



## LITERATURE IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE

(Address at the awarding of the Avery Hopwood prizes at the University of Michigan, June, 1934)

BY MAX EASTMAN

I THINK I would better begin this speech by telling you that I won't keep you waiting long. I know how you feel. There are probably several dozen of you poets counting on these prizes to enable you to pay your bills and get out of town. That was how I managed to leave college. Moreover, one of the prizes that I was particularly counting on, and that I won, and that belonged to me in all right and justice, fell into the hands of some warped and prejudiced and crooked-minded judges, congenitally incapable of delivering a just and honest decision about anything, and instead of giving me the prize, they divided it between me and another man who had no right to it whatever, except that he worked harder than I did, and hadn't run up any bills, and didn't need it, and moreover wouldn't even lend me his half after he got it. That mistake of those judges gave me a bad start in life financially that I've never got over. And so when a majority of you poets go out of here, as you are inevitably bound to do, saying that I have no taste whatever in poetry and am constitutionally blind, deaf, dumb, dishonest, and reactionary, please remember that I agree with you. I think all prize judges are like that. And I realize now that if I had any sense I would never have come up here after judging your poetry, and submitted my own feeble oratory to your withering criticisms. It was, to tell you the truth, an act of weakness. I could not resist the temptation of the peculiar opportunity

afforded by this occasion for making a few timely and appropriate remarks about my own books.

My latest book is called *The Literary Mind: Its Place in an Age of Science*. And it starts off by drawing a few teeth out of the ogre that is called up in the minds of a good many people by that word "science." If you have a brain and a certain amount of energy and make a systematic effort to find out what is the cause of any event, or what are the properties of any object, and your effort is successful, why that is science. It does not matter whether you are moved by pure curiosity or by some purposive interest. It does not matter how important or how trivial the problem is in which you are interested. If you sincerely want to know, and go at it persistently and systematically, and with the only means available—observation, study, reasoning, and above all experiment—that is science. Science is merely the mature and disciplined use of the mind and the stores of human knowledge about any problem.

This first chapter about science is very important. Very important that it should stand first. If you carry into my book any of those old-fashioned, credulous, fairy-story views of what science is, that were so popular with people who thought they were hard-headed thirty or forty years ago, you will go utterly astray on my argument. That is what a lot of my extremely learned

chance of making money under a capitalistic system by exporting goods we would rush into the world market singing Hallelujah! Similarly, when it looks to us as if the rest of the world is about to get a slight advantage over us, we will build up tariff walls and consecrate them with trumpets, prayers, and the Ark of the Covenant of Wall Street.

“Yet underneath it all, American resources and American technological skill will stand watch and come to our assistance when our business folly drives us too far into the mud. Your so-called abundance now may be a snare and a delusion; your soil is still good; but there are factors insidiously and dangerously at work to weaken its productivity. Your ideals are becoming more ideals of consumption, of selling, of an empty and extravagant standard of living, instead of being ideals of production, of sav-

ing, of sturdy fundamental human values. Science and science alone, by the will of God, can save us, and unless you foster and nourish this tender and sensitive tree of knowledge you are doomed. Then we shall hear the cruel thundering of the horses of famine tramping on the land and we shall see you like two starved monkeys chattering on the limb of a withered tree, shouting at each other: self-sufficiency, international coöperation, with no one to hear you and no one to care. Until that day, gentlemen, I bid you good afternoon.”

Our two disputants looked at the departing figure with amused contempt. Then one of them tapped his head significantly, the other nodded assent, and they both retired to the bar-room for much needed refreshment after their discussion.

critics have done—they have read only the title of this first chapter, *The March of Science*. “Oh, yes, the March of Science,” they have said — “he belongs to the period of Spencer, Huxley, Franz Haeckel. He still believes that the world is a machine, that all knowledge is quantitative, and that an absolute determinism prevails throughout nature which makes human choice a delusion. He is doubtless also a Behaviorist.” If these extremely learned critics had happened to read my chapter on the March of Science they would have found all those opinions listed as credulous metaphysical fabrications which science has left behind on its march. They would have found Behaviorism listed there. These views are not scientific findings but wild jumps at emotional conclusions. And jumping at conclusions—whether you take science for your springboard or whether you take religion or poetry—is not science. It is the opposite thing. Science consists only one half in knowing what is known: the other half is never pretending to know what is not.

Now this attitude of sceptical and disciplined experimental inquiry, born, you might say, about the middle of the sixteenth century, has for four hundred years been steadily advancing into one department of human experience after another. In the sixteenth century astronomy and geography, and physiology; in the seventeenth, physics and chemistry, optics and mechanics; in the eighteenth, economics and political science; in the nineteenth, biology and sociology; in the twentieth, psychology. This is a mere rough suggestion of the general course of development. But you see how this organized and mature technique for getting reliable knowledge has very gradually spread over the whole field previously occupied by emotional guesswork and literary eloquence. And the process is only just now, in our own days, complete. I do not mean that scientific knowledge is complete, or ever will be. But scientific knowledge exists, and is distinguishable from amateur opinion in every field. You may say that with the de-

velopment of a psychology and sociology of religion this four-hundred-year triumphant march of science came to an end. Science has now pitched its camp in every field in which men have opinions.

I will not try to convince you that this is the most momentous change that is to be found in the whole history of human culture, although I think it is. The proletarian revolution in Russia, for instance, is but an incident in this more universal change. That revolution is still going forward, economically at least, on the original lines fifteen years after the seizure of power, a thing unheard of in the previous history of social upheavals, because it had scientific leadership and for no other reason. The Soviet régime was set on its feet by technical revolutionary engineers trained in sociology, economics, and the science of historic change. I do not have to convince you of that, however, but only of this: that this steady, relentless, step-by-step invasion by verified knowledge of all the fields heretofore occupied by literary eloquence is the most momentous thing that has happened or could possibly happen in the history of literature. The whole literature of our modern epoch ought to be read and studied primarily, although not of course exclusively, in the light of its relation to this change. Particularly the literature of these recent years when, with the development of psychology and sociology, science has overthrown the last bulwark and invested the last field that was still held sacred to the poet and critic—the field which used to be described as “humane letters” or “the humanities.”

In the next section of my book, therefore, I take up one or two of the outstanding literary schools or tendencies of our day and I show that in their main outlines they are either defense reactions, or reactions of retreat before this invasion by verified knowledge of the fields which used to be occupied by literary eloquence.

The efforts of T. S. Eliot and his very British and very priggish friends, for

instance, to revive a régime of what they call "Intellect" in literary criticism—their attempt to go back, as they say, to seventeenth and eighteenth century tradition—is a mere manoeuvre in the defensive warfare of literary truth against science. It may seem strange to you that people should be resisting science in the name of intellect, but that is because you belong to an age which has so completely embraced the viewpoint of science as to have forgotten the meaning of the word intellect, or come to look upon intellect as a slightly comic affliction. On the lips of Emerson and Matthew Arnold the word intellect was consciously opposed to the exercise of the mind in experiment and investigation. It meant literary as opposed to scientific thinking. T. S. Eliot is trying to head off the advancing prestige of science by making literary truth look very cool and rational and unemotional and extremely scholarly and high-brow. He is yearning back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which literary intellectuals still had a social prestige higher than men of science.

The New Humanists, on the other hand, are trying to head off the march of science with a moralistic propaganda. At least they were a year or so ago. They seem to have given up the sponge for the time being. It is a notable and surprising fact, at least, that their central fortress and arsenal and mighty organ of propaganda, the *Bookman*, has never yet printed a word of reply to the attack on them contained in my book. Of course these literary battles are not carried out under the Marquis of Queensberry rules, but I have already counted nine issues of the *Bookman* since I landed my blow, and I maintain that if I count ten it is a knock-out.

Here, at any rate, is what I said: I said that with all the expert writers writing about it, and the expert teachers teaching it, it remained an insoluble riddle and mystery just what the New Humanism really is. The New Humanists believe in some eighteen different principles or points of view, all held together by the fact that the New Hu-

manists believe them, but not in any other way that anybody has ever been able to discover. I asserted that I had discovered what it was that held these eighteen heterogeneous things together, and that I could prove it. Every single one of them was either a direct defense of literary eloquence as against scientific knowledge, or else a strategic position which enabled them to direct some sort of cross-fire on the advance of scientific method into the field heretofore dominated by literary eloquence.

The humanists pretend, for example, to be very much interested in something which they call the "Inner Life." In the name of the Inner Life they attack psychology, which is a serious attempt to find out about the inner life. In the name of Socrates, who adopted for his own the motto written over the temple of the Oracle at Delphi, "Know Thyself," they attack Sigmund Freud who, —with all his mythological propensities— has, perhaps, contributed more than any one man since Aristotle to the knowledge of the self. And this "inner life" about which our humanists make such a fuss that you might think they would be ready to abandon father and mother and go sell all they have and give to the poor, and turn their backs on all the advantages of place and position and property in this exterior world, in order to achieve it—this inner life turns out to be nothing more illuminating and for that matter nothing more "inner," than decorum, or the art of behaving like a gentleman or a lady with a proper amount of money in the bank. Those humanists are not interested in morals, and they are not interested in the inner life—not any more than the rest of us. What they are interested in, like so many of the human beings around them, is their own profession. They are defending the right of literary critics and essay writers to talk loosely and yet be taken seriously in a scientific age. They are defending the profession of humane or polite letters against the inexorable advance of a more scientific study of man.

After discussing these critics and professors of literature who are fighting science in the name of Intellect and Morals, I take up those poets and creative writers whom we group under the general term "modernist." Their literary character also is fundamentally determined by this advance of scientific knowledge. But instead of a defense reaction, theirs is an attitude of retreat. Instead of opposing the advance of science into the field of literary truth, they have abandoned the field. They have ceased even to pretend to make any serious comment upon life, or give us any important thought, counsel or direction as to its conduct. They have taken refuge in what I call a Cult of Unintelligibility on the one hand, and in a tendency of Pure Poetry on the other. Under these two chapter headings, "The Cult of Unintelligibility" and the "Tendency Toward Pure Poetry," I have summarized the outstanding features of those modern kinds of writing which are to be found so often upon people's drawing room tables, but so rarely in anybody's hand when he reads.

If you pick up a book by Wallace Stevens, or E. E. Cummings, or Hart Crane, or James Joyce, or Gertrude Stein, or Edith Sitwell, or T. S. Eliot as a poet, and read a page innocently, the first feeling you will have is that the author isn't telling you anything. It may seem that he isn't telling you anything because he doesn't know anything. Or it may seem that he knows something but he won't tell. In any case he is uncommunicative. He is unfriendly. He seems to be playing by himself, and offering you somewhat incidentally the opportunity to look on.

Here for instance is a book of poems by Wallace Stevens. Let us open it at random and read a poem. I am not really opening this book at random—I have it trained so it will open where I want it to. I have read this poem aloud forty-four times, and no one has ever been able to tell me what it is, or what it has to do with. Let's see if you can do any better.

JASMINE'S BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS  
UNDERNEATH THE WILLOW

My titillations have no foot-notes  
And their memorials are the phrases  
Of idiosyncratic music.

The love that will not be transported  
In an old, frizzled, flambeaued manner,  
But muses on its eccentricity,

Is like a vivid apprehension  
Of bliss beyond the mutes of plaster,  
Or paper souvenirs of rapture,

Of bliss submerged beneath appearance,  
In an interior ocean's rocking  
Of long, capricious fugues and chorals.

Did you get it? It's a simple poem, you see, and from a distance beautiful, but if you come up close and try to make friends, it won't confide in you. It won't tell you candidly and exactly what it's thinking about. I have read Wallace Stevens' book through, and with the exception of one or two brief moments I do not feel that I have ever been in communication with him.

And that is typical. I think you might say that the dominant tendency of the advanced schools of poetry—and of art in general—for the last twenty years has been to decrease the range, the volume, and the definiteness of communication. I should put that simple statement, which has the advantage of really meaning something, in place of about one half the misty literarious talk of the poets and poet-critics of the modern movement. They are not abandoning romanticism, or going back to an eighteenth or seventeenth century tradition. If the words "romantic" and "classic" mean anything at all, which is subject to question, then the height of the romantic movement is the idea of these modernist poets that they are classical.

Let me read you something from T. S. Eliot's famous poem "Ash Wednesday." This is said to be a religious poem, and it was first published in a tiny thin volume containing only nineteen pages of ten-point Caslon type, and which nevertheless sold for five dollars—a point relevant to my argument that this modern poetry is

distinguished by a decrease not only in the volume and definiteness, but also in the range, of communication. Let me give you a small sample of this expensive religion—about sixty-five cents' worth, as I figure it. And do not forget that T. S. Eliot considers himself a neo-classical poet. He thinks that he represents a return to the manners in poetry established by John Dryden, who said "The first object of a writer is to be understood."

"If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is  
spent  
If the unheard, unspoken  
Word is unspoken, unheard;  
Still is the unspoken word, the Word un-  
heard,  
The Word without a word, the Word  
within  
The world and for the world;  
And the light shone in darkness and  
Against the Word the unstilled world  
still whirled  
About the centre of the silent word.  
O my people, what have I done unto  
thee."

Now I don't say that that is weak, unctious and invertebrate poetry, a mere oily puddle of emotional noises, although that is what I think about it. I merely say that anything farther away from John Dryden, or what is generally called classical in poetry, or the kind of poetry that prevailed in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, would be impossible to find. And I say that the number of people to whom Eliot is going to communicate this religion at five dollars a shot is very small. These poets are not returning to an eighteenth century tradition. They are not returning to any tradition at all. They are not going anywhere. They are withdrawing into themselves. They are communicating with fewer readers; they are communicating less; and what they communicate is less definitely determined.

The cult of unintelligibility might be described as a tendency toward privacy in an art condemned by its very nature to employ

as materials the means of social communion.

However, this cult of unintelligibility is only a part, and probably a transient part, of the modern tendency in general. Indeed, some people tell me it has all but gone out of fashion. It might be described in medical terms as an "exaggerated reaction" to the march of science. "All right, if you won't let us be fountains of truth any longer"—the poets say—"why we won't communicate at all. We'll have nothing to do with you. To hell with the reader." And so they have climbed way upstairs and are sitting there in the middle of the nursery floor playing with words and ideas all by themselves with an egotistical pout on their lips. The cult of unintelligibility is a sulk on the part of poetry brought on by the greater attention which is being paid to science in these modern days.

The other aspect of the modern tendency is more serious, more long-lasting, a more adult and inevitable reaction to the march of science. That is the tendency toward pure poetry. By pure poetry I do not mean anything mystical or queer. I merely mean poetry that is free from the motive to persuade or educate, or give advice, or point a moral, or convey knowledge, or "criticize life," poetry which is solely concerned, as music generally is, to communicate an experience. The most important thing in my book is an essay right in the heart of it entitled "What Poetry Is." In that essay I show that poetry differs from prosaic language in that it dwells upon the qualities of the things it mentions more than is necessary for practical understanding. And pure poetry is poetry that mentions things solely in order to convey qualities, and not in order to interpret them or tell you anything *about* them.

I have explained this in that chapter in a psychological manner. In another I have approached it historically, and I want to repeat my historical outline — to make you realize what poetry is in its own nature by imagining it originating, as it doubtless most often did, in the incantations of medicine-

men and magicians. Names are supposed by all primitive people to have an occult power over the thing named. They have the power of evoking the being of that thing and compelling its obedience. But in order to do that they have to be just the right names. And the medicine man or shaman or poet-magician, who was also sometimes more or less of a "con man," would get the idea spread abroad that he knew the right names of things. He could bring rain, for instance, by standing out under the sky and saying the right words. That is a very wonderful and exciting way to use words, you see, and yet totally unrelated to science or everyday practical communication. The ordinary way to use words when the garden gets dry, is to say, "Well, don't you think we'd better find the old sprinkling pot?" And the scientific way is only a little more elaborate, "Let's build a dam and dig ditches and irrigate the whole valley." But the sorcerer, the poet, this wonderful and deep-eyed man who is in touch with the heart of reality through language, gets out there in the middle of the valley, and spreads out his hands, and says words which do not mean a thing. And then the rain falls. Or else it doesn't! In any case it ought to. And among all primitive peoples, all human tribes who have not yet passed under the affliction of statistics, the opinion is that if the poet has got the right words, the rain does actually fall.

That was undoubtedly the principal mother-lode from which poetry arose. But that is not what poetry is. In the mind of that wonderful tongued magician, naming the raindrops out of the sky, there was an actual vision of the drops he named. His words did have the power to evoke the being of things — in his imagination. For him, moreover, the line between imagination and sense was not too clearly drawn. He was not entirely a sorcerer, but something also of a child. And he had an *interest* in raindrops, an absurd and altogether important interest in raindrops, which had nothing whatever to do with agriculture or the problem of watering the soil. He had a like interest in

the sky. It is not too much to say, in view of what we know about his successors, that he sometimes loved the sky, in a mournful way, even when it failed to rain. He loved, whether with joy or sorrow, the whole business of "being" in this world. And, like all people who love a thing, he enjoyed calling it pet names. Set free by his profession from any other very steady occupation, he developed a great habit of sitting around thinking up pet names for things — the names that would most exactly and vividly evoke them into his imagination. That was how he kept awake when he was not working. And that was pure poetry.

It is to this original and pure form of poetry that the modernists, with all their sophistication and their city things, are tending back. They are abandoning practical meanings, themes, preachments, all that stuff of education and edification that led Wordsworth to describe poetry as "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," and Matthew Arnold actually to define it as a "criticism of life." In place of a criticism, these poets offer us in each poem a moment of life, a rare, perfect, beautiful, ugly, grotesque, or intense moment, and nothing more. They offer us awakening—they even offer to keep us awake for the few moments while we are reading their poem—and that seems to them enough. Poetry is a thing like music or the morning, which stands in no need of ulterior justification for those who are sensitive enough to perceive it.

And the reason why they are doing this is that their former function, the function of interpreting things and criticizing life, has been taken away from them by the advance of scientific knowledge. To put it crudely, the reason the poets don't teach us anything is that they have become aware of the fact that *as poets* they don't know anything. The business of knowing things has become a highly specialized technical function in the hands of scientific experts. Where our fathers consulted Browning and Tennyson for actual guidance in the moral and social crises

of their lives, we consult the psychoanalyst or the expert in home economics or the theory of business cycles or the class struggle for the seizure of power. That is what is happening. Just as in the seventeenth century Galileo and Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle were driving poetry out of the books which interpret physical and chemical experience and show us how to deal with external nature, so in our day the physiological psychologists, and the Freuds and the Marxian Lenins — to mention only a few—are driving poetry out of the books which interpret mental and social phenomena, and show us how to deal with man.

I think it is very important that this fact should be clearly faced, and that is why I express it in these crude terms. Poets *as poets* don't know anything. Men of letters *as men of letters* are not to be looked to any longer for reliable knowledge in any field. Such statements as this which I am going to read from John Masefield, the poet laureate of England, are the feebly extravagant gestures of a dying belief:

"There is another way to truth: by the minute examination of facts. That is the way of the scientist: a hard and noble and thankless way. It is not the way of a great poet, the rare unreasonable, who comes once in ten generations. He apprehends truth by power: the truth which he apprehends cannot be denied save by greater power, and there is no greater power."

And such statements as this from Archibald MacLeish—politically backward enough to be our own poet laureate! — are equally moribund to any man of clear intelligence with the courage to face facts:

"The contemporary critic who sees nothing significant in a poem unless it uses the word dynamo, waves a submachine gun and draws its symbols from New York morning papers of even date will eventually die—as the esthetical critics and the moral critics died before him. And his grandchildren will find in "Anabase," with its biblical and Asian images, and in "The Waste Land," with its Eastern references and its Elizabethan

phrase, the understandable answer to questions neither Mr. Keynes nor Major Douglas nor the whole literature of Marxism will be able to resolve."

That is not the way to defend poetry, or assert its future possibilities or independent rights. That is the way to destroy everybody's respect for it. The Waste Land does not give an understandable answer to any question, and every man of clear sense knows it, and will know it from now on. There is no use trying to defend poetry with this old elevated jabber about truth come at by Power with a capital P any longer. There is no use. The facts to the contrary are too obvious.

I am as much concerned to defend poetry, and assert its independent rights and future possibilities as these poets are. For that very reason I insist that poetry—whatever it may at times be used for—be defined as a communication of experience, and that we fearlessly acknowledge that the progress of intellectual culture has demanded a steadily growing separation of the function of communicating experience from that of communicating knowledge about experience. The limit to which this separation will go is defined only by the limit to which exact and reliable knowledge will go. And the fundamental way to defend poetry, even in the face of an infinite progress of science, is to point out that in devoting yourself to the cultivation and communication of knowledge *about* life, you fail to cultivate and communicate life. The scientist is as much lamed and crippled by the division as the poet. Poetry is not knowledge—no, but it is life. Is it so small a thing to live? And to live vividly? And to live *together*? That is what poetry is—living vividly and living together.

This point of view always makes my Marxian friends a little angry. They think I am deserting the banner because I do not affirm that all literature and all art is a mere reflection of that economic evolution which lies at the basis of social life, and point out that this tendency toward pure poetry and

this Cult of Unintelligibility that I have been discussing are reflections of the approaching breakdown of the bourgeois-capitalistic régime. I feel much as they do about the bourgeois-capitalistic regime, but I cannot repeat these dogmas of the philosophy of dialectic materialism, because I know that they are not true. I have explained at length in a book which you never heard of that Marx confuses the conditions which make a thing possible with the causes which determine its nature. He does this because, being a German romantic philosopher, he thinks he has to prove communism is historically inevitable, and not merely that it is possible—which is all that any scientific revolutionist needs to know. It is true that we could not have had the literature we have if there had not been a certain development of the technique of industry. But that is not saying that the developing technique of industry determines what kind of literature we have.

However, I am not going into that philosophical question just now. Suffice it to say that I have taken upon myself the task of keeping the philosophy of dialectic materialism out of America while helping to bring the Marxian contribution to science in. This subject of the relation of art and literature to social movements in general, and more particularly to the communist dictatorship in Russia, will be treated in my next two books.

Meanwhile, I will say only this—that it is just as true in the sphere of proletarian revolution as it is anywhere else that science, or the communication of knowledge about experience—knowledge of its relations—is separating itself from poetry or the communication of experience itself. And it is because their philosophy does not recognize this fundamental and inevitable division of labor that the Bolsheviks under Stalin have found it so easy, and made it appear so noble, to strangle poetic literature in Russian.

When this fundamental division *is* recognized—when poetry, I mean, is defined as a communication of experience and it is

recognized that with the advance of human culture this function becomes increasingly set apart from science, or the communication of knowledge about experience—then, of course, you have to make some qualifying statements. And here my friend Professor Boynton of Chicago University—and your friend too, undoubtedly—who is one of my most kindly and understanding critics, succeeds in poking a little fun at me. He calls me the “Angel with the Flaming Sword”, and says that after I have driven the poets and literary professors out of the Paradise of truth-seeking with what seems a terrible wrath and ruthlessness, I relent in a most gentle manner—in fact in the manner of an anticlimax—and let them back in on certain conditions. And that is quite true, and I am very proud of it. There is in fact only one virtue, only one genuine old-fashioned virtue, that I have ever laid claim to, and that is that I am really interested in finding out and stating what I believe to be true, and I am more interested in that than I am in building up an imposing argument, or giving my books a spectacular climax. I could have made quite a sensation, perhaps, if I had concluded this book by saying that everything except pure poetry is now dead, and the professors of literature can go and shoot themselves.

Instead of that I turned round and pointed out some obvious facts, which qualify the increasing separation of poetry from science, and make the future of poetic literature and of teaching literature a gorgeously exciting prospect.

One of these obvious facts is that the same single individual, if he is big enough, can be both scientific and poetic. That is, he can learn the scientific point of view, understand the validity of science, lay up a certain store of information, and so, without ceasing to be a poet, win back, or retain, his old place in the forefront of human culture. For that purpose, however, he will have to be very big.

Another of these obvious facts is that in certain fields in which scientific knowledge

is not very specialized or mathematical, truths *ascertained* by the methods of science can be *expressed* in poetic language. I cannot go into all the ways in which this can be worked out, but for one thing a general statement can often be conveyed to your mind—and conveyed with weight and living warmth of color and convincingness—by a particular instance or concrete example. That is the most simple and natural reunion of poetry with science, and probably the most simple instance of that is the significant story. Telling tales that teach or convey an attitude of wisdom essentially based upon science—tales of which Goethe's *Faust* is an example—will, I think, be one of the prevailing forms in which *Dichtung* and *Wahrheit* will be united in the future.

Another of these obvious facts is that verified knowledge, although it now exists in every field, is nevertheless extremely limited in content. There is still a vast kingdom of ignorance in which the man of letters has as good a right to make imposing guesses as the man of science. Indeed he has a better right, for he will not be misusing the authority of science, which derives from an oppo-

site procedure, in order to give more weight than they deserve to emotional guesses. Moreover these literary guesses stand a chance of planting some seed of a new hypothesis, which will be nourished by men of science and bear fruit of verified knowledge.

In short the division of labor I am talking about can never be absolute, either among people — as to say, these men are wholly poets, these wholly scientists — or among books—these books are poetic literature and contain no knowledge about experience, these are science and contain no communication of experience to the imagination. But nevertheless it is a fact that these two *functions* are separating, and their separation is an inevitable accompaniment of the progress of civilized culture. It inheres in the very nature of experience and of our knowledge about it. The important thing is to recognize the fact. Literature, and also the teaching of literature, have a great future. But the great future of literature is in the hands of those who understand what has happened and accept it, not of those whose writings are a blind reaction to it, whether of resistance or of flight.