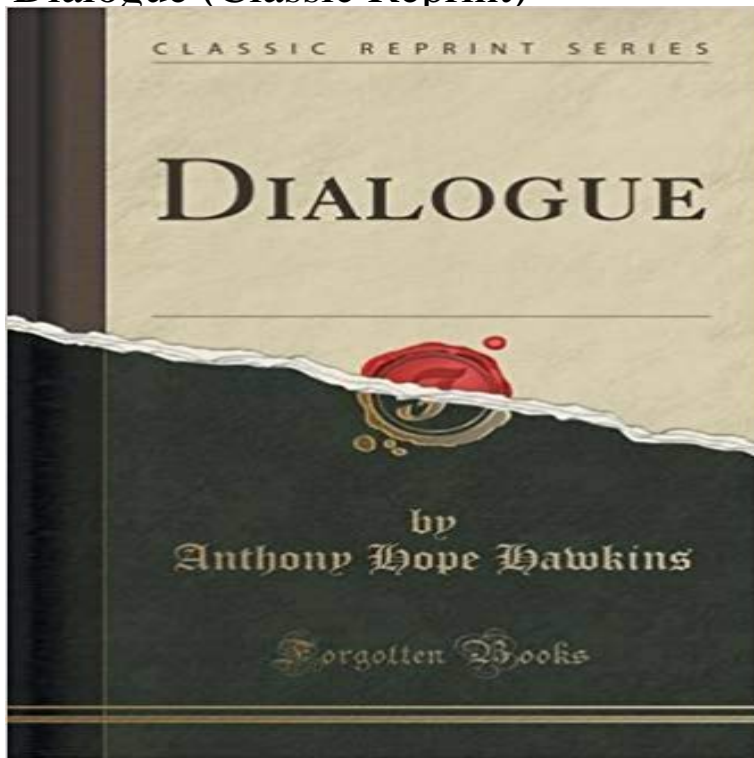


Dialogue (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from Dialogue Although it is probable that the subject I have chosen to speak about this evening is rather outside the ordinary scope of your proceedings, I have thought it better to take that risk than to attempt to address you on some topic which I, as a working novelist and one who has made experiments in the dramatic line also, have had less occasion to study, and therefore should be less likely to be able to say anything deserving of your attention - not that I am at all confident of doing that even as matters stand. Yet perhaps it is not altogether alien to the spirit of this Association to consider sometimes a more or less technical aspect of literature itself, even though its main object may be to promote the study of literature; such a discussion, undertaken from time to time, may foster that interest in literature, on which in the end the spread of its study must depend. With that much said by way of justification, or of apology, as you will, I proceed to my task. Some months ago I happened to read a novel in the whole course of which nobody said anything - not one of the characters was represented in the act of speaking to another with the living voice. One remark was indeed quoted in a letter as having been made viva voce on a previous occasion, but this sudden breach of consistency did not command my belief - it seemed like an assertion that in an assembly of veritable mutes somebody had suddenly shouted. The book was not in the main in the form of letters - it was almost pure narrative. The effect was worse than unreal. An intense sense of lifelessness was produced; you moved among the dead - or even the shadows of the dead. It was a lesson in the importance of dialogue in fiction which no writer could ever forget. What, then, is this dialogue? Formally defined it includes, I suppose, any conversation any talk in which two or more persons take part; while it excludes a monologue, which one delivers while

others listen, and a soliloquy, which one delivers when there is nobody to listen - unless, perchance, behind the arras. But some dialogues are, if I may coin a word, much more thoroughly dialogic than others - there is much more of what is the real essence of the matter. That real essence I take to be the meeting of minds in talk - the reciprocal -exhibition of mind to mind. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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