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## Embodied Intersubjectivity

### *Intersubjetividad Corporeizada*

Una interesante conferencia de Vittorio Gallese sobre las neuronas espejo. ["From mirror neurons to embodied simulation: A new perspective on intersubjectivity."](#) O sea, "De las neuronas espejo a la simulación corporeizada: una nueva perspectiva sobre la intersubjetividad." La idea clave es que nuestras experiencias intersubjetivas son originariamente corpóreas, que la intersubjetividad no es un constructo psicológico elaborado, sino una respuesta neuronal primaria, una reacción corporal del sistema de las neuronas espejo.

Blog de notas de **José Ángel García Landa**

(Biescas y Zaragoza)

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*"Algo hay en el formato mismo de los blogs que estimula un desarrollo casi canceroso de nuestro ego"* (John Hiler)

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Video:

From Mirror neurons to embodied simulation: A new perspective on intersubjectivity.

<https://youtu.be/PIV7F3MHuEk>

*Resumen:*

*Our seemingly effortless capacity to perceive the bodies inhabiting our social world as goal-oriented individuals like us depends on activity within a shared “we-centric” space. I have proposed that this shared manifold space can be characterized at the functional level as embodied simulation a basic functional mechanism by which our brain/body system models its interactions with the world. The mirroring mechanism for action and other mirroring mechanisms in our brain represent sub-personal instantiations of embodied simulation. Embodied simulation provides a new empirically based notion of intersubjectivity viewed first and foremost as intercorporeity. Embodied simulation challenges the notion that Folk-psychology is the sole account of interpersonal understanding. Underlying our capacity for “mind reading” is intercorporeity as the main source of knowledge we directly gather about others. Parallel to the detached third-person sensory perception of social stimuli internal non-linguistic “representations” of the body-states associated with actions emotions and sensations are evoked in the*

observer as if he or she were performing a similar action or experiencing a similar emotion or sensation. By means of an isomorphic format we can map others' actions onto our own motor representations as well as others' emotions and sensations onto our own visceromotor and somatosensory representations. Social cognition is not only explicitly reasoning about the contents of someone else's mind. Our brains and those of other primates appear to have developed embodied simulation as a basic functional mechanism that gives us a direct insight of other minds thus enabling our capacity to empathize with others. This proposal opens new perspectives on our understanding of psychopathological states.

Traduzco:

*Nuestra capacidad aparentemente ilimitada de percibir los cuerpos que habitan nuestro mundo social como individuos como nosotros, orientados a objetivos, depende de la actividad en el seno de un espacio compartido "nosotros-céntrico". He propuesto que este espacio múltiple compartido puede caracterizarse a nivel funcional como una simulación corporeizada—un mecanismo funcional básico mediante el cual nuestro sistema cerebral/corporal construye modelos de sus interacciones con el mundo. El mecanismo especular aplicado a la acción y otros mecanismos especulares de nuestro cerebro suponen ejemplos sub-personales de simulación corporeizada. La simulación corporeizada proporciona una nueva noción de*

*intersubjetividad, con base empírica, contemplada ante todo y primeramente como intercorporeidad. La simulación corporeizada cuestiona la idea de que la psicología popular sea la única fuente de comprensión interpersonal. Subyaciendo a nuestra capacidad de "lectura mental" se encuentra la intercorporeidad como la fuente principal del conocimiento de los otros que obtenemos directamente. Paralelamente a la percepción sensorial objetiva de los estímulos sociales en tercera persona, se evocan en el observador unas "representaciones" interiores no lingüísticas de los estados corporales asociadas con acciones, emociones y sensaciones como si el observador estuviese realizando una acción similar o experimentando una emoción o sensación similar. Mediante un formato isomórfico, podemos proyectar las acciones de otros a nuestras propias representaciones víscero-motrices y somatosensoriales. La cognición social no consiste sólo en un razonamiento explícito acerca del contenido de la mente de otra persona. Nuestros cerebros y los de otros primates parecen haber desarrollado la simulación corporeizada como un mecanismo funcional básico que nos da una comprensión directa de otras mentes, capacitándonos así para la empatía con los otros. Esta propuesta abre nuevas perspectivas para nuestra comprensión de los estados psicopatológicos.*

La segunda parte del vídeo es tan interesante como la primera.

En YouTube: [https://youtu.be/COKWZjCd\\_rM](https://youtu.be/COKWZjCd_rM)

La experiencia del otro es para nosotros como la propia en gran medida, sólo que hay determinados

sistemas neuronales suplementarios que se activan para permitir distinguir la experiencia propia de la ajena—cuando estamos meramente contemplándola, no experimentándola nosotros. Pero, claro, la percepción y comprensión de la experiencia ajena sigue activando muchos elementos cerebrales en común con la experiencia propia—eso es lo que nos permite compartirla, y entenderla. Eso sucede incluso en el caso de representaciones indirectas, como a través de la lectura (esta conexión entre narración y experiencia corporal la comenta Norman Holland en "[Stories and the Mirror Inside You](#)"). También hablamos de esto en "[Neurological Analysis of Narrative Experience](#)".

En cuanto a la comprensión de enfermedades mentales, señala Gallese que en la experiencia normal el sistema neurológico de la insula posterior se desactiva para disociar la propia experiencia de la ajena, y en el caso de pacientes esquizofrénicos hay deficiencias en esta desactivación, o falta de desactivación que resulta en psicosis. Así la imagen corporal propia y la experiencia ajena están entremezcladas, borrosas, y sin fronteras claras.

De las neuronas espejo escribí y especulé hace unos años en "[Especulaciones neuronales](#)". Es interesante que Gallese se refiera a la obra sobre intersubjetividad

de Merleau-Ponty y de Martin Buber, a la hora de buscar conexiones e implicaciones de su teoría, para las humanidades (para la constitución del universo social humano).

Otro aspecto interesante de la conferencia es la teoría de la experiencia corporal que proyectamos a modo de instrumento para la interpretación del mundo. Incluso en el caso en que lo experiencia que percibimos se refiere a seres no conscientes: esto es muy sugestivo para la lingüística cognitiva de la línea de Mark Johnson, George Lakoff o Mark Turner: el mundo lo interpretamos en gran medida a modo de proyecciones de nuestra propia experiencia corporal, y por tanto es de esperar que el lenguaje refleje esa construcción de imágenes desplazadas de nuestro cuerpo al mundo.

Lástima que no le dé tiempo a Gallese a tratar la última cuestión a la que se refiere, cuando enfatiza la importancia del nivel preverbal e interpersonal también en el análisis de la narración, o más generalmente en la relación entre el lenguaje y el sujeto. "Descubrimos que la misma región cerebral que se activa cuando actúo o cuando veo a otro actuar, resulta ser la región cerebral que se activa cuando leo o escucho una narración que describe esas mismas acciones. Así que esto puede ser relevante para el lenguaje

también." Una cuestión que especifica en el turno de preguntas es que (aunque los resultados son preliminares y provisionales) la contemplación de una acción excita las mismas áreas motoras en el cuerpo, una excitación que es inhibida por la excitación de otro grupo de neuronas, mientras que la *lectura de una narración o descripción de esa acción excita no las áreas motoras sino únicamente las correspondientes áreas inhibitoras de la acción.*

Termina Gallese señalando la relevancia de ciertos aspectos del pensamiento de Freud para esta nueva noción de la experiencia preverbal, pues en sus propios términos Freud enfatizaba, cito, que "una palabra adquiere su sentido ligándose a una presentación de un objeto [...] y la presentación del objeto de por sí es un complejo de asociaciones que ligan una gran variedad de presentaciones táctiles, visuales, cinestéticas". Esto viene de un ensayo de Freud sobre la afasia, con nociones muy similares a las concepciones modernas según observa Gallese; fue influido por el trabajo sobre la afasia de J. Hughlings Jackson ("On Affections of Speech from Disease of the Brain." *Brain* 1 (1878): 304-330; 2 (1879): 203-22, 323-56).

Querría yo completar esta perspectiva, señalando otro paralelismo histórico, o precedente de esta teoría de



las raíces corpóreas de la intersubjetividad; no tan antiguo como el de Freud, pero igualmente llamativo. En cierto modo quizá estemos volviendo en el siglo XXI a retomar ciertas concepciones decimonónicas, o de hace cien años, *aufgehoben* como era de esperar, una vez superadas ciertas reacciones extremas a ellas en la segunda mitad del siglo XX—por ejemplo, poniendo más énfasis en el carácter corporal de la experiencia, en lugar de en el constructivismo puramente mental o cultural de la misma. Constructivismo, sí, pero a un nivel no únicamente conceptual sino también neuronal. Voy a reproducir en esta línea un texto muy pasado de moda y seguramente olvidado por la mayoría de los *literary theorists*, el capítulo 15 de los *Principles of Literary Criticism* de I. A. Richards, explicando su noción de "Attitudes"—en el sentido de movimientos incipientes o imágenes cerebrales de movimientos. Esta noción de la experiencia mental como experiencia corporal incipiente o inhibida había sido desarrollada por Theodor Lipps, Wilhelm Dilthey y otros—y estas nociones ellas vemos el correlato decimonónico de las respuestas neuronales inhibidas que estudia Gallese.

Cito de I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924; reimp. Londres: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). Pero antes veamos una presentación de la teoría estética de Richards, la que en tiempos



explicaba yo cuando enseñaba teoría literaria allá hacia 1990:

## I. A. RICHARDS (1893-1979)

Ivor Armstrong Richards was born in Cheshire, England, but he followed a path opposed to T. S. Eliot's, and became a Harvard University professor in 1944. Richards is perhaps best known as the author of *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), together with C. K. Ogden;

this book strongly influenced the semantic movement in linguistics. It shows Richards's use of psychology in dealing with language. Richards became a leader in the attempt to make criticism scientific in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), *Science and Poetry* (1925), *Practical Criticism* (1929), and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936). In 1932 he began working with Basic English, a form of English with an 850-word vocabulary. He wrote a Basic English version of Plato's *Republic*.  
(1)

According to John Crowe Ransom, "Discussion of the new criticism must start with Mr. Richards. The new criticism very nearly began with him". (2).  
The influence on the New Critics exerted by I. A.

Richards must be qualified, since an important part of his thought is in contradiction with the most commonly accepted principles of the New Criticism. The ideal of Richards is to establish scientific bases for criticism, and ultimately to reduce to scientific explanations, to psychological phenomena, the mysteries of art and emotion. His scientific ideal and his psychological approach are rejected by the New Critics, but many of his ideas and methods of analysis will deeply influence them.

Richards's aesthetics, expounded in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, is heavily dependent on his peculiar conception of the human mind. The aim of this work is to give literary criticism a psychological foundation. Criticism is a secondary discipline, and its principles must be grounded on more basic theories of communication and valuation. Richards's aim is to provide a scientific grounding for both value and communication, and therefore for criticism. He warns against purely emotional, subjective responses which are obstructive to scientific criticism. The task of criticism is the definition and the valuation of the aesthetic experiences. A critical statement has two parts: the technical part of the statement describes the aesthetic object; the critical part

describes the value of the experience it provides. The best criticism, according to Richards, is attentive to the effect of the work on the receiver, but it also seeks to relate the reactions of the receiver to the objective properties of the work. (....)

### *The Aesthetic Experience:*

Richards denies that there is any peculiar, distinctive aesthetic experience different in substance from any other experience. He feels that aesthetic experiences have been distorted and magnified by the critics who defend "art for art's sake" and aestheticism (such as Roger Fry). The isolability of aesthetic experiences does not entail the uniqueness of the values they provide. For Richards, aesthetic experiences share many common elements with "ordinary" experiences. There is no distinctive "aesthetic emotion" from a psychological point of view. Our reactions to art are just an elaboration of our ordinary reactions to real life experiences. Art has no special value that is not present in life as well. All value is psychological value, and criticism is ultimately a branch of psychology: it is the description of the psychological experiences provided by the works of art. For Wellek, Richards's position amounts to

a "total abolition of the difference between art and life" (3)

The psychology outlined by Richards is materialist: he defines the mind as a part of the activity of the nervous system. The mind is a system of impulses which is self-regulated to a certain extent: it is the inner state of the system which determines which external stimuli will be of consequence. That is, the importance of an event or experience cannot be determined in itself, but only in relation to the mental system which perceives it. The conduct of life is an attempt to organize impulses so that the most important impulses may find satisfaction. Value is determined as the satisfaction and balance of impulses. In itself, the satisfaction of impulses is good, but a balance must be preserved. Anything that manages to satisfy an impulse without thwarting a more important one is good. The importance of an impulse is therefore defined relationally, as "the extent of the disturbance of other impulses in the individual's activities which the thwarting of the impulse involves" (*Principles* 39). Richards wants to provide a "neutral" definition of value, one which does not rely on any doctrine or preconception, a definition which escapes the extremes of both authoritarian

moralism and hedonism. The aim of mental activity is to achieve a growing order, and the best organization of impulses is the one which is the least wasteful of human possibilities, the one which is more comprehensive and therefore enables to attain the more important values. Richards is critical of the more conventional values which organize public life. These public moral codes are cruder, less complex than the individual ones. They have the useful function of securing uniformity, but for Richards "none of the afflictions of humanity are worse than its obsolete moral principles" (*Principles* 43). No single standard of organization of impulses can be imposed, but it is desirable that nobody be deprived of all generally accessible values. Richards's aesthetics, and even the notion of balance of impulses, stem out of a line of psychological aesthetics mostly developed in Germany (Theodor Lipps, Wilhelm Dilthey) but which also has some representatives in the English-speaking world. Vernon Lee (*The Beautiful*, 1913) develops Lipps's concept of "empathy" as feeling oneself into the aesthetic object. Richards will argue however that not all art provides empathy; he prefers the more general term "synaesthesia", defined as "a harmony and equilibrium of our impulses" induced by the work of art. This concept is not wholly new: Ethel D.

Puffer's *Psychology of Beauty* (1905) speaks of "equilibrium of impulses", and Wilbur M. Urban of "balance of impulses" (*Valuation*, 1909) as the result of the aesthetic experience.

The definition of poetry given by Richards is intimately linked to this conception of the human mind. The aim of poetry is to order and satisfy human impulses, and the value of the poem depends on the number and diversity of the impulses harmonized. A successful work of art is a device which brings the whole of our personality into play and orders our emotions, canalizing them in one direction. In doing this, poetry goes beyond the mere production of pleasure. Pleasure is not the end of poetry, but a by-product. Pleasure is not a complete experience, which stands alone or is an aim in itself. It is always a question of pleasure in doing something, pleasure as the result of successful activity of some kind. Unpleasure likewise results from frustrated or chaotic activity. They arise in the course of activities directed to other ends. If pleasure becomes an end in itself, disillusionment and exhaustion soon follow. Poems, therefore, are not to be read for pleasure, since that is not their objective. The value of literature lies in its mental after-effects, and the influence it has in building a

whole and harmonious personality.

Richards, like Arnold, defines poetry as a criticism of life, and he adds to this definition his own concern with communication. Art is a privileged form of communication, because it is a transmission of peculiarly valuable experiences; a storehouse of recorded values. Works of art "spring from and perpetuate hours in the lives of exceptional people, when their control and command of experience is at its highest" (*Principles* 22). If only we approach them in the right way, we shall find that "They record the most important judgements we possess as to the values of experience" (*Principles* 23). Poetry is a record and a perpetuation of valuable experiences. The artist is specialized in the elementary, concrete responses which are the living source of morality. Moralists tend to condemn artists because moralists are concerned with the abstract side of moral life, the morality consecrated by the community, while the artist works on the border of the concrete, striving to enlarge our ordered response to life. Art makes complex private experiences available to the community, and is therefore a way to diffuse moral influence in the sense of moral evolution. High civilization, that is, civilization which allows to lead free, varied and



unwasteful lives, depends largely on art for its vitality. Art has a civilizing, an educating influence which is subtle but pervasive. Art and criticism are therefore not a luxury, but a necessary vanguard. The arts are not an alternative to reality or an expenditure of superfluous energies: what they offer is the very essence of reality. Richards defines art as the delicate organization and the communication of real life values.

According to Richards, the artistic experience is given shape by the need for communication. The artist may argue that he is not concerned with communication, but the very conditions of his art are defined by the necessity of communicating experiences. Successful communication in art does not depend on the purpose of the artist: it is often achieved instinctively, even if the artist neither cares nor devotes a second thought to the problem. Richards interprets Eliot's aim of "impersonality" as the need to give shape to a comprehensible message. It is at bottom a question of communicative efficacy, taking into account the peculiar conditions of artistic communication, which prevents direct contact between the artist and the public. The only contact occurs through the artistic object, which must therefore be an effective instrument of

communication. It is useless to speculate on the mental states of the artist, which are not available to us (although Richards will not always be consistent on this particular point). Richards prefers to concentrate on the psychological effect of the poem on the reader, and he outlines a theory of reception which is less interesting than it might have been because it largely ignores the properly linguistic and literary responses to a work, to concentrate on purely physical perceptions or the subjective associations of the reader. (4)

Richards is anxious to find the physical and physiological roots of meaning effects. The bridge between the physical and the mental is provided by the concept of "attitude". All kinds of bodily and mental experiences and reactions leave their trace in memory images or "attitudes", and the experience of the work of art involves a reworking of these images. Reacting to a work of art, then, involves residual or imaginal movements of the body and the emotions. Mental activity consists in a constant adjustment to our environment by means of these semiotic traces. Richards applies this principle to the analysis of poetry, painting, sculpture and music. In spite of their imaginal character, artistic experiences should not be conceived as incomplete or

vicarious experiences: "they might better be described as ordinary experiences completed" (*Principles* 184)

Communication is not a "transference" of experience from the author to the reader, but a recreation of the original experience:

Communication . . . takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience of the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience. (*Principles* 137).

The degree of communication is variable, and it depends not only on the nature of the work but also on the similarities shared by the participants, and on the saliency of the features of the experience which is being communicated. The poet must be a good communicator, that is, he must be able to use past similarities in experience as his materials and he must be able to control the way the materials interact with each other in the structure of the work. (...)

(One must note, in passing, that Richards's materialist psychology has nothing in common with the psychology of the unconscious developed by Freud).

His conception of poetic form derives immediately from his psychology. He conceives of the analysis of the strata of a poem in a dynamic way, as phases in the mental analysis of the poem, or psychological maneuvers. Six kinds of psychological events occur when we read a poem:

- I. The visual sensations of the printed words.
- II. Images very closely associated with these sensations.
- III. Images relatively free
- IV. References, or "thinkings of" various things.
- V. Emotions.
- VI. Affective-volitional attitudes.

Richards thus traces the path the poem follows from the page to its influence on the coenesthesia of the reader: "it is the attitudes evoked which are the all-important part of any experience" (*Principles* 101).

### (Notes)

- (1) Joseph E. Baker, "Richards, Ivor Armstrong".
- (2) John Crowe Ransom, *The New Criticism* (1941)
- (3) René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950. Vol. 5: English Criticism, 1900-1950*. London: Jonathan Cape, 186. 222.
- (4) See "The Analysis of a Poem," ch. 16 of *Principles of Literary Criticism*.

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Bien, esto contextualiza un poco la psicología de Richards (la fuente principal es, aparte del propio Richards, la *History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* de René Wellek). Ahora, a continuación, reproduzco el capítulo 15 de *Principles of Literary Criticism*, "Attitudes", en el que se puede ver la similaridad entre la teoría materialista de la respuesta literaria que propone Richards, y los nuevos desarrollos apuntados por Gallese, basados en la intersubjetividad corporeizada a través de las neuronas espejo. Creo que (sin extendernos en la diferencia de los planteamientos, bases científicas y metodologías) las similaridades entre estas teorías psicológicas de la percepción corporeizada hablan por sí mismas, aunque alguna observación apuntaremos entre paréntesis y en cursiva.

## Chapter Fifteen

### ATTITUDES

My Sences want their outward motion  
Which now within  
Reason doth win

The interventions of memory are not confined to sensation and emotion. They are of equal importance in our active behaviour. The acquisition of any muscular accomplishment, dancing or billiards, for example, shows this clearly. (*Aquí se refiere Richards a un tipo de "memoria neuronal" o corpórea cuyos antecedentes en psicología comentamos más en este artículo: [Training the Train of Ideas](#)*) What we have already done in the past controls what we shall do in the future. If the perception of an object and the recognition that it is a tree, for example, involve a poise in the sensory system concerned, a certain completeness or 'colosure', to use the term employed by Köhler, so an act, as opposed to a random movement, involves a similar poise in a motor system. But sensory and motor systems are not independent; they work together; every perception probably includes a response in the form of incipient action. We constantly overlook the extent to which all the while we are making preliminary adjustments, getting ready to act in one way or another. Reading Captain Slocum's account of the centipede which bit him on the head when alone in the middle of the Atlantic, the writer has been caused to leap right out of his chair by a leaf which fell upon his face from a tree. Only occasionally

does some such accident show how extensive are the motor adjustments made in what appear to be the most unmuscular occupations.

This incipient activity stands to overt action much as an image stands to a sensation. But such 'imaginal' activity is, by its very nature, extraordinarily hard to detect or to experiment upon. Psychology has only dealt with fringes of the mind hitherto and the most accessible fringe is on the side of sensation. We have therefore to build up our conjectures as to the rest of mental happenings by analogy with the perhaps not entirely representative specimens which sensation supplies. This limitation has led the majority of psychologists to see in imaginal movement no more than images of the *sensations* from muscle, joint, and tendon, which would arise if the movement were actually made.

It is certain that before any action takes place a preliminary organization must occur which ensures that the parts do not get in one another's way. It appears to the writer that these preliminaries in his case make up part of consciousness, but there is a heavy weight of authority against him. The point is no doubt exceptionally hard to determine.

In any case, whether the consciousness of activity is due to sensations and images of movements alone, or



whether the outgoing part of the impulse and its preparatory organization help to make up consciousness, there is no doubt about the importance of incipient and imaginal movement in experience. The work done by Lipps, Groos and others on *einfühlung*, or empathy, however we may prefer to restate their results, shows that when we perceive spatial or musical form we commonly accompany our perception with closely connected motor activity. We cannot have this activity out of our account of what happens in the experiences of the arts, although we may think that those who have built upon this fact what they had put forward as a complete aesthetic—Vernon Lee, for example—have been far from clear as to what questions they were answering.

The extent to which any activity is conscious seems to depend very largely upon how complex and how novel it is. The primitive and in a sense natural outcome of stimulus is action; the more simple the situation with which the mind is engaged, the closer is the connection between the stimulus and some overt response in action, and in general the less rich and full is the consciousness attendant. A man walking over uneven ground, for example, makes without reflection or emotion a continuous adjustment of his steps to his footing; but let the ground become precipitous and, unless he is used to such places, both reflection and

emotion will appear. The increased complexity of the situation and the greater delicacy and appropriateness of the movements required for convenience and safety, call forth far more complicated goings on in the mind. Besides his perception of the nature of the ground, the thought may occur that a false move would be perilous and difficult to retrieve. This, when accompanied by emotion, is called a 'realization' of his situation. The adjustment to one or another of varied impulses—to go forward carefully, to lie down and grasp something with the hands, to go back, and so forth—and their co-ordination into useful behaviour alters the whole character of his experience.

Most behaviour is a reconciliation between the various acts which would satisfy the different impulses which combine to produce it; and the richness and interest of the feel of it in consciousness depends upon the variety of the impulses engaged. Any familiar activity, when set in different conditions so that the impulses which make it up have to adjust themselves to fresh streams of impulses due to the new conditions, is likely to take on increased richness and fullness in consciousness.

*(Como se ve I. A. Richards expone toda una teoría de la consciencia, de la experiencia consciente y de la atención, frente a la experiencia subliminal o*

*preconsciente. La consciencia no es un fenómeno primario, sino complejo, emergente, a partir de una experiencia que es un complejo semiótico de autocomunicaciones y representaciones. Es una noción que está en plena línea con el empirismo británico, y con el pragmatismo norteamericano, y a este respecto se puede comparar con la noción de la consciencia emergente expuesta contemporáneamente a Richards por [George Herbert Mead, en su Filosofía del Presente](#)).*

This general fact is of great importance for the arts, particularly for poetry, painting and sculpture, the representative or mimetic arts. For in these a totally new setting for what may be familiar elements is essentially involved. Instead of seeing a tree we see something in a picture which may have similar effects upon us but is *not* a tree. The tree impulses which are aroused have to adjust themselves to their new setting of other impulses due to our awareness that it is a *picture* which we are looking at. Thus an opportunity arises for those impulses to define themselves in a way in which they ordinarily do not.

This, of course, is only the most obvious and simple instance of the way in which, thanks to the unusual circumstances in which things depicted, or in literature described, come before us, the experiences that result

are modified. To take another obvious example: the description of [the theatrical presentation of a murder](#) has a different effect upon us from that which could be produced by most actual murders if they took place before us. These considerations, of vast importance in the discussion of artistic form, will occupy us later (pp. 111, 187). Here it is sufficient to point out that these differences between ordinary experiences and those due to works of art are only special cases of the general difference between experiences made up of a less and of a greater number of impulses which have to be brought into co-ordination with one another. The bearing of this point upon the problem of the aesthetic mode with its detachment, impersonality, etc., discussed in the second chapter, will be apparent. (Compare Chapter Thirty-two, p. 196).

The result of the co-ordination of a great number of impulses of different kinds is very often that no *overt* action takes place. There is a danger here of supposing that no action whatever results or that there is something incomplete or imperfect about such a state of affairs. Both imaginal action and incipient action which does not go so far as actual muscular movement are more important than overt action in the well-developed human being. Indeed the difference between the intelligent or refined, and the stupid or crass person is a difference in the extent to which overt

action can be replaced by incipient or imaginal action. (*Esta noción de Richards, el principio de que la acción mental es acción corporal convertida en acción incipiente y en signo, sí puede conectarse con la psicología freudiana— en su teoría del desplazamiento de la libido a objetos simbólicos, del fetichismo, o más generalmente del argumento desarrollado sobre la represión en Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*). An intelligent man can 'see how a thing works' when a less intelligent man has to 'find out by trying'. Similarly with such responses as are aroused by a work of art. The difference between 'understanding' it and failing to do so is, in most cases, a difference between being able to make the required responses in an imaginal or incipient degree, adjusting them to one another at that stage, and being unable to produce them or adjust them except overtly and at their fullest development. Though the kinds of activity involved are different, the analogy with the case of the mathematician is not misleading. The fact that he will not make half so many marks on paper as a schoolboy does not show that he is any less active. His activity takes place at an earlier stage in which his responses are merely incipient or imaginal. In a similar manner the absence of any overt movements or external signs of emotion in an experienced reader of poetry, or concert-goer, compared to the evident disturbances which are sometimes to be seen in the novice, is no indication of

any lack of internal activity. The response required in many cases by works of art is of a kind that can only be obtained in an incipient or imaginal stage. Practical considerations often prevent their being worked out in overt form, and this is, as a rule, not in the least to be regretted. For these responses are commonly of the nature of solutions to problems, not of intellectual research, but of emotional accommodation and adjustment, and can usually be best achieved while the different impulses which have to be reconciled are still in an incipient or imaginal stage, and before the matter has become further complicated by the irrelevant accidents which attend overt responses.

These imaginal and incipient activities or tendencies to action, I shall call attitudes. When we realize how many and how different may be the tendencies awakened by a situation, and what scope there is for conflict, suppression and inter-play—all contributing something to our experience—it will not appear surprising that the classification and analysis of attitudes is not very far advanced. A thousand tendencies to actions, which do not overtly take place, may well occur in complicated adjustments. For these what evidence there is must be indirect. In fact, the only attitudes which are capable of clear and explicit analysis are those in which some simple mode of observable behaviour gives the clue to what has been taking place, and even here only a part

of the reaction is open to this kind of examination.

Among the experiences which are by the nature of the case hidden from observation are found almost all those with which criticism is concerned. The outward aspects and behaviour of a man reading *The Prioresses' Tale* [sic] and *The Miller's Tale* may well be indistinguishable. But this should not lead us to overlook how great a part in the whole experience is taken by attitudes. Many experiences which, if examined by introspection for their actual content of sensation and imagery, differ very little, are totally diverse in the kind and degree of implicit activity present. This aspect of experiences as filled with incipient promptings, lightly stimulated tendencies to acts of one kind or another, faint preliminary preparations for doing this or that, has been constantly overlooked in criticism. Yet it is in terms of attitudes, the resolution, inter-inanimation, and balancing of impulses—Aristotle's definition of Tragedy (1) is an instance—that all the most valuable effects of poetry must be described.

(1) 'Tragedy is an imitation of an action . . . effecting through Pity and Terror the correction and refinement (*kátharsis*) of such passions'.

*Poetics*, VI. Cf. p. 247, *infra*.



Como se ve, Richards nos remite tanto a la experiencia personal (a modo de experimento vivido de la interioridad) como a la psicología experimental de Lipps, cercana a Wilhelm Wundt, y a la [Einfühlungstheorie](#) de Karl Groos y otros. También tuvo estrechos contactos con esta escuela alemana (directamente con Dilthey y Wundt) [George Herbert Mead](#), con cuya psicología materialista de la consciencia tiene una gran proximidad la psicología de Richards. Son concepciones cuyo parentesco con las actuales concepciones neurológicas de la intersubjetividad corporeizada o interiorizada no conviene desdeñar, a pesar de los evidentes progresos en observación y experimentación realizados durante el último siglo, y de la novedad relativa que supone la teoría de las neuronas espejo.

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