

A Poetics

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I wish to encapsulate certain assumptions about language, about the literary work and its form, about the writer's playing field, and about a country's literature as its image. The "field work" in research – that is, the reading of the poetic texts themselves over the last century – enabled me to clarify to myself those assumptions. The argument is as follows:

1. Particularly when the work is literary, linguistic usage is essentially translation. The word, "translation," is from Latin *transferre, translatus*, meaning "to carry or ferry across." When we write, we ferry across our words our perceptions of reality. Such working or tillage of language is work of imagination: it makes things real to the mind, for it is the mind that has the imaginative power. This implies that the sense for language is the basic poetic sense. It is intimately bound with one's sense of reality. *What is most imagined is what is most real.* "When the imagination sleeps," says Albert Camus, "words are emptied of their meaning." The same tillage or cultivation of language implies that the meanings of our words do not come so much from the words themselves as from lives lived. We translate a feeling or an impression into the words of a language; the translation could fail. We invent or reinvent our words, or transform or even subvert their accepted syntax, in order that we might ferry across them our own soul's freight.

2. The literary work itself, without Theory, isn't mute. Its chief appeal is to the imagination, and the basic requirement is a