



Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words and Supplementary Essays

Laura Jackson, Schuyler B. Jackson

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Existing only in manuscript since the 1940s but enjoying an underground reputation among friends and advocates, this primary document by one of the most original and influential of American poets and thinkers is now being published as *Rational Meaning*, Laura (Riding) Jackson's testament of the necessity of living for truth. Begun as a dictionary and thesaurus in the 1930s, the work developed into a fundamental reevaluation of language itself. Riding, in close collaboration with her husband, continued this monumental project over the succeeding decades, completing it after his death in 1968. At the core of *Rational Meaning*, which aims to restore the truth of language by arguing that meaning inheres in words, stands the idea that a total renovation of the knowledge of language is needed, not to develop mere verbal sophistication and respectability but fundamentally to reinvigorate the intellectual processes of consciousness. The book reveals the disastrous extent to which language has been "unlearned" and shows how it may be learned again. *Rational Meaning* will be essential reading, not only for students of literature but for radical-minded linguists and lexicographers unhappy with the orthodoxies current in their disciplines.

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