral term and the ground of each image. In χλωροτέρα ποίας, that which 'I' and ποίας have in common is indicated by the neutral term, χλωροτέρα, and, as one expects, by no other term. We can call χλωροτέρα, simply, the *ground-term*, and the same tag can be attached to γλῶσσαν ἀγαθήν in γλῶσσαν ἔχων ἀγαθὴν Νέστορος, to 'whiter' in 'whiter than snow' and to the corresponding items in any of the '*N* as *V*' or 'more *N* than *V*' comparisons cited. Looking back to the instances of neutral terminology discussed earlier, we can see in some cases an almost identical relationship with the ground. Thus, in the οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην instance, οἴχεται is ground-term to νεβροῦ, although here at least it is apposite to add that while the reference of οἴχεται is to the ground, it obviously isn't to the *whole* of the ground.[3] The idea of 'pursuit', for instance, is part of the ground, but is hardly embodied in its entirety in οἴχεται.

1 Svartengren (p.465) suggests that about a fifth of all the similes in his massive collection are alliterative in some way and about four-fifths of these in the 'good as gold' way. This means that there may be about a thousand recorded instances of this type in English, though many of these are not proverbial but creative coinages and many others are dialectal or defunct. (On the other hand, his catalogue is incomplete: one or two of my instances are not, in fact, there.)

2 This is the case *now*, irrespective of the earlier history of the phrase. Various theories about its origin, plausible and implausible, are considered by Svartengren 143ff., Hulme 52f.

3 This point about the ground-term in simile is taken by Aristides Quintilianus ii.9 in his discussion of *Od.*10.304 (on the herb moly):

> ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος.
>
> Superficially, there is no ground-term here, but in context εἴκελον obviously = 'white'. Whiteness, however, is not the whole of the ground, as Aristides notes: πολλῶν γὰρ χἀτέρων λευκῶν ὄντων τὸ καὶ γλυκύτητος ἔμφασιν ποιησόμενον ἐπελέξατο.

§12

So much, for the moment, for explicit imagery. It will be remembered that in my analysis of the metaphor in *Persae* 598ff., I stopped short at κακῶν. The passage continues as follows:[1]

> φίλοι, κακῶν μὲν ὅστις ἔμπειρος κυρεῖ
> ἐπίσταται βροτοῖσιν ὡς, ὅταν κλύδων
> κακῶν ἐπέλθῃ, πάντα δειμαίνειν φίλον,
> ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ . . .

There is not much to note about the status (terminological status) of πάντα...εὐροῇ. Some words are colourless, as ὅταν. Some belong to the tenor, as δαίμων. And εὐροῇ is a term of the vehicle that coheres with κλύδων and carries through certain of its implications. πάντα δειμαίνειν φίλον might be characterized as neutral, but to all intents and purposes is relatively colourless tenor terminology; tenor, because the κακῶν terminology, not the κλύδων, is as yet dominant. Colourless terms, one perceives, follow the terminology of the moment, chameleon-like.[2]

What is left is ἐπέλθῃ, the point of present interest. The word has a relevant dual reference, is neutral: characteristically tenor (τῶν ἐπιόντων κακῶν, Hdt.7.120.1),[3] characteristically vehicle (ἐπῆλθε πλημυρὶς τῆς θαλάσσης, Hdt.8.129.2).[4] It thus has some affinity with any of the neutral terms discussed above, but most with the ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον of *Pe.*426. The structures are schematically very close, over and above the simile/metaphor distinction:

τοὶ δ' (*T*) ὥστε...βόλον (*V*) ἀγαῖσι...ἐρειπίων (*T*) ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον (*N*)
ὅταν (*T*) κλύδων (*V*) κακῶν (*T*) ἐπέλθῃ (*N*)

And in particular, in both passages the neutral terminology is, we might say, *articulated* by its position at the end of the syntactic unit before a following pause. The effect produced by ἐπέλθῃ is recognizably distinct from that of, say, οἴχεται in οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην. Apart from anything else, ἐπέλθῃ is not *the* ground term (metaphor does not entail one), although it is still *a* ground term. All neutral terminology, one would presume, will have some relation to the ground.

That the character of neutral terms may be expected to vary in context has been provisionally shown. I hope it is clear also that the neutral compressions exemplified in these Aeschylean passages *and* those in the comparisons and similes *and* the parallelisms noted earlier all have one thing in common: a breakdown of the rigid terminological barrier that stood between tenor and vehicle in Homer's

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀπ' Οὐλύμπου νέφος ἔρχεται...
ὣς τῶν ἐκ νηῶν γένετο ἰαχή τε φόβος τε.

We have just as much of a barrier, let it be said, in

Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail

for all the 'movement' between 'tied' and 'dog's tail' (*V*–*V*); and we have it likewise in the *V*–*V* group in general. And it will be useful to give an equal emphasis here to the fact that, unlike simile and comparison, metaphor more

often than not has the barrier intact – and good metaphor as much as any:

> Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> *Ripeness* is all. (*King Lear* v.2)

> ὡς Διωνύσοι' ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος
> οἶδα διθύραμβον οἴνῳ συγκεραυνωθεὶς φρένας.
> (Arch.77)

I am not concerned with the barriers, but only with ways of breaking them down. Any such breakdown I shall call 'interaction';[5] and 'such', as is already apparent, conceals a good deal of diversity. I shall now suggest how much more diversity can be subsumed under the same heading.

1 I stop this time at εὐροῇ, because the textual uncertainty that follows would complicate the discussion irrelevantly.

2 This suggests, if it was not already evident, that *neutral* and *colourless* are not rigidly distinct; that there is a spectrum with imperceptible gradations. At the opposite end to colourless *N* terms come punning *N* terms, like the 'dry' of 'dry as dust', which is 'two-toned', in current commercial jargon.

3 Of κακά similarly: *h.Cer.*257, Phoc.16.2, E.*fr.*135.2, Hdt.7.139.2, Hp.*Epid.*7.14, Demad.*fr.*15.

4 Of flowing water similarly: Pi.*fr.*140c, A.*Supp.*559ff., Hdt.2.14.2, Th.3.89.2, Hellanic.28 Jac., Hp.*Vict.*1.27, Thphr.*HP* 4.7.4. The verb is used as *N* likewise at A.*Supp.*469 and *Prom.*1016.

5 *Faute de mieux*, but to the further sorrow of Dr Richards, did he but know, who used the word of the tenor–vehicle relation itself. It is not wholly satisfactory for my purposes, because it implies a two-way relation; whereas the relation involved in my interactions will often be one-way. I am, however, gratified to note that the word has already been used in my sense, and by a distinguished classic at that. 'The interaction of comparison and thing compared', writes Fraenkel (II.39), the reference being to 'intrusion', as I shall be calling it.

§13

Almost all the instances of interaction cited so far have involved neutral terminology,[1] but in discussing comparison I noted an instance of a different kind; a trivial image, hardly an image, more a fossil; but still embodying a different kind of interaction: the English proverbial comparison, 'dead as a doornail'. To recapitulate: the predictable structure of an English comparison is '*N* as *V*'; but 'dead as a doornail' (of an animate being) is, in fact '*T* as *V*'; in sum, the tenor term has *displaced* something else – a term

belonging to both tenor and vehicle. Compare an Aeschylean passage that I discussed in the Prolegomenon,[2] the home-coming king and the vine, *Ag.*966ff.:

ῥίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ' ἐς δόμους,
σκιὰν ὑπερτείνασα σειρίου κυνός.
καὶ σοῦ μολόντος δωματῖτιν ἑστίαν....

'The image', says Fraenkel (after Vahlen), '...assimilates elements of the thing compared.' That is, ἵκετ' ἐς δόμους, applicable to the king but not to the vine, and therefore in tenor terminology, stands as part of – or instead of part of – the vehicle: a displacement once again, notwithstanding the extreme dissimilarity in other ways between the Aeschylus and the English proverb. Such displacements I shall call *intrusions* and intrusion is another main kind of interaction.

Now a new instance, Stesichorus 8.2f. (the subject is Ἀέλιος, the Sun):

ὄφρα δι' ὠκεανοῖο περάσας
ἀφίκοιθ' ἱαρᾶς ποτὶ βένθεα νυκτὸς ἐρεμνᾶς.

There is clearly a relation of some sort between ὠκεανοῖο and the vehicle, βένθεα. The two words belong to the same 'watery' semantic field (θαλάσσης πάσης βένθεα, *Od.*1.52f.);[3] structurally, one could say, a passage like *Odyssey* 12.1f. is evoked: λίπεν ῥόον ὠκεανοῖο / νηῦς ἀπὸ δ' ἵκετο κῦμα θαλάσσης. It is equally clear that the relation is of a new kind. In the first place, there is obviously no question of any displacement; and secondly, ὠκεανοῖο is not neutral but in tenor terminology. Yet by virtue of the relation, the familiar barrier is broken – interactively. The difference between this interaction and those involving neutral terms is important: this one, let us say, is *extra-grammatical*; it operates not through but outside the grammatical structure.[4] And unlike those, again, it has nothing to do with the ground of the image: ὠκεανοῖο has no bearing on the likeness, whatever it may be, between the *x* of night and depths of water. All of which goes equally for the *Macbeth* image cited in the Prolegomenon:[5]

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.

As ὠκεανοῖο is to βένθεα, so 'fall'n' – more or less – is to 'leaf'. And that 'more or less' predictably implies significant variation within this third main type of interaction.

Persae 599f. again:

ὡς, ὅταν κλύδων
κακῶν...

The last major type of interaction differs fundamentally from all the others. These others are overtly and directly *semantic* interactions. Between κλύδων and κακῶν there is a perceptible *aural* relation, an alliterative relation. Since the two words are vehicle and tenor terms respectively, this simple relating is *ipso facto* interactive; it represents another way by which the 'natural' terminological barrier may be overcome – irrespective of the specific effect of the alliteration in this particular case. So: we have, apparently, a separate class of aural interactions, and to this may be referred the patterns briefly remarked above as characteristic of the English '*N* as *V*' comparisons: 'good as gold', 'dry as dust'.[6] In the latter case, one might point out, the alliteration is – more or less predictably – between vehicle and neutral ground term; in the Aeschylus, between vehicle (κλύδων) and its immediate tenor (κακῶν); not that alliteration is to be thought of as the only possible source of aural interactive effects.

These, then, are the four main types of interaction: neutral-based, intrusive, extra-grammatical, aural. Each of these seems to justify in its own way the common general name, interaction: they all involve an *active* relationship *between* the terminologies. That should be clear enough, even before any closer examination into the varieties of relationship – the particular categories within the four main types.

1 I.e. discounting the Prolegomenon, where the passages discussed were more mixed.

2 Prolegom. pp. viif. For full discussion, see below, pp. 140f.

3 βένθεα is largely confined to epic (to which the Stesich. is rhythmically akin), where it is almost invariably used of waters: λίμνης *Il.*13.21, Hes.*Th.*365; θαλάσσης *Od.*1.53; ἁλός *Il.*1.358; πόντου *h.Cer.*38. It seems not to be attested in specific connection with ὠκεανός itself, though cf. *Il.*7.422, *Od.*10.511.

4 For the tag, cf. Trypho *Trop.*III p. 198 Spengel, where tropes of one particular kind (in fact, trope proper, including metaphor etc.) are described as τῆς γραμματικῆς τὴν κοινὴν συνήθειαν παραβαίνοντες. Extra-grammatical signification in my sense was also recognized in antiquity, even perversely, as by Aristid. Quint.*de Mus.*2.9, who claims that in *Il.*7.421–3 the epithets ἀκαλαρρείταο and βαθυρρόου add a feeling of βραδυτής to the sun's rising (!).

5 Prolegom. p. xi.

6 See above, p. 20.

§14

Now that it is apparent what I mean by 'interaction', it may be wondered why I have approached the subject in this oblique way, via what are presumably not its most striking manifestations. I hope it is sufficient to answer that

it is no less important to be able to say, 'In this instance such and such features are perceptible, though not remarkable', than 'In that instance there is a remarkable effect ascribable to such and such'. Each, of course, presupposes the other: one cannot understand 'major' if one does not understand 'minor', and *vice versa*. But in practice it is usually the minor that is presupposed, and presupposed too much.

In addition, it is something if the preceding pages have sufficiently shown that bigger and better interactions are liable not to be freaks, but, as G. M. Hopkins said poetry should be, 'the current language heightened'. A comparatively unremarkable interaction like, say, Aeschylus' ἐπέλθῃ may itself be seen as a heightening of a lower form, one which at its lowest is virtually a built-in feature of the language, the neutral ground term in comparisons. It is valuable to demonstrate how interaction relates to fundamentals, and, to do this, one may as well begin with fundamentals; particularly so, in view of the fact that fundamentals have been largely ignored in the sporadic attention given to this whole field hitherto.

I hope also that the oblique approach has served to make it clear that interaction cannot be accounted a universal 'key' to the appreciation of imagery. Many images do not harbour any interaction and in few of those that do is it the main feature; interaction's tenuous relation to the conceptual aspects of imagery is one very relevant factor here and ultimately, as with any partial emphasis, a limiting one. On the other hand, interaction is a notable feature of many – surprisingly many? – of the most celebrated images in Greek poetry and English poetry too.