THE CRITICAL PRACTICE OF F.R. LEAVIS

CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF SOME FORMATIVE

INFLUENCES: PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis attention is focussed on the antithetical and complementary roles played by T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence in the criticism of F.R. Leavis. They figure both as subjects for and as influences upon that criticism, and are seen by Leavis as complementary forces from an early stage in his career as a critic. An attempt is made to explain Leavis's shifting valuations of these authors by reference to the work of four philosophers for whom he has expressed admiration.

Santayana's ideas are seen to favour the influence of both Eliot and Lawrence. Particular attention is paid to the concepts of tradition and impersonality in relation to Eliot, and to the way in which Santayana's version of 'impersonality' is congruous with Lawrence's view of the artist as a man for whom there is no distinction between the living (and suffering) individual and 'the mind which creates'.

Whitehead's philosophy of organism, and the overriding importance attached to the human individual by Collingwood and Polanyi are seen as further reinforcements of Leavis's high valuation of Lawrence. Because Whitehead and Polanyi are both philosophers with a grounding in the natural sciences they are seen to be aptly invoked by Leavis in his controversy with Lord Snow on the nature of culture, and this controversy in its turn is seen to reflect part of Leavis's concern with Lawrence.

This study is not a comprehensive view of influences upon Leavis as a critic. But it is hoped that, by concentrating attention upon the major figures of Eliot and Lawrence and the possible influence of four philosophers, some light has been cast valuably on Leavis's critical premisses and in particular on his view of the relation of literature to life.
## Table of Contents

**Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I. Santayana and Leavis</th>
<th>p.1</th>
<th>p.14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Santayana and Eliot</td>
<td>p.15</td>
<td>p.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Impersonality and Tradition</td>
<td>p.21</td>
<td>p.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. The Function of the Critic</td>
<td>p.27</td>
<td>p.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Santayana and Leavis</td>
<td>p.49</td>
<td>p.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Santayana and Leavis on the function of the critic</td>
<td>p.56</td>
<td>p.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Santayana and Leavis on The Relativity of Human Values</td>
<td>p.86</td>
<td>p.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter II. Eliot and Leavis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II. Eliot and Leavis</th>
<th>p.119</th>
<th>p.217</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Eliot and Leavis's New Bearings</td>
<td>p.133</td>
<td>p.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Leavis and Eliot's After Strange Gods</td>
<td>p.150</td>
<td>p.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Eliot and Leavis's Revaluation</td>
<td>p.158</td>
<td>p.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Leavis and Eliot on Milton</td>
<td>p.171</td>
<td>p.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Eliot and Leavis's Education and The University</td>
<td>p.183</td>
<td>p.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Leavis's Approaches to T.S. Eliot</td>
<td>p.189</td>
<td>p.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. Leavis's later criticism of Eliot</td>
<td>p.201</td>
<td>p.217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter III. Leavis and Lawrence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter III. Leavis and Lawrence</th>
<th>p.218</th>
<th>p.313</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Leavis's Reasons for admiring Lawrence</td>
<td>p.219</td>
<td>p.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Leavis's criticism of Lawrence</td>
<td>p.250</td>
<td>p.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Lawrence versus Eliot's Demonstration</td>
<td>p.308</td>
<td>p.313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter IV. Whitehead and Leavis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter IV. Whitehead and Leavis</th>
<th>p.314</th>
<th>p.363</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.364</td>
<td>p.405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter V. Leavis, Collingwood and Polanyi**

| Chapter V. Leavis, Collingwood and Polanyi | p.406 | p.418 |

**Bibliography**
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Introduction

Tracing influences on the critical practice of Leavis is a difficult undertaking. Leavis is still not just alive, but actively engaged in the teaching and criticism of literature. However, as Leavis himself recognizes, the fact remains that in the formation of his critical ideas he was impressed by certain writers.

This thesis is not intended to deal exhaustively with all the formative influences on the criticism of Leavis. Its principle concern is with T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence who have both profoundly influenced Leavis as a literary critic, and who have also been the occasion of some of his own most influential criticism. In recent years, Leavis has referred more than once to philosophers whom he has found valuable for particular insights, and it will be argued that a better understanding of the nature of Leavis's criticism, and in particular of his dealings with Eliot and Lawrence, can be arrived at if we look also at what has certainly or possibly interested him in the work of four philosophers whose names appear in his writings: George Santayana, A.N. Whitehead, R.G. Collingwood and Michael Polanyi.

Here an objection has to be forestalled. It may be argued that Leavis is well known for his distrust of abstract and philosophical thinking; how can it be then that he is influenced by such philosophers? The answer is that Leavis makes use only of those of their ideas that pertain to literary criticism proper and enforce his claims for the human world, relegating the abstract philosophical argument to the specialist.

Santayana's ideas, it will be seen, move in the direction of both Eliot and Lawrence. Tradition, impersonality and the expediency of a dispassionate approach to works of literature are prominent in Santayana's writings, and are recurrent in both Eliot and Lawrence,
and are drawn upon by Leavis. But Eliot's initial view of impersonality as implying a complete separation between the man who suffers and the mind which creates has not been found felicitous by Leavis (though he worked under its spell for some time). Meanwhile it is at variance with the notion of vitalism expounded by Lawrence, the philosophy of organism outlined by Whitehead, and the doctrine of 'personal knowledge' inherent in the writings of Collingwood and Polanyi. Eliot's classicism, which Lawrence describes as 'bunkum' in a phrase to which Leavis frequently returns, is associated in Leavis's mind with a dry intellectual tone largely arising from prolific reading of books but not from experience of life. In Leavis's mind it is related to Flaubert's aestheticism, the doctrine of 'art for art's sake' and the 'Bloomsbury Group' with their one-sided and exclusive interest in the autonomy and aestheticism of art.

This classicism, Leavis discovered, would debar the critic from appreciating the whole of the 'Romantic Movement' in which the cult of personality looms large, and which in Leavis's view, 'enriched the human heritage'.

With Eliot's classicism Leavis could not appreciate Blake, Dickens, Wordsworth and Lawrence who form the axis of Leavis's critical oeuvre: The niusus, intuition, and spontaneity discernible in the writings of these authors are diametrically opposed to the notion of 'technique' favoured by Eliot.

Added to this is the restrictive tone that dominates Eliot's criticism from his entry into the Church of England. Eliot's consequent identification of tradition with Christianity not only narrows down the range of the literary tradition but also rules out writers who are not professedly Christian—writers like Lawrence for whom Leavis's admiration is intense.
All these factors have contributed to Leavis's disenchantment with Eliot. Eliot's restrictive view of Christianity is replaced in Leavis's spectrum by the notion of human and moral relativity, a notion that he found available in the writings of Santayana, Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. The notion has temporal and spatial qualities that make it imperative to see the work of art not just in relation to the age, but also to the society in which it is produced. It is in terms of that moral relativity that he rates so highly Dickens, Blake, and Lawrence, and even Eliot himself; but Eliot the poet whose Four Quartets transcends any doctrinal frame and is at the same time a strong and pertinent protest against our 'technologico-Benthamite Age'.

Leavis's relation to Collingwood and Polanyi is somewhat 'ticklish' if one can use that word, in the sense that they are referred to only in recent work, and in the context of Leavis's attack on C.P. Snow's Two Cultures. Their importance is that they not only illustrate Leavis's view of the oneness of the human tradition, but also the potency of the human element in an age of a massive technological and computational drift. Hence they take Lawrence's notion of life as inherent in the individual a step further to assert the inalienable creativity of man in an age in which computers and machines seem to render human beings redundant and unnecessary.

The line of argument adopted in the thesis is not linear but circular in the sense that it does not take up a certain point, and develop it to a logical conclusion, but rather tackles certain themes that are seen to represent Leavis's major points of emphasis. These points recur, in varying degrees, in every chapter, and by virtue of their recurrence, it is hoped, the influence of the authors singled out for discussion on Leavis is clarified.
The chapters are ordered in such a way as to lead to Leavis's most recent criticism and for this reason the addition of a formal conclusion seemed unnecessary.

Matthew Arnold and I.A. Richards are two names often associated with that of Leavis. It might be as well to indicate the extent of Leavis's indebtedness to these two critics, however cursorily. Richards does not appear to be a major influence: Matthew Arnold, however, has influenced Leavis not only in terms of ideas, but also in his very vocabulary. Looking at Richards's contribution to the formation of Leavis's ideas we find that it manifests itself mainly in the notion of tradition and in the practical analysis of works of literature. Leavis quotes the following passage from Richards's Practical Criticism:

> From the beginning civilization has been dependent upon speech, for words are our chief link with the past, and with one another, and the channel of our spiritual inheritance. As the other vehicles of tradition, the family and the community, for example, are dissolved, we are forced more and more to rely upon language. 1

Reliance on language has been seized upon by Leavis as a means of maintaining the continuity of tradition. In English Literature in our Time and the University Leavis sees Richards's chapters on 'Rhythm and Metre', and on 'Poetry for Poetry's sake' in The Principles of Literary Criticism, as his most important contribution to criticism, as they released criticism from the fallacy of form, and 'pure sound value'. 2

2. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University London, Chatto and Windus, 1957, p.17
Leavis feels, however, that Richards's increasing pre-occupation with questions of semasiology, logic and psychology has not very much advanced the concrete analysis of works of literature.¹

What about Arnold?

Leavis has often been described as the heir of Arnold,² and the description has a substantial element of truth. Leavis acknowledges Arnold as one of the major formative influences on him.³

As early as 1930 Leavis takes his cue from a quotation from Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, a quotation with which he opens his Mass Civilization and Minority Culture:

And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilization is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. ⁴

Arnold's conception of 'mechanical' and 'external' civilization, accompanied by 'spiritual philistinism' evolved, in Leavis's hands, into that of the technologico-Benthamite civilization, a phrase that sums up Leavis's reaction against the overwhelming advance of technology and obsession with material well-being. In his introductory essay to English Literature in our Time and The University, Leavis says:

1. ibid, pp 1 -17
What we face in immediate view is a nightmare intensification of what Arnold feared. He saw this country in danger of becoming a greater Holland; we see it unmistakably turning with rapid acceleration into a little America. By 'greater' Arnold meant bigger; what he feared was the relative loss of that which had made England great, as distinguished from rich, materially prosperous and powerful. What we see now in the rapid assimilation of this country to America is the jettisoning of all that made it no more paradoxical that England should have produced English literature than that America should be producing the American literature that American wealth is bestowing on the world and American prestige recommending. 1

The distinction between England and America, as Leavis sees it, lies in the sense of rootedness, tradition, and organic community from which English literature springs. This rootedness is associated in Leavis's mind with the rural England of Shakespeare and Bunyan where "society was in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive" 2 to put it in Arnoldian terms.

That is why Leavis is keen to indicate that the distinction he draws between England and America, far from being a matter for praise or dispraise, is a determined attempt to return to origins, to tradition and to communal life. In a letter to The Times Literary Supplement he says:

I had hoped I had made it plain that I didn't regard America's strength with its conditions and concomitants, as a matter for simple attitudes of approval or disapproval, pleasure or displeasure. Such simple attitudes - and that was an insistence of mine - are out of place in the world of complexities and ambiguities in which we have to determine what stance our sense of personal responsibility dictates. 3

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p. 33
Arnold's definition of culture as 'the study of perfection' and perfection as 'an inward condition of the mind and spirit at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us' was later adumbrated in Leavis's insistence on 'the autonomy of the human spirit'. Leavis says:

I was merely insisting that there is an intrinsic human nature, with needs and latent potentialities the most brilliant scientist may very well be blank about, and the technologically directed planner may ignore, with (it doesn't need arguing) disastrous consequences.  

To put an end to the adverse consequences of this accelerating technological advance Leavis proposes the notion of an educated public capable of appreciating literature and the University as a centre of that appreciation. In making this proposition he was inspired by Arnold's leading ideas. Leavis himself recognizes this saying:

I have perhaps made it plain by now that my associated insistences on the University and on English literature are two emphases in the expression of the same basic concern. It is the concern that it was Arnold's distinction to have given expression to and that makes the conception of the function of criticism he stands for - he made it part of the English speaking cultural heritage - a significant development.

Leavis's insistence on the notion of tradition that makes for continuity had been heralded by Arnold. Arnold finds it a matter for regret that Englishmen have lost their sense of identity with the national past: In "on The Study of Celtic Literature", for example, Arnold says:

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1. Matthew Arnold, op.cit. p.19
2. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, London, Chatto and Windus, 1972, p.94
3. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and the University, p.42
on this side - Wales, where the past still lives, where every place has its tradition; every name its poetry; and where the people, the genuine people, still knows this past, this tradition, this poetry and lives with it and clings to it; while, alas, the prosperous Saxon on the other side, the invader from Liverpool and Birkenhead has long ago forgotten his. 1

Arnold's insistence on the Hellenic, Hebraic, and Elizabethan periods as sources of vitality in Culture and Anarchy, is also illustrative of his concern with the notion of tradition.

Like Arnold, Leavis attaches paramount importance to literature and to the moral character inherent in works of literature. But this statement needs qualifying, for the importance attached by Arnold to poetry has a materialistic, pragmatic tinge. In "The Study of Poetry" Arnold says:

The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us as nothing else can. A clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, is the most precious benefit which we can gather from a poetical collection such as the present. 2

(the Collection is Ward's English Poets). Before that he has already stated

... in poetry as a criticism of life, under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on, and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay.

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3. ibid, p.235
Although Vincent Buckley interprets the phrase 'criticism of life' to mean 'interpretation, evaluation, feeling for, sympathetic sharing in'; it does not mean carping at, or even rational analysis. The immediate function of poetry is a quasi-religious, not a social one, and although Leavis vindicates Arnold's phrase "as expressing an intention counter to the tendency that finds its consummation in 'Art for Art's sake', I still feel that the phrase is an infelicitous one because the phrasing suggests a narrowing down of the vast range poetry is presumed to embody, namely the experience of the human race at large. To hold poetry as a substitute for religion — as Arnold does — is to blur the distinction between two recognizably different disciplines. Leavis himself states this view saying:

'...The element that dates in the worst sense is that represented by the famous opening in which Arnold suggests that religion is going to be replaced by poetry.'

Arnold's views of poetry as 'a criticism of life' and as 'a substitute for religion' are coloured by his preoccupation with Victorian material civilization and his loss of faith in religion.

Following Arnold's lead, Leavis assigns this great importance to literature without committing himself to any reductive statement. He sees in the poetic experience a process that strikes deep roots that are common to human beings — these deep roots he designates as moral and religious:

1. Vincent Buckley, Poetry and Morality, London, Chatto and Windus, 1908, pp. 36-37
3. ibid, p. 322
In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe. What for - what ultimately for? What do men live by - the questions work and tell at what I can only call a religious depth of thought and feeling. 1

Leavis's view of the function of criticism shows another aspect of Arnold's influence - Leavis's lifelong dedication to criticism as a discipline and to the vindication of the critical activity is essentially Arnoldian in spirit. Arnold's definition of criticism as 'a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches', 2 strikes a sensitive chord in Leavis. Arnold also identifies 'the free play of the mind' with 'the life of intelligence'. 3 Leavis speaks of the function of the critic in terms of 'critical intelligence', 4 and as in Arnold, the word 'intelligence' is crucial to his critical vocabulary.

Like Arnold, Leavis recommends critics to concentrate on the concrete analysis of specific works of literature without busying themselves with abstract formulations. In 'The Study of Poetry' Arnold says:

Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better to have recourse to concrete examples; to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say: The characters of the highest quality of poetry are what is expressed here. 5

1. F.R. Leavis, Two Cultures ? The Significance of C.P. Snow, London, Chatto and Windus, 1962, p. 23
3. ibid, p.268
4. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p.225
5. Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, pp. 213-214
This repudiation of the abstract in favour of the concrete has become one of Leavis's leading critical principles; censuring Eliot for failing to induce the contributors to The Criterion to stick to the concrete, Leavis, in "Under which King, ... Bezonian"? says:

The relevance of the point may be enforced by remarking the particular weakness of The Criterion, for the dead, academic kind of abstract thinking especially when the 'thinker' (incapable of literary criticism) stands in a general abstract way, for 'order' intelligence, and the other counters all of which are worthless than nothing if not related scrupulously to the concrete. 1

In another context Leavis once again says:

You can't profitably discuss the standards apart from the purposes and the methods, or apart from the actual functioning of criticism in the contemporary world. And apart from the ability to arrive at intelligent and sensitive judgments in the concrete—except, that is, as informed by critical experience—understanding of the nature of critical judgment in the abstract can amount to little. 2

In The Function of Criticism at the Present Time Arnold sums up the function of the critic in one word 'disinterestedness'. 3

Leavis makes ample use of the word in his critical discourses. Clarifying Hopkins's sense of humour, for example, Leavis says:

Hopkins's humour is the humour of a disinterested, mature, perfectly poised and completely serious mind, and has in it nothing of defensiveness, superiority or donnishness. 4

2. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University p. 46
3. Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, p.20
4. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 69
He also describes Lawrence saying:

... he was, in fact, intelligent, as only the completely serious and disinterested can be. 1

Later on he says:

... For disinterested intelligence and the creative impulse that goes with it, the urgency of the human crisis is both a challenge and an opportunity. 2

But this disinterestedness is qualified when the critic comes to pass a judgment on the work of literature. This judgment becomes inevitably personal and in that sense creative. That is why Arnold arrogates to criticism 'a joyful sense of creative activity'. 3 Leavis's view of criticism as 'creative', and not objective 5 as Eliot maintains, is Arnoldian.

Arnold's critical writings provide Leavis with a number of critical terms that he harnesses to serve his own purposes. Pointing to Chaucer's superiority over the romance poets, Arnold says:

Chaucer had not their helplessness, he has gained the power to survey the world from a central, a truly human point of view. 6

Leavis capitalizes on this notion of 'human centrality', 7 and makes it one of his operative critical criteria. Describing Lawrence's achievement in The Horse Dealer's Daughter Leavis says:

1. ibid, p.238
2. F.R. Leavis, For Shall my Sword, p.215
3. Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, p. 265
4. F.R. Leavis, For Shall my Sword, p.97
5. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, London, Faber and Faber, p.25
6. Matthew Arnold, op.cit, p.247
7. The word 'centrality' as the soul of all good criticism occurs in 'The Literary Influence of Academies' p.55
When we come to The Horse Dealer's Daughter it is not so difficult to suggest, in description, the kind of thing it offers. And yet, the classical perfection of the tale in its simple human centrality is bound up with its remoteness from anything in the nature of a cliché.

And in his article on 'Johnson as Critic' he again says:

Johnson's critical writings exhibit very notably the characteristic wisdom, force and human centrality of the great moralist.

The word 'movement' is another illustration of Arnold's influence on Leavis. Expressing his enthusiasm for Chaucer's poetic skill, Arnold says:

Of his style and manner, if we think first of the romance poetry and then of Chaucer's divine liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement, it is difficult to speak temperately.

And in the same article he again says:

A nation may have versifiers with smooth numbers, and easy rhymes and yet may have no real poetry at all. Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry, he is our 'well of English undefiled', because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement, he makes an epoch and founds a tradition. In Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction the fluid movement of Chaucer.

In one of his famous essays titled 'Imagery and Movement' Leavis seems to draw on Arnold's term, and though Leavis tends to equate 'movement' with his favourite terms 'enactment' and

2. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, p. 197
3. Matthew Arnold, op.cit, p. 247
'imagery' yet the Arnoldian connotation manifests itself when he compares Wordsworth's two poems 'Surprised by Joy' and 'Calais Beach' and reports:

'Surprised by Joy' demands a constant and most sensitive vigilance in the reader, and even if he knows the poem well, he is unlikely to satisfy himself at the first attempt, such and so many are the shifts of tone, emphasis, modulation, tempo, and so on, that the voice is required to register ('movement' here, it will be seen, is the way the voice is made to move, or feel that it is moving, in a sensitive reading-out).

In *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* Arnold says:

"... the touch of truth is the touch of life", and then says

... every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry, and life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great deal of critical effort behind it.

Leavis quotes these words in his essay on 'Eliot and Milton', and later on we find that he makes use of them in his critical discussion. He, for instance, says

the judgments the literary critic is concerned with are judgments about life.

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1. *Scrutiny*, vol.XIII, no.2, September 1945, p.126
3. F.R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit*, p.29
4. F.R. Leavis, *For Shall by Sword*, p.97
Santayana's critical writings can be described as lending themselves to the opposed views of Eliot and Lawrence. In tracing Santayana's influence on Eliot this chapter will suggest the notion of tradition, the 'objective correlative' formula, and partly the doctrine of impersonality as points of reference. The doctrine of impersonality raises an issue involving two of the authors to be discussed in this thesis. Santayana and Eliot are both agreed on the need for rendering the artistic emotion in an adequate impersonal form; but they do not show accord on the nature of this impersonalization.

1. George Santayana (1861-1952) is a philosopher, poet, literary critic, novelist (he wrote a semi-autobiographical novel titled The Last Puritan) and even a dramatist (he wrote a tragedy called Lucifer largely modelled on Goethe's Faust). Of a Spanish father and a Catalan mother he was born in Madrid on December 16, 1863. After a "friendly if not altogether pleasant separation" his mother returned with her three children by the first American husband (Nathaniel Russell Sturgis) to the United States. In July 1872 Santayana joined them; he was nearly nine years old. He went through grammar school, high school, and Harvard College, graduating from Harvard in 1886. He secured a Harvard College fellowship grant for two years to the University of Berlin. He worked on Lotze for his thesis and in 1889 he was awarded his doctorate and appointed to the staff of the Harvard department of Philosophy. He was sent as an advanced graduate student to King's College, Cambridge in 1896-1897. He went on sabbatical in 1904-1905 to Italy and the East, and in 1905-1906 he was an exchange professor at the Sorbonne. In 1907 he was appointed full Harvard professor. In 1912 his mother died and he resigned his Harvard professorship, spending the rest of his life in Europe (cf. 1 - George Santayana "A general confession", Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed) The Philosophy of George Santayana, New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1951, pp. 3-30. 2 - Norman Henfrey (ed) Selected Critical Writings of George Santayana, vol.1, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 1-37. 3 - Encyclopaedia Britannica vol.19, pp. 1043-1044).
Eliot insists that there is a separation between the man who suffers and the mind which creates, but Santayana views the creative individual as an indivisible whole. Eliot's profession of classicism and belief in original sin predispose him to be dubious about the possible integrity of the individual; and his assault on the 'inner voice' is a quick reminder of this distrust.

From the social angle we notice that Eliot speaks of the individual not as an independent entity entitled to particular consideration, but rather in relation to the family, class and society.¹

Santayana, like Lawrence, thinks that the individual is the centre of any social life. In an interesting essay significantly titled "The Indomitable Individual" he says:

The individual is the only seat and focus of social forces. If society and government are to be justified at all, they must be justified in his eye and by his instinct ... Men is constrained to be more or less social by his mode of propagation but this constraint, so to speak, is peripheral, the core of his being has a closed, private and indomitable life. Every man has a soul of his own. ²

In his essay on 'John Galsworthy' Lawrence similarly insists that life is primarily individual and laments the over-emphasis on the social being, "But the fatal change today is the collapse from the psychology of the free human individual into the psychology of the social being". ³

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Furthermore Santayana's interest in the 'immediacy' and sincerity of the artistic experience, and the Romantic movement as a whole is in line with the vital tone of Lawrence. These points will be given more attention in the next two chapters on Eliot and Lawrence. The immediate concern of this chapter is with the influence of Santayana on Leavis.

Though Leavis in 'Tragedy and The Medium' dissents from the views expressed by Santayana in 'Tragic Philosophy', he does not fail to recognize that he made use of the essay in his discussion of literary criticism with his undergraduate-students. What is more revealing as 'Tragedy and The Medium' testifies, is that Leavis holds Santayana in a very high esteem, and in Leavis's ambit this esteem is accorded only to a few. It is quite rare for Leavis to describe a critic as brilliant, witty, and sharply intelligent as Santayana is qualified in this essay.

This esteem is further consolidated by Mrs Leavis's favourable review of Santayana's critical writings in Scrutiny. In this review she concentrates on some of Santayana's critical works, and recommends them for study by students of English literature. The essay brings out a number of points of significance related to Santayana's characteristic critical approach. First, she argues that Santayana's criticism is not philosophical in the abstract sense of the word, because he concentrates on a textual analysis of a given work, and if he points to a certain philosophy, the reference is based on the total experience of the work. (She cites his essay on Browning and Whitman as illustrative of this view). Secondly, his Latin

background afforded him that impartial tone that characterizes his criticism of English literature. Comparing Santayana's essay, in Three Philosophical Poets, to Eliot's on Dante she says:

... it (Santayana's essay) illustrates the superior sophistication and detachment of the disillusioned catholic. It is perhaps not impertinent to say that the Anglo-Catholic attitude to Dante is there felt to be reverential to the point of prostration and to the exclusion of a critical attitude. The cool approach of Santayana, equally serious and equally sensitive to Dante's genius but free also to register critical dissatisfaction, comes out in refreshing contrast and is justified by the use he makes of his criticisms for comparative study. 1

Adopting the same procedure, but on a different plane, she compares Santayana's criticism of Dickens with Chesterton's saying:

Chesterton, while desiring to be immeasurably laudatory, does not succeed in isolating or pointing to the peculiar virtues of Dickens' writings; all that his book does is to project on to a fictitious Dickens the highly coloured and boisterous literary personality of G.K. Chesterton. It is a Teutonic and insular piece of work, and in the end, does neither Dickens nor his readers any good. Santayana's essay is perfectly impersonal (one's consciousness of an un-English force at work behind it does not conflict with this statement); while making all the radical criticisms of Dickens he also distinguishes his unique merits and values them as highly as possible. 2

This analysis is supplemented by the equally relevant examination of the social background of the artist. Mrs Leavis dwells with satisfaction on Santayana's association of the work of art with the social environment (a strategy that was subsequently developed by Mr and Mrs Leavis in their literary criticism). She endorses Santayana's cynical attitude to the academic life at Harvard University - an attitude that was later

1. ibid, p.282
2. ibid, pp.282-283.
echoed in her attack on academics at Cambridge - as this chapter will show later on. In the most enthusiastic and panegyrical terms she concludes her essay on Santayana by applying to him one of his own favourite dicta 'Intelligence is the highest form of vitality'.

In the course of her criticism of the 'good taste' of Oxford "dons" like George Gordon, whose main preoccupation in literary studies, she feels, was to show their egotism and their strong zeal for second and third rate writers and to reduce genuine literary appreciation to the mere editing of books, she points out that for such a group the most genuinely witty, urbane and brilliant critic, Santayana, will make no impression.

Leavis's interest in Santayana dates back to the early twenties, and judging by documentary evidence, the influence of Santayana is seen at work in Leavis's writings since 1921, when Leavis in his Ph.D. thesis, draws on Santayana's description of the poet, in the course of his distinction between the poet and the journalist:

But the sense of the distinction is clear if we think of the poet who (as Santayana describes him) 'spokesman of his full soul at a given moment cannot consider eventualities or think of anything but the message he is sent to deliver, whether the world can then hear him or not'. A journalist must consider eventualities.

1. ibid, p.295
In *New Bearings in English Poetry* Leavis makes use of Santayana's *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* in drawing the analogy between Eliot's *Ash-Wednesday* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.  

In *revaluation* Leavis capitalizes on Santayana's views in his essay on Shelley.  

In *Education and the University*, Leavis refers twice with approval to Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets*. Elaborating Pound's list of works to be read by the aspirant to literary training Leavis says "... there is Dante, whom one hasn't merely read as one has Goethe and Lucretius (for one has, of course, read Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets*)." The second reference is made in the course of Leavis's recommendation of reading classic works, at least in translation, if they are not written in one's native language or in the languages he knows, a view which runs counter to that expounded by Pound "one can read Dante, and helped, say, by Mr Eliot's remarkable essay and by Mr Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets*, which Mr Pound seems to despise, form something more than an academic notion of Dante's place in the European tradition." But Leavis's acknowledgment of indebtedness to Santayana is frankly stated in the opening sentences in his essay on "Eliot as Critic". In those early years - says Leavis - after the great hiatus, as in a dazed and retarded way I struggled to achieve the beginnings of the power of articulate thought about

3. F.R. Leavis, *Education and The University*, p.106.  
4. ibid, p.134
literature, it was Santayana. I picked up Logan Pearsall Smith's *Little Essays from the Writings of George Santayana*, when it came out.\(^1\) If Leavis does not feel entirely happy with the essays, this may be due to the fact that, in Smith's edition the essays are excised, fragmentary and abstracted from the meaningful context in which they should be seen.

Furthermore Santayana stayed in England from 1914 to 1918, mostly at Oxford and frequented Cambridge. At that time Leavis's critical ideas were fermenting and it is possible that Santayana helped to form them. This is at least what this study aims to show.

To trace the influence of Santayana on Leavis I will deal with three main topics: The Work of Art, The Function of the Critic, and The Relativity of Human Values. These topics overlap, and in doing so they will help to show the relationship between the two critics. In this connection chronology, I think, is not essential as Santayana had virtually finished as a critic before Leavis began.

But if Santayana influenced Leavis, he certainly also exerted an influence on Eliot; and since Eliot himself is a formative influence on Leavis, it would be advisable to deal with Santayana's influence on Eliot here because this process, as I hope to show, will clarify much of what is in common between Santayana and Leavis.

**Santayana and Eliot**

The idea of tradition underlies Santayana's literary criticism. This idea is also a cornerstone in Eliot's critical

practice. It is not surprising to learn that Santayana was Eliot's professor at Harvard; the student probably assimilated much of the critical ideas of his professor. Herbert Howarth assures us that Eliot attended Santayana's courses both as an undergraduate and a postgraduate. ¹

The impact of Santayana's concept of tradition on Eliot's can be demonstrated by quoting from the two:

It is this continual digestion of the substance supplied by the past - says Santayana - that alone renders the insights of the past still potent in the present and for the future. Living criticism, genuine appreciation is the interest we draw from year to year on the unrecoverable capital of human genius. ²

Eliot, in turn, defines tradition as 'the vitality of the past that enriches the life of the present'. ³

What is worth emphasizing is that in the quotation from Santayana we have a glimpse of Eliot's notion of the historical sense which does not simply mean knowledge of something outdated and irrelevant, but rather a potent force co-present and co-effective with contemporary works of art. The historical sense has a very subtle connotation as it refers to a work of art produced in the present and this is the temporal aspect of the historical sense, but this work, to be properly appreciated, should be simultaneously related to past works of art of which it forms a part, and in this act of judgment and appreciation the presentness of the present


work of art and the pastness of previous works are fused so that both become contemporaneous. In his elaboration of the concept of tradition Eliot has emphasized the substantially effective potency of the present over the past. In other words present works of art affect past works (or at least our sense of them) in as much as they are affected by them. "What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens to all works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new work of art among them)."¹

In his essay on Eliot, Murray, Homer, and the Idea of Tradition, David Ward attributes Eliot's concept of tradition largely to the influence of Gilbert Murray. He contends that Murray's lectures on the "Rise of the Greek epic" delivered at Harvard and attended by Eliot, must have constituted the source of Eliot's notion of tradition.² To this contention the following counter-propositions can be advanced. Of all the figures to whom Eliot acknowledges indebtedness, Murray is the least recognized; Eliot refers to him in the most derogatory terms in his essay "Euripides and Professor Murray". "... it is because professor Murray has no creative instinct that he leaves Euripides quite dead."³ Eliot attributes the success of the play,

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not to Murray's translation which is imperfect and lifeless, but to the lively performance of the actors. Ward's essay specifies Homer (and Homer's Iliad in particular because it was the subject of Murray's lectures) as the source of the concept, but Homer seems not to have had particular importance for Eliot. Eliot confesses that it was Virgil rather than Homer, and Virgil's Aeniad and not Homer's Iliad that attracted him to the study of classical literature. 1

Furthermore if Murray in "The Iliad as a Great Poem", 2 refers to the idea of tradition, he does so with reference to the Iliad; in other words, his reference is occasional and not insistently made as it is in Santayana. To consolidate these counterstatements I would put beside the lengthy quotation David Ward takes from Murray, another one from Santayana. Ward's quotation is:

But now comes a curious observation. We who are accustomed to modern literature always associate this sort of imaginative intensity with something personal. We connect it with an artist's individuality or with originality in the sense of 'unness'. It seems as though, under modern conditions, an artist usually did not feel or imagine intensely unless he was producing some work which was definitely his own, and not another's work, which must bear his personal name and be marked by his personal character ....
I do not specially wish to attack this modern prejudice, if it is one. I largely share in it; and its excesses will very likely disappear. But I do very greatly wish to point out that artistic feeling, in this matter, has not always been the same. Artists have not always wished to stamp their work with their personal characteristics or

even their personal names. Artists have sometimes been, as it were, Protestant or Iconoclast, unable to worship without asserting themselves against the established ritual of their religion; sometimes, in happier circumstances, they have accepted and loved the ritual as part of the religion, and wrought out their new works of poetry, not as protests, not as personal outbursts, but as glad and nameless offerings, made in prescribed form to enhance the glory of the spirit whom they served ... Each successive poet did not assert himself against the tradition but gave himself up to the tradition, and added to its greatness and beauty all that was in him. The intensity of imagination which makes the Iliad alive is not, it seems to me, the imagination of any one man. It means not that one man of genius created a wonder and passed away. It means that generations of poets, trained in the same schools and a more or less continuous and similar life, steeped themselves to the lips in the spirit of this great poetry.

Santayana's passage runs as follows:

... life is an art not to be learned by observation and the most minute and comprehensive studies do not teach us what the spirit of man should have learned by its long living. We study the past as a dead object, as a ruin, not as an authority, and as an experiment. One reason why history was less interesting to former ages was that they were less conscious of separation from the past. The perspective of time was less clear, because the synthesis of experience was more complete. The mind does not easily discriminate the successive phases of an action in which it is still engaged, it does not arrange in a temporal series the elements of a single perception, but posits them all together as constituting a permanent and real object. They thought of all reality as in a sense contemporary.

With the fundamental realization that Santayana's quotation is taken from Interpretations of Poetry and Religion published in 1900, and which Eliot must have read or heard in the form of

lectures, I will attempt to sketch the main ideas in the two quotations, and their bearing on the point under discussion. Murray's quotation bears a relation to the concept of tradition in so far as it emphasizes the notion of anonymity and depersonalization. In the concluding section of the quotation there is a reference to the interaction and collaborative interplay between the past and the present, but the major emphasis falls on the notion of depersonalization.

In the passage from Santayana, however, we are struck by the marked emphasis on the inseparability of the past from the present, the dissolution of all barriers and the contemporaneity of the past.

Murray's passage, I think, pertains more to the creative activity, whereas Santayana's is concentrated on the unbroken link relating the past to the present. With full awareness of the integrity of the concept of tradition I would say that Santayana's passage strikes the central note; that is, the original conception, but Murray's stresses a major component of it; that is impersonality. To clarify this one would refer to the threefold character of the concept of tradition; the relation of the work of art to other works (the simultaneous existence of past and present works of art); this relation is the one with which the present argument is concerned. The relation of the work of art to the artist (the impersonality implicit in the

1. The title of Santayana's course "Ideals of Society, Religion, Art and Science in their historical Development", which, as Herbert Howarth states, Eliot elected in 1909, bears close analogies to Santayana's Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, wherein the relationship between poetry, religion and science furnishes the substance of the book. See preface, p. V.
creative process) impersonality will follow soon. And finally
the relation of the work of art to the reader or the critic -
a relation that entails objectivity of approach - (this point
will be taken up later). These three elements are discernible
in Santayana's critical writings.

Herbert Howarth tends to think that E.K. Rand's lectures
on Virgil and the classics must have contributed to Eliot's
idea of tradition.

I imagine that Eliot must have been prepared for his
doctrine of tradition and the creative assimilation
of the past by lectures in which Rand showed how
Virgil studied, assimilated and transformed his
poetic forerunners. 1

In other words Rand might have drawn Eliot's attention to the
significance of the classics and in this general sense they
might have their share in forming his idea of tradition.

Undoubtedly it is difficult, especially in connection
with Eliot, to point to definite influences and look upon them
as conclusive, because he was an omnivorous reader. What I
would like to emphasize is that Santayana has claims, at least
as good, as a possible influence on the formation of Eliot's
notion of tradition.

Impersonality and Tradition

The sense of tradition implies impersonality, but before
discussing this concept in both Santayana and Eliot I would
like to put it in a historical perspective. In English literary

criticism the idea of impersonality is adumbrated by Coleridge:

1. Herbert Howarth, op.cit., p. 70.
"A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself"; in the same context he makes impersonality synonymous with "the alienation, the utter aloofness of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and analyst".

Flaubert in French literature expresses similar views. "I believe that great art is scientific and impersonal" and in another context he states "Egoism gives the measure of inferiority; a perfect being would no longer be egotistical" and again he reports: "the man is nothing, the work is all". But Flaubert's working out of this concept is not consistently developed. He contradicts himself, for example, when he describes poetry as being purely subjective.

James Joyce, too, is one of the early British exponents of the concept of impersonality. In *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* he says:

The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself so to speak. The mystery of aesthetic like that of the material creation is accomplished. The artist, like the God of Creation remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

2. *ibid*, p. 16.
4. *ibid*, p.84
5. *ibid*, p.82
But before Joyce, Santayana's influence was looming large on the American and even continental scene, and above all on Eliot's academic life at Harvard. The term 'impersonality' occurs significantly, for example, in the course of Santayana's commentary on Dante whose Divine Comedy came to be lavishly admired by Eliot as an ideal of impersonal emotion:

..... the tendency to impersonality, we see, is essential to the ideal. It could not fulfil its functions if it retained too many of the traits of any individual. 1

In another context he says:

The painter does not look at a spring of water with the eyes of a thirsty man, nor at a beautiful woman with those of a satyr. The difference lies, it is urged, in the impersonality of the enjoyment. 2

In point of fact the idea of impersonality is most elegantly expressed in Santayana's discussion of Lucretius's genius as a poet. "The greatest thing about this genius is its power of losing itself in its object, its impersonality." 3

It should be obvious that the conception of impersonality varies in the hands of Santayana. It either means that the artist might blend the real with the ideal through the agency of imagination that impersonalizes the experience (as Dante did with Beatrice), 4 or the dissolution, so to speak, of the personal character of the artist into the character and details he creates (as happened with Lucretius). 5 And in both

5. George Santayana, op.cit, p.34.
cases the imagination which welds such divergent elements is nothing but the sum-total of the poet's views and experiences which in turn colour the artistic product as Dante's Christian doctrine colours his attitude to the *Divine Comedy*.

Santayana's concept of impersonality suggests that the personal life of the artist is irrelevant to our appreciation of the work of art, and should not deter us from direct access to the work:

*But where intelligence is attained, the rest of the man, like the scaffolding to a finished building, becomes irrelevant. We do not wish it to intercept our view of the solid structure, which alone was intended by the artist, if he was building for others and not a coxcomb.*  

Eliot seems to have adopted this view when he says:

*It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting.*  

And again he says:

*To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim, for it would *conduce* to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad.*  

To indulge in purely personal emotions, to fail to keep away from the emotions represented in the work of art, is, to Santayana, a sign of *barbarism*. It is this charge which he levels against both Whitman and Browning:


3. *ibid*, p. 59
His (Browning's) art was still in the service of the will. He had not attained in studying the beauty of things, that love of the form for its own sake, which is the secret of contemplative satisfaction. 1

Santayana's 'barbarism' was later identified by Eliot with the lack of 'technical excellence'.

There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. 2

Here it must be admitted that when Eliot adopted the concept of impersonality at the beginning of his career, he was possessed by an excessive sense of protest against the Romantics, and so he worked out the concept of impersonality in a way which is slightly different from that of Santayana; and this applies to his definition of the mind of the artist at the moment of creation. He goes so far as to deny this mind any active role in the act of creation. He likens it to a catalyst which effects changes in the material it handles, but remains intrinsically neutral and unchanged. This extreme view is the result of his strong reaction against what he calls the spontaneity of the Romantics. He separates the personal feelings of the artist almost exclusively from those which he entertains at the moment of creativity, and reduces the mind of the artist to a mere medium that passively attends on the process of transformation.

1. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 194
2. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p. 59
The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates the more perfectly will mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material. 1

It should be observed that Santayana's concept of impersonality does not preclude personal emotions and moral views from being expressed in the work of art. In this connection Santayana says:

..... nothing can so well call forth or sustain attention as what has a complex structure relating it to many complex interests. A work woven out of precious threads has a deep pertinence and glory. The artist who creates it does not need to surrender his practical and moral sense in order to indulge his imagination. The truth is that mere sensation or mere emotion is an indignity to a mature human being. 2

This view of impersonality sounds much more sensible and convincing than Eliot's as it ensures the major goal of objectivity without going to extremes. The central aim of the French Symbolists and the English Imagists was to counteract the sentimental indulgence of the Romantics by exhorting artists to express their emotions and ideas indirectly through equivalent symbols and images, 3 and this is precisely what Santayana's quotation suggests. But in his early phase Eliot went too far in banishing personal emotions and ideas almost altogether from the work of art. As he matured as a critic, however, Eliot gave up this extreme view in favour of

1. T.S. Eliot, ibid, p. 54
Santayana's sounder interpretation. In his essay on Yeats he says:

I have, in early essays, extolled what I called impersonality in art, and it may seem that, in giving a reason for the superiority of Yeats's later work the greater expression of personality in it, I am contradicting myself ... the truth of the matter is as follows. There are two forms of impersonality: that which is more and more achieved by the maturing artist, the first is that of what I have called the anthology piece of a lyric by Lovelace or Suckling or Campion. The second impersonality is that of the poet, who out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience to make of it a general symbol.  

Santayana conceives of the creative activity as a process of objectification; that is to say, it is an attempt to conjure up the images and details that evoke the impression the artist wants to leave upon us.

The poet's art is to a great extent, the art of intensifying emotions by assembling the scattered objects that naturally arouse them. By this union of disparate things, having a common overtone of feeling, the feeling is itself evoked, in all its strength, nay it is often created for the first time.

In another context he says

... emotions are essentially capable of objectification as well as impressions of sense.

1. There are early indications, however, that Eliot is going to move in the direction of Santayana. In his essay on Ben Jonson, 1919, he says 'The creation of a work of art, we will say, the creation of a character in drama, consists in the process of transfusion of the personality, or in a deeper sense, the life of the author into the character' The Sacred Wood, p.118


3. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p.263

4. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty, p.47
He again states

convenience and economy of thought alone determine what combination of our sensation we shall continue to objectify, and treat as the cause of the rest. The right and tendency to be objective is equal in all. 1

The idea of objectification is exquisitely brought home in Santayana's words

We can convey a delicate emotion by delicately describing the situation which brings it on. 2

Santayana uses the term 'objectification' with regard to Dante in a way which reminds the reader of a similar tone in Eliot's essay on Dante. 3 Santayana says

Dante's objectification of morality, his art of giving visible forms and local habitations to ideal virtues and vices, was for him a thoroughly serious and philosophical exercise. 4

This conception with the general desirability of objectification it implies has become a guiding principle in modern literary criticism and has exercised a far reaching effect on almost the whole galaxy of modern critics. It has its repercussions, not just in Eliot's idea of objectivity, but in his formulation of the notion of the 'objective Correlative'. Santayana's words in this connection are:

1. ibid, p.145
2. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p.277
3. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.213
4. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p.108
The thrilling adventures which he (the child) craves demand an appropriate theatre; the glorious emotions with which he bubbles over, must at all hazards, find or feign their correlative objects. 1

Eliot's words are

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art, is by finding an objective correlative; in other words a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events that shall be the formula of that particular emotion, such that when the external facts which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. 2

Matthiessen rules out Hulme as a possible source of this concept. 3

This point of view was later asserted by Frank Kermode. 4 Sean Lucy's approach to the subject is rather ambiguous and self-contradictory. 5

1. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 277
3. In his notes on Eliot's 'objective correlative' Matthiessen argues that Hulme was killed in action in 1917, and his essays on 'Modern Art and Philosophy', 'Humanism and The Religious attitude', 'Romanticism and Classicism' were not published until 1924, in his book Speculations. Eliot heard about him from Pound but never read his essays before their publication in Speculations, that is when his views on the 'objective correlative' had already taken shape. F.O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T.S. Eliot, London, Oxford University Press, 1947, pp. 70-71.
4. Kermode says "Eliot was not much affected by him (Hulme) until his posthumous period of influence began with the publication of Speculations, in 1924". The Romantic Image, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 120
5. Sean Lucy first says "Eliot had been associated with Hulme in The Imagist Movement, and since Hulme was known as a brilliant talker, must have been familiar with his ideas", T.S. Eliot and The Idea of Tradition, London, Cohen & West, 1940, p. 33, but later on he contradicts himself saying "In fact, apart from the evident debt to Arnold, it is very difficult to trace in Eliot's criticism the direct influence of any predecessor or contemporary", ibid, p. 58
Yvor Winters ascribes Eliot's 'objective correlative' to Edgar Allan Poe. In an essay titled 'Criticism in Crisis' Harry Levin attributes the phrase to Washington Allston.

"Anti-romantic reaction, turning from the image of the artist to the sphere of his artistry has attempted to scrutinize the latter with a technician's impersonality. The focal point of the scrutiny has been - in a phrase formulated by a half-forgotten classicist, Washington Allston, and promulgated by Eliot - The objective correlative.

In "The criticism of T.S. Eliot", Rene Wellek comes to the same conclusion:

Eliot wants to think of this world (the world of art) primarily as one of objectifying, of patterning emotions 'Not our feelings, but the pattern which we make of our feelings, is the centre of value' amounts to saying that the strongest writers make their feelings into an articulate external world. Both these passages are variants of the most famous phrase 'the objective correlative' a term Eliot apparently picked up in Washington Allston's hardly known 'Lectures on Art'.

A review of Washington Allston's Lectures on Art will immediately reveal that as early as 1850, the phrase was used by that writer. Speaking of external phenomena as a manifestation of inward mental activities he says

So too is the external world to the mind; which needs also as the condition of its manifestation its objective correlative. Hence the presence of some outward object predetermined to correspond to the pre-existing idea in its living power is essential to the evolution of its proper end — the pleasurable emotion.

One may even go further and argue that Allston's view of the correspondence between 'the outward object' and the pre-existing idea gives the cue to Eliot's insistence on the 'complete adequacy of the external to the emotion'. It should also be noted that embodiment of ideas and emotions in visible forms — a theme which is favourite to Eliot — is the dominant subject of Allston's Lectures on Art. In his Introductory discourse he says:

Were it possible to embody the present complicated scheme of society, so as to bring it before us as a visible object, there is perhaps nothing in the world of sense that would so fill us with wonder.

Talking about Paganini's need for his fiddle, his Cremona, he again says:

... he needed the most delicate Cremona — some instrument as it were articulated into humanity — to have inhaled and respired those attenuated strains, which those who heard them, think it hardly extravagant to say, seemed almost to embody silence.

Now this one classical instrument by means of which such marvels were wrought, is but one of the many visible symbols of that more subtle instrument through which the mind acts when it would manifest itself.

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1. Washington Allston; Lectures on Art and Poems (1850) and Monaldi (1841) Facsimile reproductions by Nathalia Wright, Gainsville Florida, 1967, p.16

2. ibid, p.9

3. ibid, p.15
Mario Praz asserts that Eliot has derived the idea of the 'objective correlative' from Ezra Pound. He says:

Pound's idea of poetry as a 'sort of inspired mathematics which gives us equations not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres and the like, but equations for the human emotions' may be said to be the starting point of Eliot's theory of the objective correlative. 1

Judging by verbal analogy Santayana's words 'Correlative objects' appear to be closer to Eliot's 'objective correlative' than Pound's words. Frank Kermode, in another context, confirms this impression saying:

The objective correlative, a term probably developed from the object correlative of Santayana 2 though he reverses the order of Santayana's phrase.

Indeed this point has been made by E.R. McElderry in an article titled 'Santayana and Eliot's objective correlative', where he inclines to think that 'Santayana's correlative objects' might be a possible source of Eliot's 'objective correlative' and in pursuance of Eliseo Vivas's argument that the emotion expressed through the objective correlative is not that which the poet felt before the poem was written. The emotion as well as the correlative are found through the process of creation. But if the term 'creation' is taken seriously the consequences for Eliot's critical approach are devastating. For it means that once finished, no one can go behind the poem, not even the artist himself. 3

2. Frank Kermode, Modern Essays, Fontana 1971, p. 307
McElderry concludes that if the creative process really inheres in creation not in expression, then Santayana's 'correlative objects' appears to be a more accurate phrase than Eliot's,¹ and he supports this judgment by quoting Santayana's statement that expression is a misleading term which suggests that something previously known is rendered or imitated; whereas the expression itself is an original fact. ² That is to say that the objects, images are not stored up in the mind as Eliot contends but rather created 'for the first time' as Santayana argues.

Mario Praz terms Eliot's 'objective correlative' a theory thereby indicating that it has a being quite separate from the corpus of Eliot's criticism. In doing so he shows a radical misconception of Eliot's notion of the 'objective correlative', because Eliot's objective correlative is inseparable from his doctrine of impersonality. The main drive behind Eliot's cult of impersonality is to preclude the artist from indulging in direct self-expression and this can be achieved by creating a host of images, objects and situations standing for, and equivalent to the personal emotions of the artist, hence 'the notion of the objective correlative'. The only new element which Eliot brought into the term was the insistence on the "complete adequacy of the external to the emotion",³ which his discussion of Hamlet necessitated.

2. ibid, p.180
To reinforce his contention that Eliot's 'objective correlative' derives from Pound, Mario Praz advances a number of quotations from Pound's *The Spirit of Romance*, which he imagines to "have the chief elements of Eliot's theory of the objective correlative as well as his interpretation of Dante's vision". But these quotations do not strongly suggest the notion of the 'objective correlative', at least not as strongly as Santayana's. Here are some of the extracts he gives:

The cult of Provence had been a cult of the emotions; and with it there had been some, hardly conscious, study of emotional psychology. In Tuscany the cult is a cult of the harmonies of the mind. If one is in sympathy with this form of objective imagination and this quality of vision, there is no poetry which has such enduring, such, if I may say so, indestructible charm.

Apropos of Guinizelli's sonnet 'Vedunt la lucente stella diana', Pound writes:

Here the preciseness of the description denotes, I think, a clarity of imaginative vision. In more sophisticated poetry an epithet would suffice, the picture would be suggested. The dawn would be 'rosy-fingered' or in 'russet clad'. The Tuscan poetry is, however, of a time when the seeing of visions was considered respectable, and the poet takes delight in definite portrayal of his vision. The use of epithet is an advance on this method only when it suggests a vision not less clear, and its danger is obvious. In Milton or Swinburne, for example, it is too often merely a high-sounding word, and not a swift symbol of vanished beauty.

Praz also gives this passage:

There is little doubt that Dante conceived the real Hell, Purgatory and Paradiso as states, and not places, Richard of St. Victor, had some while before, voiced this belief, and it is, moreover, a part of the esoteric and mystic dogma. For the purpose of art and popular religion, it is more convenient to deal with such matters objectively, this also was most natural in an age wherein it was the poetic convention to personify abstractions, thoughts and the spirits of the eyes and senses and indeed everything that could be regarded as an object, an essence

1. Mario Praz, *op.cit.* p.351
or quality. It is therefore expedient in reading
the Commedia to regard Dante's descriptions of men's
mental states in life, in which they are after death,
compelled to continue. That is to say, men's inner
selves stand visibly before the eyes of Dante's intellect. 1

I have quoted these extracts at length because they have their
equivalents in Santayana, but in a finer, and much more lucid form.
In his essay on Dante Santayana argues that in the age of Dante
people had a sharp distinction between good and evil. He says

... so earnestly and exclusively did they speculate
about moral distinctions, that they saw them in almost
visible shapes, as Plato had seen his ideas. They
materialised the terms of their moral philosophy into
existing objects and powers. 2

Defining poetry in terms of Dante's concrete realization of
experience Santayana says

Poetry is an attenuation, a rehandling, an echo
of crude experience, it is itself vision of things
at arm's length. 3

In the course of his description of Dante's manipulation of
moral values Santayana again says

Dante's objectification of morality, his art of
giving visible forms and local habitation to ideal
virtues was for him a thoroughly serious and
philosophical exercise. 4

He designates Dante's Divine Comedy as 'a dramatic view of human
passions in life'. 5 In his essay on Dante Eliot makes use of
this view and echoes it:

1. Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart, pp.354-355
2. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p.77
3. ibid, p.124
4. ibid, p.108
5. ibid, p.106
Dante's is a visual imagination. It is visual imagination in a different sense from that of a modern painter of still life; it is visual in the sense that he lived in an age in which men still saw visions. It was a psychological habit, the trick of which we have forgotten, but as good as any of our own. 1

Furthermore a review of the remaining part of Eliot's essay on Dante will show that apart from his discussion of the idea of poetry and belief, Eliot is pre-occupied with drawing a comparison between Dante and Shakespeare as regards their manipulation of religious themes, a comparison which eventually culminates in Eliot's preference of Dante to Shakespeare. This preference refers us back to Santayana's essay on "The absence of Religion in Shakespeare"2 wherein the same view is voiced and later drawn upon in Eliot's critique.

It is true that Eliot, in his preface to the essay on Dante, acknowledges his indebtedness to both Pound and Santayana, 3 but in view of what has already been pointed out Santayana's influence should receive a greater attention than has so far been given. Yet if we realize that Praz set out to write his book with a pre-conceived bias in favour of Pound's influence we may discern why his view was defective and one-sided. Suffice it to mention that the title of his book 'The Flaming Heart' itself derives from Pound's The Spirit of Romance, wherein he says

The vision of love, and the flaming heart, of love in the guise of a pilgrim, and of the little cloud cannot be separated from the whole. 4

1. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.243
2. George Santayana, Interpretation of Poetry and Religion, p.156
A glance at Pound's 'As for Imagisme', \(^1\) will reveal that Pound is more concerned with the part played by the mind in the act of creation than with the notion of objective equivalence. He classified images into two categories, subjective and objective. The subjective image is that which undergoes change in its original form as a result of the operation of the mind upon it. The objective image retains its 'external original'. In other words in the objective image the mind of the artist does not noticeably interfere. In this way Pound prepares the reader for his concept of the mind as "machinery where the voltage is so high that it fuses the machinery, one has merely the 'emotional man' not the artist. The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage. The better the machinery, the more precise, the stronger, the more exact will be the record of the voltage, and the various currents which have passed through it." \(^2\) In this passage we certainly have anticipations of Eliot's concept of the artist as a catalyst, a shred of platinum, and a medium, as well as 'the separation between the man who suffers and the mind which creates', but not of objective equivalence.

On the basis of Pound's critical writings in *The Spirit of Romance* and in *Literary Essays* \(^3\) one might say that Pound cannot take up a subject, work it out and follow it up to a definite and logical conclusion. I am more inclined to endorse Sean Lucy's view in this respect that:

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2. *ibid*, p. 350

Perhaps the word 'stimulus' is better than the word 'influence' in describing the possible interplay of their (Pound's and Eliot's) ideas. It has been said of Pound that he has a genius for bringing to life in the people with whom he comes into contact, the personal gifts of these people rather than any reflected impression of his own character. 1

This means that, when he met Pound, Eliot had already some dormant ideas of impersonality and its implications, ideas generated by Santayana in the class-room probably and by the French symbolists whom Eliot knew through his one-year stay in France. Pound's role was to develop, through his discussion, Eliot's interest in the French symbolists, and probably Santayana, because Eliot's critical ideas obviously enough reflect the influence of both Santayana and the French symbolists.

To my mind Santayana's critical writings embody the major values for which Eliot stands. If Eliot has been acclaimed as a champion of objectivity and classicism, this view is most articulately and elegantly brought home in Santayana's doctrine of beauty.

Sentimentalism in the observer, and romanticism in the artist are examples of aesthetic incapacity. Whenever beauty is really seen and loved, it has a definite embodiment, the eye has precision, the work has style, and the object has perfection. 2

The achievement of the artist does not inhere in his stark personality or distasteful egocentricity, but rather in abiding by a body of literary works that preceded him, and which by virtue of their precedence, determine the line of his creativity. They do so because they have formed the taste of readers, and it is in relation to this formed taste that his work will be judged. In

1. Sean Lucy, op. cit. p.58
2. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty, p.150
their totality they constitute a rich heritage on which the contemporary artist can draw for his artistic creation. In this connection Santayana points out that the ancients were far superior to us in understanding. They concentrated on the definite, precise aspects of nature that gave adequate objectification to human sensations and emotions.¹

The value of past works of art for the contemporary artist is that they enable him to acquire technique. "The specific values of art", says Santayana, "are the technical values, more permanent and definite than the adventitious analogies on which a stray observer usually bases his views. Only a technical education can raise judgments on musical compositions above impertinent autobiography. The Japanese know the beauty of flowers, and tailors and dressmakers have the best sense for the fashions. We ask them for suggestions and if we do not always take their advice, it is not because the fine effects they love are not genuine, but because they may not be effects which we care to produce."²

To cut oneself off from these technical accomplishments is to be in danger of asserting pedantry, chaos and disgusting sentimentality. To maintain the literary tradition does not mean to repeat or reproduce what was done in the past, since tradition is, by nature, elastic, adaptable and susceptible to change and development. Santayana's words in this context are suggestive:

1. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty, p. 150
2. George Santayana, Reason in Art, p. 369
The only kind of reform, usually possible, is reform within a more intimate study, and a more intelligent use of traditional forms. Disaster follows rebellion against tradition (or against utility) which are the basis and root of our taste and progress. But within the given school, and as exponents of its spirit, we can adapt and perfect our works, if haply we are better inspired than our predecessors. For the better we know a given thing, and the more we perceive its strong and weak points the more capable we are of idealizing it.

Thus tradition denotes that the writer should be traditional and original simultaneously; traditional in the sense that he adheres to a corpus of works of art that give him an insight into the nature of artistic excellence, and original in the sense that he has to contribute something new to the sum-total of previous works, otherwise his work will be valueless.

In working out his critical theory Eliot seems to have exploited to the full the implications of Santayana's view. 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' gives ample evidence of this assumption. It is in a sense a remoulding of the original ideas of Santayana.

For Santayana the creative process entails a great deal of concentration.

Focus a little experience, give some scope and depth to your feeling and it grows imaginative, give it more scope and more depth, focus all experience within it, make it a philosopher's vision of the world, and it will grow imaginative in a superlative degree, and be supremely poetical.

Eliot embraces this view in his approach to works of art. Eliot's insistence that the creative process involves a great deal of pressure is stated when he says:

1. ibid, p.167
For it is not the 'greatness', the intensity of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place that counts. 1

In order to be achieved, this intensification must be subserved by a climate of thought, a literary milieu, which should on the whole be congenial to its creation. On this subject Santayana is quite clear and articulate:

A monstrous ideal devours and dissolves itself, but even a rational one does not find an immortal embodiment simply for being inwardly possible, and free from contradiction, it needs a material basis, a soil and situation propitious to its growth. This basis as it varies, makes the ideal vary, which is simply its expression. 2

Voicing the same idea in his criticism of Blake, Eliot says:

The question about Blake the man is the question of the circumstances that concurred to permit this honesty in his work ... the favouring conditions. 3

This point leads logically to consideration of a principle in common between Santayana and Eliot - a principle in the formulation of which, Santayana undoubtedly had the precedence; namely that aesthetic and moral experiences are closely intertwined. In point of fact this is a ruling principle running throughout Santayana's works, and the important point is that, for Santayana the beautiful and the moral are identified and inseparable. This inextricable bond between aesthetic and moral experiences is largely due to Santayana's central conception that poetry and religion are identical, are expressions of the human imagination and have their source in myth. Santayana says:


To attempt, then, to abstract a so called aesthetic interest from all other interests, and a so called work of art from whatever, in one way or another, ministers to all human good, is to make the aesthetic sphere contemptible. 1

And in another context he says:

To separate the aesthetic element, abstract and dependent as it often is, is an artifice which is more misleading than helpful, for neither in the history of art, nor in a rational estimate of its value can the aesthetic function be divorced from the moral and practical. 2

Eliot takes up this idea and words it in a similar order, placing particular emphasis on the need for a 'unified sensibility'.

He says:

The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility, and the religious by its separation from the artistic. 3

To Santayana the creative process is an act of discovery in which diverse and different elements are skilfully interwoven. It is an activity in which the artist explores new combinations hitherto unknown to him.

By this union of disparate things having a common overtone, the feeling is itself evoked in all its strength, may it is often created for the first time ... poets can thus arouse sentiments finer than any they have known and in the act of composition become discoverers of new realms of delightfulness and grief. 4

Echoing this idea Eliot says that the creative mind is a receptacle in which special or very varied feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations. 5

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1. George Santayana 'What is Aesthetics' Philosophical Review May 1904, and later in Obiter Scripta, p.29
2. George Santayana, Reason in Art. p.15
3. T.S. Eliot, Notes Towards The Definition of Culture, p.21
4. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, pp.263-264
5. T.S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood, p.54
but it should be noted that Santayana attributes this uniqueness of the creative moment to the sense of intuition which the artist has whereas Eliot ascribes it to the passivity of the mind at the moment of creation.

Santayana argues that the achievement of the artist does not manifest itself in hankering after novel experiences or new ideas, but rather in concentrating on familiar experiences and manipulating them in a significant and illuminating way.

Poetry is not at its best when it depicts a further possible experience, but when it initiates us, by feigning something, which as an experience is impossible, into the meaning of the experience which we have actually had.  

Reflecting this notion Eliot says:

The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones, and in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all.  

(To clarify Eliot’s distinction between emotion and feeling, a distinction which he borrowed from F.H. Bradley, I would roughly say that emotion is the central theme or rather experience embodied in the work, whereas feeling is the detail, the object or the image that contributes to the illumination or perspicuity of that emotion).

The Function of The Critic

If we move on to the second aspect; that is the function of the critic, we find that Santayana maintains that the critic’s

judgment or taste is a personal one. This criterion - says Santayana - will be natural, personal and autonomous. The view is echoed by Eliot as he says:

For the development of genuine taste, founded on genuine feeling, is inextricable from the development of the personality and character, and the man whose taste in poetry does not bear the stamp of his particular personality, so that there are differences in what he likes from what we like, as well as resemblances, and differences in the way of liking the same things, is apt to be a very uninteresting person with whom to discuss poetry.

But this personal taste is not simply a matter of bluntly or naively expressing one's impressions and views. It entails - according to Santayana - a great deal of analysing, questioning and purging of his feelings to achieve the requisite degree of refinement and maturity in artistic appreciation. This view finds expression in Eliot's belief that the critical effort carries with it a considerable measure of 'sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting and testing.'

This maturity manifests itself in a coherent pattern which the critic discerns in the work. The critic's function - says Santayana - is precisely to feel and to confront all values, bringing them into relation, and if possible into harmony.

1. George Santayana, Reason in Art, p.192
3. George Santayana, op.cit, p. 192
4. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.30
5. G. Santayana, Obiter Scripta, p.30
If Santayana expresses the function of the critic in terms of the sense of harmony he creates among works of art Eliot has conceptually the same view but renders it in terms of 'order'. To him works of art must 'form an ideal order among themselves' and 'the function of criticism seems to be essentially a problem of order'. This function, to be adequately discharged necessitates that the critic should be impartial and objective. 'An intelligent critic', says Santayana, 'should look impartially to beauty, propriety, difficulty, originality, truth and moral significance in the work he judges'.

Attacking what he terms the 'inner voice' Eliot says that the critic 'should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks' with the object of reaching something outside himself 'which may provisionally be called truth'.

This pursuit of truth can ideally be attained by putting the reader in possession of the work of art instead of diverting his attention into historical, autobiographical, or even biographical information. 'We might say to the critic', says Santayana, 'that sinks into the archaeologist, show us the work and let the date alone'. This view has its reverberation in Eliot's assault on those critics who supply information on the work instead of enabling the reader to have a first-hand experience of it. This information creates a

1. T.S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood, p. 50
2. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 23
3. George Santayana, Obiter Scripta, p. 28
4. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 25
5. Ibid, p. 34
'vicious taste for reading about works of art instead of reading the works themselves',¹ to use Eliot's words in this connection.

Reference has been made to Santayana's central belief that moral and aesthetic values are indivisible. In his characteristic philosophical reasoning Santayana maintains that a thing is beautiful if it is essentially moral, and by analogy is simultaneously ugly if it is lacking in moral perfection.

... if a thing were ugly it would thereby not be wholly good, and if it were altogether good, it would perforce be beautiful. ²

Reference has also been made to Santayana's concept of the function of the critic as consisting in the exposition of the moral significance of the work of art. Eliot's earlier critical writings do not come out strongly in favour of including moral and social considerations in the evaluation of works of art. In 'Tradition and The Individual Talent' published in 1919, he emphasizes that 'any semiethical criterion misses the mark',³ but later on in his essay on Dante, that is in 1929 he modifies this arbitrary judgment saying:

It would appear that 'literary appreciation' is an abstraction and pure poetry a phantom, and that both in creation and enjoyment much always enters, which from the point of view of 'art' is irrelevant. ⁴

Yet Eliot's confession that literary criticism should be supplemented by moral standards is frankly stated in his essay in 1935 on 'Religion and Literature', 'literary criticism', he says, 'should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint ... literature has been and probably always will be judged by some moral standards'.⁵ If we proceed to his essay on 'Johnson as critic and Poet',

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1. T.S. Eliot, op.cit. p.33
2. George Santayana, Reason in Art. p.177
4. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 271
5. ibid, p.368
that is in 1934, we find that Eliot falters and fluctuates, regressing to his 'pure literary' theory.

In our own day, the influence of psychology and of sociology upon literary criticism has been very noticeable. On the one hand, these influences of social disciplines have enlarged the field of the critic, and have affirmed in a world which otherwise is inclined to depreciate literature the relations of literature to life. But from another point of view this enrichment has also been an impoverishment, for the purely literary values, the appreciation of good writing for its own sake, have become submerged when literature is judged in the light of other considerations. 1

And in 'The Social Function of Poetry' Eliot evades the whole issue and concentrates on the role of language and the unified sensibility it creates among the different strata of society.

It is only in his last work To Criticize The Critic that he ultimately and unswervingly settles down to a moral view of literature. Eliot says:

I have suggested also that it is impossible to fence off literary criticism from criticism on other grounds, and that moral, religious and social judgments cannot be wholly excluded. That they can, and that literary merit can be estimated in complete isolation is the illusion of those who believe that literary merit alone can justify the publication of a book which could otherwise be condemned on moral grounds. 2

But it should be observed that Eliot's sense of morality or rather his conception of tradition is identified with Christianity and he narrows the scope still further by interpreting Christianity in terms of orthodoxy.

I believe that a right tradition for us must be a Christian tradition, and that orthodoxy in general implies Christian orthodoxy. 3

3. T.S. Eliot, After Strange Gods, London, Faber and Faber, 1934, p. 21
and in the same context he says:

 Tradition by itself is not enough, it must be perpetually criticized and brought up to date under the supervision of what I call orthodoxy.  

Eliot goes so far as to denounce people's adaptability to moral changes looking upon it as a deviation from the right path.

This adaptability to change of moral standards is sometimes greeted with satisfaction as an evidence of human perfectibility, whereas it is only evidence of what unsubstantial foundations people's moral judgments have.  

Discussing the 'Aims of Education' and under the heading 'The Issue of Religion', Eliot insists on the necessity of having a definite, and if possible, uniform Christian religious education.  

But Eliot's most explicit ideas on the subject occur in a pamphlet which he exclusively devotes to this topic; that is, The Idea of a Christian Society, wherein he says:

... the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilization is to become Christian.  

Reviewing these statements in the light of what we have seen already of Eliot's view of tradition we shall be struck by a sense of inconsistency and self-contradiction, as he insisted that the sense of tradition extends from Homer down to the present day.  

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1. ibid.  
2. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.389  
If we remember that Homer and with him the whole of Greek literature is essentially pagan and unchristian, \(^1\) Eliot's theory collapses because the organic link between the past and the present which is of the essence of the notion of tradition is lost. Two diametrically opposed doctrines are apparent: Paganism and Christianity. The contemporary artist and critic will not draw on past or more specifically Greek works of art because they belong to a different religious category. Similarly the historical sense which comprehends in Eliot's view as expounded in 'Tradition and The Individual Talent' the timeless and the temporal will be reduced only to the temporal or more exactly to the period that marks the beginning of Christianity. By this I mean that Eliot's identification of tradition with Christianity will not only exclude Greek literature, but Hebrew literature too, if we consider the question from the point of view of historical development, and contemporaneously it will rule out any other literature belonging to a non-Christian tradition.

Santayana, contrary to what Eliot holds, recognizes and believes in the relativity of human and moral values. In a letter to Henry Ward Abbot, Santayana points out that man's standard of morality is 'relative to everything else in the world'. \(^2\) And in another context he praises the philosophy of eminent poets like Homer and Dante - poets with whom Shakespeare is contrasted and compared, on the score of their ability to see man in his relations, surrounded by a kindred universe in which he fills his allotted place. \(^3\)

1. This point will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter on Eliot.


3. G. Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 154
Santayana speaks in the most favourable terms of Aristotle's religion, as it combines all the relevant elements that practically conduce to its efficacy and integration. In other words this religion is based on a proper and realistic understanding of the moral and material nature of man. It is an 'embodiment of thought's perfect fulfilment', to use one of Santayana's favourite terms in this regard. Santayana's concept of religion is a comprehensive view of all the relevant moral doctrines that meet and crystallize men's ideals. Thus his vision is wider in the sense that it affords each generation and each society the right to adopt the kind of moral ideals most suited for its human purposes. This again implies that religion should not be literally or narrowly interpreted, but should represent a response to 'personal experience and human life', that is, to visualize religion as a kind of poetry, depending on the imagination of the people, and corresponding to human ideals and aspirations, 'each man' says Santayana, 'has an immortal soul, each life has the potentiality of an eternal meaning'.

Santayana and Leavis

Santayana lays great stress on the significance of tradition; Leavis also uses this concept with marked emphasis. Leavis says:

1. ibid, p.70
2. ibid, p.71
3. ibid, p.94
4. ibid, p.95
... it is of so great importance to keep the literary tradition alive. 1

and if Santayana defines tradition as the 'unrecoverable capital of human genius' 2 Leavis proposes a similar view when he identifies tradition with the 'picked experience of ages'. 3 In another context he approvingly quotes Eliot's definition of tradition as 'the vitality of the past that enriches the life of the present'. 4 Leavis bitterly laments the loss of the communal rural life and the organic relations binding the English agricultural society - relations that were shattered in the face of an overwhelming industrial development, creating a society that is insular and mechanical by nature. He thus turns to literature, and to language as an expression and crystallization of that literature as a means of maintaining the continuity of tradition or 'the inherited wisdom of the folk'. 5

When we come to the idea of impersonality we find that Leavis uses the term for the first time in the context of his analysis of Eliot's poetry and with regard to Gerontion in particular. 'Gerontion', says Leavis, 'has the impersonality of great art'. 6 He singles out Gerontion for this designation because this poem marks for the first time Eliot's detachment from his hero and this lends the poem a dramatic quality enhancing its effect. The tenor

1. F.R. Leavis, Denys Thompson, Culture and Environment, London, Chatto & Windus, 1964, p.62
2. G. Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p.1
3. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p.82
5. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p.80
6. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry, pp.72. This fact serves to correct the impression of Vincent Buckley's Poetry and Morality, London, Chatto & Windus, pp.160-182, where the term looks as if it were first used in 'Thought and Emotional Quality (1945)'.
of Leavis's criticism here smacks more of Eliot's than of Santayana's conception of impersonality. I mean that Leavis's tone here suggests that he is under the spell of Eliot's initial view of impersonality as implying a separation between 'the man who suffers and the mind which creates'. When he, later on, uses the term in his criticism of Wordsworth's poetry, we find that the tone shifts from Eliot to Santayana. Impersonality in Wordsworth means that the personal emotions and experiences of the artist should be transmuted into an objective pattern that impersonalizes them or gives them an impersonal dimension. There is obviously no separation here between the personal emotions and his creative mentality as this quotation may show.

The absence of any sign of repression serves to emphasize this significance. The significance of this achieved naturalness, spontaneous, and yet the expression of an order and the product of an emotional and moral training.

When Leavis takes up the idea again in 'Thought and Emotional Quality' he uses it in the same sense. He says:

When we look at 'Heraclitus' we see that the directly emotional and personal insistence distinguishing it is associated with an absence of core or substance; the poem seems to be all emotional comment, the alleged justifying situation, the subject of comment being represented by loosely evocative generalities, about which the poet feels vaguely if intensely (the intensity of this kind of thing is conditioned by vagueness). Again, the emotion seems to be out there on the page, whereas in reading 'Proud Maisie' we never seem to be offered emotions as such; the emotion develops and defines itself as we grasp the


2. ibid., pp. 170-171
dramatic elements the poem does offer - the
data it presents (that is the effect) with
emotional 'disinterestedness' - for
'disinterestedness' we can substitute
'impersonality', with which term we introduce
a critical topic of the first importance. 1

For Leavis the artist can have personal emotions, but in
working them out into poetry they are fused in a host of
concrete images, dramatic situations and pregnant complex
details that render them objective and impersonal.

To confirm this point of view Leavis compares two poems.

'A slumber did my spirit seal' by Wordsworth, and 'Break, break,
break' by Tennyson. The theme in both poems is the irrevocable
loss of the past. The two poems deal with a personal experience,
yet in the case of Wordsworth the experience has been so
skilfully concretized and objectified that it assumes an
impersonal dimension. Leavis's commentary on the formal
manipulation of the two poems is illuminating:

Here is a contrast analogous to the last, (the
contrast between 'Proud Maisie' and 'Heraclitus')
but a contrast in which the 'impersonal' poem
unmistakably derives from a seismic personal
experience, while the obviously emotional poem
is not suspect, like 'Heraclitus', of being a
mere indulgence in the sweets of poignancy. No
one can doubt that Wordsworth wrote his poem
because of something profoundly and involuntarily
suffered as a personal calamity, but the
experience has been so impersonalized, that the
effect, as much as that of 'Proud Maisie', is one
of bare and disinterested presentment. 2

At first sight, it may sound ironical and even paradoxical that
Wordsworth who said that poetry is 'the spontaneous overflow of
powerful feelings' 3 should now be represented by as an exemplar

1. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, vol. XIII, No. 1 Spring 1945, p. 53
2. Ibid, p. 53-54.
3. E. de Selincourt (ed) The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth,
of impersonality. But this paradox can be resolved if we take into account the fact that Leavis, in his critical practice, discovered that spontaneity does not mean a turning loose of emotion - as Eliot conceived - but involves a great deal of organization and self-discipline; "spontaneity" says Leavis, "that is, as Wordsworth seeks it, involves no cult of the instinctive and primitive at the expense of the rationalized and civilized, it is a spontaneity engaging an advanced and delicate organization."¹ Leavis explains Wordsworth's conception of spontaneity as an attempt at both naturalness (whereby the emotions evoked are rendered genuine and impressive) and organization (whereby the emotions are ordered according to intellectual canons serving definite ends in view, and to Wordsworth they are moral ends). He (Wordsworth) stands for a distinctively human naturalness, one that is consummating a discipline, a discipline moral and other.² It should, in fairness, be admitted that this re-interpretation supplied by Leavis marks a change of attitude towards Wordsworth, mostly exculpating him from the vicious connotations of spontaneity as interpreted by Eliot.³ When Leavis reverts to the same theme in his later critique of Wordsworth he brings home the same point saying:

1. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p.170
2. ibid, p.170
... creativity in Wordsworth is impelled by the pressure of deeply and intensely experienced pre-occupations; emotional problems that are at once personal and impersonal (that is, moral). 1

Leavis instances Wordsworth's 'The Ruined Cottage' as an example of this personal-impersonal form. Characterizing the nature of the poem Leavis reports that

its essential distinction is to have a disturbing immediacy that makes it, in its major way, unique. That distinction, the poignant disturbingness, is inseparable from the mode of presentation (which he has already qualified as dramatic) from the fact that while the tale is told by the Pedlar, the poet himself (William Wordsworth) is so insistently and effectively a presence for us that the sensibility we share is felt as very personally his. 2

Complementary, and in a sense contrary to this form of impersonality, is the other, advanced by Leavis in his discussion of Santayana's 'Tragic philosophy'. If the Wordsworthian kind of impersonality arises from 'a seismic personal experience' rendered impersonal through literary devices, in tragedy, as Leavis conceives it, impersonality issues from something that transcends the merely personal. Leavis describes this impersonality in these words:

... it is an essential part of the definition of the tragic that it breaks down, or undermines or supersedes, such attitudes (the egotistic attitudes stigmatized by Lawrence whom Leavis quotes on the incompatibility of both egotism and egoism with the tragic experience). It establishes below them a kind of profound impersonality in which experience matters, not because it is mine, because it is to me it belongs or happens, or because it subserves or issues in purpose or will, but because it is what it is, the 'mine' mattering only in so far as the individual sentence is the indispensable focus of experience. 3

2. Ibid, p.333
3. F.R. Leavis, "Tragedy and The Medium", Scrutiny, vol.XII, no.4, Autumn 1944, p. 256
And later on he says:

The sense of heightened life that goes with the tragic experience is conditioned by a transcending of the ego - an escape from all attitudes of self-assertion ... significance lies in the willing adhesion of the individual self to something other than itself. 1

It is this type of impersonality that makes for the sense of community; or rather for what makes for our common humanity.

Commenting on this form of impersonality, Andor Gomme remarks:

This plainly is the statement of a religious conviction and here the adherence to the 'something other', the recognition of 'something' that transcends the individual is the acceptance of the 'link' at a deeper level than that of personality. 2

Leavis uses the term impersonality in its Eliotic sense in the course of his evaluation of George Eliot. Recalling T.S.Eliot's insistence on the separation of the artistic emotions from the every-day emotions of the artist, Leavis praises George Eliot's attitude to the Transome theme in Felix Holt, because therein and contrary to what she does in the early phase of her work, she manages to dissociate herself altogether from the character:

... the directly personal vibration, the directly personal engagement of the novelist that we feel in Maggie Tulliver's intensities even at their most valid is absent here. The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; it is in the part of Felix Holt dealing with Mrs Transome that George Eliot becomes one of the great creative artists. 3

Leavis's evocation of this form of impersonality is the result of his passion for the occasional sense of aloofness achieved by George Eliot for the first time in her method of characterization.

1. ibid, p. 258
3. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.XIII, no.4, Spring 1946, pp. 252-253
But the fact that Leavis couples this aloofness with Eliot's separation between the man who suffers and the mind which creates shows that he has Eliot's and not Santayana's view of impersonality in mind in his analysis of George Eliot's works. It is in his criticism of Lawrence that Leavis shows himself to be a disciple not of Eliot (the Eliot of the early phase) but of Santayana. This is confirmed by Leavis's discussion of Lawrence's method of characterization in *The Rainbow*:

> Of the lives dealt with in *The Rainbow", that nearest to Lawrence's own is Ursula's, and in important ways it is very near. The impersonalizing process has its overt manifestation in the sex - the she protagonist. One can imagine cases in which such a manifestation, the substitution of the other sex for the author's, might be the mark of an impersonality unsought or insecure, a disguise prompted by a sense of danger. But in Lawrence, it is clearly not that; it is rather the mark of creative genius.

and later on Leavis defines this genius as:

> the extraordinary power of the impersonalizing intelligence to maintain, while the artist, in an intensely personal and exploratory way, is actually living the experience that goes into the art, the conditions that make creative impersonality possible.

But Santayana's influence becomes obvious in Leavis's later rebuttal and even reversal of Eliot's dictum in the context of his evaluation of Eliot's critical views. He says:

> The relevant truth, the clear essential truth is stated when one reverses the dictum and says that between the man who suffers and the mind which creates there can never be a separation.

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2. ibid. p. 149
This eventual gesture on Leavis's part confirms us in the belief that Leavis has inclined the balance once and for all in favour of Santayana's original conception of impersonality. This point is reinforced if we recall that Leavis maintains that the character of the artist is one integral and indivisible whole, whereas Eliot looks upon the artist at the moment of creation as completely different from the same artist in every-day life.

A closer scrutiny of Leavis's "Thought and Emotional Quality" will show that it is, in a sense, a recasting of Santayana's words:

...that is very rightly called a sense for fitness is a vital experience involving aesthetic satisfactions and aesthetic shocks. The more numerous the rational harmonies are, which are present to the mind, the more sensible movements will be going on there, to give immediate delight.

Accordingly nothing can so well call forth or sustain attention as what has a complex structure relating it to many complex events. A work woven out of precious threads has a deep pertinence and glory. The artist who creates it does not need to surrender his practical and moral sense in order to indulge his imagination.

Eliot's objective correlative exercised some influence on Leavis's critical procedure, and it runs through a considerable part of his appraisal of great novelists. To assess the artistic achievement of Joseph Conrad in Heart of Darkness Leavis speaks in terms of artistic objectification saying:

...one might say that Heart of Darkness achieves its overpowering evocation of atmosphere by means of 'objective correlatives'.

He speaks of George Eliot's inability to master the emotions of Dorothea and to embody them in adequate terms, Leavis says:

2. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.1, no.1, June 1941, p. 23
But the emotional 'fulness' represented by
Dorothea depends for its exulting potency on an
absence of intelligence and self-knowledge, and
the situations offered by way of 'objective correlative'
have the day-dream relation to experience. 1

But a closer examination of Leavis's critical practice will reveal
that side by side with his use of Eliot's 'objective correlative'
Leavis was already developing the term 'enactment' to replace
Eliot's formula.

Distinguishing between didacticism and the artistic
transformation of experience in the case of George Eliot, Leavis says:

... one is judging that the intention to communicate
an attitude hasn't become sufficiently more than an
intention; hasn't, that is, justified itself as art
in the realized concreteness that speaks for itself
and enacts its moral significance. 2

In the following number of Scrutiny, Leavis quotes a passage from
George Eliot's Middlemarch, relating to the life of Dr Casaubon.
On this passage Leavis says:

Actually, the path on that Casaubon enacts 'below the
tragic level' is not quite that this passage by itself
might suggest. 3

The word 'enacts' is used in the passage to refer to an
externalization of Casaubon's sense of failure and frustration.

Leavis again uses the term in his commentary on Johnson as critic
when he maintains that Johnson fails to realize that 'works of art
enact their moral valuations.' 4

1. ibid., Vol. XTV, no.1, Summer, 1944, p. 26
2. ibid., Vol. X11, no.3, Autumn 1945, p.174
3. ibid., Vol. X11, no.4, p. 24
   Later reprinted in The Common Pursuit, pp. 110-111
Looking at Leavis's term with Santayana in mind, one finds that it could derive well from Santayana's critical writings. Santayana says:

... we can convey a delicate emotion only by delicately describing the situation which brings it on.

and in another context he says:

The poet has only to study himself and the art of expressing his own ideals, to find that he has expressed those of other people. He has but to enact in himself the part of each of his personages.

Yet we must keep reminding ourselves that Santayana, in devising such a term and others, was mostly working out a philosophy of art, that is, he was laying down the foundations of an aesthetic theory, a theory formulated by a philosophizing and rationalizing mind with an underlying passion for beauty. In other words Santayana in most cases, speaks of these terms in general and abstract terms whereas Leavis adopts them as pointers to certain significances he discerns in certain literary texts. To put it briefly one would say that Santayana is a critical theorist, but Leavis is a practitioner of criticism.

Leavis's censure of writers who fail to transform their feelings into vivid objects—"offer emotion insistently explicit, in itself, for itself, for its own sake, and give nothing but gross sentimentality," can be detected in Santayana's doctrine of beauty.

Sentimentalism in the observer, and romanticism in the artist are examples of aesthetic incapacity. Whenever beauty is really seen and loved, it has a definite embodiment, the eye has precision, the work has style and the object has perfection.

1. George Santayana, Reason in Art, London, Archibald Constable, p. 52
3. ibid, Vol.XIII, no.1, Spring 1945, p. 50
4. G. Santayana, op.cit. p.150
He labels both Whitman and Browning 'barbaric' on the ground that they are ruthlessly sentimental and starkly personal. Their poetry is barbaric in the sense that it is crudely sentimental.

If Santayana holds that the ancients were conspicuously conversant with genuine artistic taste, Leavis repeatedly uses 'the picked experiences of the ages regarding the finer issues of life'. Again if the concept of tradition suggests the co-presence of traditional elements and original touches concurrently Leavis's critical practice is an obvious manifestation and application of the concept. Revaluation has the subtitle 'Tradition and Development in English Poetry', the subtitle is self-explanatory and indicative of the nature of tradition. His New Bearings In English Poetry, on the other hand, is a critical study of the change itself of sensibility that manifested after the First World War, in the poetry of Eliot and Pound. This change of sensibility and poetic technique was most urgent and timely to save poetry from the state of sentimentality, stagnation, torpor and superficiality to which it was reduced at the hands of Browning and Tennyson. Thus to Leavis, Eliot and Pound offer a new development showing that they are alive in their time, and simultaneously enriching the body of tradition. The Great Tradition is a critique of the novelists who form a coherent order and a traditional pattern. These novelists are few in number but their value resides in their ability to maintain the tradition.

And as a recall to a due sense of differences it is well to start by distinguishing the few really great, the major novelists who count in the same way as the major poets, in the sense that they not only change the art for the practitioner, and readers, but they are significant in terms of the human awareness of the possibilities of life. 1.

In D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, there is a constant and deliberate attempt to relate Lawrence to what Leavis calls 'the tradition of George Eliot, thereby emphasizing his 'sanity, normality and health. It should be emphasized that Leavis is consistent in expressing these views in almost all his works. Mass Civilization and Minority Culture is an exposition of the view that it is only on the intelligent minority that the human and literary tradition (in the case of Leavis the two adjectives merge and are identified) depends for continuity and perpetuation. Santayana is a precursor in this particular respect. His point is so close to Leavis that it inevitably gives rise to the suggestion that Leavis is influenced by it.

The best men in all ages keep classic traditions alive. These men have on their side the weight of superior intelligence, and though they are few, they might claim the weight of numbers. 1

Even Leavis's phrase 'awareness of the possibilities of life' has its counterpart in Santayana's view on the function of the poet:

... out of that living, but indefinite material (he has) to build new structures, finer, fitter to the primary tendencies of our nature, truer to the ultimate possibilities of the soul. 2

For the word 'life' we can substitute the word 'soul', since Leavis's intention, as I am going to show, is also ultimately moral.

Leavis's phrase 'what makes for life and what makes against it' finds an echo in Santayana's description of Lucretius's attitude:

This impersonation in the figure of Venus of whatever makes for life would not be legitimate, it would really contradict a mechanical view of nature - if it were not balanced by a figure representing the opposite tendency, the no less universal tendency towards death. 3

1. George Santayana, Reason in Art. p. 206
2. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 270
3. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p. 42
Describing Lawrence as a novelist Leavis says:

He (Lawrence) has unfailingly sure sense of the difference between that which makes for life and that which makes against it. 1

Talking about Louisa’s moral judgments in The Daughters of The Vicar, Leavis again says:

they express a moral sense that speaks out of a fulness of life and is at the same time a fine sense of what makes for that and what makes against it. 2

Santayana uses the term 'insight' frequently as a means of distancing the artist from the object of his pre-occupation.

He tells us that

In philosophy itself investigation and reasoning are only preparatory and servile parts, means to an end. They terminate in insight or what in the noblest sense of the word be called theory. 3

Again he talks about Dante saying:

A better science need substract nothing from the insight he had into the difference between political good and evil. 4

Using the term 'insight' in the sense of objectifying the experience Leavis talks about Lawrence saying:

There is in fact no more impressive mark of his genius than what he did with his misfortune; he turned it into insight. 5

2. ibid, p. 86
3. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, pp. 10-11
4. ibid, p. 90
5. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, pp. 136-137
Opposed to this kind of experience is the one provided by Swift.

Swift was, in various ways, curiously unaware, the reverse of 'clairvoyant. He is distinguished by the intensity of his feelings, not by insight into them. 1

Santayana uses the word 'immediacy' as a critical term indicating the strong personal urge underlying the experience.

He says "Thus we have just seen that Goethe in his Faust, presents experience in its immediacy". 2 Again he says:

To be miscellaneous, to be indefinite, to be unfinished is essential to the romantic life. May we not say that it is essential to all life in its immediacy? 3

In a similar way Leavis uses the term in relation to Wordsworth:

His success depends upon his conveying the peculiarly private value, the intensely personal significance, of the concrete incident, of the experience in immediacy. 4

The focussing of experience which Santayana entices the artist to fulfil is mirrored in Leavis's realization that the creative process calls for an intensification of feelings. 5 Even the term 'intensity' was already used by Santayana in his introductory note to Three Philosophical Poets, wherein he says

Intensity, even momentary intensity, if it can be expressed at all, comports fullness and suggestion compressed into that intense moment. 6

1. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 87
2. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p. 203
3. ibid, p. 199
5. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.xiii, no.1, Spring 1945, p. 53 and D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, pp. 111-123
6. G. Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p.12
Meanwhile, if Santayana holds that this intensification must be coupled with a favourable climate of thought that fosters the poet's creativity, Leavis adopts the same idea in his exegesis of Wordsworth's poetic technique. He says:

The poetic process engaged an organization that had, by his (Wordsworth's) own account been determined by an upbringing in a congenial social environment, with its wholesome simple pieties, and the traditional sanity of its moral culture, which to him were nature. 1

This intensification in the act of creation is effected with the object of bringing the artistic experience into a moment of illumination or 'significance', to use one of Leavis's favourite terms in this context, or to "render its native agility practical, and to attach its volume of feeling to what is momentous in human life"2 to use the words of Santayana.

This brings us to another element in common between Santayana and Leavis that is the indivisibility of moral and aesthetic values. Analyzing Pope's 'Juncial' Leavis says:

Aesthetic is a term the literary critic would do well to deny himself. Opposed to 'moral' as it is it certainly doesn't generate light. 3

In The Great Tradition, Leavis indictes that the novelists who constitute that tradition are great innovators from the point of view of artistic form. But this technical originality is subservient to an all-embracing moral vision.

2. G. Santayana, Reason in Art, London, Archibald Constable, 1905, pp. 64-65
As a matter of fact when we examine the formal perfection of *Emma*, we find that it can be appreciated only in terms of the moral preoccupations that characterize the novelist's peculiar interest in life. Those who suppose it to be an 'aesthetic matter', a beauty of composition that is combined miraculously, with truth to life can give no adequate reason for the view that *Emma* is a great novel ... it is in the same way true of other English novelists that their interest in their art gives them the opposite of their affinity with Pater and George Moore, it is brought to an intense focus, an unusually developed interest in life. 1

In this connection the affinity between Santayana and Leavis is stronger than it is between Santayana and Eliot. Questioning the validity of Eliot's earlier view of the purely literary values Leavis says:

*What are the 'purely literary values'? I myself am firmly convinced that literature must be judged as literature and not as another thing ... but to believe this is not, so far as I can see, to believe in 'purely literary values'. And the appreciation of good writing for its own sake, seems to me, for all its plausibility, a phrase that covers a failure of thought.* 2

Applying this failure to Eliot's interpretation of his own plays Leavis says:

*The discussion of drama in general suffers from the same weakness, the examination of the possibility and the practical problem of poetic drama comes from a mind in which the thinking about matters of form and technique hasn't the life, grapple and force that critical thought cannot have apart from the habit of full engagement, the habit that manifests itself in the kind of pre-occupation with value significance and responsibility to life that makes it impossible to talk about 'purely literary values'.* 3

It is interesting to notice in this argument that Leavis reverses the critical judgment passed by Eliot on both Dryden and Johnson and credits the latter with superiority on account of his ability to combine literary with human values in his insight into literary works.

3. ibid., p.196
Johnson's critical writings exhibit very notably the characteristic wisdom, force and human centrality of the great moralist, but they have also a value that is peculiarly of and for literary criticism - their specific interest is in and of that field. Johnson is always a moralist, but in criticism he is a classic qua critic. 1

Here it should be pointed out that Leavis's conception of morality is of a particular and unique kind. In the first place it is not a kind of didacticism crudely forced upon the work of art with the object of inculcating a superficial moral lesson as the eighteenth century practitioners conceived of morality, nor is it the kind of Victorian moral insistence and lack of concreteness for which Leavis censured Matthew Arnold. Still less is it a kind of cliché which Leavis blindly attaches to works of art. Commenting on Leavis's criticism of Henry James's novels Harold Osborne says:

Dr Leavis does not condemn James because he thinks that his influence on morals is bad. He is clear that these novels can work change in our moral views; indeed if they could revolutionize morality, Dr Leavis's sarcastic condemnation would be mitigated. He condemns them because they are out of line with the moral views which Dr Leavis assumes his readers to share, and he enunciates a general principle of criticism that any work of literature which deals with men and women, and which contravenes accepted principles of morality is bad. 2

Osborne misunderstands the exact nature of Leavis's criticism simply because Leavis has strongly refused to pin himself down to a fixed principle or to a set of rules, on the sound basis that this freedom from 'restrictive codes' will afford him a wider and a more flexible scope meeting the varying qualities of diverse

1. ibid, p.197
artistic achievements. Here I would like to instance only two examples confirming this flexibility. Criticizing Eliot's later poetry Leavis indicates that one can enjoy this poetry without sharing Eliot's 'intellectually formulated conclusions, his doctrinal views'. Again vindicating Lawrence's artistic technique, he relates him to the tradition of George Eliot, not on any doctrinal or dogmatic assumption but on the wider plane of the human and moral significance of their works. Thus where morality is concerned, it is taken for granted, I think, that Leavis has no dogmatic doctrines nor preconceived moral codes.

But if Osborne is accusing Leavis of imposing some moral codes arbitrarily on the work of art, S.L. Bethell, on the other hand complains that Leavis has no clear-cut and sharply defined theological doctrine whereby to assess works of art.

Dr Leavis has more than once stated that literary criticism involves ethical considerations, and it is obvious that we cannot discuss a writer's insight without having some standard by which to assess it. But Dr Leavis has nowhere said that theological considerations are also necessary, indeed he would seem to believe the contrary. Yet, even apart from the fact that there are insights which are spiritual, without being ethical, does not the acceptance of an ethical position in itself involve, at least some relation to the systems of theology? If the critic elects to take his stand on ethics without philosophical examination of the matter, there will always be a chance that his ethics may consist of personal preclusions, or the assumptions of his social group. Whether this is so will be apparent to readers of Scrutiny.

1. F.R. Leavis, Education and the University, London, Chatto and Windus, 1955, p. 134


Leavis, as I have already said, does not commit himself critically to any theological doctrine because he does not want to be dogmatic on the one hand, and because he conceives criticism to be the 'free interplay of the mind on all possible subjects' on the other. It is interesting to put on record here that the collaboration invoked by Leavis as the function of the critic implies agreement as well as dissent. In *Education and The University*, Leavis says: "Collaboration, a matter of differences as well as agreements". Leavis indicates that differences in approach and in appreciation of works of art are significant and symptomatic of a healthy phenomenon because they assert the fact that their advocates are humanly alive. Moreover the *Scrutiny* writers were not a clique with biased or dogmatic opinions, but a group of writers who sometimes agreed and sometimes disagreed with each other, which is perfectly permissible and natural in any healthy climate of thought.

Morality in Leavis is something that goes deep down into the very essence of our humanity, something that touches the deep recesses of our nature, not in its instinctive and primitive sense, but in its subtler psychological and human significance. It is something that is concerned with 'the deep levels, the springs of life, the illimitable mystery that well up into consciousness', to use one of Leavis's suggestive epithets in the course of explicating the nature of spontaneity in Wordsworth and associating it with Lawrence's characteristic technique. Leavis makes this point clear when he

In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe. That for — what ultimately for? That do men live by — the questions men are told at what I can only call a religious depth of thought and feeling.

I may observe in parenthesis that L.C. Knights purports a Leavisian line of thought in his conception of morality. Comparing Dryden's dialecticism rendered in Christian terms with Herbert's image of seasonal growth, decay and renewal, Knights says:

A religion that can be expressed in such terms has plainly lost connection with the deeper sources of vitality and spiritual health, and for this reason it cannot enrich human living with a sense of significance in all its parts, as the tradition active in Herbert's and Shakespeare's day enriched it.

And in another context he identifies "moral judgment with the imaginative apprehension of life serving at its highest power", and in another context he refers to Shakespeare's development as manifesting "a genuine sense of the mysterious depth of human experience, the genuine sense of a deeper reality." Rejecting the dogmatic approach of Pro - George — very Leavis says 'If Christian belief and Christian attitudes have really affected the critic's sensibility, then they will play their due part in his perceptions and judgments, without him summoning his creeds and doctrines to the role of discriminating and pronouncing. If, on the other hand, he does, like Pro George — every, make a deliberate


4. ibid, p.28
and determined set at discriminating Christianly; then the life of the spirit will suffer damage, more or less severe, in the ways that Bro George Every's work merely exemplifies with a peculiarly rich obviousness. It is fair to add that he represents the most active and formidable of contemporary gang-movements.¹

To Leavis's mind morality is something that pertains to our humanity, to what makes us genuinely human. Leavis's morality can be represented by such a passage from Lawrence's 'Morality and the Novel':

The only morality is to have man true to his manhood, and woman true to her womankind and let the relation form of itself, in all honour, for it is to each life itself. ²

In confirmation of this principle Leavis condemns the end of Lawrence's *Rainbow*, in spite of the fact that it satisfies the moral expectations and considers it as a kind of 'Cessation' arbitrarily imposed by Lawrence himself and not emanating from the previous threads of the work. By contrast he endorses the natural ending of *Women in Love*, in spite of its murky and gloomy connotations because it 'comes as the inevitable upshot of a drama enacted by human individuals as recognizable and as intelligently motivated as any in fiction'.³ He also condemns Shelley's moralizing because it is too personal and vague,⁴ and Milton's allegorizing because it is subjective and disembodied, and finally Arnold's sentimentalizing because it does not offer a concrete object

⁴ F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 214
⁵ *ibid*, pp 58-59
suggesting the emotion. Here it would sound logical to 'identify' morality with impersonality since Leavis's moral attitude entails a comprehensiveness of outlook, a universality of vision which can only be matched by his concept of impersonality. This point is elaborated by Leavis in his essay on 'Anna Karenina'. In this essay Leavis seems to define his critical stand and to enlighten his reader on a number of the crucial terms he uses. Speaking about the wider relation which art bears to life he says:

> It is an immensely fuller and profounder involvement in life on the part of the artist whose concern for significance in his art is the intense and focused expression of the questing after significance that characterizes him in his daily living. This, of course, amounts to saying that Tolstoy is a different kind of man from James - he is the kind of man the greatest artist necessarily is - Tolstoy might very well have answered as Lawrence did, when asked, not long before his death, that was the drive behind his creating 'one writes, out of one's moral sense, for the race, as it were. 'Moral', of course, is an ambiguous word, but Lawrence was thinking of that manifestation of his own vitality of genius - the distinctive preoccupation with ultimate questions - those which concern the nature of one's deepest inner allegiances, and determinations, the fundamental significances to be read in one's experience of life, the nature and the conditions of fulfilment.

It shouldn't be construed that Leavis is suggesting a moral norm or a definitive attitude. The significance and more specifically, the moral significance he attributes to the work of art springs from its intrinsic structure, and it is the task of the critic, as Leavis discharges it here, to bring it out. In other words Leavis does not favour a social or moral idea at the expense or to the detriment of the artistic character of the work of art. On this point Leavis is most emphatic. He stresses the inalienable principle that Tolstoy's dexterous manipulation of Anna Karenina solicits Lawrence's view that:

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Art speech is the only speech and by speech Laurence means the utterance of thought - thought of the anti-mathematical order.

This notion gives rise to another crucial term frequently used by Leavis in designating the significance of the work of art - that is 'sincerity'. The term also recurs in Santayana's critical writings and prompts the reader to think that Leavis is influenced by Santayana's use of it, but before elaborating their respective use of the term, I would like to put it in some historical perspective. Lionel Trilling traces the term back to the sixteenth century:

The word enters the English language in the first third of the sixteenth century, considerably later than its appearance in French.

In a footnote Trilling says:

The O.E.D. gives 1549 as the date of the earliest French use, but this is contradicted by Paul Robert's Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue Française, which gives 1473 as the date for sincere and 1237 as the date for sincérité.

And goes on to say:

It derived from the Latin word sincerus and first meant what the Latin word means in its literal sense - clean or sound or pure. An old and fanciful etymology, sine cora, without wax, had in mind an object of virtue which was not patched up and passed off as sound, and serves to remind us that the word in its early use referred primarily not to persons but to things, both material and immaterial. One spoke of sincere wine, not in a metaphorical sense in the modern fashion of describing the taste of a wine by attributing a moral quality to it, but simply to mean that it had not been adulterated, or as was once said, sophisticated. In the language of medicine urine might be sincere, and there was sincere fat and sincere gall. To speak of the sincere doctrine or the sincere religion, or the sincere gospel, was to say that it has not been tampered with, or falsified or corrupted. Dr Johnson in his Dictionary gives priority to the meaning of the word as applied to things rather than to

1. ibid, p.15.
persons. As used in the early sixteenth century in respect of persons, it is largely metaphorical—a man's life is sincere in the sense of being sound or pure, or whole, or consistent in its virtuosity. But it soon came to mean the absence of dissimulation or feigning or pretence. Shakespeare uses the word only in this latter sense, with no apparent awareness of its ever having been used metaphorically. 1

Taking this line of inquiry a step further, we find that M.H. Abrams detects in Pater's distinction between science and art the inalienable place of sincerity. He suggests that the transcriptive function of science means 'accuracy' or truth to the original, whereas the representational character of art implies personal 'intimacy or sincerity'. In his essays "upon epitaphs" Wordsworth set as one of his aims to establish a criterion of sincerity by which a writer may be judged. 2

Identifying literature with morals he quotes Wordsworth as saying:

... nothing can please us however well executed in its kind, if we are persuaded that the primary virtues of sincerity, earnestness, and a moral interest in the main object are wanting. 3

He goes on to show that John Keble considered poetry in association with religion and looked upon sincerity as their connecting link.

In religion it means truth to oneself and in poetry it means the faithful expression of genuine emotions. In Carlyle we can see the movement of truth as it turns on its heels to become equivalent to 'sincerity'. 4

3. ibid,
4. ibid.
Related to this point is the use of 'sincerity' in the sense of naturalness and spontaneity as opposed to artificiality and affectation. On this basis Leigh Hunt praises the sincerity of ancient poets like Homer and Chaucer, in contra-distinction with the neo-classic craftsmanship. With Mill's identification of poetry with religion, and Arnold's advocacy of the same concept a new sensibility set in. Wordsworth and Coleridge kept poetry and religion distinct and apart.

It was only in the early Victorian period when all discourse was explicitly or tacitly thrown into the two exhaustive modes of imaginative and rational, expressive and assertive, that religion fell together with poetry in opposition to science, and that religion as a consequence was converted into poetry, and poetry into a kind of religion. 2

In his use of the word 'sincerity' Arnold first identifies it with 'truth', and secondly he thinks that it is the mainspring of 'high seriousness'. In The Study of Poetry he censures Burns for indulging in 'scotch drink, scotch religion and scotch manners'.

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in Burns, and it is unsatisfactory, not because it is Bacchalian poetry, but because it has not the accent of sincerity, which Bacchalian poetry, to do it justice, very often has. There is something in it of bravado; something which makes us feel that we have not the man speaking to us with his real voice; something, therefore, poetically unsound. 3

Arnold terms Burns's poetry 'poetically unsound' because it lacks one of the two major requisites of poetry, that is truth. It is not genuine, it is affected and insincere, and therefore untrue.

1. ibid.
2. ibid, p.335
The other major requisite of poetry, high seriousness, comes as a by-product of sincerity:

But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth, and poetic beauty. Those laws fix an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness; the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity. The accent of high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity, is what gives to such verse as 'in la sua volontade e nostra pace...to such criticism of Dante's, its power. 1

But the reference to Dante brings us back to Santayana, because it is in connection with Dante that he significantly employs the term: "The most visionary of subjects, life after death, could be treated with scientific sobriety and deep sincerity." 2

Roughly speaking 'sincerity' here is identified with concreteness. In another context Santayana discriminates between English poetry which he designates as largely selective and homogeneous and poetry of the Latin tradition which he describes as mainly heterogeneous saying:

In French, Italian and Spanish as in Latin itself, elegance and neatness of 'expression' suffice for verse. The reader passes without any sense of incongruity or anti-climax, from passion to reflection, from sentiment to satire, from flights of fancy to homely details, the whole has a certain human sincerity and intelligibility which weld it together. 3

Santayana again commend Jean Labor's attitude towards the complicated problems of our life. He points out that man should boldly face the conditions of life instead of evading them, because only

1. ibid, p. 48
2. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 131
3. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 131
through a direct confrontation of the predicaments posed by daily
life can he discover a hope for living.

With this clarity of thought Santayana invests Jean Lahor
saying "This moral confusion our author avoids by his greater
sincerity", and the meaning with which the term is fraught here
has a direct bearing on our humanity; on what caters for human life
and hope.

In his essay on 'Anna Karenina' Leavis reminds us that "every
great creative work compels us to reconsider the meaning of that
word." In the light of this remark it would be advisable to trace
Leavis's use of the term in some chronological order.

Commenting on Yeats's consciousness of the raging conflict between
'intellectual passion' and 'old age' dominating his later poetry,
Leavis says:

This is the voice of one who knows intellectual passion. He does not deceive himself about that he has lost, but
the regret itself becomes in the poetry something positive.
His implications, in short, are very complex; he has
achieved a difficult and delicate sincerity, an extra-
ordinarily subtle \( p.d.e. \). 3

The sincerity here which reflects the genuineness of personal
experience is matched by the concurrentness of creative experience
the 'subtle \( p.d.e. \).'

Then Leavis applies the term to Eliot's Ash Wednesday, later on,
he suggests that the poet's technical accomplishment is a manifestation
of, rather, a plea for sincerity. For the poet 'technique' was the
problem of sincerity. 4

1. ibid, p.243
2. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, London, Chatto and
   Windus, 1967, p.17
4. ibid, p.99
Applied to the later poetry of Eliot, the word can be understood in terms of Leavis's concept of moral enactment. The poetry of 'Ash Wednesday' onwards doesn't say, I believe, or I know, or here is the truth; it is positive in direction, but not positive in that way (the difference from Dante is extreme). It is a searching of experience, a spiritual discipline, a technique for sincerity for giving sincerity a meaning. The preoccupation is with establishing from among the illusions, evanescences and unrealities of life in time, an apprehension of an assured reality. 1

It is obvious that Leavis's use of the term here is similar to Santayana's application of it to Dante's Divine Comedy. Dante's 'visionary subject' has its parallelism in Eliot's illusions, evanescences and unrealities. The function of sincerity as elaborated here by both Santayana and Leavis is to create out of fantasies and abstractions something concrete and valid. Discussing Forster's portrayal of human relations Leavis says:

In his treatment of personal relations the bent manifests itself in the manner and accent of his pre-occupation with sincerity. 2

Sincerity in connection with Forster reflects his pre-occupation with viewing human life from a significant angle. This pre-occupation with our humanity - Leavis suggests - prompts Forster to outstep the conventional limits of comedy proper, in both 'A Room with a View' and Where Angels Fear to Tread. These limitations to which Jane Austen would have closely adhered, are transgressed in favour of a faithful and revealing delineation of human life. Within a comic framework Forster introduces love and death, and contrasts Italy with England. 3 Thus Leavis uses sincerity in this context as a faithful indicator of varying human emotions, and this use is in line with Santayana's adoption of the term in his distinction between the homogeneous English

1. F.R. Leavis, Education and University, p. 89
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 262
3. Ibid
poetry and the heterogeneous poetry of the Latin tradition.

In respect to Henry James the term is used in a very subtle and delicate sense:

His intelligence about the need of his time alerted and quickened by his Parisian initiation, he dealt firmly with Victorian moralism in the way the time - the state of British and American culture - required. On the other hand, strong with his un-British inwardness with France, he yielded no ground to the opposed fallacies of Aestheticism, which had so great an attraction, for the would-be enlightened and unprovincial. He had achieved a centrality that made him strong to deal with all provincialisms. He expressed with a fine and irresistible sincerity his sense of Flaubert's place in the history of the novel, and of the indebtedness to Flaubert that should be felt by all practitioners. But making his famous decision that was a mature conscious realization of what for him was fact and necessity.

The term points to the fact that James was an adept artist because he concentrated on provincial American themes, thereby securing the element of precision and specificity which simultaneously makes for universality, as Lewis has indicated in another essay on the same subject. But Lewis's handling of the term in this particular argument charges it with further implications. Sincerity with regard to James suggests the handsome tribute he gives Flaubert for the part he played in the development of the novel, but what is more important is that it points to James's adherence to the proper literary tradition of George Eliot which has its obvious moral implications.

Thus the term here serves to combine the aesthetic approach of Flaubert with the moral tone of George Eliot.

When Lewis applies the term to 'Anna Karenina' he compels upon us

its human and even spiritual connotations. Commenting on the
ending of 'Anna Karenina' Leavis argues that Levin's meditations on
life and death, though not strictly pertinent to the central theme of
'Anna and Karenin, harmonize with the general panoramic view of the novel.

It is a close in keeping with the creative mode of the
work, with the delicate wholeness of the 'sincerity' with
which Tolstoy pursues his aim of inducing life to propose
and define the 'questions' a process, that is, at the same
time a conveying of such 'answers' as life may yield. 1

Leavis's use of 'sincerity' to transcend the strictly literary
and to cover ultimate issues essential to our humanity is in full
keeping with his rejection of the exclusively aesthetic view of
literature, and with Santayana's identification of poetry with
religion. It serves to bridge or narrow down the gap between
literature and morality in the interest of what is central and
significant in Human life.

Santayana and Leavis on The Function of The Critic

Both Santayana and Leavis are in agreement on the vital need of
the critic for experience and literary training, 2 that is a constant
familiarity with good works of art that helps to cultivate what
Santayana calls taste, and Leavis intelligence or refinement of
sensibility. To both of them specialization is a pre-requisite for a
competent literary critic. The subtle sense of appreciation with
which the critic is endowed entails a great deal of self-discipline and
experience of both art and life. 3 This wide experience is intended to
help the critic realize the underlying vision of the work. If Santayana

1. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays p.15
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p.224-225 and George Santayana
   The Life of Reason (Reason in Art) pp.192-193
3. ibid.
expresses this function in terms of harmony and coherence, Leavis in his characteristically practical tone says:

As he (the critic) matures in experience of the new thing he asks, explicitly and implicitly 'where does this come, how does it stand in relation to ...? How relatively important does it seem? And the organization into which it settles as a constituent in becoming 'placed' is an organization of similarly placed things, that have found their bearing with regard to one another. 1

In other words to Santayana the function of the critic is to create a kind of harmony and order among works of art, and to Leavis it is a process of establishing relations between them on a basis of functionalism and relevance, and the similarity between 'placing' and 'harmony' is quite obvious.

Again, Santayana and Leavis agree on the notion that the judgment passed on the work of art is a personal judgment. "This criterion", says Santayana, "will be natural, personal and autonomous" 2, and Leavis's view that a judgment is personal and cannot be otherwise has become almost common-place. Once again Leavis's conception of criticism as a collaborative activity appealing to the readers for general consent or what Leavis prefers to call 'unanimity of consciousness' represented by his famous interrogatory sentence "This is so, isn't it?" has its origin in Santayana's concept of criticism as a serious and public function, 3 and the critic's judgment will extend its authority over other minds also in so far as their constitution is similar to (his). In that measure what is a genuine instance of reason in (him) others will recognize as a genuine expression in themselves also. 4 Santayana and Leavis accord with each other on the idea that the significance or

3. George Santayana, Reason in Art, p. 151
4. ibid.
intention elicited by the critic from the work of art may be quite
different from the original intention of the artist. Stating this
idea Santayana says that the critic's function is to awaken a
certain feeling in the reader,

but even this most aesthetic element in the value of
art does not borrow its value from the possible fact
that the artist also shares those habits and emotions. 1

Leavis says something similar:

These tests may very well reveal that the deep,
animating intention (if that is the right word)
is something very different from the intention the
author would declare. 2

This is in harmony with Leavis's original concept that intentions
are nothing but what is realized in the work of art.

Thus if the taste of the critic is personal, yet the judgment
he tries to pass on the work of art - through a plea for consent on
the part of the audience addressed, implies impersonality. Andor

Gomme intelligently elaborates this point saying:

What lies behind and gives substance to his (Leavis's)
use of the formula (conversational style) is a
conviction that we do share a fundamental human
sensibility which can properly be appealed to in
this way. This, as I understand it, is the
impersonality referred to by Leavis. 3

This conversational style was later defined by Leavis as
'The Third Realm'4. The phrase is designed to identify the new
kind of intermediate style that is not exclusively literary, nor rigidly
scientific, but rather conversational. This gesture on the part of

1. George Santayana, Reason in Art, p. 151
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 225
3. Andor Gomme, Attitudes to Criticism, Carbondale and Edwardsville
   Southern Illinois University Press, 1960, p. 117
4. F.R. Leavis, Two Cultures, London, Chatto and Windus, 1952, p. 28
Leavis represents a critical 'tactic', having a twofold value. In the first place it brings criticism to bear on human and social issues, thereby enhancing its effect, and in so doing it simultaneously broadens its scope. The phrase 'The third realm' says the editor of The Human World is Leavis's means of making his step from the great particular example, the existence of a poem, to a general truth about the nature of language, and this in turn, of widening literary criticism into a criticism of life. Life as a comprehensive whole, Leavis suggests, is an ideal which cannot be attained in the fragmentary spirit of scientific specialities, and this is again an element in common between Santayana and Leavis.

To both Santayana and Leavis the judgment passed on the work of art is a moral one. On this point Santayana is quite positive:

"Art being a part of life, the criticism of art
is a part of morals." 2

Leavis reaches a similar position though his wording is somewhat different:

"... to insist that literary criticism is or should be a specific discipline of intelligence, is not to suggest that a serious interest in literature, can confine itself to the kind of intensive local analysis associated with practical criticism ... a real literary interest is an interest in man, society and civilization." 3

Attributing Johnson's 'discriminating taste' and 'sensitive ear' to a positive tradition that is wider than the merely literary one, Leavis says:

"... its positiveness is a matter of its being so much more than literary; the very decided conventions of idiom and form engage comprehensive unanimities regarding morals, society and civilization." 4

1. The Human World, May 1971, p.73
2. George Santayana, Reason in Art, p. 178
3. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 200
4. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina, p. 199
Leavis's use of such terms as 'relevance' and 'significance' is an implicit pointer to the moral and humane connotations involved in the work of literature.

In his criticism of individual writers Leavis is also influenced by Santayana's judgments on those writers. This is Santayana's view of Wordsworth:

what he renders, beyond such pictorial touches as language is capable of, is the moral inspiration which the scene brings to him. This moral inspiration is not drawn at all from the real processes of nature which every landscape manifests in some aspect and for one moment. ... Wordsworth dwells on adventitious human matters. He is no poet of genesis, evolution and natural force in its myriad manifestations, only a part of the cosmic process engages his interest or touches his soul. 1

Enlarging on this view he says:

Wordsworth was truly a poet of nature. In so far, however, as he was a poet of landscape, he was still fundamentally a poet of human life, or merely of his personal experience. When he talked of nature he was generally moralizing and altogether subject to the pathetic fallacy, but when he talked of man or himself, he was unfolding a part of nature, the upright human heart, and studying it in its truth. 2

In a similar way Leavis says:

Wordsworth's pre-occupation was with a distinctively human naturalness, with sanity, and his interest in mountains was subsidiary. 3

The affinity between Santayana and Leavis on Wordsworth brings to the fore the whole romantic set-up to which Santayana gives so much credit - and Leavis, probably with Santayana in mind, makes it a high-water mark of his criticism. Santayana says:

1. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p. 59
2. ibid, pp. 60-61
3. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 195
In fact, the great merit of the romantic attitude in poetry, and the transcendental method in philosophy, is that they put us back at the beginning of our experience. They disintegrate convention which is often cumbersome and confused and restore us to ourselves, to immediate perception and primordial will. 1

It is possibly in consequence of that view that Leavis formed his opinion that the Romantic movement added something, that is, enriched the human heritage. 2

When Leavis comes to assess Dickens in The Great Tradition, he brands him as a great entertainer and cites Santayana to confirm this verdict. Santayana's intimation that Dickens cannot be taken seriously and can only be enjoyed at the grate in a winter evening is explicitly adopted by Leavis to indicate a lack of responsibility on the part of Dickens. In his criticism of Dickens Santayana says:

It is remarkable, in spite of his ardent simplicity and openness of heart, how insensitive Dickens was to the greater themes of the human imagination, religion, science, politics, art. He was a waif himself and utterly disinherited. For example the terrible heritage of contentious religions which fills the world, seems not to exist for him. In this matter he was like a sensitive child, with a most religious disposition, but not religious ideas. Perhaps properly speaking he has no ideas on any subject at all. 3

Leavis seems to have gone on for a long time under the impact of this 'judgment', and it was probably the severity of this judgment that delayed his recognition of Dickens's artistic achievement. It is interesting to note that, as Leavis achieved critical maturity, he not only rejected, but revoked that verdict. 'A waif himself', he was totally disinherited. Santayana's observation illuminates nothing except the assumptions behind it, it is stultifyingly false. 4

1. George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets, p. 196
2. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Dickens, The Novelist, p. 274, and later repeated in Leavis's introduction to The Image of Childhood, p. 21
4. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Dickens The Novelist, p. 214
The judgment passed by Santayana and Leavis on Browning is similar in import and effect. Santayana states that Browning's poetry is defective on two main points. It is extremely personal in the sense that Browning himself is always the centre of the poetic experience, and this attitude on his part deprives him of achieving technical maturity and convincingly and reduces his poetry to sentimental discourses. The second major defect is the lack of a binding moral or ideal tone in this poetry. It is secular, passionate and crude. It does not ennoble the sensibility of the reader, but degrades it. The emotion is pursued crudely for its own sake.¹

In New Bearings, Leavis says:

There are kinds of strength a poet is best without. And it is plain that Browning would have been less robust, if he had been more sensitive and intelligent. He did indeed bring his living interests into his poetry, but it is plain too, that they are not the interests of an adult sensitive mind. He did not need to withdraw into a dream world, because he was able to be a naive romantic of love and action on the waking plane. ²

Leavis's 'naïve romanticism', corresponds to Santayana's 'barbarian' because the designation has more or less the same significance of inexperience and immaturity.

But Leavis disagrees with Santayana in his appraisal of Shelley and by this I mean that their evaluation of Shelley is made from two different standpoints. In his essay on Shelley, Santayana tries to justify Shelley's emotional outbursts and subversive tendencies along historical and philosophical lines. In the first place Shelley feels that he does not belong. He has not received a formal education, and is not constrained by formal institutions. On the contrary he feels that it is his bounden duty to level them down, because in his revolutionary and moral spirit, they are symbols of

¹. G. Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, pp. 188-215
². F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry, p.24
oppression. He shied away from life, because his inner, pure and uncontaminated soul was richer, nobler and healthier. He did not bother to take notice of this world, because it was in his visionary world that he found embodiment of his ideals. To him this inner world constituted the realm of beauty, love and eternity.

Shelley's poetry shows us the perfect, but naked body of human happiness, that clothes circumstances may compel most of us to add, may be a necessary concession, to climate, to custom or to shame; they can hardly add a new vitality and a new beauty comparable to that which they hide. 1

But this is too much an idealized view which suits Santayana's philosophic cast of mind, but loses sight of the pressing demand for concreteness that is essential to good poetry. That is why Leavis rightly rejects it since it is based on mere idealism and Platonism. 2

... but Shelley, we have seen, was, while on the one hand conscious of ardent altruism, on the other peculiarly weak in his hold on objects - peculiarly unable to realize them as existing in their own natures and their own right. His need of loving (in a sense that was not, perhaps, in the full focus of Mr Santayana's intention) comes out in the erotic element, that as already remarked the texture of the poetry pervasively exhibits. 3

In an involved and laboured process Santayana tries to impress upon us the idea that Shelley's character was self-sufficient.

Shelley, on the contrary, is like a palm-tree in the desert or a star in the sky, he is perfect in the midst of the void. His obtuseness to things dynamic - to the material order, leaves his whole mind to develop things after their own kind, his abstraction permits purity, his playfulness makes room for creative freedom, his ethereal quality is only humanity having its way. 4


2. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, London, Chatto and Windus, 1969, p.200

3. ibid, p.222

4. Norman Benfrey (ed) op.cit, p. 173
These statements show how Santayana is so engrossed by Shelley's character and philosophy that he forgets their impact in a poetic context; that is whether they are dramatized or not. In fact he has forgotten one of his own leading principles, namely that embodiment or enactment is the method of effective poetic composition. This seems to justify Leavis's view that Shelley offers emotion, in itself, unattached, in the void, for its own sake, and though Santayana's defence seems to be subtle and philosophical, it does not refute Leavis's charge.

Santayana and Leavis on The Relativity of Human and Moral Values

I have already referred to Santayana's relativity of moral values. It would be relevant to emphasize this notion with regard to Leavis's criticism. In one of his illuminating statements Santayana says:

... any reasoned appreciation of life is bound to be a religion, even if no conventionally religious elements are imported into the problem. 2

The statement throws a flood of light on Leavis's pre-occupation with other social and educational questions beside his definite practice as a literary critic, but this point will be reverted to later.

In "The Appeal to The Supernatural" Santayana in his sarcastic and cynical way satirizes the illusory notion of codified or standardized norms - norms that are fictitiously held to meet diverse human needs at all times and in all places saying:

1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit., p.214
2. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p.235
If for instance the human soul were supernatural and had its proper life and perfection in another world, then indeed all the variety of human tastes, temperaments and customs, would be variety only in self-ignorance and error. There would be an eternal criterion, apart from all places, persons and times, by which everything should be judged.  

Speaking about protestantism Santayana says that its ideals were more allied to those of the Hebrews than to those of the early Christians, and that 'the typical protestant was himself his own church and made the selection and interpretation of tradition according to the demands of his personal spirit.'

Again Santayana indicates that Christianity succeeded as a religion in its early phases, because it then depended for its principles on the preceding pagan, Hebrew, and imaginative popular traditions:

... it was only by virtue of this complement that Christianity could claim to approach a humane universality or to achieve an imaginative adequacy. The problem was to compose in the form of a cosmic epic, with metaphysical justifications and effectual starting-points for moral action, the spiritual autobiography of man.

This concept of the relativity of human and moral values Santayana exhibits in his introduction to Three Philosophical Poets, where he says that "each of these poets (Lucretius, Dante and Goethe) is typical of an age." Lucretius is a naturalist who believes that the world is made up of certain elements in continual flux - that it is a machine the constant operation of which entails regular cycles of death and rebirth -

Into this view of the world he fits a view of human life as it ought to be led under such conditions.

2. G. Santayana, op.cit, p.112
3. George Santayana, ibid, p.114
5. ibid, p.5
This is by definition the relativity of human values that characterizes Santayana's moral approach.

With the passage of time and the consequent need for adaptability to a new set of values, Dante appeared on the scene and a new sensibility set in; that is the Christian sensibility manifesting itself in the doctrine of reward and punishment, and man's life on earth as a preparation for the life to come. Dante's Divine Comedy responded to that spirit and crystallized such ideals.

As time went on a new doctrine began to take shape, that is romanticism, or the belief in man's infinite capabilities and his unrestrained passion for life and adventure. Goethe's Faust served to set forth this romanticism.

Adopting this relativity of human values in his criticism, Leavis refutes Henry James's irresponsible plastic art saying:

"Is there any great novelist whose pre-occupation with 'form is not a matter of his responsibility towards rich human interest, or complexity of interests, profoundly realized?—a responsibility involving of its very nature, imaginative sympathy, moral discrimination and judgment of relative human value."

Again in the course of his analysis of Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', Leavis says that the poem represents a complete break with the nineteenth century tradition and a new start.

This new start is meant to represent the modern sensibility. Reverting to the values embodied by the poet and their correspondence to the sensibility of the age to which he belongs, Leavis remarks on the 'Later Poetry of T.S. Eliot' that "it is peculiarly relevant to the stresses of our time". In D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, Leavis

consistently develops this relative morality when he describes Lawrence as 'the great writer of our phase of civilization'.

Once again he describes Lawrence's technique saying:

he (Lawrence) is recording in his rendering of provincial England what in the concrete this has meant in an actual civilization.

It is in relation to this contemporary civilization that Lawrence manages to portray his character, to penetrate into the workings of their heart to bring out what is weighty and momentous in their life. This exquisite unfolding of the human values they represent is precisely what Leavis takes to be moral or 'religious' in Lawrence, and if Lawrence, as Eliot accused him, did not adhere to a Christian dogma, it is because he wanted to concern himself practically with the substantial and diverse human values. His achievement is manifest in his insight into human individuals related to a given environment.

An interest like his in the deeper life of the psyche cannot be an interest in the individual abstracted from the society to which he belongs.

This gives rise to a wider investigation into other scales of relativity, because the term cannot be confined to or exhausted by the relation between the individual and his age, for there is the more important consideration that the value advocated by the individual can or should be supplemented by other relative values.

I have already referred to Santayana's belief that, on its inception, Christianity succeeded to impress its teachings upon people by integrating into it principles derived from pagan, Hebrew and

1. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, p.9
2. ibid, p.110
3. ibid, p.128
popular traditions. Adopting this concept, in principle, Leavis
indicates that literary studies should be completed or rather
perfected by studies in other departments of thought. His
doctoral thesis is an exploration of the relationship between
literature and journalism. His *Education & the University* is a
reflection of his keen concern for promoting a system of education
fulfilling the humane values he finds pre-eminently in the study of
literature. His *Two Cultures?* is a refutation of C.P. Snow's false
demarcation between what he superficially terms a technological
culture and a literary culture. Leavis's main point in that
lecture was to insist on what he rightly considers as one culture,
combining all that characterizes our humanity. Leavis argues that
a student with a scientific bent must have some background in literary
studies, and correspondingly the student of literature must have some
awareness of technical knowledge. *English Literature in Our Time and The
University*, denotes Leavis's focal interest in the university as a
centre wherein the human tradition, the genuine cultural values can
be maintained.

Mrs Leavis's *Fiction And The Reading Public*, is a study of the
gradual change of taste that showed itself in the reading public of
English fiction from the eighteenth century up to the thirties. She
terms her study 'anthropological' and the adjective is indicative
of the close relationship, rather the interaction between literature and
society. In her essays on 'The Cambridge Tradition' she singles out
A.C. Haddon, Leslie Stephen, Henry Sidgwick, and Professor Chadwick for
particular admiration as they stood for sound and effective human
values in Cambridge University. But these are pregnant subjects and
it sounds appropriate to deal with them in some detail.

1. Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction And The Reading Public*, London, Chatto
and Windus, 1932, reprint 1968, p.XV.
In the preface to *Education and The University*, Leavis says

What I mean, as I explain further on, is that the more clearly you see the indispensable value of a real literary training, the more it is borne in you that such a training cannot occupy by itself two or three years of a student's university life, and that it demands of its very nature, to be associated with work in other fields. 1

In working out his programme for a liberal education, Leavis is neither philosophizing nor speaking in abstract terms, but is noticeably meticulous and specific. He chooses a definite academic institution, study that is Cambridge, and a particular branch of *study*, that is literature. He concentrates on the university, because it provides, in his view, a healthy and ideal climate both for the preservation and continuity of the human tradition. In this context Leavis clarifies for us almost incontestably the crux of the subject under review, namely that the human tradition can be studied and maintained without involving religious dogmas

... it is the pre-occupation with cultural values as human and separable from any particular religious frame or basis, the offer at a cultural regeneration that prompts the description 'humanist'. 2

Leavis's concept of the liberal education, designed to meet the exigencies of modern life, is that it is free from any religious 'inculcation'. He maintains that Eliot is a representative of modern sensibility, not on account of his Anglo-Catholicism, though he professes that, but rather by virtue of embodying the predicaments, the crises of modern life. He reminds us that our age is no longer *simply* that of Dante nor of Herbert (the implication is that religion can no longer adequately represent the crucial, intricate problems of modern man, as it did in the ages of both Dante and Herbert.

1. F.R. Leavis, *Education and The University*, pp.8-9
2. *ibid*, p.19
In other words, the complexity of modern life solicits a profounder and a more comprehensive treatment than the pre-occupation with religious dogmas or the limited discussion of religious issues. This complexity calls for a deeper understanding of basic human issues and conditions of living.

In *Two Cultures*, Leavis attacks Snow's short-sighted and reductive attitude towards life. This attitude is deficient and imperfect as it reduces life to a mere system of material prosperity based on technological advance. Snow claims that the 'scientific Culture' is becoming preponderant in modern life and that the scientists have the future in their bones. If one aspires to something outside the confines of this material technological mode of living one will be stigmatized by Snow as a Luddite.

The upshot is that if you insist on the need for any other kind of concern entailing forethought, action and provision about the human future, any other kind of misgiving, than that which talks in terms of productivity, material standards of living, hygienic and technological progress, then you are a Luddite. 1

To counteract this diminutive or rather reductionist approach to life, Leavis resorts to the University wherein literature is studied. The significance of Leavis's emphasis on literature, in this regard, is that it involves language. This language furnishes a neutral ground for both the specialist in literature and the people, or what he has already called 'the third realm'. The fact that the specialist will talk to people in a language familiar to them, and elicit the desirable response, will create a collaborative activity which is essential to the survival of our human heritage. This language is the common property of all of them, and in using it the critic strikes sensitive chords bringing his auditors back to their

fundamental human character, which transcends present conditions and forms a continuous stream running from the past to the future, thereby surmounting the crudities and insensitivities incurred by a technologico-Benthamite age.

In English Literature In our Time and The University, Leavis develops this point in a way that has a direct bearing on the concept of relativity - a concept that he derived mainly from Santayana. After paying tribute to Mansfield Forbes for his efforts in establishing the Cambridge English Tripos - efforts that eventually resulted in the consequent experimental work conducted by I.A. Richards in that school in the field of literary criticism, Leavis comes to grips with the pivotal question of language and literary criticism. The new point he brings to light in this discussion is the idea of 'value' or rather critical standards.

If language furnishes a common ground on which people can mutually and understandably communicate with each other, the immediate occasion for this communication is a given poem or novel, because it is in terms of literature as a manifestation of language that Leavis speaks. The discussion carried on between the critic and his public on the nature of that work of art entails judgment or what Leavis calls 'valuing'. Here Leavis is shrewd enough to identify value with 'significance', which he interprets as moral significance, and to indicate that each new work that presents itself to the reader compels him to modify his judgment and his sense of value:

... so far from valuing being a matter of bringing up a scale, a set of measures, or an array of fixed and definite criteria to the given work, every work that makes itself felt as a challenge evokes or generates in the critic a fresh realization of the grounds and nature of judgment. A truly great work is realized to be that because it so decidedly modifies, alters the sense of value and significance that judges. 2

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature In Our Time and The University, London, Chatto and Windus, 1937, p.50
2. ibid.
He invokes Lawrence in support of this view where he says:

> The true artist doesn't substitute immorality for morality on the contrary, he always substitutes a finer morality for a grosser. As soon as you see a finer morality, the grosser becomes relatively immoral.\(^1\)

This brings us back in the most compelling way to the Santayana-Leavis theme of the relativity of moral and human values.

Adverting to the same topic in his first lecture, in Lectures in America, Leavis clears up some misconceptions popularized by the English papers and 'Snow's Lecture'. In the first place he rejects Dickens's designation as a Luddite and describes him as an 'incomparable social historian'.\(^2\) His achievement is to depict vividly and intensely the shortcomings of his Victorian age. His second object is to attack Snow's denomination of two cultures and to insist that there is only one human culture. In this lecture he shows himself alive to the fact, that however great the achievements of science and technology may be in the sphere of our material life, yet they are utterly helpless and deficient in respect of our moral and spiritual needs. They cannot satisfy the profound cravings of the soul. His claims for the university as a seat of enlightenment and intelligence does not depend on the concept of a university as a set of specialized departments, but rather on the assumption that through the education of the public, they can respond to the deeper values, the finer strains and the more centrally human notations implicit in works of literature, and discussed by the literary critic in collaboration with them. In the cultivation of this refined sense of human values Leavis secures a human basis countering the grossly developing technological civilization.\(^3\)

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1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p.51
3. ibid, pp.3-25
Leavis's concern for maintaining the literary tradition is consolidated, and in a sense complemented by Q.D. Leavis's interest in anthropological and sociological studies. This interest has the effect of broadening the spectrum to embrace studies in humanities at large. This interest shows that she is adopting something close to Santayana's view of the relativity of human values. Under the heading 'The Cambridge Tradition' she expresses admiration for A.C. Haddon's successful efforts to establish the study of anthropology at Cambridge, and is revolted at the university's ingratitude manifested in denying him a professorship. ¹

Vindicating Leslie Stephen's critical procedure against the charge of moralism, Mrs Leavis again recapitulates the central conception of relative human values; that is, values that are largely determined by the spirit of the age. She rejects the view of art for art's sake, arguing that morality in art springs from a keener and profounder realization of man's life. This profounder understanding of human life is precisely what she calls 'moral beauty' which she attributes to Leslie Stephen. Meanwhile a judgment of value will be the right one if it is linked with the exact generation of people, and the specific period of time to which it unmistakably belongs.

... In talking of literary changes I shall have first, to take note of the main intellectual characteristics of the period, and secondly what changes took place in the audience to which men of letters addressed themselves; and how the gradual extension of the reading class affected the development of the literature addressed to them. ²

In discussing Henry Sidgwick's Cambridge, Mrs Leavis again focuses attention on the fundamental question of liberal education,

1. Scrutiny: Vol.XI, no.4, Summer 1943, pp. 305-310
tracing it back to the initiatives of Henry Sidgwick. In this
field she puts on record two facts that have become fully established
as a result of the pioneering work of Sidgwick. The first is the
creation of the system of co-education in Cambridge, the second is
the nullification of the principle of religious uniformity as
applied to university tests in religion, and to the appointment of
university staff-members. This achievement which establishes the time-
honoured relative human and moral values, dear to both Santayana and
Mrs Leavis, is the essential bond that associates Mrs Leavis with
Cambridge.

A society that places a high value on character and
intellectual virtue, instead of on social and
intellectual conformity, is something that in these
days (the days of today) at Cambridge we may
look back to with both pride and nostalgia. 1

This liberal attitude reaches its climax in the work of professor
describes
Chadwick which Mrs Leavis rightly describes as 'disinterested'. This
disinterestedness is supremely represented in his rejection of the
idea of forcing Anglo-Saxon as a compulsory subject on the students
in spite of the fact that he was the professor and chairman of that
department. In a spirit of complete self-denial, and in the
interests of promoting these studies he suggested that they should
be optional and free from philological associations. Instead of
constraining his students to the rigid rules of Anglo-Saxon
philology, he concentrated on relating these studies to their
northern social background, and in this way he managed to
cultivate a taste and a critical appreciation of these studies.

He insisted that Anglo-Saxon should be studied in his university in its proper context, in association with the early history and antiquities of the country and in comparison with early Scandinavian studies similarly organized. 1

In this way he opened new avenues for the relevant study of sociology and archaeology that in turn enrich the study of literature and reveal its social implications. Is it not this principle of social and moral relativity that we find at work in Mrs Leavis's *Fiction And The Reading Public*? I think that the point is worth examining.

A cursory review of the book will immediately suggest the notion of relative human values. The book is divided into three sections: The Contemporary situation, The past, and The bestseller. Each of these sections relates the novel form to a certain state of affairs by means of which it either degenerates as it does in the present, or maintains its refined standards as it did in the past, or adapts itself to the process of commercialization (the divisions apply to the thirties).

Mrs Leavis again classifies the reading public into highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow, indicating that each class has to be catered for by a respectively appropriate type of novel.

A novel received with unqualified enthusiasm in a lowbrow paper will be coolly treated by the middlebrow, and contemptuously dismissed if mentioned at all by the highbrow press; the kind of book that the middlebrow press will admire wholeheartedly, the highbrow reviewer will diagnose as pernicious; each has a following that forms a different level of public. 2

But this is not all, for the reading public of a certain class seems to be so completely shut off from other classes that it is almost ignorant of what caters for or interests these classes.

It is not perhaps surprising that, in a society of forty three millions so decisively stratified in taste that each stratum is catered for independently by its own novelists and journalists, the lowbrow public should be ignorant of the work and even of the names of the highbrow writers, while to the highbrow public Ethell M. Dell or 'Tarzan' should be convenient symbols drawn from hearsay rather than first-hand knowledge.  

with the statistics she offers in mind we realize that the highbrow readers form the minority whereas the lowbrow readers constitute a sweeping majority. The highbrow novelists sell only by thousands because they are usually abandoned by the majority of readers as their novels demand an intellectual effort and a degree of sensibility for which they are not prepared. They take the novel as a form of entertainment to amuse them in their leisure. By contrast the lowbrow novelists sell by millions because they are commercially minded and strive by all possible means to gratify, in a cheap way, the desires of the public or to quote a phrase from Mrs Leavis "to give the public what it wants".  

This means that lowbrow writers achieve popularity and prosperity since they satisfy 'herd instincts' and are tremendously encouraged by both publisher and journalist because they secure for them the maximal profit. The good novelist on the other hand finds himself placed under extremely difficult and unfavourable conditions. In the first place he is subordinated to and at the mercy of the publisher who is keen on profit and not on artistic refinement, and of the journalist who

1. ibid, p.35
2. ibid, p.27
cares for the masses and not necessarily for intelligent appreciation of art. The situation becomes worse for the good novelist if he depends, for his living, solely on writing. Materially he will be impoverished and intellectually he will deteriorate. The journalist dictates his own terms - terms that usually run counter to genuine artistic taste.

... one must be aware that when an editor writes 'Nothing heavy, morbid or neurotic, he is condemning by implication (for the terms are accepted counters and used for the sake of delicacy) the living tradition of the novel. 1

Tracing this perverted taste back to its origin Mrs Leavis finds its nucleus in the corrupt literary criteria that followed industrial development. She states that the mechanical attitude which the worker adopts when he is on duty is reflected in his approach to works of art. If in the past people read out of a desire to enjoy and to avoid tedium and in the present they read to fill the time and the leisure which followed the reduction of work hours,

They read not with any artistic, spiritual, moral or informative purpose, but simply in order to pass time. 2

The malady, as Mrs Leavis in her admonitory way, diagnoses it, is deeper than that. The bestseller, too, has his own qualifications for character portrayal. Such characters - the bestseller insists - should be loveable and socially endearing. They should not confuse the reader or cause him any mental exertion or psychological depression, and in this fashion, most of the genuine novels that penetrate into human nature and delineate the workings of the human heart become undesirable and unpopular. This inaccurate critical approach gives

1. ibid, p.28
2. ibid, p. 49
rise to the flourish of second and third class writers whose works are crudely sensational and artistically cheap, and to the diminution of first class genuine artists who write for artistic excellence and sincerity. In this context Mrs Leavis raises a critical question of first importance, namely the failure of both the journalist and the publisher, and with them the editors of magazines and newspaper critics to distinguish between art and life, taking art to be a compensation for what they lack in their daily life. On the other hand the writers of the bulk of bestsellers are artistic failures. They can hardly manage to depict a convincing social or moral ideal.

Unfortunately since the author has been educated neither in thinking nor in feeling, the moral passion exhibited is fatally crude, fatally only by the standards of the sophisticated. 1

Both the writers for the bestseller and their readers glorify the heart at the expense of the mind, and by the heart is meant 'barbaric' emotion, unrefined, unpurged and degenerate. Levelling her charges against the corrupt and pernicious tendency of her age Mrs Leavis says:

... the novel can deepen, extend and refine experience by allowing the reader to live at the expense of an unusually intelligent mind, by giving him access to a finer code than his own, but this we have seen, the popular novels do not ... 2

It is needless to say that a public confuses artistic experience with social life in the sense that they favour the superficial work that meets their expectations and condemn an artistic achievement that happens to shock or surprise them. I need hardly point out, too, that these factors combined contributed to the gradual decrease

1. ibid, p.50
2. ibid, p.74
of the intelligent reading minority. It may be obvious, too, that
given these conditions the bestseller comes out victoriously as the
master of the situation, thriving at the expense of withstanding
and repressing genuine artists who, in turn, suffer starvation
and neglect.

In contrast to this decadent and degenerate present there is
the vitality and liveliness of the past where

the masses were receiving their amusements from
above (instead of being specially catered for by
journalists, film-directors, and popular novelists
as they now are) They had to take their amusements
as their betters. 1

The attitude of wishful thinking-dream-fulfilment and self-
dramatization was excluded in favour of artistic maturity and superiority.

The technique of the novel of that time rendered
such a process of self-dramatization impossible,
the eighteenth century novelist reports (even in
Richardson's epistolary convention) that is to say,
the author is felt to be present, commenting on
the action coolly, rationally, and often with a
malicious pleasure in disappointing the reader's
expectations, who is therefore forced to distance
the subject matter. 2

Mrs Leavis's technique of holding relations between the artists,
the reading public, the age, the journalist, the publisher, the past
and the present, is part and parcel of a general conception of
relative human values - a conception that compellingly recalls to
mind the influence of Santayana on that particular topic.

To associate Santayana with Leavis on the assumption that the
former exerted a certain influence on the latter's critical ideas
is necessarily to be aware of a number of questions and difficulties.
First one cannot point, in general terms especially in the realm of
literature, to clear-cut influences which can be traced back from one
writer to another. In most cases this process has to be carried out

1. ibid, p.85
2. ibid, pp. 235-236
by deduction, comparison and analogy. The question is further complicated because Leavis’s claim to distinction lies in his use of critical vocabulary and his discrimination. Santayana, in spite of his occasional diversion into critical writing and poetic composition, remains in the last analysis a philosopher by profession whereas Leavis keeps on reminding us that he should be viewed only in his capacity as a literary critic — and as a literary critic who insists that the line of demarcation between philosophy and literary criticism should always be kept distinct. Reviewing Leavis’s _Revaluation_, ¹ Rene Wellek called upon Leavis to define his own critical stand or more explicitly to state his philosophical views. Leavis answered:

... my reply to him in the first place is that I myself am not a philosopher, and that I doubt whether in any case I could elaborate a theory that he would find satisfactory. I am not, however, relying upon modesty for my defence. If I profess myself so freely to be no philosopher, it is because I feel that I can afford my modesty; it is because I have pretensions to being a literary critic ... literary criticism and philosophy seem to me to be quite distinct and different kinds of discipline, at least, I think they ought to be. This is not to suggest that a literary critic might not, as such, be the better for a philosophic training, but if he were, the advantage, I believe, would manifest itself partly in a surer realization that literary criticism is not philosophy ... it is no doubt possible to point to valuable writing of various kinds representing varying kinds of alliance between the literary critic and the philosopher. But I am not the less sure that it is necessary to have strict literary criticism somewhere and to vindicate literary criticism as a distinct and separate discipline. ²

Leavis’s main argument in the whole essay rests on his view that philosophy is an abstract discipline, whereas literature, and poetry in particular can be approached only in terms of the concrete.

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This accounts for his insistence on being a practical critic with no preconceived theories or formulae at the back of his mind. His criticism is mainly concerned with the exposition of the significance of a given work of art as a work of art.

In fact Leavis's refusal to commit himself to a body of theories or doctrines has been shown on a number of occasions. In an essay entitled 'Under which King, Bezonian?' contributed to Scrutiny at a time when the Marxist ideology was noticeably gaining ground, Leavis and the other Scrutiny writers were called upon 'to show their colours',¹ and the phrase - as Leavis tells us - derives from a number of writers the chief amongst whom is Santayana himself.² Categorically Leavis refuses to commit himself to the Marxist doctrine, since it is based on what may roughly be called class-distinction. In other words it seeks to dismiss the bourgeoisie to provide ample and unquestionable scope for the proletariat. This class distinction is at odds with Leavis's central conception that, in a healthy society, culture should be possessed by 'people at large' and not be a privileged class. To put the matter in strictly critical terms Leavis refuses to align himself with Marxist doctrine because he finds that Marxist critics like Edmund Wilson and Prince Hirsky (though Hirsky contributed some reviews to Scrutiny, Leavis does not hesitate to attack him on this principle) are using words in a loose and abstract way, and this is


2. In a letter sent by Leavis and dated 31 December 1972, Leavis reports that Santayana asked him to do that in a letter which he sent from 'Hotel Bristol', Rome.
the same defect which he notices in philosophers. To be concerned, as Scrutiny is, for literary criticism is to be vigilant and scrupulous about the relation between words and the concrete. The inadequacies of Mr Wilson and Prince Mirsky as literary critics are related to their shamelessly uncritical use of vague abstractions and verbal counters." ¹ This point is further enforced by a lecture entitled "literature and society", delivered to the Students' Union of the London School of Economics and Politics.² This lecture is of cardinal importance since it crystallizes the characteristically Leavisian critical approach namely that it is only through tackling the work of literature in the first place as a work of literature that we can discern its social and political significance. To elaborate this point Leavis demonstrates that the work of literature is the product of certain social and cultural conditions which can be grasped through an examination of the peculiar operation of the language embodying that work of literature. This language peculiar to that work, is of paramount importance as it represents the fundamental evidence on which both the sociologist and politician should rely in order to render their accounts convincing and plausible. This point has a direct bearing on Santayana's misconception of the relation between the work of art and its medium which I am going to take up in the following pages. In point of fact the whole question was openly raised when Santayana contributed an essay to Scrutiny entitled "Tragic Philosophy".³ Because this

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1. ibid, p.212
3. G. Santayana, "Tragic Philosophy", Scrutiny, March 1936, pp. 365-376
essay provoked Leavis to point to Santayana's radical misconception of the relation between the form and content of the work of art, not just in his reply "Tragedy and the Medium",¹ but also in Education and The University,² I would dwell for a while on it. Santayana wrote this essay with Eliot's essay "Shakespeare and The Stoicism of Seneca"³ in mind. In this essay Eliot argues that, though it is not corroborated by documentary evidence that Shakespeare was influenced by Seneca, yet 'the attitude of self-dramatization assumed by some of Shakespeare's heroes at moments of tragic intensity'⁴ seems to be modelled on Senecan devices. Compared with Marston's and Chapman's (who are obviously influenced by Seneca) the self-dramatization exhibited by Shakespeare's heroes is finer and superior. Some of Shakespeare's heroes like Othello, Coriolanus and Antony show a degree of pathos and self-pity at the moment of their death. Having been disappointed by worldly conditions largely hostile to them, they resort to some kind of Senecan stoicism. Santayana takes this subject and elaborates it, in his own way, by drawing a comparison between Shakespeare and Dante whereby he stresses the difference in their poetic medium of expression. In this process he reveals a radical misconception as

¹ ibid, Vol. 12 no. 4, Autumn, 1944, pp. 249-260
² F.R. Leavis, Education and The University, London, Chatto and Windus, reprint, 1965, pp. 66-66
³ T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, London, Faber and Faber 1932, pp 126-140
⁴ ibid, p. 129
to the nature of the dramatic value of Macbeth. He says that
Shakespeare has no clear-cut attitude such as Dante's, and that
if he were called upon to state his philosophy he could do
nothing but resort to the outbursts of Macbeth. In other words
Santayana tends to separate the form of the play from its contents
in a bid to discuss its ideas or 'philosophy' independently of
the means of expression, and to recommend a certain philosophical
approach and condemn another. Furthermore he conceives of the play
as being constructed in terms of preconceived ideas to which a
form would later be given. I would quote an illustrative passage
that was quoted by Leavis in his discussion of the essay:

Shakespeare was not expressing, like Seneca, a settled
doctrine of his own or of his times. Like an honest
miscellaneous dramatist, he was putting into the mouths
of his different characters the sentiments that, for the
moment were suggested to him by their predicaments.
Macbeth, who is superstitious, undecided, storms excessively
when he storms; there is something feverish and wild in
his starts of passion, as there is something delicate in
his perceptions. Shakespeare could rein in such a
character to his own subtle fancy in diction and by-play,
as well as in the main to the exaggerated rhetoric proper
to a stage where everybody was expected to declaim, to
argue, and to justify sophistically this or that extravagant
impulse. So, at this point in Macbeth, where Seneca could
have unrolled the high maxims of orthodox stoicism,
Shakespeare gives us the humours of his distracted hero;
a hero non-plussed, confounded, stultified in his eyes,
a dying gladiator, a blinded lion at bay. 1

Leavis's reply helps to put things in a proper critical perspective and
reveals Santayana's defective sense of drama. Leavis says:

'He don't, when we are responding properly, say that
Shakespeare gives us Macbeth's speech; it comes to
us, not from the author, but from the play, emerging
dramatically from a dramatic context. It offers no
parallels to Seneca's 'high maxims', and the 'philosophy,
moral significance, or total upshot of the play isn't
stated, but engendered. But for Mr Santayana significance
is a matter of ideas, and ideas have to be stated, and so,
looking for an epitomizing statement, he excises that

speech from the organism to which it belongs, fixes it directly on Shakespeare, and gives us his surprising commentary ... Mr. Santayana's inappreciation seems to me to go with a naivety about the nature of conceptual thought that is common among philosophers, to their disadvantage as such ... to demand that poetry should be a medium for previously definite ideas is arbitrary, and betrays a radical incomprehension. The control over Shakespeare's words in Macbeth (for what Harding describes as the essentially poetic use of language, a use in which Shakespeare is pre-eminent) is a complex dramatic theme, vividly and profoundly realized, not thought of, but possessed imaginatively in its concreteness, so that as it grows in specificity, it in turn possesses the poet's mind and commands expression. 1

To this commentary I would add that Shakespeare does not, except in some exceptional cases necessitated by dramatic exigencies, put anything into the mouths of his characters in the sense that they are not reduced to mere puppets or mouthpieces, but they are in most cases, recognizable and living characters, with all the claims and attributes that natural characters have (Leavis's view of Iago as a tool used to bring forth the tragedy of Othello; that is to dramatize a play in which Othello should be viewed as the hero, is intended not to divest Iago of life, but to subordinate him to his natural status - a status in which he is subsidiary to Othello the hero, and in so doing he counteracts misconceptions that portray Iago as the leading character of the play). These characters do not at all boil down to mere types, because they are singularly and individually depicted absolutely in harmony with their natural springs and impulses.

On this division of form from content Santayana is most insistent. His repetition of the idea becomes so obvious that he seems to settle into a belief that ideas should be discussed apart

1. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol 12, no.4, Autumn, 1944, pp. 254-255.
from their form. Distinguishing between poetry and prose
Santayana maintains that the images or situations manifested
in a poem are false or at least fictional, but in prose they
are factual or real. Poetry is superior to prose in that its
fanciful images are clothed in a beautiful form. To combine
the merits of both a writer must have clear and truthful ideas
expressed in a beautiful style.

Why should not discourse then have nothing but truth
in its import, and nothing but beauty in its form?
With regard to euphony and grammatical structure
there is evidently nothing impossible in such an ideal,
for these radical beauties of language are independent
of the subject-matter. They form the body of poetry,
but the ideal or the emotional atmosphere which is its
soul depends on things external to language, which no
perfection in the medium could modify. 1

In forwarding this statement Santayana is making a plea for the creation
of what he calls 'rational poetry', a poetry which is predominantly
ideational and consequently corresponds to his rational philosophy.
Like Wordsworth in his Preface, Santayana believes that rhyme, metre,
euphony are external elements of beauty that are superimposed on the
poem instead of forming part and parcel of it. This outlook upon
language and poetic devices as a kind of 'ornament', 2 reminds us
that, in his early years, Santayana was brought up in the traditions
of Romanticism.

Santayana believes, in his own way, that the conditions on
which these elements depend are physiological in origin, and when
they are transmitted to poetry they lend it a new element of beauty.

   Ltd., 1905, p. 107

2. Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry And The Tradition, The University
In poetry ... euphony, metres and rhyme colour the images they transmit and add a charm wholly extrinsic and imputed. 1

Coupled with this dichotomy between form and content there is a restrictive tendency on the part of Santayana to determine the kind of vision that will be worked out by the dramatist, so as to elicit the desired response from his audience and afford it a sense of psychological relief. This prompts Leavis in the essay under discussion to associate Santayana with Johnson and the Augustan tradition on the ground that Johnson conceived of tragedy as a kind of formal construction with a direct moral purpose in view. Leavis accuses Johnson of failure to understand that works of art enact their moral valuation, and it is, I need hardly say, the same charge he imputes to Santayana. Leavis's argument in the whole essay on Santayana can be summed up as to the effect that the tragic experience is neither personal (because it does not necessarily reflect the personal life of the dramatist, whose identification with the different dramatis personae implies impersonality) nor utilitarian recomposing our nerves and mitigating our tension as Richards would have it. It is an elevation or sublimation of personal claims in favour of something more urgent and important; the tragic experience itself that captures our interest for the time being. Leavis's formulation of this notion suggests the sense of impersonality which I have already identified with morality. It is, I think, worth quoting:

1. George Santayana, op.cit, p.77
Actually the experience is constructive or creative, and involves a recognizing positive value as in some way defined and vindicated by death. It is as if we were challenged at the profoundest level with the question 'in what does the significance of life reside?' and found ourselves contemplating, for answer, a view of life and of the things giving it value, that makes the valued appear unquestionably more important than the valuer, so that significance lies clearly and inescapably in the willing adhesion of the individual self to something other than itself. 1

If I have, in my concluding statement on Santayana, referred to his imperfect understanding of the nature of dramatic art, and to his abstract way of thinking, this does not mean that I want to minimize Leavis's indebtedness to him because Leavis has really benefited from Santayana's mature critical writings. My object is to define the extent to which he has conformed to Santayana's critical principles, when they have served Leavis's purpose, and the measure in which he has deviated from them when they become philosophical or abstract, to focus on literary criticism proper. Only through this definition, I think, can Santayana's influence upon Leavis and Leavis's indebtedness to Santayana, be discerned.

1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit., p. 258
CHAPTER 2

ELIOT and LEAVIS

In the critical writings of Leavis Eliot's influence looms large. This chapter proposes to trace this influence, and to suggest reasons for Leavis's later disenchantment with Eliot. This latter point is bound up with a consideration of Eliot in relation to Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. Leavis's repudiation of some of Eliot's critical ideas will be seen to be in harmony with the views of these philosophers. Whitehead's philosophy of organism and the emphasis which both Collingwood and Polanyi place on 'personal knowledge' do not easily combine with the critical views of Eliot.

Eliot, for example, consistently denies the potency of the self in the act of cognition, saying in his early doctoral thesis:

... Theoretically that which we know is merely spread out before us for pure contemplation and the subject... the I or the self is no more consciously present than is the inter-cellular action. 1

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" he reduces the artist to a mere catalyst, a medium, and a shred of platinum, and in another context he likens the creativity of the artist to a carpenter's making of a table. In "The Pensees of Pascal" he draws a distinction between inspiration and craft sanctioning the latter:

I have no good word to say for the cultivation of automatic writing as the model of literary composition. I doubt whether these moments can be cultivated by the writer, but he to whom this happens assuredly has the sensation of being a vehicle rather than a maker. No masterpiece can be produced whole by such means. 1

This approach is incompatible with the basic position of Whitehead in which individual creativity is essential to the understanding of objective phenomena, and "the process of creation is the form of unity of the universe". 2

Eliot's bias for form - his affiliations with The Bloomsbury Group with their interest in 'pure art' and their slighting of Lawrence are further aided reasons for Leavis's dissociation from Eliot. Lawrence's critical ideas and philosophy of vitalism, on the other hand, consort well with Whitehead's philosophy of organism and the integrative ideas of Collingwood and Polanyi.

Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi with their insistence on the genuineness, creativity and spontaneity of human experience offset - in Leavis's view - the deficiency of Eliot's notion of tradition depending as it does on dry intellectuality and bookish pursuits, and identified as it is with a restrictive Christian dogma. In other words they provide the necessary counterpart which makes Leavis's approach to literature viable and humane.

But to leave the matter of Leavis's relation to Eliot at this point is to oversimplify the whole issue because it entails a narrowing down of the conception of influence. Influence can

2. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, Cambridge University Press, 1933, p. 231
assume a positive as well as a negative form, and in both forms it is effective and potent. Both Eliot and Leavis believe that the idea of 'influence' is not simply a matter of quiescent and placid assent, but rather provides a strong urge for dissent. They are of the opinion that if an author inertly subordinates himself to the spell of a predominant influence without affording his faculties the chance to scrutinize the essence of that influence, he is bound to debase his intellectual energy, to reduce himself to a mere imitator, and ultimately to deprive himself of original thinking and the right to be himself. On this point Eliot and Leavis are in manifest accord. Nominating Irving Babbitt for the professorship of poetry at Oxford Eliot says:

For a professor of poetry, I believe that I should choose an American, Professor Irving Babbitt. Not that I agree with all Mr Babbitt's opinions; but partly that there are few writers so well worth disagreeing with. 1

Adopting the same tone in his preface to The Common Pursuit (a title that Leavis derives from Eliot's essay on "The Function of Criticism") Leavis develops the same notion:

Collaboration may take the form of disagreement and one is grateful to the critic whom one has found worth disagreeing with. 2

And when he reverts to the same theme some years later he expresses the same opinion:

One's very indebtedness to the authors to whom one is most indebted is commonly in some measure a matter of their compelling one to a convinced 'but'. 3

1. T.S. Eliot, 'Letter to The Dial' The Dial, vol.73, July and Dec. 1922, p.94
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 14
3. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Lectures in America, p. 49
Leavis's interest in Eliot dates back to the early twenties when his attention was drawn to Eliot's *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *The Sacred Wood*.  

In 1929 Leavis published an article in *The Cambridge Review* called 'T.S. Eliot - A Reply to The Condescending' in which he tried to win recognition for Eliot's poetry. The article is a reply to what Leavis considers a censorious review in *The New Statesman*, reproaching Eliot for his dogmatism and dry intellectuality.  

The article expresses a number of valuable points. First it explicitly states Leavis's indebtedness to Eliot - "it offers Leavis to use his own words - "a fair opportunity to acknowledge the debt and to define its nature". Secondly it, in a sense, charts the course which Leavis is going to take in his future critical career. When Leavis indicates that, in his search for adequate critical canons, he finds an almost unanimous agreement on the pre-eminence of Eliot's *Homage to John Dryden*, he is in other words reflecting the impressive appeal he felt as teacher and critic of Literature in Eliot's critical writing. Thirdly in countering the charge that Eliot is a writer of 'fashions' Leavis invokes the unanswerable idea of tradition - a notion that exercises the strongest hold on Leavis as a critic. 

Expressing this admiration Leavis says:

1. 'In a letter dated April 2, 1974, Leavis tells me that he has lectured on Eliot's poetry from the middle twenties onwards.' 

2. cf, infra, my qualification of this reply'.

Mr Eliot's acquaintance with the past, then, has impressed us so much, because it has illuminated for us both the past and the present. His acquaintance with the past is profound enough to have reshaped the current effective idea of the English Tradition. 1

The change of sensibility and the re-orientation of the course of English poetry are two major merits, among others, that Leavis imputes to Eliot. When Leavis says

if no serious critic or poet now supposes that English poetry, in the future, must or can develop along the lines running from the Romantics through Tennyson, this is mainly due to Mr Eliot, 2

he is, in effect, anticipating the central argument of _New Bearings in English Poetry_. But _New Bearings_ too, as Leavis admits in his prefatory note, is "an acknowledgment, vicarious as well as personal, of indebtedness to a certain critic and poet. 3 the critic and poet is unquestionably Eliot and the chapter on Eliot is by far the most prominent in the book. This prominence can be accounted for by the leading role which Eliot played in rejecting the late Romantic pre-suppositions of his time and affording poetry a new start. In its tone and wording the article is a tribute - an unqualified eulogy vehemently hailing a long-awaited patron of art and criticism. It may sound strange that Leavis who is noted for the scant nature of his praise, in this article lavishes upon Eliot almost indiscriminately, but this may be because he was then a newly initiated critic feeling his way in an atmosphere of lurking romantic haze and suddenly coming across what seemed to him a 'halo' of enlightenment.

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1. ibid, p. 254
2. ibid,
3. F.R. Leavis, _New Bearings in English Poetry_, p. 11
The indiscriminate endorsement of Eliot's approach is demonstrable in Leavis's unqualified acceptance of Eliot's ideas. For instance he takes over Eliot's rigorous interest in literature, and his approach 'by way of technique'. It is in terms of technique that Richard Church characterizes Leavis's approach in New Bearings, and Leavis approves of this characterization saying:

By critical approach which (to my gratification) leads Mr Church to note that I am pre-occupied with technique, I have always imagined myself (as I hint in my prefatory note) to derive from Mr Eliot as much as from anyone.

It is this technical approach which Leavis has learnt in the course of his development not only to avoid, but to assail - an endeavour entailing a gradual disengagement from Eliot. This point will be taken up in due course.

In The Cambridge Review article Leavis underscores two key-concepts: impersonality and order. Impersonality is the clue to a proper comprehension of the creative activity, an impartial tone deducible from the artist's handling of his material, and order makes for the idea of tradition, the reorganization of a previously established pattern of works of art in the light of the newly created ones to form an integral whole. These two notions loom large in Leavis's critical writings. In the same article Leavis says:

... we are much impressed by his way of stating the problem of preserving civilization. At any rate, we feel that we must consider very seriously his view of civilization as depending upon a strenuously achieved and traditional normality, a trained and arduous commonsense, a kind of athletic poise that cannot be maintained without a laborious and critical docility to traditional wisdom.

2. ibid, p. 511
3. ibid, p. 256
Thematically this idea anticipates what Leavis and Thompson were to discuss in *Culture and Environment*. The lack of a strong link binding the past to the present is what is profoundly lamented in that work. The quotation also contains two critical terms that were to figure prominently in Leavis’s critical vocabulary: ‘normality’ and ‘health’; and it may be relevant to note that it is in connection with Eliot that they are first used.

In the same article we also find a discussion of the function of the critic. The sense of fact with which the critic must be endowed is a prerequisite for sensible critical appreciation. The critic can attain this sense of fact by keeping himself apart from the work he is criticizing and by the exercise of self-discipline. This will help create a climate of opinion wherein critics will collaborate to reach a true judgment. On the opening page of the anthology *Determinations*, Leavis quotes (and not for the last time) these words from Eliot’s “The Function of Criticism”,

> Here, one would suppose, was a place for quiet co-operative labour. The critic, one would suppose, if he is to justify his existence, should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks, tares to which we are all subject, and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible in the common pursuit of true judgment.

But this sense of fact is partial as there is no conclusive judgment in literature. Eliot himself is unduly sceptical about the soundness of human judgment. He says: ‘In practice our literary judgment is always fallible’. And in ‘Experiment in Criticism’ he expresses a similar view:

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We have to see literature through our own temperament in order to see it at all, though our vision is always partial, and our judgment always prejudiced; no generation and no individual can appreciate every dead author and every past period, universal good taste is never realized. 1

Eliot's insistence on the use of the word 'always' in both quotations shows his distrust of human abilities - a distrust that falls in line with his central view of Original Sin.

Leavis's belief in the relativity of human judgment, on the other hand, makes him less pessimistic:

Actually, of course, there is no one demonstrably right judgment. But a critic is a critic only in so far as he is controlled by these ideals, and their inaccessibility leads not to arbitrariness, but to askeison, not to assertiveness but to docility. 2

In his "Restatements For Critics" Leavis draws on Eliot's critical dicta.

It is part of our debt to Mr Eliot that he has made it so plain that there can be no easy way or simple solution. Of tradition he wrote "It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour." 3

In "What is wrong with criticism" (an article originally written - as Leavis tells me in a letter dated April 2, 1974 - for The Criterion Miscellany on a suggestion from Eliot, and returned to Leavis, on his request, because of Eliot's unjustifiable procrastination, to be published in Scrutiny) Leavis says:

1. ibid, p.12
2. F.R. Leavis, The Cambridge Review, February 8, 1929, p.255
3. F.R. Leavis, For Continuity, Cambridge, Gordon Fraser, The Minority Press, 1933, p. 178
One may start, paradoxically, by asserting that this age will be remarkable in literary history for its achievement in criticism. The histories of literary criticism contain a great many names, but how many critics are there who have made any difference to one—improved one's apparatus, one's equipment, one's efficiency as a reader. At least two of them are of our time: Mr Eliot and Mr Richards. Mr Richards has immensely improved the instruments of analysis and has consolidated and made generally accessible the contribution of Coleridge. Mr Eliot has not only refined the conception and the methods of criticism; he has put into currency decisive reorganizing and re-orientating ideas and valuations.

Leavis's admiration for Eliot springs largely from a cherished belief that Eliot's criticism provides ample scope for the free play of the critical mind on a wide range of subjects, and his poetry impersonates a refined modern sensibility.

In 1934 Eliot published *After Strange Gods* (The book was originally The Page-Barbour Lectures delivered at the University of Virginia in 1933). It is made up of three lectures dealing with the nature of tradition and literary taste. In this book Eliot identifies tradition with the teachings of the Christian church in the belief that they provide the right safeguard against 'personal heresy' and the 'inner voice'. He sums up the argument of the whole book saying:

> what I have been leading up to is the following assertion: that when morals cease to be a matter of tradition and orthodoxy; that is, of the habits of the community formulated, corrected and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the church, and when each man is to elaborate his own, then personality becomes a thing of alarming importance.

In his review of this book Leavis does not fail to spot the relevant merit of tradition, and he approvingly endorses Eliot's apopthegm 'Tradition is the vitality of the past that enriches

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1. F.R. Leavis "What is wrong with Criticism", *Scrutiny*, vol.1, no.2 September 1932, pp. 132-133.

the life of the present as a critical maxim. But with the publication of that work it became increasingly obvious to Leavis that Eliot's criticism was more and more restricting itself to a specific theological doctrine, that is Christian orthodoxy, thereby exhibiting a parochial and reductive approach to literature. In his review Leavis regretfully exposes the shortcomings of Eliot's obsessive Christian criticism saying:

... since the religious preoccupation has become insistent in them, Mr Eliot's critical writings have become notable for showing less discipline of thought and emotion, less purity of interest, less power of sustained devotion, and less courage than before. 2

In his review of Eliot's Essays Ancient and Modern Leavis's strictures on Eliot become much more articulate. He begins the essay by hazarding that most of those who are indebted to Eliot are justified in fearing any new book he publishes since it will oblige them to condemn him by the very criteria they have learnt from him. Leavis is particularly stringent on Eliot's criticism of Tennyson, and is obviously censorious of Eliot's cynical tone regarding the teaching of English literature to the neglect of Greek and Latin. Leavis harks back to the question of religion as, in a large measure, accounting for Eliot's lack of precision and particularity of thought:

There is, in fact, something very depressing about the way in which nowadays, he brings out these orthodox generalities weightily, as substitutes for particularity of statement, rigour of thought, and various other virtues we have a right to expect of him. We no longer expect them unfortunately. 3

1. ibid, p.30


3. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.V, June 1935, p.68
This Christian discrimination is bound "to absolve Eliot from the literary critic's kind of discrimination,"¹ to adopt a judgment which Leavis passes on George Every.

Leavis's continued championing of Eliot's cause (and it is in connection with the poetry that it is consistently shown) can, however, be seen at its highest when he volunteers to take issue with an adverse anonymous reviewer of Eliot's East Coker. In his letter to The Times Literary Supplement, Leavis says:

> what is not permissible in a serious critical journal is to write in contemptuous condescension of the greatest living English poet (what other poets have we now Yeats is gone?) and exhibit a complacent ignorance of the nature of his genius and of the nature of the technique in which that genius is manifested. If East Coker were an experiment on unprecedented lines, your reviewer would have had some excuse, but the work of a decade and a half has led directly up to it. ²

Later on Leavis published an article in The Cambridge Review titled 'East Coker' in which he came again to Eliot's defence. The article seeks to resolve a crucial issue related to the doctrine of impersonality. East Coker, as Leavis intimates is definitely personal and even autobiographical, but the rendering, the technique "is an evidence of a profound impersonality - an impersonality rare and difficult of attainment, sought as it is and sustained in the realm of the most immediately personal."³

A year later Leavis published an essay in Scrutiny called "T.S. Eliot's later Poetry". In this essay Leavis deals with Eliot's The Dry Salvages, Burnt Norton and East Coker and forecasts a fourth poem that will complete what later came to be Four Quartets.

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¹ F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 249
² F.R. Leavis, Letter to T.L.S. September 21, 1940, p. 483
³ F.R. Leavis, The Cambridge Review, February 21, 1941, p. 268
In this critique Leavis underlines a fundamental idea pertaining to the appreciation of *Four Quartets*, namely that these poems can be enjoyed without reference to their specifically Christian content:

Eliot is known as professing Anglo-Catholicism and classicism, but his poetry is remarkable for the extraordinary resource, penetration and stamina with which it makes its explorations into the concrete actualities of experience below the conceptual currency; into the life that must be the raison d'être of any frame — while there is life at all. In any case to feel an immense indebtedness to Eliot and recognize the immense indebtedness of the age one doesn't need to share his intellectually formulated conclusions, his doctrinal views, or even to be uncritical of his poetry. 1

In *Scrutiny* for December 1947 Leavis reviewed Rajan's 'Approaches to T.S. Eliot'. Leavis recalls the daring and leading role he played in establishing Eliot's reputation as an accomplished artist against a background of what he designates as fanatical and conventional thinking. In this review Leavis clarifies the nature of Eliot's influence saying:

True respect is inseparable from the concern to see the object as in itself it really is, to insist on the necessary discrimination and so to make the essential achievement with the special life and virtue it embodies effective as an influence. 2

Speaking in personal terms Leavis recognizes this influence in the following words:

It is a debt that I recognize for myself as immense. By some accident (it must have been I had not come on Mr Eliot's name before) I bought *The Sacred Mood* just it came out in 1920. For the next few years I read it through several times a year, pencil in hand. I got from it, of course, orientations, particular illuminations and ideas of general instrumental value. But if I had to characterize the nature of the debt briefly I shouid say that it was a matter of having had incisively demonstrated for pattern and incitement, what the disinterested and effective application of

2. F.R. Leavis "Approaches to T.S. Eliot", *Scrutiny*, December 1947
intelligence to literature looks like, what is the
nature of purity of interest, and what is meant by
the principle (as Mr Eliot himself states it) that
when we are considering poetry we must consider it
primarily as poetry and not as another thing. 1

In The Great Tradition Eliot's critical formulae such as
'impersonality' and 'objective correlative' are adopted by
Leavis as distinctive measures of judgment. 2

In his British Academy Lecture on Milton, Eliot attempted
to create an ambiguous situation in which Milton's defects can
be taken together with his merits, thereby blurring the earlier
strictures expressed in his first lecture. In an essay titled
'Mr Eliot and Milton' Leavis takes Eliot to task considering his
attitude as amounting to "a surrender of the function of criticism". 3
Leavis uses the word 'insidious' to describe this ambiguous
attitude, and it is the same word which Leavis later employs to
categorize Eliot's ambiguous approach to Lawrence, 4 though he
does not fail to indicate that "our time in literature may fairly
be called the age of D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot". 5

In 1958 Leavis published another article in Commentary on
"T.S. Eliot as Critic". 6 In this article he repeats that he had
purchased The Sacred Wood immediately after its publication;

How I came to buy it so soon after the publication
I can't now say. I had never heard of Eliot, and
I had no more literary sophistication than I had
acquired at school before the war. And though I

1. Ibid, pp. 58-59
2. This point is elaborated in the chapter on Santayana.
3. F.R. Leavis "Mr Eliot and Milton" Sewanee Review, no. 57
   1949, p.c.
   1955, p.304
5. Ibid, p. 303
6. The article is now reprinted in Anna Karenina and Other Essays
   from which future quotations will be taken.
turned the book over a good deal and no doubt profited, I won't pretend that I absorbed rapidly what it had to give, or that it became for me, after a short acquaintance, decisively formative, or anything but a vague and minor stimulus.

That these words suggest some kind of indebtedness is certain, but that they also reveal a growing sense of disenchantment is much more obvious. Does Leavis here withhold the praise he has already accorded Eliot? Is this a sign of sobriety, or has he become satiated with Eliot's writings now that he has achieved individual distinction and maturity as a critic. Can these words be taken as conclusive or does he still draw on Eliot's directions as his subsequent critical writings attest?

The article marks an obvious change of tone. It may tentatively be argued that Leavis condemns Eliot on account of his betrayal of the same principles he taught his readers to uphold in the early twenties. He also condemns him for some of the very principles which he found worthy of praise in the twenties, and which he no longer thinks are valid.

Is the change of emphasis due to Leavis's reinstatement of Lawrence and his growing interest in the ideas of Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi? Does Leavis in his later critical writings discover in Lawrence some merits which he missed or neglected in his early career - merits which relate him to these humane philosophers? The next chapter will seek to answer this question.

Leavis advocated the early Eliot because he found that his critical practice and poetic output were then most needed for a revival of both poetry and criticism. Eliot's reputation once established, however, Leavis becomes conscious of an element

1. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and Other Essays, London, Chatto and Windus, 1967, p. 177
missing from his works, namely human spontaneity and individual 
creativity. In *English Literature in our Time* and *The University*
he opposes Lawrence to Eliot, to opt eventually for the former.
In his 'Introductory Note' to *Nor Shall My Sword*, Leavis points to
the antithetical relation between Eliot and Blake to underscore
his interest in Blake's creativity. In *Dickens The Novelist*
Leavis associates Blake with Dickens and Lawrence on the score
of their creative and vital interest in life:

> The kind of vital strength that makes Dickens a
> 'romantic novelist', and relates him to Blake is
> what Eliot rules out from the creative process,
> and the mind of the artist in his account of
> impersonality, which has for essential purpose
> to deny that art expresses or in any way involves
> a responsibility towards life. 1

Leavis had already expressed this view in the same words in
his introduction to Peter Coveney's *The Image of Childhood*, 2 where
Blake is related to both Dickens and Lawrence.

Nevertheless it does not seem to be an unwarranted generalization
to say that Leavis takes Eliot, whose ideas and poetry are usually
somewhere at the back of his mind, as a point of departure either
for agreement or disagreement, and in both cases Eliot is
undeniably influential.

### Eliot and Leavis's New Bearings

Reference has already been made to Leavis's dedication of
*New Bearings* to Eliot - a dedication that becomes self-explanatory
in the light of the telling adjective 'new' which qualifies both

1. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, *Dickens The Novelist*, London, Chatto and Windus,
   1970, p. 276

   p. 12
Leavis's 'bearings' and his view of Eliot's poetic and critical assumptions, and the question that logically proposes itself is: What is there in New Bearings that is owed to Eliot?

Most evidently New Bearings looks at the present moment in English poetry in terms which are largely derived from Eliot's criticism. Leavis's historical perspective is identical with Eliot's in outline, although a number of small adjustments are made in the course of the book.

The central idea of the historical view shared by Eliot and Leavis is that of the 'dissociation of sensibility' - an idea which has been the subject of much controversy and to which Leavis has clung insistently throughout his critical career. It is given its classical statement in Eliot's essay on 'The Metaphysical Poets'.

The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered.

This idea figures prominently in Leavis's writings. It is a key stone in Revaluation, is drawn upon in his Lectures in America, is referred to in The Cheltenham lecture, and is made the centre of interest in the four essays on Eliot in English Literature in our Time and The University.

Eliot is a central figure in New Bearings because Leavis sees him as representative of the unified sensibility of which the age stands in need. Taking over Eliot's criteria Leavis extracts the following from Eliot's essay on Massinger:

1. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, pp. 287-288
With the end of Chapman, Middleton, Webster, Tourneur, Donne, we end a period when the intellect was immediately at the tips of the senses; sensation became word and word sensation.

And then comments:

'Germonton! answers to this description as well as anything by any of the authors enumerated. It expresses psychological subtleties and complexities in imagery of varied richness and marvellously sure realization. The whole body of the words seems to be used. Qualities that (if we ignore Hopkins as he was ignored) have been absent from English poetry since the period (the Elizabethan) that Mr Eliot describes (his re-occupation with it is significant) reappear with him.

Thus Leavis attributes to Eliot a reintegration of thought and feeling that was in abeyance for the last two hundred years. This reintegration logically associates Eliot with his favourite Metaphysical poets. Eliot in this capacity contributes positively both in his criticism and poetry to the idea of a unified sensibility held dear by Leavis.

It is with the antithesis, the dissociated sensibility, that Leavis was pre-occupied in the first two chapters of his book. They are, in effect, a summary view of Eliot's notion of dissociation. It has been stated that this idea plays a leading role not just in New Bearings, but also in most of Leavis's later account of Eliot. It must be added that throughout all his essays on Eliot, the idea is always referred to in laudatory terms so that even after his later disillusionment with Eliot, and his deprecation of some of his remarks and suggestions, the idea always enjoys Leavis's favour.

Harold Wendell Smith questions the basis on which Eliot discriminates between a unified and a dissociated sensibility:

1. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 70
"Eliot’s view", he says, "is too much regarded as a self-evident truth and too little investigated". 1

He carries on what seems to him to be the right investigation of Donne’s poetry, and concludes that Donne’s sensibility is a dissociated and not a unified one as Eliot claims. He suggests that Donne’s apprehension of thought was not sensuous but rather abstract - and the whole gist of Metaphysical poetry is to create unity out of diversity in abstract statements. He also draws an analogy between Coleridge and Eliot indicating that both are engaged in a life-long struggle to create unity out of ‘multeity’ to make up for a psychological feeling of disintegration and a mental sense of fragmentariness.

Pursuing a similar line of thought Marius Bewley analyses Donne’s ‘Songs and Sonnets’ and disclaims Eliot’s statement that Donne exhibits a unified sensibility. He cites Donne’s manipulation of the theme of love in terms of a polar conflict between the body and the soul as illustrative of a dissociated sensibility:

These two opposite attitudes in Donne’s poetry sever the normal functional co-operation between the body and the soul which had been persistent throughout the precedent age. Each slightly lame in itself, goes limping off in its private direction to find its pleasure and peace, not in a unified but fragmentary universe. 2

It may safely be indicated that Harold Wendell Smith and Marius Bewley represent a viewpoint which Leavis in the early fifties would be prepared to discuss (especially if we consider that Smith is a contributor to Scrutiny, and Bewley is one of Leavis’s proteges), but he would straightaway reject a different


viewpoint advanced by both Frank Kermode and C.S. Lewis. Kermode contends that the dissociation of sensibility is "a false theory." He points out that it is more of a European than an English phenomenon, and goes as far back in history as Greek thought itself, so "that there is little historical propriety in treating it as a seventeenth century event."²

Ruling out any line of demarcation made in temporal terms as inaccurate, C.S. Lewis similarly dissolves the sharp distinction traditionally drawn between The Middle Ages and The Renaissance:

If we do not put the Great Divide between the Middle Ages and The Renaissance, where should we put it? I ask this question with the full consciousness that in the reality studied, there is no Great Divide. There is nothing in history that corresponds to a coastline or watershed in geography.³

Leavis, on the other hand, considers that the phrase is one of Eliot's felicitous formulae and that "it serves its purpose quite well in the context Eliot gives it."⁴ He also indicates that the notion of dissociation is also valid as a general point of critical reference. The Victorian and Georgian poets with whom he was concerned in the first two chapters of New Bearings attest to the existence of an opposition between actual living and the idealized non-existent world into which they escape. It may also be suggested that Leavis's handling of the Metaphysicals establishes a coherent line of wit running from Ben Jonson to Donne. It is in relation to this coherence that Leavis enunciates his principle that there is a reciprocal interaction between the

2. Ibid, p. 156
3. C.S. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum", An inaugural lecture, M. D. Cambridge University Press, p.4
4. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Lectures in America, p.38
The subject crops up again with persistent urgency when Leavis deals with Milton. Grouping Milton into the class of poets noted for their 'dissociated sensibility' Leavis says:

I have in mind Milton's habit of exploiting language as a kind of musical medium outside himself, as it were. There is no pressure in his verse of any complex and varying current of feeling and sensation; the words have little substance or muscular quality. (Pressure and muscular quality are well-known Eliotic terms.) Milton is using only a small part of the resources of the English language. 2

The theme again recurs in the affinity which Leavis discerns between Milton and Dryden. Their poetry marks the beginning of the Restoration with its polished style, but degenerate and crude sensibility. On this point, both Eliot and Leavis are in obvious agreement:

... this dissociation as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century; Milton and Dryden. The language went on and in some respects improved. But while the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude. 3

Drawing on Eliot's assumptions Leavis says:

Mr Eliot, who put the phrase into currency, ascribed the dissociation very largely to the influence of Dryden and Milton. Dryden is the voice of his age, and may be said to have in that sense responsibility. And even without reference forward to the eighteenth century the coupling of his name with Milton's can be readily justified. 4

In his account of the dissociation of sensibility Leavis reckons not just with the predominating climate of rationalism, but also with the emergence of a new mode of social life associated with the coffee-

2. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 71
3. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 288
4. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 38
house life, the tendency towards sociability, the emergence of wit and satire, and the consequent preponderance of prose. The Restoration of monarchy at the hands of Charles II did not restore the court culture and the sense of fineness characteristic of earlier times. Leavis shows this point in practice in his exegesis of Rochester's status as a poet:

Rochester is not a great poet of any kind; yet he certainly had uncommon natural endowments which, it is reasonable to suggest, he might have done much more with had he been born thirty years earlier. As it is his few best lyrics are peculiarly individual utterances with no such relation to convention or tradition as is represented by Carew or Marvell. 1

Holding a comparison between Marvell and Prior, Leavis states that in Prior's verse

the tradition died - died so completely into the modes, into the conventions of sentiment and expression of a new age (and postulates that) 'The Restoration had resulted in a hiatus, a discontinuity, one too anomalous to persist. 2

When Leavis takes up the same topic later he refers to Sprat's History of The Royal Society where the members are called upon to "bring all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can," 3 and in the same context he comments that it is this process of regularization that inaugurated the technologico-Berthamite age in which we are now living.

In an essay entitled "Bacon and The Dissociation of Sensibility" L.C. Knights approves of the historicity of the idea. He relates Bacon's intellectualism to the typical seventeenth century over-

1. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 35
2. ibid, p. 113
3. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p. 94
estimation of the mind and reason at the expense of sensibility and emotion. He links this over-emphasis on reason with the Restoration spirit and the rise of English prose. "This development", he maintains, "is largely responsible for the divorce between reason on the one hand and the creative perception and the feelings generally on the other - reason, of course, having the pre-eminence." ¹

In the same essay Knights emphasizes that this dissociation has wider implications and tends to permeate life as a whole, and extends beyond the Augustan period to comprehend the Romantic one as well with the result that there is a persistent schism between life and poetry. He ends the essay by remarking that:

reason has dominated life for a long time within an area of experience which is defective because it takes the part for the whole. There are still gains to be won by reason, but by a reason or intelligence that recognizes the claims of the sensibility. ²

Basil Willey confirms the previous assumptions of Leavis and Knights and argues that the Cartesian spirit helped to create a separation between prose and poetry. Prose became a vehicle for conveying factual statements and was addressed to the mind, whereas poetry was for expressing delight and addressed to the fancy. He concludes that the outcome of this separation is the preponderance of reason or rationalism over feeling, hence, the branding of the age as the Age of Reason. ³

Summing up Eliot's achievement Leavis says "He has made a

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2. ibid, p. 269
new start and established new bearings.\(^1\) To justify this verdict Leavis reviews the body of verse produced before Eliot began to exert his influence. This review covers two phases: The Victorian age and the Georgian Period till the end of The First World War. This review is made in terms of "the poetical" and "the poetry of withdrawal" - qualities that characterize the poetry of these two phases. The Poetical Leavis associates with the pre-conceptions of the age regarding poetry namely that it should be in the Miltonic phrase, 'simple', 'sensuous' and 'passionate'. The rejection of the poetical is associated by Eliot with a revival of interest in Dryden and the Metaphysicals (but it should be noted that Leavis replaces Dryden by Pope). In his essay on 'John Dryden' Eliot traces these pre-conceptions back to the notion of sublimity:

With regard to Dryden, therefore, we can say this much. Our taste in English poetry has been largely founded upon a partial perception of the value of Shakespeare and Milton, a perception which dwells upon sublimity of theme and action. \(^2\)

In a similar way Leavis says:

Poetry, it was assumed, must be the direct expression of simple emotion and these of a limited class: the tender, the exalted, the poignant, and in general, the sympathetic. \(^3\)

In their reappraisal of English poetry both Eliot and Leavis go back in history - the first to Hazlitt, the second further back to Warton. Eliot quotes these words from Hazlitt:

Dryden and Pope are the two great masters of the artificial style of poetry in our language as the poets of whom I have already treated - Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton were of the natural. \(^4\)

\(^1\) T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 309
\(^2\) F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p.16
\(^3\) T.S. Eliot, op. cit, p. 309
Quoting from Warton Leavis gives the following:

The sublime and the pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy. What is there transcendentally sublime or pathetic in Pope? (Warton goes on to classify the English poets.) In the first class I would place our only three sublime and pathetic poets: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. 1

To understand the full import of New Bearings, it is useful to recall Eliot’s late statement:

I was in reaction not only against Georgian poetry, but against Georgian criticism. 2

and his complementary confession:

the emphasis on tradition, came about, I believe, as a result of my reaction against the poetry in the English language of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and my passion for the poetry both dramatic and lyric of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. 3

It is in terms of ‘the dream world’ — a phrase that Leavis borrows from Eliot, 4 that Leavis epitomizes the predominant Romantic background against which Eliot writes his poetry and

1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 15
2. T.S. Eliot, To Criticize the Critic, London, Faber and Faber 1965, p.16
3. ibid, p. 19
4. In a footnote in New Bearings, p. 17 Leavis tells us that ‘Eliot has pointed this out in Homage to John Dryden’. But a reading of Eliot’s ‘Homage to John Dryden’ will not bear this out. The phrase first occurs in Eliot’s essay on ‘Andrew Marvell’ where Eliot says: ‘The effort to construct a dream-world which alters English poetry in the nineteenth century, a dream world utterly different from the visionary realities of the Vita Nuova or the poetry of Dante’s contemporaries is a problem of which various explanations may no doubt be found’, Selected Essays, p.301. And in his Introductory essay to Johnson’s Vanity of Human Wishes, Eliot comes nearest to the phrase when he says: ‘Those who demand of poetry a day-dream or a metamorphosis of their own feeble desires and lusts or what they believe to be intensity of passion will not find much in Johnson. He is like Pope and Dryden, Crabbe and Landor, a poet for those who want poetry and not something else, some stay for their own vanity’ (Samuel Johnson: London and The Vanity of Human Wishes, with an introductory essay by T.S. Eliot, London, Frederick Etchells and Hugh Macdonald, p. 17)
Leavis's reliance on Eliot's critical practice is also seen in his reliance on Eliot's notion of "dissociation of sensibility" which becomes a dominant theme in New Bearings, and most of Leavis's subsequent critical writings. Leavis argues that 'rootedness', being an essential requirement of integrated poetic works, is lacking in Victorian poetry as a consequence of the dissociation of sensibility. In the course of his diagnosis of Victorian verse he says:

For the most part it is not so much bad as dead - it was never alive. The words that lie there arranged on the page have no root(s); the writer himself can never have been more than superficially interested in them. 1

He again says, more explicitly referring to Eliot's 'dissociation':

But if the poetry and intelligence of the age lose touch with each other, poetry will cease to matter much, and the age will be lacking in finer awareness. 2

And in a curt but revealing statement Leavis once more says:

Losing all touch with the finer consciousness of the age, it (poetry) would be, not only 'irresponsible, but anaemic, as indeed, Victorian poetry so commonly is. 3

Leavis attributes this dissociation partly to the terrifying advances of industrial civilization.

In considering our present plight we have also to take account of the incessant rapid change that characterizes the machine age. The result is breach of continuity and the uprooting of life. 4

This alienation from 'traditional wisdom' 5 to borrow a phrase from Eliot that Leavis capitalizes upon in his later writings is, in Leavis's view, the raison d'etre of the degeneration of poetry.

1. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 14
2. ibid, p. 20
3. ibid, p. 46
4. ibid, p. 78
Leavis starts off with the assumption that proper literary values and genuine artistic taste were in abeyance before Eliot began to make himself felt as a directing influence. Harold Monro had argued that there were, at that time, many minor poets in English each producing a few good poems; if his age's claim to distinction rested on these few good poems it would be worth his while to edit such a collection.  

By way of commenting on these meagre aspirations Leavis says:

They could have been made only in an age in which there were no serious standards current; no live tradition of poetry, and no public capable of informed and serious interest.

With his eye on The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse Leavis discerns that for forty or fifty years poetry has been on the decline.

Enlarging on the Victorian phenomenon of poetastery Leavis singles out the works of minor versifiers: O'Shaughnessy's 'Ode' and Andrew Lang's 'The Odyssey', for particular reference to show that they are deficient by reason of their lack of informed personal experience. They are poetasters because they express their inert desire for a dream-world which they would yearn to inhabit, cutting them off from actual living. It is this insulation from the vital sources of experience that gives rise to the decadence of poetry. That is why Leavis's concern with an interfusion of thought and feeling making for the liveliness and integration of works of art is so emphatic.

Leavis's definition of 'the poetical' deserves closer scrutiny as it assumes a focal role in the course of his argument. To Leavis poetry is the product of the poet's complex relationship with his social and historical situation. In the absence of such relationship the poetic experience offered by the poet becomes unconvincing and shaky because it is not rooted in reality. This

2. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 14
point directs our attention to another complementary aspect, namely
the indivisibility of the poetic experience. If a poet is to
communicate an experience that is not genuinely felt, his
insincerity would be immediately exposed.

Indeed, (says Leavis) his capacity for experiencing and his
power of communicating are indistinguishable; not merely
because we should not know of the one without the other,
but because his power of making the words express what he
feels is indistinguishable from what he feels. 1

This indivisibility is worth dwelling upon because Richard Church in
his review of New Bearings (and in spite of Leavis's apparent
approval of it) misrepresents the nature of Leavis's critical
apparatus and defines it as exclusively concerned with technique:

It is to be noted throughout the whole of his study that
he is preoccupied with technique, and in this respect he
is a poet's critic. When he speaks of tradition he
means the tradition of form and expression. 2

It is clear that Leavis's discussion of form is inseparably bound
up with content. To illustrate this is not difficult. Consider
his discussion of Eliot's 'technical edifice'. Talking about
Ash-Wednesday he says:

The sequence is poetry and highly formal poetry. Yet
it is impossible not to see in it a process of self-
scrutiny, of self-exploration, or not to feel the
poetical problem at any point was a spiritual
problem, a problem in the attainment of a difficult
sincerity. 3

Again he says: "For the poet technique was the problem of sincerity". 4

Speaking about the Dantesque and ritualistic suggestions in
Ash-Wednesday he says:

1. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 19
2. Richard Church "The Labyrinthine Way" The Spectator, March 26,
   1932, p. 453
3. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 98
4. ibid, p. 99
They go with the formal quality of the verse, in which we have already noted a suggestion of ritual, and with the liturgical element, to define the plane at which poetry works. The spiritual discipline is one with the poetical.

In New Bearings also we find that the other crucial term that Leavis applies to Eliot - a term that gained currency at the hands of Eliot himself is impersonality: "Gerontion", says Leavis, "has the impersonality of great art". Again he says: "In The Waste Land the development of impersonality that Gerontion shows in comparison with Prufrock reaches an extreme limit". Here it should be observed that Leavis adopts the criterion of 'impersonality' to distinguish Gerontion and 'The Waste Land' from the earlier poems (Prufrock and Portrait of a Lady) that are concerned with the directly personal embarrassments, disillusionments, and distresses of a sophisticated young man. When we look closely at Leavis's qualification of impersonality in The Waste Land, we find him saying 'it would be difficult to imagine a completeness transcending of the individual self, a completeness projection of awareness'. The 'transcendence of the self' is a foresight of his view of impersonality expressed in 'Tragedy and The Medium'. The projection of awareness provides a favourable occasion for Leavis to voice his cherished view that the highest level of consciousness and sensibility is attained only by a small minority, and that good poets and men of letters are

1. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p.104
2. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p.72
3. ibid, p. 80
4. ibid, p. 72
5. ibid, p. 80
6. of the chapter on Santayana.
foremost amongst that minority. Leavis associates this consciousness in modern literature with a sense of futility largely arising from the role played by science and anthropology in reducing human moralities and religious beliefs to a matter of human habits. Leavis finds a confirmation of this view in the theme and the anthropological background of The Waste Land. 1 But the anthropological theme is an apt illustration of a notion favoured by Leavis: breach of continuity and alienation from organic life:

The remoteness of the civilization celebrated in The Waste Land from the natural rhythms is brought out, in ironical contrast, by the anthropological theme. Vegetation cults, fertility ritual, with their sympathetic magic, represent a harmony of human culture with the natural environment, and express an extreme sense of the unity of life. 2

In The Waste Land the elements of fertility, unity and harmony are replaced by sterility, disgust, and spiritual disintegration. The whole concept of New Bearings is inspired by Eliot in the sense that it is Eliot who constitutes the pivot around which both Pound and Hopkins revolve.

It is owing to Mr Eliot that Hopkins and Pound can be discussed as having the significance here attributed to them and can be associated with him in terms of a revised tradition, 3 and Leavis frequently repeats that in solving his own problems as a poet Eliot helped others to do the same. 4

1. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 80
2. ibid, p. 79
3. ibid, p. 157
4. ibid, pp. 28 - 58 - 95 - 158
In his essay on Eliot, Leavis establishes relations between his poetry and that of the Metaphysicals. He pursues this line of argument in his essay on Pound:

... throughout there is a subtlety of tone, a complexity of attitude such as we associate with seventeenth century wit. 1

And in the Epilogue he speaks of Empson's poetry in terms rendered through the influence of Eliot. 2

New Bearings also shows that Leavis is remarkably scrupulous about indicating the affinities between Dante and Pound, and Dante and Eliot, the first seen in the Cantos, the second in The Waste Land. But Eliot's affinities with Dante can be observed at a much more articulate level in Eliot's explicit invocation of 'reason' supervening upon emotion as constituting the potential urge behind his own writings. 3

Leavis's discussion of Pound's poetry in New Bearings, however, leads to criticism of Eliot and marks the beginning of a tone of dissent that will grow stronger as time goes on. In his Introduction to the Selected Poems of Ezra Pound, Eliot considers Mauberley a great poem and Pound's "finest before the Cantos", 4 but he also brands it as naive and rough, and asserts that it can hardly be understood without bearing Pound's earlier poems in mind.

Leavis on the other hand, finds Mauberley convincing and self-sufficient. 5 He justifies this verdict by indicating that though

1. ibid, p. 117
2. ibid, p. 161
5. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 112
Mauberley is the summing-up of an individual life and is in essence autobiographical, yet it achieves, through its technical perfection, "the impersonality of great poetry". Here we witness a view of impersonality that will be seen remarkably at work in Leavis's criticism of Eliot's later poetry, Wordsworth, Lawrence and Blake. It is this interest in the personal aspect of experience that will gradually dissociate Leavis from Eliot and draw him closer to Lawrence and the ideas of Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi.

To account for Eliot's insistence on relating Mauberley to Altaforte and the other earlier poems Leavis draws our attention to Eliot's interest in form, or more properly in the aesthetic aspects of Pound's earlier poems. Leavis refers in particular to Eliot's Introduction to Selected Poems of Ezra Pound, and the essay titled "Isolated Superiority".

In his Introduction to Selected Poems of Ezra Pound, Eliot hesitates between two poles of form and content, sometimes according approval to the one, sometimes to the other, and sometimes to both.

In "Isolated Superiority" Eliot argued that Pound had an influence, but was without disciples: "Influence can be exerted through form whereas one makes disciples only among those who sympathize with content", and he suggests that in form Pound far outgrew his age whereas in content he lagged behind and contented himself with the outmoded ideas of the preceding age.

In the same article Eliot confirms this division between form and content by saying "I confess that I am seldom interested in what
he is saying, but only in the way he says it.¹ This divisive
tendency provokes Leavis to disagree with Eliot and to argue that
the verse of Mauberley exhibits a coherence in which form consorts
with content.

The verse is extraordinarily subtle, and its subtlety
is the subtlety of the sensibility it expresses. No
one would think here of distinguishing the way of
saying from the thing said.²

Apart from Mauberley, which in Leavis's view, represents Pound at
his best, Leavis thinks that Pound is an aesthete: "his main
concern has been art; art as represented by Flaubert - saint and
martyr of the artistic conscience."³ It is against this
exclusive concern with an aesthetic life that Leavis launches his
later attacks, and it is mainly with Flaubert's aestheticism in
mind that he brings an equally compelling plea for social and moral
life into play.

Leavis, and Eliot's After Strange Gods

With Eliot's entry into the church of England a new
restrictive and incoherent tone emerged. In an essay entitled
"Experiment in criticism (1928) for example, he demonstrates a sense
of confusion and contradiction. In the first part of the essay he
is seen as an exponent of the doctrine of art for art's sake, a
champion of the aestheticism of Clive Bell, Leonard and Virginia
Woolf. He regards literature as "primarily literature, a means of

1. ibid, p. 6
2. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 115
3. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings, p. 118
refined and intellectual pleasure*. And towards the end of the essay he states:

... the possession of clear literary standards must imply the possession of clear moral standards. The various attempts to find the fundamental axioms behind both good literature and good life are among the most interesting experiments in criticism in our time. 2

By providing the missing and necessary counterpart Eliot unconsciously undermines the refined intellectual pleasure he establishes at the beginning of the essay. As he moves on he is lured again by the aesthetic doctrine, succumbs to its charm, severs the bond between morality and aesthetics and opts for a one-sided pleasure.

So long as poetry and fiction and such things are written its first purpose must always be what it always has been; to give a peculiar kind of pleasure which has something constant throughout the ages. 3

In "Catholicism and International order" which may be considered an essay on clear moral standards, Eliot's professed intentions of treating Catholicism as a universal order applicable to all communities betray a sense of inconsistency and contradiction, for in the early part of the essay he dismisses Fascism and heresy, in the middle he hurls his attacks on humanism, and at the close he draws a distinction between Catholic faith and protestant doctrine, thereby exposing what he takes to be the deficiencies of the latter and the advantages of the former.

2. ibid, p. 20
3. ibid, p. 24
At the beginning Eliot identifies Christianity with world order:

We are committed to what in the eyes of the world, must be a desperate belief, that a Christian world order is ultimately the only one, which from any point of view will work. 1

Similarly in his essay on Irving Babbitt he declares that

It is quite irrelevant to conjecture the possible development of European races without Christianity; to imagine, that is, a tradition of humanism equivalent to the actual tradition of Christianity. 2

To identify Christianity with world order means to conceive of Christianity as an over-all system comprehensive of, or capable of comprehending, other recognizable systems. This lofty conception is grotesquely anticlimaxed by Eliot's systematic assault on other such systems as socialism, Fascism and humanism in the name of Christianity and world-order.

Against this sectarianism in Eliot may be set Leavis's essay on 'The Logic of Christian Discrimination' where he is sharply critical of approaching a work of art with a preconceived notion of 'discriminating Christianly'. Leavis suggests that the critic's primary function is to approach the work of art as a work of art, and if he has acquired a refined sense of appreciation through his Christian faith it should be revealed through his finer discriminations without being biassed by a premeditated Christian dogma.

Leavis instances the poetry of Eliot as representative of a refined sensibility that is at once emotionally gratifying and spiritually edifying to any reader, whether he is Christian or not.

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2. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 473
3. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 254
To prejudice one's judgment by a Christian doctrine is to exert a pernicious influence on the soul and to do a disservice to the cause of criticism; and this is the problem underlying *After Strange Gods*. It is true that Eliot wrote this work under extremely difficult personal conditions and this may induce in the reader willingness to make allowances for its shortcomings - an attitude that is further encouraged by Eliot's later realization of the defective nature of the work and his subsequent suppression of it. But it is equally true that this work with its explicit attack on Lawrence is largely responsible for Leavis's gradual disillusionment with Eliot and his mounting interest in Lawrence. It can, on the other hand, and in a paradoxical way, be seen as leading to Leavis's rehabilitation of a genuine, but displaced artist, and in that sense it can be looked upon as providing the incentive for a new contribution to our sense of 'The Great Tradition'.

It is in place, then, to see what is there in *After Strange Gods* that occasions disagreement between Eliot and Leavis:

The book is ostensibly designed to promote a certain conception: the inter-relation of tradition and Christianity. The defence of this idea involves Eliot in a programme of excluding non-Christian doctrines and races to keep tradition "Christian and homogeneous". He looks unfavourably upon Sanscrit; views Protestantism as decadent, and attacks the Humanism of both Irving Babbitt and Ezra Pound; the first because it contains Confucian elements, the second because it draws on Chinese doctrines. To Eliot, Pound, like Babbitt, "is an individualist and a libertarian". ¹

Lawrence is also discredited because "he is reared in an agnostic atmosphere". It is the sum-total of the doctrines upheld by these writers that Eliot labels 'modern heresy'.

Lawrence - according to Eliot - does not belong to the tradition he is promoting because his mother did not give him a proper religious orientation. In effect she did not give her son membership of the Church of England.

Nothing could be much drearier than the vague hymn singing pietism which seems to have consoled the miseries of Lawrence's mother, and which does not seem to have provided her with any firm principles by which to scrutinize the conduct of her son.

Do these statements exemplify the principles of objectivity and impersonality favoured and propagated by Eliot? In his early essays, Eliot has been at pains to set up a principle of objectivity whereby a work of art could be appraised without much regard for personal idiosyncrasies. He does not seem to be objective enough in these pronouncements. To Eliot the works of Lawrence have an alarming strain of cruelty and his characters are immoral. In the course of comparing Lawrence's short story "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" with Joyce's "The Dead", Eliot rejects the former and endorses the latter on the assumption that Joyce's shows a more refined sensibility whereas Lawrence's is illustrative of a strain of cruelty.

One can readily concede that Joyce's short story is artistically more mature than Lawrence's, but as Stephen Spender has judiciously argued, Eliot's choice of representative specimens from both Lawrence and Joyce is infelicitous and does injustice to Lawrence because the story is one of his worst, and Eliot's summary

1. Ibid, p. 38
2. Ibid, p. 39
of it is imperfect, because it singles out those aspects that illustrate Eliot's viewpoint without taking the better aspects into consideration. Spender denies Eliot's contention that Lawrence's characters are cruel and lifts this quality onto Joyce's in his other stories. He convincingly indicates that Lawrence's treatment of situations is natural and realistic, whereas that of Joyce's is sentimental and idealistic, and in opting for Joyce Eliot enlists himself in the romantic camp to which his theory of tradition is presumably opposed.

It is again in connection with his notion of tradition that Eliot exposes his narrowness:

The point is that Lawrence started life wholly free from any restriction of tradition or institution, that he had no guidance except the Inner Light, the most untrustworthy and deceitful guide that ever offered itself to wandering humanity.

The crux of the matter is Eliot's definition of tradition. If it is the kind of abstract idea wrung from books and absolutely cut off from life that Stephen Spender finds it, it is a very impoverishing notion, and it is better to replace it, as Leavis has, by the human spontaneity and genuineness of personal experience for which Lawrence stands. A tradition that shies away from the concerns of actual living is doomed. A tradition that does not accommodate personal experience is to say the least one-sided.

Eliot identifies Lawrence with the 'inner light', the most


2. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p.54

3. Stephen Spender, op.cit, p. 161
'untrustworthy guide', yet paradoxically enough sums up his life as being carried on the spiritual plane. He describes his diagnosis of the death of modern civilization as 'unanswerable, and recommends Fantasia of The Unconscious as "a book to keep at hand and re-read." 2

Eliot's charges against Lawrence reach their highest pitch when he accuses him of sexual morbidity and moral perversion. He thereby suggests that Lawrence exercises a pernicious influence on those to whom he appeals. Leavis had already written a pamphlet called D.H. Lawrence, expressing his admiration of Lawrence, and therefore he was in a sense implicated in Eliot's adverse verdict on Lawrence. Leavis's response was sharp:

Moral or religious criticism cannot be a substitute for literary criticism; and it is only by being a literary critic that Mr Eliot can apply his recovered standards to literature. It is only by demonstrating convincingly that his application of moral principles leads to a more adequate criticism that he can effect the kind of persuasion that is his aim. In these lectures if he demonstrates anything, it is the opposite. 3

Leavis hits directly on Eliot's inadequacies:

... it has, more generally, to be said that since the religious preoccupation has become insistent in them, Mr Eliot's critical writings have been notable for showing less discipline of thought and emotion, less purity of interest, less power of sustained devotion, and less courage than before. 4

Leavis argues that Eliot's charges against Lawrence as Eliot himself admits, are based on an inadequate reading of

1. cf the preceding page and the chapter on Santayana.
2. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p.60
3. F.R. Leavis, 'Mr Eliot, Wyndham Lewis and Lawrence', Scrutiny Vol.III, no.2, September 1931, p. 185
4. ibid, p. 186
Lawrence and ought to be reconsidered and probably changed in consequence of a better and more comprehensive reading of Lawrence. This procedure is calculated to disarm Eliot.

The work singled out for praise by both Eliot and Wyndham Lewis - Mornings in Mexico - is, as Leavis remarks, one of the worst works of Lawrence, and if this choice signifies anything it is either a vicious taste or a wilfulness not to understand at his best. This point is brought home by Leavis's exposure of the instability and inconclusiveness of Eliot's approach to Lawrence. The praise he accords him with one hand he withholds with the other. Leavis expresses surprise at Eliot's 'over-insistence on Lawrence's sexual morbidity', because this quality reflects back on Eliot himself. Lawrence's concern with sex - Leavis contends - far from being morbid or distasteful is a genuine effort to get recognition for it as a normal social activity making for the establishment of one of Eliot's favourite ideals; that is the vital connection between the 'individual and the race'. Thus Leavis suggests that Eliot's definition of tradition in its livelier and more stimulating aspects is Laurentian rather than Eliotic - Leavis quotes from Lawrence - that statement on the novel which portrays human life as being dynamic, flexible and in a state of flux; it is the task of the novelist to figure forth that 'ebb and flow' that is constantly refreshing'. To undertake this task the novelist must be preoccupied with the emotive aspects of life that underlie its mysteries.

As for Eliot's complaint that Lawrence's works are void of moral struggle, Leavis makes the complementary suggestion that Eliot's own

1. ibid, p. 189
2. ibid, p. 190
obsession with original sin is contrariwise, boring and uninteresting because remote from actual conditions of living.

Concluding, Leavis indicates that if Lawrence's realization of life does not cover the whole range of human experience, Eliot's understanding of orders of perception is also incomplete. It is only by bringing them together that a sense of completeness, of health, and of growth can be attained. From the totality of Lawrence's sense of vitality and human passions, and Eliot's sense of order and form, a sense of balance, normality can be discerned. It is the realization of this sense of equilibrium, of complementariness that characterizes many of Leavis's consequent references to these two artists. It is Eliot's onslaught on Lawrence that takes Leavis away from Eliot's influence, broadens the scope of his critical œuvre, enlarges his concept of tradition to include levels of experience that Eliot's ostracizes, because it is under the stimulus of Eliot's assault on Lawrence that Leavis comes to a more mature realization of Lawrence's significance in the body of English tradition, and so dedicates to him one of his major works.

Eliot and Leavis's Revaluation

Linking Revaluation to New Bearings, Leavis, in his introduction echoes Eliot's notion of tradition.
The book was planned when I was writing my New Bearings which offers an account of the situation as it appears today, indeed the planning of the one book was involved in the planning of the other. An account of the present of poetry, to be worth anything, must be from a clearly realized point of view, and such a point of view, if it is critically responsible, must have been determined by and defined as much in relation to the past as to the present.  

The words show that Leavis attempts to bring Eliot's notion of tradition into the field of practical application.

It should be observed that, at this stage of his development as critic, Leavis adheres to some principles borrowed from Eliot which he was later bound either to qualify or repudiate. In 'The Function of Criticism' Eliot, for instance says:

The critic, one would suppose, if he is to justify his existence, should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks, tares to which we are all subject and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible in the common pursuit of true 'judgment'.

Modelling his views on those of Eliot Leavis says: "A critic will endeavour to be as little merely individual as possible", and following upon Eliot's rigorous principle of self-sacrifice he again says: "observing this rule and practising this self-denial, the critic limits, of course, his freedom, but there are kinds of freedom he should not aspire to". This self-denial is in harmony with Eliot's view that there is no creation in criticism. In the course of his development and with the dawning on him of the vital role played by

2. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 25
3. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p.2.
4. ibid, p.3
5. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, pp.30-31
the individual in the formation of any judgment (largely suggested by the ideas of Lawrence, Whitehead, and perhaps confirmed by Collingwood and Polanyi) Leavis came to modify this view and to postulate that criticism is creative, and that a judgment is personal and cannot be otherwise.

In the first chapter of the book Leavis associates the modern sensibility with the metaphysical line of wit with which he identifies Eliot. The title of the chapter is taken from Eliot's essay on Marvell, and the chapter as a whole is written with Eliot's views in mind. Attempting a definition of wit, Leavis harks back to that essay and the tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace with which wit is equated by Eliot is the guideline of Leavis's subsequent remarks. Yet Leavis's elaboration of Eliot suggests a qualification regarding the association of Milton's *Comus* with that line of wit—a qualification rendered necessary by Leavis's later critique of Milton. To clarify the notion of wit, Eliot writes:

> What is meant is some quality which is common to the songs in *Comus* and Cowley's *Anacreontics*, and Marvell's Horatian ode.  

Ruling out the songs in *Comus* Leavis argues:

> But the songs in *Comus* have not in or beneath their simple grace, any such order of implications as leads us to call the apparently simple poise of Jonson 'wit'.

> The finesse attributed by Eliot to Cowley's *Anacreontics* is challenged by Leavis, and replaced by a callous and ruthless tone which he discerns in the poem. Amplifying this point Leavis

1. F.R. Leavis, *op.cit.*, p. 24
2. T.S. Eliot, *op.cit.*, p. 293
3. F.R. Leavis, *op.cit.*, p. 25
chooses another poem by Cowley called 'Wit' in which wit is stripped of its tough reasonableness, divested of its inherent grace to herald the new mode of social manners of the Augustan period.

When it comes to placing Dryden Leavis finds that Pope's affinities with Jonson, Donne and Marvell are stronger than Dryden's, and that it is Pope and not Dryden, who carries the line of wit with him. Pope - Leavis tends to think - is a member of the community of the literary tradition, whereas Dryden is a provincial poet representative only of his age. In view of this sense of community Leavis reverses Eliot's judgment and rates Pope higher than Dryden. Leavis again challenges Dryden's affinities with Jonson as postulated by Eliot.

Eliot says:

He is a successor of Jonson and therefore the descendant of Marlowe, he is the ancestor of nearly all that is best in the poetry of the eighteenth century. 1

Eliot's defence of Dryden - it should be noted - is made against a background of what he thinks to be a prevalent nineteenth century prejudice and an inviolable taste for Shakespeare and Milton. Leavis's angle of vision is different. The affinities he seeks prompt him to associate Dryden with Milton - that is with the hollow, the superficial and the magniloquent. Both Eliot and Leavis hold Milton responsible for that dissociation of sensibility in which language is insulated from thought.

To proceed to Pope is to be conscious of an original line of thinking that Leavis develops even whilst most under Eliot's influence.

1. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p. 305
He finds that Eliot has done more than justice to Dryden and has been unfair to Pope. Leavis believes that Pope's achievement is more directly relevant to the modern sensibility than that of Dryden (here the notion of historical relativity which he largely derives from Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi is a determining factor) and in consequence of this Pope is entitled to greater attention. That is what his chapter on Pope argues.

Leavis's reappraisal of Pope entails a reconsideration of traditional approaches to that poet. To Leavis Pope is on the one hand linked to the Metaphysicals by virtue of his speculations on the life of the soul and the body and his metaphysical wit, but on the other hand he is related to the modern sensibility by his sense of humour producing the tone of Eliot's own Prufrock. It is in this emerging sense of affinity, of relational bonds that the originality of Revaluation resides. To establish these affinities Leavis rules out the approach to Pope in terms of his personal life as outmoded and doing violence to the artistic achievement of the poet.

Pope's rehabilitation is effected with the tools adopted by Eliot in his essay on Dryden. Eliot maintains that Dryden resembles Swinburne in his mastery over words but whereas Swinburne's words are connotative, those of Dryden are precise but denotative. Leavis attributes the merits of both Swinburne and Dryden to Pope and argues that Pope's words are both precise and connotative. Furthermore Eliot's celebrated view that poetry should occasion a sense of surprise in the reader, a quality which he imputes to Dryden's dexterity is applied to Pope with greater

intensity. 1

As Leavis proceeds to the Augustans we find him keen to establish affinities between Pope and Gray on the one hand, and Milton and the Augustans who found Milton's melancholic and ruminative modes together with his blank verse congenial on the other. He finds in 'Thomson's declamatory Miltonics in particular a terse illustration of these affinities. On this last point we notice an obvious resemblance between Leavis's and Eliot's ideas.

In his Introductory essay to The Vanity of Human Wishes, an essay to which Leavis attaches a capital importance, Eliot holds Milton responsible for what is poor and dreary in eighteenth century verse. "A good part of the dreariest verse of the time is written under the shadow of Milton". 2 Accounting for the failure of that verse Eliot again says in the same essay "Instead of working out the proper form for its matter, when it has any, and informing verse with prose virtues, it (the eighteenth century) merely applies the magniloquence of Milton." 3

But if the Augustans have links with the Metaphysical and Elizabethan predecessors they are not so much the precursors of the Romantics as the Romantics are their descendants. This is an original stroke on Leavis's part:

The point of Professor Nichol Smith's observation should be not that Akenside anticipates Wordsworth, but that Wordsworth with an essential life of a very different order has a certain eighteenth century strength; it is not any romantic spirit in Akenside that links him to Wordsworth, but the common-sense ethos and social habit implicit in the meditative verse - verse that as Professor Nichol Smith points out, looks so like Wordsworth's. 4

1. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 88
2. Samuel Johnson's London and The Vanity of Human Wishes, with an introductory essay by T.S. Eliot, p.13
3. ibid, p.14
4. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 109
The originality of Leavis's idea can be brought home if we recall that Eliot thought that Akenside, together with Cowper, Thomson and Young "prepared the way for Wordsworth." 1

Apart from Pope whom Leavis considers as of his time and superior to it in his poetic attainment, the age bears witness to a dissociation of sensibility:

The Restoration had resulted in a hiatus, a discontinuity, one too anomalous to persist. 2

Leavis's word 'hiatus' reminds us of the eighteenth century tendency - as Eliot conceives it - to apply a grand style to a poor content 'so that what the writers have to say appears surprised at the way in which they choose to say it.' 3

This impression is later confirmed when Leavis cites Prior as giving evidence to the death of tradition.

It is not merely that sensibility has changed; senses and faculties have been lost, a perceptive and responsive organization has ceased to function, a capacity for fineness has disappeared. 4

The new civilization with its bent for urbanity and polish failed to achieve an inward grasp of experience, and poetry, in both Eliot's and Leavis's view dissolved into artificial Miltonic devices.

While Leavis endorses Eliot's view of the eighteenth century as exhibiting a state of decadence, and an incongruity between form and content, he nevertheless denies his assertion that prose virtues should be a criterion of appraising poetry. He reinforces this denial by appealing to Eliot's manipulation of language in Ash-Wednesday, a manipulation that resists the very neatness and ordered structure of prose argument. That is to say that from

1. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p.14
2. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p.113
3. Samuel Johnson's London and The Vanity of Human Wishes, with an introductory essay by T.S. Eliot, pp.11-15
4. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p.112
their arrangement and association in a poetic composition
words acquire shades of meaning and connotations not usually
present in their patterned structure.

Leavis's chapter on Wordsworth is a departure from Eliot
in two main respects. First he interprets Wordsworth's view
of nature primarily in terms of human nature and indicates that
Wordsworth's interest in mountains was secondary. 1 The
sanctions sought by Wordsworth are essentially Laurentian in
the sense that they "recall Lawrence's preoccupation with the
deep levels, the springs of life, the illimitable mystery that
wells up into consciousness." 2

Secondly Leavis counters Eliot's derogatory approach to
Wordsworth's conception of poetry as 'emotion recollected in
tranquillity' and suggests that it is inaccurate. In
"Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot says:

... We must believe that "emotion recollected in
tranquillity" is an inexact formula. For it is
neither emotion, nor recollection, nor without
distortion of meaning tranquillity. It is a
concentration, and a new thing resulting from the
concentration, of a very great number of experiences
which to the practical and active person would not
seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration
which does not happen consciously or of deliberation.
These experiences are not recollected; and they,
finally unite in an atmosphere which is tranquil only
in that it is a passive attending upon the event. 3

Leavis on the other hand, thinks that spontaneity in
Wordsworth, is not 'a turning loose of emotion' as Eliot would
content, but rather an advanced form of control:

1. cf the chapter on Whitehead.

2. E.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 165

reprint 1969, p. 58
Spontaneity, that is, as Wordsworth seeks it, involves no cult of the instinctive and primitive at the expense of the rationalized and civilized; it is the spontaneity supervening upon complex development, a spontaneity engaging an advanced and delicate organization. 1

Leavis's chapter on Shelley, however, takes Eliot's view as its point of departure and for the most part develops its significance. Both draw on A.E. Housman's *The Name and Nature of Poetry,* 2 in their approach to Shelley but for different purposes, for while Eliot invokes Housman to corroborate his view that Dante's poetry can be enjoyed without necessarily sharing his beliefs - a view that Leavis applies with marked stress to Eliot's own poetry - Leavis adduces Housman to support his contention that Shelley carries on the tradition of the 'poetical'.

But the passage which Leavis quotes from Eliot's *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism* 3 is intended for dissent, because it is a 'personal statement' which departs from proper critical appreciation and therefore needs qualifying.

Accounting for his early interest in Shelley, Eliot suggests that it was then favoured by a view in which the question of belief or disbelief did not then arise. 4 Eliot says:

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1. F.R. Leavis, *op.cit,* p. 170
2. T.S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism,* p.95 and F.R. Leavis, *Revaluation,* p. 208
3. F.R. Leavis, *Revaluation,* pp. 203-204
4. T.S. Eliot, *op.cit,* p. 97
When the doctrine, theory, belief or view of life presented in a poem is one which the mind of the reader can accept as coherent, mature and founded on the facts of experience, it interposes no obstacles to the reader's enjoyment, whether it be one that he accept or deny, approve or deprecate. When it is one which the reader rejects as childish or feeble, it may for a reader of well developed mind, set up an almost complete check. 1

Eliot's choice of words is not happy. To present a belief, a view of life in a poem means to consider the poem as a container of ideas, a receptacle into which ideas can be poured and this implies a division of form from content. Again Eliot's words give the impression that this belief or view of life is something external to the poem and is separately considered as acceptable if mature, and unacceptable if immature. This impression is emphasized by Eliot's words "Shelley did not live to put his poetic gifts which were certainly of the first order at the service of more tenable beliefs". 2 Eliot's distinction between form and content, between music and vision in Milton is still lurking in our minds and has been encountered more than once in this chapter (Leavis associates Shelley with Milton and Tennyson whose use of language seems to him external and inorganic; and in relation to whom Eliot exposes the split between form and content). This situation induces the reader to think that Eliot is more of a dualist than an organicist, and in this sense he can hardly be in harmony with the philosophy of organism espoused by Leavis and explicated by Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi and seen at work in Lawrence's vitalistic ideas (it was not an accident that the lecturer on Newman's Idea of a University

1. ibid, p. 96
2. ibid, p. 97
gathered that Leavis was a vitalist) and it is not surprising that Leavis shifts the focus of attention from Shelley’s ideas and ideals to the poetry, the totality of the poetic experience.

Kristian Smidt has remarked, on the other hand, on the dualist tendency in Eliot interestingly expressed in his defence of Paul Elmer More’s Christian dualism in *The Times Literary Supplement*. But what Kristian Smidt has failed to draw our attention to is that in the same essay on Paul Elmer More, Eliot seems to endorse this dualism in literature too. Speaking about More’s *Essay on Criticism* Eliot says:

> The essay is a protest against certain modern tendencies in art and philosophy and it is to these tendencies that the author opposes his dualism. The demon of the absolute is for More the spirit of heresy in all things - the human craving for unification which will push any theory to the extreme.

Smidt comes nearer to a realization of this disparity when he says earlier in the book

> ... if it were possible to weigh his various statements in opposite scales, it is probable that a slight preponderance would be found in favour of the formal elements as the prime factors in poetry.

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1. F.R. Leavis, *English Literature in our Time and The University*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1907, p. 53

2. "This dualism was right - he thought - in maintaining the idea of a gap between the material and the spiritual, between science and religion as opposed to the merging of these things in the writings of Whitehead and others". Kristian Smidt, *Poetry and Belief in The Work of T.S. Eliot*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1901, p. 272.


4. Kristian Smidt, *op.cit*, p. 49
Following upon this quotation he argues:

And this must be because the formal elements, after all, are the truly dynamic ones. Eliot’s basic idea seems to be that beauty of form provides a stimulus which, as far as emotional, sensual or intellectual content goes is undifferentiated. And each reader is allowed to differentiate the meaning to himself by his particular responses much as is commonly done in the case of music.

Leavis’s argument gives a different account of the reader’s disenchantment with Shelley’s poetry. It is not so much the intrusion of Shelley’s ideas, beliefs or view of life that poses an impediment to our appreciation of the poetry as the abstract process by which feeling is insulated from thought:

Actually that quivering intensity offered in itself, apart from any substance, offered instead of any object, is what, though it may make Shelley intoxicating at fifteen, makes him almost unreadable, except in very small quantities of his best, to the mature.

And again he says:

Shelley at his best and worst, offers emotion in itself, unattached in the void. In itself, for itself, it is an easy shift to the pejorative implications ‘for its own sake.’

While Eliot finds the difficulty in Shelley in the interposition of his personal views and life which are ‘pedantic and repellent’, Leavis sees the problem in the lack of objectification, or to use Eliot’s words – in the absence of ‘objective equivalence’.

Leavis’s chapter on Keats, in Revaluation, is written from an independent point of view, and points to the moral tone that will consistently govern his later critical writings. To clarify this

1. Ibid, p. 49
2. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 211
3. Ibid, p. 214
statement one must refer to Keats's *Letters* in which Leavis and Eliot took interest, but for different emphases. Quoting from one of these *Letters* Eliot gives the following:

... Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal chemicals operating on the mass of neutral intellect — but they have not any individuality, any determined character. I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self Men of Power.  

And then comments:

This is the sort of remark, which, when made by a man so young as was Keats, can only be called the result of genius.

Leavis, on the other hand, postulates that Keats's achievement in both his poetry and *Letters* suggests something superior to mere aestheticism — something which relates to a common human morality. Leavis gives us the following extract from Mr Meyer:

While a great deal is made of aesthetic sensibility and its refinements, we hear very little about moral sensibility. It is ignored; and the deep-seated spiritual vulgarity that lies at the heart of our civilization commonly passes without notice.

Again Leavis quotes these words from a letter: "Scenery is fine, but human nature is finer."

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2. *ibid.*
3. F.R. Leavis, *Revaluation*, p. 235
4. *ibid.*
Leavis and Eliot on Milton

Leavis's discussion of Milton's stature as a poet is carried out with Eliot's achievement in the forefront of his mind. This achievement set the seal on Milton's 'dislodgment' to adopt a favourite word of Leavis reiterated in the context of his discussion of Milton. But the question of Milton is complicated by the two lectures Eliot gave on Milton in the second of which (The British Academy lecture 1947) he tried to modify some of the pronouncements he voiced in the early lecture of 1936. This gesture was interpreted by some critics as a recantation of the earlier views. The change of tone shown in the British Academy lecture involved Leavis in a difficult situation, and by his account, encouraged his detractors to make fun of his unqualified adoption of Eliot's ideas.

The detractors represent it (Milton's dislodgment) as showing me in the posture of comically servile deference to authority. Mr Eliot in his own pontifical way, says Milton's no good; and I innocently supposing that to settle the matter, proclaim Milton's annihilation to the world. And now Mr Eliot goes back on his tip, leaving me exposed in my discomfiture for the amusement of his snobbish, his judicious and real admirers. 1

In this connection it must be indicated that Leavis's essay on Milton was first published in Scrutiny for September 1933, whereas Eliot's first lecture on Milton was in 1936. So it is, in a sense, Leavis himself who started the campaign against Milton, "aided no doubt, by Eliot's critical asides and creative achievement." 2

1. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p.12
When Leavis takes up the question later in Lectures in America, he tells us that Eliot did not 'recant' about Milton; he merely contrived a discourse in which while actually (to do him justice) he conceded nothing but confirmed the judgments he made earlier with such economy, he had enabled his audience to feel that he had recanted. How clear he was in his own mind about what he was doing I don't know (there are penalties for expertness in that art) but he knew that he couldn't recant about Milton without repudiating his genius and his raison d'être. 1

In view of this equivocal situation it will be as well to scrutinize the whole affair in some detail.

The gist of Leavis's argument on Milton, is that by his preoccupation with words and their sonority, with the Grand Style, with the magniloquent, Milton debarred himself from the exploitation of the full resources of language. In other words his obsession with form did not afford him the opportunity to realize adequately appropriate human feelings and values. Even this obsession with form was superficial in the sense that it did not permit a vital interaction between words because Milton's private interests and character intruded upon the experience instead of allowing words to work out their proper relations naturally.

He exhibits a feeling for words, rather than a capacity for feeling through words; we are often in reading him, moved to comment that he is external or that he works from the outside. 2

1. F.R. &Q.D. Leavis, Lectures in America, pp. 37-38
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 50
In handling the language externally, Milton was paving the way for and forestalling the characteristic approach to language represented by the eighteenth century practitioners. Milton's latinizing was a departure from the genuine sources of vitality inherent in the English language. But this pernicious influence moves further forward. It is manifest in Tennyson whose interest in the musicality of words is pursued irrespective of, or rather at the expense of, a profound realization of their content. "Tennyson descends from Spenser by way of Milton and Keats." ¹

To associate Hilton with Tennyson is to establish a line of development along which a dissociation of sensibility is marked, and which calls for a counterbalancing movement to unification. It is in Eliot that Leavis recognizes this counterbalance. In this respect Leavis considers Milton and Eliot two poles apart, the recognition of the one cancels the other.

Eliot's first lecture is a confirmation of Leavis's earlier pronouncements:

Milton's images do not give this sense of particularity nor are the separate words developed in significance. His language is, if one may use the term without disparagement artificial and conventional. ²

And if in his essay on 'The Metaphysical Poets' Eliot attributes to both Milton and Dryden 'the aggravation of the dissociation of sensibility', ³ in this essay he views Milton's influence as detrimental and perverse, whereas that of Dryden is healthier.

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¹. ibid, p.56
². T.S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p.140
³. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 288
I have said elsewhere that the living English which was Shakespeare's became split up into components one of which was exploited by Milton and the other by Dryden. Of the two I still think Dryden's development the healthier because it was Dryden who preserved, so far as it was preserved at all, the tradition of conversational language in poetry and I might add that it seems to me easier to get back to healthy language from Dryden than it is to get back to it from Milton. 1

Again Eliot confirms Leavis's view that Milton's use of language is external:

A disadvantage of the rhetorical style appears to be that a dislocation takes place through the hypertrophy of the auditory imagination at the expense of the visual and tactile (which he attributes to Milton's blindness) so that the inner meaning is separated from the surface, and tends to become something occult or at least without effect upon the reader until fully understood. 2

It should be noted, however, that Eliot's connivance at the meaning for the sake of sound is at odds with his later remark in The British Academy Lecture that 'the music of verse is strongest in poetry which has a definite meaning expressed in the properest words'. 3  In the same essay he recurs to that division suggesting that Milton's achievement inheres in his musical long periods and not in any significant ideas.

The peculiar feeling, almost a physical sensation of a breathless leap, communicated by Milton's long periods, and by his alone, is impossible to procure from rhymed verse. Indeed this mastery is more conclusive evidence of his intellectual power, than his grasp of any ideas that he borrowed or 'invented'. 4

This sense of contradiction incites Leavis to take issue with Eliot on the subject. Leavis's intention as he proclaims it, is not to score points against Eliot, but to vindicate the critical function.

1. ibid, p. 142
2. ibid, p. 143
3. ibid, p. 160
4. ibid, p. 158
It seems appropriate to give a summary view of Eliot's lecture to furnish a background on which further discussion can be clearly pursued.

The British Acaieny lecture shows that Eliot 'retracts' on two main points. First he no longer holds Milton and Dryden exclusively responsible for bringing about the dissociation of sensibility and puts this responsibility onto a more general social plane related to the Civil War. Secondly he disavows responsibility for his earlier view that Hilton's influence is much more pernicious than Dryden's.

Apart from this Eliot reports that Hilton's style is purely individual and untraditional because it draws on foreign idioms and forms of expression (which he describes in the same lecture as eccentric).

In Hilton there is always the maximal, never the minimal alteration of ordinary language. Every distortion of construction, the foreign idiom, the use of a word in a foreign way or with the meaning of a foreign word from which it is derived rather than the accepted meaning in English, every idiosyncrasy is a particular act of violence which Hilton has been the first to commit. There is no cliche, no poetic diction in the derogatory sense of the word, but a perpetual sequence of original acts of lawlessness.

The question that comes readily to mind is whether this is a form of praise or depreciation. The words 'distortion', 'violence', 'lawlessness' convey an impression that is opposed to the presumably laudatory connotations of 'originality', 'absence of cliche' and 'poetic diction in the derogatory sense of the word'. There is an obvious contradiction.

1. ibid, p. 153
2. ibid, p. 154
in terms here, an anomaly, that betrays a sense of uncertainty
and confusion on Eliot's part. The last two sentences end in
an anti-climax shattering the impression conveyed by the
preceding words. Ostensibly Eliot aims at preserving a
condemnation in a tortuous and ambiguous style. Yvor Winters
says that Eliot "can speak with equal firmness and dignity on
both sides of almost any question", but what is obvious here
is the lack of firmness and certainty, and one is induced to
believe with Leavis that there is a price to be paid for this
presumed expertness: that is, confusion. If Eliot is
offering these words as a form of praise his concluding
statements come to shatter that impression. Alluding to the
danger of sudden and rapid changes in language (implying
thereby the harmfulness of Milton's practice) Eliot says:

We cannot in literature, any more than in the
rest of life, live in a perpetual state of revolution.
If every generation of poets made it their task to
bring poetic diction up to date, with the spoken
language, poetry would fail in one of its important
obligations. For poetry should help, not only to
refine the language of the time, but to prevent it
from changing too rapidly; a development of language
at too great a speed would be a development in the
sense of a progressive deterioration.

If that is Eliot's intention, it means that he has brought us
back, but in a confused and confusing way to his seasoned first
lecture. This ambiguous situation is apparently intended to
appease an English audience looking for a vindication of Milton.

This confusion is perpetuated in Eliot's statement that
Milton's poetry is purely poetic in the sense that it is at the

1. Quoted in Christopher Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, Oxford,
The Clarendon Press, 1964, pp.6-7
2. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p. 160
opposite extreme of a prose statement, one is left wondering whether this is meant to figure as a credit or a debit in the poet's account. The words that immediately follow point to the commendatory aspect.

To say that the work of a poet is at the farthest possible remove from prose would once have struck me as condemnatory; it now seems to me simply when we have to deal with a Milton, the precision of its peculiar greatness.

But towards the end of the lecture Eliot comes back to what he had said in his Introductory essay to Johnson's The Vanity of Human Wishes that 'to have the virtues of good prose is the first and minimum requirement of good poetry,' and in consequence he goes back on his earlier suggestion and settles down to a conviction that the study of Milton's poetry is more of a hindrance than a help in this respect. In this manner he recapitulates, but in a distorted form, what he had elegantly phrased in his first lecture.

Eliot further argues that Milton is bent on the vocal and the verbal rather than on the visual and notional part of artistic experience. He talks of Milton's greatness in relation to what he calls his 'sense of structure'. This lack of a sense of direction is viewed by Leavis as 'a surrender of the critical function'.

Leavis's arguments, in consideration of all this, run something as follows: A distinction should be drawn between the music of the musician and the music of the poet for the former depends on the adept handling of musical instruments whereas the latter derives

1. ibid, p. 154
2. ibid. pp. 154-155
4. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p.13
essentially from words and words are by nature semantically significant. As Eliot himself admits, the music of these words is only realised when these words convey a certain meaning. This reflects adversely — as Leavis tends to think — on Milton. To say that in reading Paradise Lost our sense of sight is diminished and our sense of sound refined is to commit a fallacy because the words used by Milton are intended for their musical effect, for their 'orotundity', to adopt one of Leavis's words, and not for any significant semantic purpose, and the Miltonic music produces in the reader a state of inertia and relaxation, which is opposed to the exercise of the critical function. Eliot's opinion that Milton's eloquence relieves the mind and facilitates declamation means — as Leavis contends — that he is virtually acquiescing in principles which make his own achievement negligible. Christopher Ricks argues, against Leavis's allegation that Milton's language conduces to inertia and relaxation, that Milton's style is dynamic and energetic, and that Milton's deviations from the normal run of speech do not derive from an eccentric desire to be freakish, but from the wish to admire the grandeur associated with the epic; that is to be decorous and normal.

Mr John Crowe Ransom has said that 'we should be so much in favour of tragedy and irony as not to think it good policy to require them in all our poems for fear we might bring them into bad fame'. In the same spirit, we might say that we should be so in favour of natural English, as not to require it in all our poems or throughout all our poems. 3

1. That part is excised from Eliot's essay on Milton in On Poetry and Poets, but is retained in the original Proceedings of The British Academy, Vol. XXXIII, p. 76


3. ibid, p. 38
Leavis questions Eliot's proposition that Milton's imagery is vocal rather than visual indicating that the word 'image' tends to encourage the notion that imagery is necessarily visual. 1 Leavis's point sounds sensible in view of the fact that the word 'image' suggests the representation or imitation of something concrete in the external world or the visualization of a certain conception or notion.

Eliot makes allowances for Milton's inconsistencies, as pointed out by Samuel Johnson, on the assumption that the world which Milton creates does not call for a consistent order. To this tendency Leavis retorts postulating that these inconsistencies are not confined only to a failure in visualization; "they affect the poet's grasp of his themes, conceptions and interests." 2

Leavis quotes these words from Eliot:

The emphasis is on the sound not the vision, upon the word, not the idea, and in the end it is the unique versification that is the most certain sign of Milton's intellectual mastership ... 3

and argues that if this verse creates a mood of relaxation, of indifference to ideas, it cannot simultaneously constitute 'a sign of intellectual mastership'. 4 Of Milton's digressions in Paradise Lost, Leavis is highly critical. These digressions relate in Leavis's mind to the mood of relaxation induced by Milton's music. Milton's manipulation of so much extraneous matter is not emblematic of his achievement, but is symbolic of his failure to

1. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, pp 16-17
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 20
3. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p. 157
4. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 21
concentrate on something significant on which our attention can be focussed.

Leavis ascribes the lack of coherence in *Paradise Lost* to the constant intrusion of Milton's character upon the narrative in verse. He invokes professor Waldock on the disjunction between Milton's real interests and the demands made on him by the Genesis story. The development of the story deprives Milton of satisfying these interests (Professor Waldock identifies these interests with Milton's personal desire to represent the myth in terms of Passion and Reason, and enumerates effort, combat, the life of the wayfaring Christian as highlighting Milton's personal urge) and so what he wants to say is resisted by what the myth in itself communicates.

Leavis concludes that Milton failed to conceive *Paradise Lost* dramatically and as a whole, capable of absorbing and depersonalizing the relevant interests of his private life. "He remains in the poem too much John Milton, declaiming, insisting, arguing and protesting." ¹

Leavis's arguments have themselves been subject to close scrutiny by younger critics and have not been found in every way satisfactory.

Christopher Ricks, for example, argues that though the subject of the epic is sublime, yet the style is colloquial and ordinary, ² that Milton's latinizings "are no more than completely normal seventeenth century English", ³ that Milton, contrary to what Eliot says, seeks to be original with the minimum rather than the maximum of alteration. ⁴

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1. F.R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit*, p. 25
3. ibid, p. 63
4. ibid, p. 58
To Leavis's charge that Milton's style is declamatory and not dramatic, Ricks replies that it is not always necessary to use a dramatic style, and that an expository or descriptive style will be in certain situations, more effective. Ricks shows that Leavis himself admits that in his critique of 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' where he recognizes as great Johnson's poetry of statement and exposition. On this point Ricks sounds convincing because Leavis seems to have coined the term 'constatation' as opposed to 'realization', to provide scope for non-dramatic but convincing pieces of poetry. In his critique of Wordsworth Leavis also admits that Wordsworth 'has no dramatic gifts', but he achieves the impersonality Leavis favours in good literature.

Complementary to this view is the necessary recognition of the inadequacy of human language as a medium of expressing such a lofty subject. Paul J. Alpers says:

For Leavis, Milton's medium calls attention to itself in the bad social sense, as if unwittingly to distract the reader from what it cannot do. But if one looks at the beginning of this passage (the passage describing Eden) it is evident that Milton is drawing attention to his medium in a quite different way - one that is fully compatible with alert intelligence and an exploitation of all the resources of language. As the poet turns to describing Eden, the phrase "if art could tell" explicitly raises the question of whether the merely human skills of poetry are sufficient to his task. 2

Thus Milton attempts to match the reality of Eden by linguistic 'artifices' hence the suggestion of magniloquence and even artificiality. The whole problem of Paradise Lost

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1. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 172
inheres in an effort to reconcile the simplicity of the English Bible and the grandeur of the Greek epic.

The inadequacy of the human medium of expression naturally evokes the personal element. Stanley Fish suggests that "our own experience is part of the poem's subject". Fish suggests that part of Milton's intention in Paradise Lost is to worry the reader, to unsettle him, to force him to doubt the correctness of his responses, and to bring him to the realization that his inability to read the poem with any sense of confidence in his own perception is its focus. 2

Criticizing Arnold Stein's contention "that Satan's speeches create a dramatic conflict between his immediate utterances and the wider context of the epic," Fish says that such an argument

... ignores the way the reader is drawn into the poem, not as an observer who coolly notes the interaction of patterns (this is the mode of Jonsonian comedy and masque) but as a participant whose mind is the locus of that interaction. 3

What is interesting about these later critiques of Leavis's attitude to Milton is not so much the fact of disagreement as the way in which this kind of disagreement harmonizes with Leavis's own growing insistence on the reader's personal involvement in the work of literature in his later work. It is the Whitehead, Collingwood, Polanyi side of Leavis that is capable of registering the force of these arguments brought against him.

2. ibid, p.4
3. ibid, pp. 10-11
Education and The University has a special significance since it deals with a topic not just of particular interest to both Eliot and Leavis, but one on which they referred favourably to, and quoted from each other. In his essay titled "The Christian Conception of Education" Eliot says:

I have read an admirable article by Dr Leavis which appeared some months ago in Scrutiny in which he makes very sensible suggestions for the improvement of the English Tripos. In this article he observes "the problem of producing the educated man; the man of humane culture who is equipped to be intelligent and responsible about the problems of contemporary civilization, becomes that of realizing the idea of a University in practical dispositions appropriate to the modern world". And he quotes a sentence by Mr Brooks Otis, an American writer, 'It is an urgently necessary work to explore the means of bringing the various kinds of specialist knowledge and training into effective relation with informed general intelligence, humane culture, social conscience and political will', one agrees. 1

But Eliot's agreement is immediately qualified by questioning the whole set-up of humane and liberal education - a questioning that arises from a deep-seated belief in the indispensable function of Christianity in moulding the concept of education:

But to such questions as 'why should we want humane culture? Why is one conception of humane culture better than another? What is the sanction for your conception of social conscience or of political will as against that, for instance, now dominant in Germany? I do not think that the humanist can give a satisfactory answer. 2

This prompts Eliot to question the adequacy of both the humanism of Irving Babbitt and that of Leavis:


2. ibid, p.208
... if a secular or non-religious humanism can provide an adequate foundation for general education such that from our point of view it requires only to be supplemented by a religious instruction, then we not only have a common ground with the wiser, though smaller body of non-Christian educational theorists, but we could afford to leave to the disciples of Irving Babbitt in America and such groups as Dr Leavis and his friends in this country, the elaboration and implementing of policies. 1

This commentary gives rise to Leavis's qualifications in Education and The University.

Dissociating himself from the Humanism of Irving Babbitt, Leavis draws on Eliot's references to him.

It occurred to me to make the dissociation because in a complementary way to an essay of mine, the substance of which is included in this book, used the word 'humanist' in commenting on the approach (the accompanying mention of Irving Babbitt made the bracketing force of the word plain) 2

The difference between Leavis and Babbitt, as Leavis sees it, is that Leavis deals with practical methods and concrete questions, whereas Babbitt is concerned with theories and doctrines.

Leavis uses one adjective 'humanist' to qualify both literary criticism and education; thereby combining literature and culture in a wider human spectrum.

Prescribing liberal education as a remedy for the ills of modern civilization, a liberal education that does not inculcate any religious doctrine or frame, Leavis writes:

The point is that, whatever else may be necessary, there must in any case be, to meet the present crisis of civilization, a liberal education that doesn't start with a doctrinal frame, and is not directed at inculcating one. The Christian comments that the

1. ibid, pp. 205-206
2. F.R. Leavis, Education and The University, p.17
culture represented by such an education is incomplete and for him, perhaps, the frame will always be there. And when he says that the cultural tradition we belong to and must aim to preserve is in very important senses Christian he commands assent. But this is the age not of Dante or of Herbert, but of T.S. Eliot, and Eliot's genius which is of the kind that makes a poet profoundly representative, runs to that marvellous creative originality in the use of language, because he cannot, for the ordering of his experience in poetry of directly religious pre-occupation, make anything like that direct use of a received doctrinal frame or conceptual apparatus, which for Dante or Herbert was natural or inevitable. 1

And in his reappraisal of Eliot's later poetry, which he reprints in this book to consolidate this argument, Leavis observes in a passage I have already quoted that the poetry "makes its explorations into the concrete actualities of experience below the conceptual currency into the life that must be the raison d'être of any frame". 2

Leavis's concern with life as something wider and more significant than any doctrinal frame has behind it the Laurentian plea for "spontaneity and fullness of life," 3 a life that is free from inhibitions and moral taboos which Lawrence takes as a prerequisite for a healthy system of education.

But to give the subject more attention one notices that Leavis's Mass Civilization and Minority Culture appeared in 1930; Culture and Environment (about which William Walsh), on information from Denys Thompson, tells us that 'apart from the general design, the ideas are exclusively Leavis's; 4 appeared in 1933, and Education and The University began as a series of essays in Scrutiny and took final form in 1943.

1. ibid, p. 20
2. ibid, p. 104
3. D.H. Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and The Unconscious, p.116
Eliot on the other hand started publishing his essays on culture in *The New English Weekly* and the *New English Review* in 1945 (though his concern with culture goes back to the early days of *The Criterion*). These essays were meant to form the material of his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* published in 1948. His views on education were adequately expressed in *The Aims of Education*, a series of lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in 1950.

While Eliot is preoccupied with general issues of education and describes himself as 'a dabbler in semantics and semasiology', Leavis singles out one concrete issue, the teaching of literature at a certain level; that is, the University. He becomes even more particular when he defines the method of that teaching in terms of practical analysis and appreciation of certain works of art. This practical analysis is carried out along lines suggested by I.A. Richards. In his definition of culture Eliot is engaged in identifying the term in relation to the individual, the family and society on one hand, the region, politics and religion on the other. Leavis's *Culture and Environment* has for its major theme the loss of the organic community - a community that was essentially rural and was later the grist of the industrial mill. Here it may be in place to distinguish Eliot's use of the word 'organic' from that of Leavis. By 'organic' Eliot means the inter-relation between the individual, the family and society on one hand, and the different strata of society on the other (Eliot's society is fundamentally hierarchical):

... I discuss what seem to me to be three important conditions for culture. The first of these is organic (not merely planned but growing) structure, such as will foster the hereditary transmission of culture within a culture; and this requires the persistence of social classes. 1

And later he says:

We only mean that the culture of the individual cannot be isolated from that of the group, and that the culture of the group cannot be abstracted from that of the whole society; and that our notion of 'perfection' must take all three senses of 'culture' into account at once. 2

In Leavis the word 'organic' means the latent bond embracing an essentially homogeneous rural community.

Eliot cannot think of education without associating it with Christianity; and he does the same with regard to culture: "The culture of Europe, such as it is, is a Christian culture". 3

Again he says:

It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have until recently been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. 4

Eliot looks unfavourably upon liberal education and the teaching of English literature, or more specifically 'the literature of one's own language'; 5 Leavis takes the opposite line of thought advocating liberal education and focussing his attention on English literature.

1. T.S. Eliot, Notes Towards The Definition of Culture, London, Faber and Faber, 1948, reprint, 1961, p. 15
2. ibid, p. 24
3. T.S. Eliot, To Criticize The Critic, p. 150
4. T.S. Eliot, op.cit, p. 122
5. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 512
For Eliot the two cornerstones of tradition are: literature and Christianity; for Leavis it is the English language alone which is the symbol of 'traditional wisdom' for the English speaking peoples.

Leavis keeps on quoting Eliot's dictum that it is the vitality of the past that enriches the life of the present and that it is in the present that the past lives, and the past is alive in so far as it is alive for us. To repudiate the present and reject the teaching of contemporary English literature as Eliot does is to make nonsense of his own theory of tradition. He hankers after the remote past with Greek and Latin as his supreme ideal, and hardly reckons with modern English literature, and when he does he looks to the classics and French literature as a model.

Leavis's preoccupation with modern English literature viewed from the point of view of tradition may also be considered defective. It is true that he is aware of the presentness of the past and that he studies modern English literature as a manifestation of both the past and the present, but Leavis's identification of tradition with the English language will restrict tradition to the span of history covered by "modern English"; that is from the England of Shakespeare and Bunyan to the modern age. This will seriously restrict and narrow the range of tradition. Leavis's consciousness of the present force of tradition, however, surely might be combined with Eliot's insistence on a literary past going back to the Greeks.

1. of the early part of this chapter.
Leavis's "Approaches to T.S. Eliot"

Reviewing B. Rajan's *T.S. Eliot: A Study of his Writings by Several Hands*, Leavis recognizes his indebtedness to Eliot using words that are partly repeated and partly echoed in his later essay on "Eliot as Critic." ¹

In this review Leavis is particularly keen to recall the painstaking efforts he has made to rehabilitate Eliot into the English tradition. His tone is slightly impassioned and egotistic, but since it touches on personal themes and influences the reader may find this forgivable. Yet Leavis's recollection of literary history is questionable. In a statement which he later quotes in his "Retrospect to New Bearings", Leavis says:

> When in 1929 an innocent young editor printed an article of mine on Mr Eliot's criticism in *The Cambridge Review* (a reply to a contemptuous dismissal of him by a Cambridge 'English don' in Mr Desmond McCarthy's *Life and Letters*) he very soon had cause to realize that he had committed a scandalous impropriety, and I myself was left in no doubt as to the unforgivableness of my offence. And when, in 1932, a book of mine came out that made the study of Mr Eliot the centre of an attempt to define the distinctive aspects of significant contemporary poetry, so much worse than imprudent was it found to be that the advanced academic intellectual of the day declined (or so the gloating whisper ran) to have anything to do with it, and *The Cambridge Review* could find no reviewer for it in Cambridge. I remember, too, with some amusement, the embarrassed notes I received from correct friends who felt that some form of congratulation on the appearance of a book had to be gone through, but knew also that the offence was rank, disastrous and unpardonable. Yet the matter of that offensive book is seen, in Dr Rajan's symposium, to be now

¹. F.R. Leavis, "Approaches to T.S. Eliot, Scrutiny, vol.XV, no.1, December 1947, p. 58
'common form'. How was it done? 1

It must be noted first that Leavis's article "A Reply to The Condescending" was a reply not to a contemptuous dismissal of Eliot by a Cambridge 'English don' and not in Mr Desmond McCarthy's Life and Letters. A search in Life and Letters volumes 1 and 2, 1928-1929, reveals no plausible candidates and only favourable mention of Eliot.

Leavis's reply was to an anonymous review - not at all contemptuous - of Eliot's For Lancelot Andrewes in The New Statesman for December 29, 1928. 2

I have already said that Leavis's reply was to what he considers a censorious review reproaching Eliot for his dogmatism and intellectuality. 3

Leavis has ostensibly built his reply on the following words from the anonymous review:

Mr Eliot's reputation among the young is due to two facts: that, of those men who practise and criticize the more recent fashions in literature, he has some acquaintance with the past, an acquaintance that strikes with awe the young men whose readings begin with the Edwardians; that he holds very distinct and reasonable dogmatic opinions, and evidently writes from his mind rather than from his 'dark inwards' or the red pavilion of his heart. 4

It is obvious that Leavis's reading of these words to mean simply that Eliot is censured for being a writer of fashions and for his dogmatism and dry intellectuality is a misrepresentation, rather than a misreading of the words; his practice of 'recent

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1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 58
2. "For Mr T.S. Eliot; For Lancelot Andrewes", New Statesman, December 29, 1928, pp. 387-388
3. cf. p.4 of this chapter.
4. op.cit, p. 387
fashions is followed by his acquaintance with the past, his
dogmatic opinions are qualified as being distinct and
reasonable, his writing from the mind is opposed to 'the dark
inwards'.

Furthermore these words are taken out of context and Leavis
is obviously building on the harder part of the review, neglecting
the 'brighter' aspect which constitutes the major part of the
review. Take for instance these remarks on Eliot's essays on
Babbitt, Bradley and Machiavelli:

Those on Bradley, Babbitt and Machiavelli are admirable
academic exposition in judicious praise or reasoned
blame of the philosophies discussed. The essay on
Machiavelli is a brilliant piece of work ... Mr Eliot's
calm restatement of what Machiavelli said and meant is
succinct, clear and capable. 1

And again:

The essay on Andrewes is a noble panegyric of a much
neglected prose writer.

The essays that show Mr Eliot's critical taste at
its best are those on Crashaw, too brief a note, and
on Baudelaire. 2

One may believe Leavis's story about his article in
The Cambridge Review, and the adverse climate of opinion then
prevalent in Cambridge, but one has also to reckon with such
established facts as the invitation extended to Eliot by
Cambridge, an invitation that fructified in The Clark Lectures
in 1926; and with I.A. Richards's Principles of Literary Criticism
published in 1924, with its appendix on 'the poetry of T.S. Eliot'. 3

1. ibid, p. 387
2. ibid
3. I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, London,
George Watson argues that there is ample evidence testifying to Eliot's widespread acceptance before Leavis's publication on Eliot,¹ Leavis's 'Approaches to T.S. Eliot', however, defines the general nature of Eliot's influence on Leavis, and suggests that it inheres in the intelligent analysis of works of art and the consideration of works of literature primarily as works of literature. Yet the recognition of Eliot's prestige as a critic is coupled with a demonstration of his limitations - limitations that began with Eliot's conversion and made his dealings with the relation between literature and life relatively defective compared to the 'sure rightness' of D.H. Lawrence. Leavis's appraisal of Eliot from now on is most decidedly made with reference to Lawrence. Leavis had already embarked on a series of essays in Scrutiny on Lawrence as a novelist - a series of essays that forms the substance of his later book D.H. Lawrence: Novelist. It is in Lawrence that he finds a fulfilment of that intimate and indissoluble relation of literature to life as opposed to Eliot's 'purity of interest in literature,'² and if Leavis uses Eliot's 'objective correlative' as a critical instrument in The Great Tradition,³ he more importantly states, in the same book, that "Lawrence in the English language is the great genius of his time."⁴

² T.S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p. 191
³ F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, pp. 79-174
⁴ ibid, p. 23
Leavis's Criticism of Eliot's Later Poetry

Life as Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi see it is 'what we have to live by'. This is the measuring rod that Leavis applies to the later poetry of Eliot, and in view of which he assigns greater value and more maturity to the later as opposed to the earlier poetry. It also accounts for the tempering of his enthusiasm for The Waste Land in favour of Four Quartets. The latter - as Leavis observes - "are relevant to the stresses of our time", a judgment which Leavis pronounces with Lawrence's influence at the back of his mind, because he follows it by saying:

To him, in fact, might be adapted the tribute that he once paid to that very different genius; D.H. Lawrence; he pre-eminentely has stood for the spirit in these brutal and discouraging years.

And when he turns to the same topic in English Literature in our Time and The University he devotes a full chapter to Four Quartets titled 'Why Four Quartets matters in a Technologico-Benthamite Age', which is written, as the chapter on Lawrence argues, with Laurentian criteria in mind.

Life, as Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi, and with them Leavis, conceive it, is individual. This is an added reason for Leavis's admiration for Four Quartets. The experience which 'East Coker' offers is personal and even autobiographical, and herein lies the right of the individual as a manifestation of life to express himself. But the question of expression brings in the importance of art, for this expression to be

2. ibid, p.71
3. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, pp. 109-132.
impressive and persuasive has "got to be something more than merely personal" ¹, to adopt Leavis's words in this context. Hence the question of impersonality arises. To clarify this general proposition Leavis's criticism of Eliot's later poetry must be dealt with in some detail.

In his review of "Collected Poems by T.S. Eliot", a review that Leavis looks upon as "extraordinarily interesting and penetrating, and pre-eminently the note on Eliot to send people to", ² Harding draws a contrast between the earlier and later poetry. In the earlier poetry he notices that the tone of protest is pervasive. The poet and the reader join hands in hurling their protest against a general state of affairs. The later poetry is more mature in the sense that it entails a better understanding and a fuller realization of experience in consequence of which the individual becomes humbler and more submissive. To say that the tone of the later poetry is submissive does not mean that it is depressed since an "extraordinary toughness and resilience underlie it". ³ This qualification is essential because the tone of protest that gives way to resignation does not mean that the poet has bettered his conditions, but rather reconciled himself to suffering.

The other element in the later poetry to which Harding draws attention is the personal strain which distinguishes it from the earlier impersonal poetry. This personal strain is of capital importance as it relates Eliot to the livingness of

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1. ibid, p. 122
2. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 60 (footnote)
experience which Leavis discerns in the writings of Lawrence as in those of Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. It speaks for an immediacy of experience highly desiderated by Leavis, and seen at work in Lawrence, Blake and Dickens.

Paradoxically enough this personal strain goes with 'a greater maturity' as Harding puts it, or what Leavis calls 'an impersonality difficult of attainment'.

The most revealing point that Harding makes is that the later poetry constitutes a remarkable achievement in "the creation of concepts", a phrase that has been frequently repeated by Leavis. The phrase roughly means the skilful manipulation of ideas, in suggestive and convincing words. To harness words to the service of a personal experience pregnantly conveyed is, in Harding's view, the greatest of linguistic achievements.

This achievement induces Leavis to take up Eliot's defence in a letter to The Times Literary Supplement. The letter is a reply to an adverse and sarcastic review of Fast Coker. In an article sardonically entitled "Mr T.S. Eliot's confession ... poem of Humility - And Funeral" the anonymous reviewer acidly observes:

The poets of the nineties wanted to purify poetry of all that was not poetry. Mr Eliot's aim seems to purify poetry of all that is poetry. That is not unfair statement. He has accepted as a dogma something D.H. Lawrence had said about the need for poetry to be bare and stark. It must suit the barren futile conditions and the misdirected purposes of our prematurely afflicated century - poetry Mr Eliot has said "with nothing poetic about it" - poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry.

1. ibid, p. 174
2. ibid, p. 175
reading it we should be intent on what the poetry points out and not on the poetry.

Leavis assumes a sharply critical attitude to this review. He denies that the poem is 'fashionable' indicating that it relates directly and logically to its predecessors. "If East Coker were an experiment on unprecedented lines your reviewer would have had some excuse. But the work of a decade and a half has led directly up to it." This remark is intended to establish the proper coherent relations within the body of Eliot's poetry and vindicate its right to figure in the canon of important English verse.

The crucial issue that Leavis raises in this connection is that of impersonality and the possibility of its emergence from a directly personal experience as the body of 'East Coker' shows. This impersonality is attained through Eliot's adept handling of language and in this respect Leavis is tacitly echoing Harding's view of Eliot's 'linguistic achievement or what Eliot calls his intollerable wrestle with words and meanings.

In this exploration of personal experience Eliot is betrayed and eluded by words; a state which reflects the treacheries of personal experience, hence "the spiritual exercise" which Leavis imputes to the poem. This spiritual exercise foreshadows

1. "Mr T.S. Eliot's 'Confession poem of Humility': And Funeral" T.L.S., September 14, 1940, p. 472
2. F.R. Leavis "Letter to T.L.S., September 21, 1940, p. 483
4. ibid, p. 268
'the technique for sincerity' postulated in Leavis's later essay on that poetry. To place *Fast Coker* in the body of Eliot's poetry Leavis contrasts it with *Burnt Norton* on one hand and *The Journey of The Magi* on the other; the first relates it to *Four Quartets* of which it is part and the second to the earlier group of poems of which it makes a whole. Leavis disagrees with Harding on the high rank he accords *Burnt Norton*, and "is more conscious of a procede at work than of any total effect attained." ¹

Leavis argues that *Fast Coker* lacks the positive orientation and tidiness of construction exhibited in *Ash-Wednesday* and *Marina*. It hardly provides a new start. Compared with *The Journey of The Magi* it lacks dramatic quality, and shows a notable looseness of construction. ²

Leavis's longer critique of Eliot's later poetry bears strong evidence to the presence of a social and human morality deducible from the writings of Lawrence and Whitehead; a morality that goes beyond and beneath Eliot's Christianity. Leavis's most articulate statement on the subject is given in the following words:

> The preoccupation is with establishing from among the illusions, evanescences and unrealities of life in time, an apprehension of an assured reality—a reality, that, though necessarily apprehended in time, is not of it. ³

Leavis discerns this transcendental view of reality in *Marina*, a poem for which Leavis's admiration does not wither and to which he later refers as his favourite. Evoking the Shakespearean

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1. *ibid*, p. 268
2. *ibid*, p. 270
heroine, Eliot portrays the father's sense of dismay at the loss of the daughter and the consequent sense of victory over death following upon her reappearance. In passing Leavis points out that the word 'grace' is the only religious term that occurs in this poem and even that word can be interpreted equivocally. This paves the way for his assertion that the later poetry can be appreciated without necessarily sharing the Christian beliefs on which it draws. Again Leavis's main point of emphasis is that the poetry secures its effects not by direct statements but by implication and suggestion and by the evocation of subtle shades of meaning. The Coriolan Poems depict the deficiencies of public life and politics. They rely for their effect on satire and shifts of tone.

As Leavis moves on to his criticism of *Burnt Norton*, however, one becomes conscious of a sense of contradiction. In his review of *East Coker* he had already said

> *Burnt Norton*, as a matter of fact, doesn't seem to me as successful as Harding's account implies. Coming as the poem did, (Leavis reports), at such an interval after the *Ariel* group, it encouraged conclusions regarding the exhausting nature of the effort and conditions represented by *Ash-Wednesday* and *Marina*, which as poems are decided and wonderful successes. Could success of that kind be indefinitely repeated or the attempt? Every attempt a wholly new start?  

Now he describes *Burnt Norton* in the following terms:

> *Burnt Norton* has the effect of being in a special sense a 'new start': It is as if the poet were conducting a radical inquiry into the nature and methods of his exploration. The poem is as purely and essentially a poem as anything else of Mr Eliot's, but it seems to me to be the equivalent in poetry of a philosophical work, to do by strictly poetical means the business of an epistemological and metaphysical inquiry.

1. F.R. Leavis, _op. cit_, p. 283

In this context he seems to forget his earlier disagreement with Harding on the value of the poem and to acquiesce in his verdict. Harding, in the illuminating commentary referred to above, registers this character in his own way when he speaks of the poem as being concerned with the creation of concepts. 1

He further blurs the distinctions he had already drawn between "procede" and "total effect" — a distinction which purports to a differentiation between a mechanical and an organic mode of composition:

> The general propositions of the first ten lines have, by the time we have read the rest of the passage, become clearly part of a procédé and a total effect that belong to poetry, and not to the order of abstraction or discursive prose. 2

Leavis's criticism is seen at its best when he takes up a passage and analyses it. He quotes a passage from *Burnt Norton* containing these lines:

> Footfalls echo in the memory Down the passage which we did not take Towards the door we have never opened Into the rose-garden.

Leavis comments:

> "Footfalls echo" is a fact, and 'memory' becomes the 'passage' which though we did not take it, is thus itself a present fact. Negative and positive aspects of reality are skilfully fused. The 'footfalls' that echo in the "memory" are the assured reality, the passage which we did not take and the door we have never opened are its negative elements, and the totality of negatives and positives forms a complex reality.

Carrying this analysis further Leavis quotes these lines:

> But to what purpose Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves I do not know

On the separation of this last sentence from what preceded it Leavis comments:

1. ibid,
2. ibid, p.65
... in its sudden drop to another plane, to a
distancing comment (it) brings out by contrast
the immediacy of what goes before, while at the
same time contributing directly to the sensuous
presentness of the whole - the words that echo
thus disturb in front of us 'the dust on a bowl of
rose-leaves (dust and rose-leaves together evoke
one of the co-presences of opposing associations
which seem to replace words by immediate sensation
and the whole sentence, of course, relates back
with various allusions of significance to the
rose-garden, and time of the opening paragraph. 1

Contrasted with *Fast Coker* and *Burnt Norton*, *The Dry Salvages*
has neither the personal historical touches of the former nor the
abstract qualities of the latter. It is concerned with dissolving
the habit-created reality of routine experience and commonsense,
with their protective (and constructive) anaesthesias", 2 to
borrow Leavis's words in this connection.

Leavis ends his critique by making the most important point
in the whole argument, namely that the poetry can be enjoyed
without reference to any specific doctrinal frame:

Eliot is known as professing Anglo-Catholicism and
classicism, but his poetry is remarkable for the
extraordinary resources, penetration and stamina
with which it makes its explorations into the concrete
actualities of experience below the conceptual currency
into life that must be the raison d'être of any frame
while there is life at all. 3

This is the judgment which brings in the human morality
of Lawrence and Whitehead.

But engagement with life as humane and individual is also
the major theme underlying Leavis's later criticism of Eliot.

1. *ibid*, p. 66
2. *ibid*, p. 68
3. *ibid*, p. 71
Leavis's Later Criticism of Eliot

This final section will piece together Leavis's views on Eliot the dramatist and the critic. Right from the start it should be said that Leavis's remarks on the dramatic and later critical writings of Eliot are adverse and negative, because he thinks that Eliot's real achievement inheres in his poetry. The plays, he feels, lack the sense of sincerity and engagement with life that characterizes the poetry. He attributes this failure to Eliot's awareness of 'the social world', a phrase which he interprets in terms of the Newtonian and Lockean ethos where the individual is treated 'mathematically and quantitatively'.

In a passage which relates Blake to Dickens and Lawrence, Leavis juxtaposes Blake's achievement with the growing emphasis on the social:

His (Blake's) creative achievement was to redeem the English language for the expression of an intensely individual sensibility; by which I mean that he reversed what happened when the Augustan age set in and the emphasis came to be laid heavily on the social: a man is a social being, yes, he inescapably is; but, as the movement and life of Blake's finest lyrics insist implicitly with such power, a man is an individual and his individuality is his reality. And with his eye on Locke and Newton, Blake points to the continuity running from the creativeness of the artist, and insists that life, while it is life, is of its very nature creative.

Leavis relates Eliot - whose view is that poetry should have the virtues of good prose - to this social world against which Blake reacts.

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p. 102 and Lectures in America, p. 145
2. ibid., pp. 105 - 166
And the poetry of the prose virtues ip general insists
that what (as Eliot puts it) the poet has to say must
be suited to a mode that implies overtly social and
'civilized presentation'. A experience that doesn't
lend itself to such treatment is implicitly told that
it doesn't exist, or is of no consequence. 1

Some pages earlier he has already told us that

Whatever his own delusions about the possibility of a
triumphant alliance between his creative genius and his
weakness for the social world, he can hardly have imagined
a discussible modern poet producing, or trying to produce,
a mode analogous to Marvell's 'urbanity' or 'wit'. 2

To Leavis's mind the plays are associated with 'the social world'.

"The plays belong to the social world, where, as I have said, his genius
didn't function; their unconscious falsity makes them repellent".

Leavis attributes this failure to the ethos of manners, to Eliot's
social conformity rather than the ability to be himself. This
criticism is applied to Eliot's view of Hamlet. In his essay
on Hamlet Eliot says:

Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is
inexpressible because it is in excess of the facts as
they appear. And the supposed identity of Hamlet
with his author is genuine to this point: that Hamlet's
bafflement at the absence of objective equivalent to
his feelings is a prolongation of the bafflement of his
creator in the face of his artistic problem. Hamlet
is up against the difficulty that his disgust is
occasioned by his mother, but that his mother is not an
adequate equivalent for it; his disgust envelops and
exceeds her. It is thus a feeling which he cannot
understand; he cannot objectify it, and it therefore
remains to poison life and obstruct action. 3

Leavis postulates that this judgment reflects back, not on
Shakespeare and Hamlet, but on Eliot and Harry in The Family Reunion:

Our sense that Eliot's essay tells us more about Eliot
than about Shakespeare's Hamlet finds a striking, if
hardly necessary confirmation in Eliot's own Family

1. ibid, p. 105
2. ibid, p. 102
3. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.145
Reunion. It is remarkable how much of his account of the artistic problem facing Shakespeare seems to describe his own problem in writing that play.  

Censuring Eliot for reducing Hamlet to a mere feeling of disgust endured by the hero towards his mother, and for equating the play with what the producer can do with 'the external facts', an approach that empties the play of its inherently rich poetic qualities, Leavis says that it is Harry's emotion that is baffling and inexpressible because it is Eliot himself who does not understand the nature of his hero, and hence fails to objectify it. It is this lack of comprehension that leaves the emotion of the hero to poison life and obstruct action."

John Peter similarly argues that in The Family Reunion, an emotion, personal in origin, is infelicitously transferred to a fictitious setting. The personal experience exhibits itself in the feeling of revulsion voiced by Harry, but this revulsion is hardly given a satisfactory point of emphasis in the text. To render Harry's sense of despair plausible Eliot should have intensified the suggestions giving rise to guilt. Harry's obsessive mood of despair can only be justified by qualms of conscience over the 'murder' of his wife, but the act of murder is strangely and consistently glossed over. On the other hand to ascribe this sense of loss to hereditary reasons is to make Harry an irresponsible lunatic:

To attribute Harry's despair to his neurosis is seriously to risk branding him as an irresponsible path, and in more concrete terms, it is also to locate a prime mover in the play - guilt - outside the compass of the facts as they are presented by the plot.  

1. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, London, Chatto and Windus, 1937, p. 182

Given his present role Harry is reduced to a mere mouthpiece articulating statements which the language of the play does not corroborate. They are 'in excess of the facts' as they appear, to use Eliot's words against his own hero.

If the objective correlative is precisely what is deficient in *Hamlet*, it is equally precisely what is deficient in *The Family Reunion*. Two forces are pulling in opposite directions. The requirement of the total theme on one side, demands that the murder should be as nebulous as possible and on the other, the ferment of the personal experience requires the murder to be a very real and substantial objective correlative. It cannot, however, be both. In effect, Harry becomes (what Eliot would have to believe *Hamlet* becomes) no more than a mouthpiece for obsession, disturbing and impairing the play in which he appears. 1

Another major defect which John Peter notices in the play is the lack of impersonality - the criterion by which Leavis distinguishes Eliot elsewhere and finds absent from this play. Martin Turnell's criticism stresses this point and places particular emphasis on the abstract and unconvincing moralizing of the play. 2

In this context it is opportune to recall one of Leavis's persistent reproaches against Eliot, namely that he blames Lawrence for 'sexual morbidity and insensitivity to ordinary social morality'. Leavis makes these charges reflect back on Eliot himself and keeps on reminding us that it is Eliot's preoccupation with sex that evokes our revulsion and disgust, and that it is his characters who are indifferent to ordinary social and moral codes. Katharine Worth stresses this point saying:

1. ibid, p. 230
It is understandable that he, who criticized D.H. Lawrence's people for their insensitivity to ordinary social morality, should find the prominence of this trait in his own heroes an embarrassment. For their indifference to ordinary social morality is a striking feature of their behaviour; in sexual matters especially, they are airily amoral. Even the gentle Celia feels no qualms of conscience over her adultery with Edward, while Agatha, an eminently ruthless being, glories in her special relation with Harry, described by Eliot himself as ambiguous, which is the fruit of her liaison with his father. 1

Related to this point is Leavis's discussion of The Cocktail Party. 2 This discussion draws on D.W. Harding's analysis of that play and is largely rendered by quotations from it.

Stating the nature of the theme Harding says:

The theme is spread rather thinly over a full-length play and The Cocktail Party, lacking the richer complexity of The Family Reunion, relies a great deal on the devices of stage entertainment, amusing dialogue, unexpected twists of incident, delayed disclosures and a slight air of mystification. 3

Reilly combines psychotherapy with spiritual guidance. Assisted by agents like Julia and Alex, he assumes the role of a professional consultant helping people like Celia Coplestone and Peter Quilpe. Within the framework of the play Eliot wants to maintain an atmosphere in which the supernatural and the mundane blend. Harding says:

2. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and the University, pp. 145-146 and Lectures in America, pp. 50-51
The danger is of a slight cheapness creeping in. It is hard, for instance, to see a serious purpose in Reilly's account of his original intuition (expressed in an apparition) that Celia was destined to a violent death. It seems beside the point: the significance of her choice was unconnected with the variety of death to which she was on her way, and presumably Reilly's help would have been equally available to such a person whether she was to die from violence, disaster or old age. It seems to be one of the incidents that fills out the stage play without being required by the dramatic theme.

John Peter on the other hand says: "Edward is in fact, in a position analogous to the ostentatious professor of virtue". Peter further argues that Celia's character at the beginning of the play was convincing, but as the play proceeds, the other characters begin to magnify her character "that it cracks, and allows her validity as a symbol to drain away".

Harding ascribes this dramatic incoherence and untidiness to a 'psychological over-simplification in the central argument:

Eliot offers the view that only a small number of chosen or doomed people, the saints, like Celia, can take the course that leads towards selfless love, in the sense of something fully outside themselves. Apart from these few saints everyone is relegated to the condition of the chamberlaynes and the very possibility of a deeply satisfying human love is excluded without argument.

Leavis on the other hand interprets Eliot's attempt at creating an atmosphere of the 'supernatural' in the play as a token of unconscious insincerity, a lack of grapple with the

1. ibid, p.144
3. ibid, p.63
4. D.W. Harding, op.cit, p.144
technologico-Benthamite civilization and a departure from genuine concern with intrinsic moral and human values. 1

Expressing his dissatisfaction with Eliot the dramatist Leavis draws on the principle of the interrelationship between literature and life - a principle consistent with the writings of Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. Leavis says:

The discussion of drama in general suffers from the same weakness (the incapacity to relate literature to life); the examination of the possibility and the practical problem of poetic drama comes from a mind in which the thinking about matters of form and technique hasn't the life, grapple, and force that critical thought cannot have apart from the habit of full engagement - the habit that manifests itself in the kind of preoccupation with value, significance, and responsibility to life that makes it impossible to talk about 'purely literary values'. 2

Hence Leavis, by implication, ascribes Eliot's failure as a dramatist to his critical ideas, ideas that favour the isolation of literature from life and the consideration of literature as an exclusive academic and intellectual pursuit. This leads logically to Leavis's later strictures on Eliot's criticism and poetry.

The most positive contribution which Leavis imputes to Eliot as critic is that of The Sacred Wood which he describes as 'a rare thing, a fine intelligence in literary criticism,' 3 and speaking in general terms he recommends the early essays as they possess "critical intelligence". He singles out for particular commendation that revealing dictum of Eliot:

Sensibility alters from generation to generation whether we will or no, but expression is only altered by a man of genius. 4

The significance of this statement for Leavis is twofold. First

1. F.R. Leavis, Lectures in America, p.51
2. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina, p.19c
3. ibid, p. 178
it brings home one of his favourite critical ideas; namely the doctrine of historical relativity and secondly it confers upon Eliot the practitioner the high quality of being a genius 'who - after the long post-Swinburnian arrest, - altered expression'.

This realization of the crucial importance of changing expression leads Leavis to postulate that Eliot's best, his important, criticism has an immediate relation to his technical problems; after the Victorian stagnation Eliot was faced with the very problem of altering expression. Leavis qualifies this view by noting that it does not follow that the criticism is of greater value than the poetry, on the contrary, the poetry can stand on its own merits without much need for the criticism. The service which the criticism has rendered the poetry is that it has created a new climate of opinion congenial to the proper appreciation of that poetry. Furthermore the criticism has brought into fuller consciousness the indispensable need for continuity from the past to the present: that is the sense of tradition.

From these positive merits Leavis moves to his strictures on Eliot - strictures that largely emerge from Leavis's preoccupation with life as embodied in human individuals. This preoccupation is induced in him by the writings of Lawrence and Whitehead. These strictures centre mainly on Eliot's 'Tradition and The Individual Talent', and the notion of the 'objective correlative' formulated in his essay on Hamlet. Related to these are two further points: Eliot's conventionality of judgment and his association with The Bloomsbury Group.

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1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 178
Leavis's adverse remarks on 'Tradition and The Individual Talent' are usually provoked by the constant presence in his mind of the kind of creativity represented by Lawrence. Contrary to the prevailing tendency that takes 'Tradition and The Individual Talent' as an example of cogent thought, Leavis reports that the essay is "notable for its ambiguities, its fallaciousness and the aplomb of its equivocations and its specious cogency".¹

Picking on Eliot's notion of the artist as a mere medium, a shred of platinum, a catalyst, exerting no force whatsoever on the creative activity, Leavis turns to the opposite example of Lawrence who asserts that without the distinguished individual, distinguished by reason of his potency as a conduit of urgent life, and by the profound and sensitive responsibility he gives proof of towards his living experience there is no art that matters.²

Exposing Eliot's specious logic, Leavis argues that the shred of platinum with which the mind of the artist is identified cannot in any possible way 'digest and transmute the passions which are its materials. Digestion and transmutation are human operations carried out by the effective agency of the human organs, and not by an inert medium like the shred of platinum. To digest and transmute - Leavis observes - the medium should be in full control of its material, but this assumption is ruled out by Eliot's contention that the feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations. That is to say that they are left to take care of themselves, and the creative

¹. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, p. 179
². Ibid, p. 179
process is now left to the hazard of chance. Leavis wonders how one can call such haphazard combinations an act of creation or more exactly 'the mind which creates' (the emphasis on the creativity of the human mind takes on a particular significance with the creativity of Lawrence and Blake now in the forefront of Leavis's attention). Eliot's subsequent remarks serve to emphasize the inactivity of an inherently active human faculty: the human mind. Under the impact of the benumbing theory of Eliot it has been reduced to a mere receptacle.

The poet's mind is, in fact, a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together. 1

How can a receptacle exert the pressure under which the fusion takes place? The question is left unanswered. Yvor Winters whose critical tone bears a noticeable resemblance to that of Leavis raises the same kind of query:

He (Eliot) does not say whether this intensity is a function of the inert mind of the poet or an accident affecting the mind from without. Nor if we try to interpret the figure, to translate it into plain language, can we determine what is meant either by inertness or by intensity nor can we guess what occurs when the poet writes, the entire process is a mystery. 2

And like Leavis, Winters adopts a view in which the creative process is one of moral evaluation of human experience.

Leavis sets Eliot's statement "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers from the mind which creates" against the kind of creativity

1. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.19
represented by great artists like Tolstoy, Lawrence, Shakespeare and George Eliot and argues that the word 'separate' here would not be meaningful because their creativity makes for an integrity and inseparability between the man who suffers and the mind which creates; and concludes that in writing this statement Eliot has Flaubert in mind. The integrity and inseparability of the man who suffers from the mind which creates prompts Leavis to advocate the reciprocity, the natural interaction between art and life, a principle that underlies the writings of Lawrence, the organic philosophy of Whitehead, the efficacy of individual life highlighted in the writings of Collingwood and Polanyi. Leavis comments:

In contemplating the work of one of the great creative powers we don't find ourselves impelled to think of the pressure of the artistic process as something apart from the pressure of the living, the living life and the lived experience out of which the work has issued. 1

In making this point Leavis argues for a coherent order that has been shattered by Eliot. It may be pertinent to indicate that in his description of the creative process Eliot uses terms such as 'Catalysis', 'medium', 'shred of platinum', and in diagnosing the achievement of the Metaphysicals in the realm of creative art he says:

The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. 2

The question that immediately comes to mind is how can a mechanism that devours things create? Is it not a contradiction in terms to assign an inherently intuitive faculty to the devouring maw

1. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, p.181
2. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.287
of the machine? The very nature of creation being essentially human jars against this mechanization. The situation is further complicated when Eliot qualifies these poets as having "a sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling," apprehension and recreation are characteristic mental activities showing the human mind vitally at work, but in retrospect, they are eclipsed by the mechanical regularity of the machine.

As for the 'objective correlative' Leavis argues that the first inadequacy of this notion is displayed in the reduction of Hamlet to a mood of disgust evoked in Hamlet by his mother. Without having a first hand experience Eliot placidly takes over the assumptions made by J.M. Robertson and E.E. Stoll and what is worse is that he builds on them a concept that the text does not fully reinforce.

Leavis draws on Lawrence's counterbalancing account of the play in Twilight in Italy where Lawrence shifts the focus of interest from Hamlet's preoccupation with the sense of disgust towards his mother to the lively representation of the father, whom Hamlet idolizes. The image of the murdered father, who stands in Hamlet's mind, for the ideals of royalty and virtue provides a new cue for an essential appreciation of the play. 1

When Eliot considers Coriolanus and Antony and Cleopatra as Shakespeare's consummate works of art, Leavis expresses his surprise at the neglect of Macbeth and Measure for Measure (the latter is associated in Eliot's mind with Hamlet, and hence a failure). In Leavis's view these last two plays are

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, pp. 162-165
instances of Shakespeare's sureness of grasp whereas Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus lack the fuller engagement Shakespeare exhibits in the other great tragedies. Following up the ramifications of Eliot's argument Leavis elicits there a Flaubertian sense of withdrawal and rejection of life.

There is in Eliot's criticism abundant evidence of negative attitudes towards life, attitudes of disgust and fear and rejection, that play a part of which he is not properly conscious; entailing as they do the Flaubertian kind of self contradiction; they portend radical failure of wholeness and coherence in him; and consequently a defeat of intelligence.

This negative attitude towards life is attributable to his over-estimation of French literature and la poésie pure.

Identifying Eliot's impersonality with a strained intellectuality that is hostile to human living and creativity Leavis suggests that it is this defective approach that prompts Eliot to elevate someone like Landor to the status of a major poet.

Moving on to Eliot's conventionality of judgment Leavis asserts that it is displayed in his parroting of conventional assessments such as his rating of Spenser's Faerie Queene as a long poem in the first-rank. This conventionality is seen at its most disastrous in his appraisal of Congreve's The Way of The World as superior in maturity to any play Shakespeare ever wrote. In this respect Eliot says:

... We cannot but feel that a play like Congreve's Way of the World is in some way more mature than any of Shakespeare's; but only in this respect, that it reflects a more mature society, that is, it reflects a greater maturity of manners.

1. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina, p. 183
2. T.S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p. 56
This superficial evaluation rests on the highly rated qualities of wit, and refinement of style, attributed to the Augustans. The second manifestation of this conventionality is seen in Eliot's preference of Joyce to Lawrence. This preference, in Leavis's view, is temperamental because it harps on the theme of pure art which furnishes the common ground on which Joyce and the early Eliot met and for the elaboration of which Eliot is partly indebted to Joyce. Needless to say, this doctrine of 'pure art' is adverse to the claims for human life and individuality which Leavis and Lawrence, and with them Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi champion.

In opting for Joyce Eliot is restricting his range of experience to the fragmentary and insular to the exclusion of the comprehensive sense of interrelationships envisioned in Lawrence's works.

Closely associated with this is the biased tone governing Eliot's glorification of social celebrities. This glorification emanates either from intimate personal acquaintance or from high social repute. His overvaluation of Lyndham Lewis stems from close personal acquaintance, that of W. P. Ker arises from social prestige; Charles Whibley is accorded greatness simply because he was a "current social literary value".

This conventionality of tone and the antipathy to Lawrence naturally bring in the Bloomsbury theme. It was by The Hogarth Press then sponsored by Virginia and Leonard Woolf that both *The Waste Land* and *Homage to John Dryden* were first published in England. If we set that fact aside, what then is the main reason for Leavis's complaint against the group to whom Eliot was loyal?

Very briefly, he thinks they constituted a coterie intent
on the elaboration of what seemed to them to be the over-ridingly significant aesthetic values of art, and of visual art in particular; for the ideal of which they looked to France; and as a group they showed a general distaste for Lawrence.

In his criticism of 'Eliot as Critic', Leavis complains both of Eliot's over-estimation of Virginia Woolf and the consequent under-rating of Lawrence, and his introduction of David Garnett to a French sophisticated public as 'a master English writer' on the strength that he belonged to the Bloomsbury elite. In another context Leavis says:

It is true that the Bloomsbury of the 1920 went in for the dix-huitieme and had produced Lytton Strachey and Clive Bell's coterie manifesto entitled 'Civilization' and that Bloomsbury (in a patronizing way) took up Eliot who let himself be taken up. 1

John Keith Johnstone tells us that the circle were mainly interested in the aesthetic appreciation of art, and in the creation of a climate of opinion countering Victorian morality and sentimentality. 2

But James Smith hits the nail on the head when he suggests that Eliot's purity of interest in art to the exclusion of the human mind and personality can be partly attributed to Clive Bell's book 'Art'. This book, he says, contains many terms, phrases, sentences even, which Eliot - I would say - no more than echoes .... Clive Bell's views provided matter for lively discussion by the Bloomsbury Group during the years when Eliot, newly arrived in London, cultivated more than 'a nodding acquaintance with its members'. 3

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University p. 102


But what is there in Clive Bell's *Art* that inclined Eliot to a 'purity of interest in art'? I would risk the following lengthy quotation as expressive of the exclusive and parochial aesthetic interests of the group - interests that negate vital human values:

The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life... it is tempting to suppose that the emotion which exalts has been transmitted through the forms we contemplate by the artist who created them. If this be so the transmitted emotion, whatever it may be, must be of such a kind that it can be expressed in any sort of form... Now the emotion that artists express comes to some of them from the apprehension of material things; and the formal significance of any material thing is the significance of that thing considered as an end in itself. But if an object considered as an end in itself moves us more profoundly (i.e. has greater significance) than the same object considered as a means to practical ends or as a thing related to human interests - and this undoubtedly is the case - we can only suppose that when we consider anything as an end in itself we become aware of that in it which is of greater moment than any qualities it may have acquired from keeping company with human beings. 1

Again he says:

In so far as a picture is a work of art, it has no more to do with dogmas or doctrines, facts, or theories than with the interests and emotions of daily life. 2

Defining the function of art he restricts it exclusively to the production of good states of mind. 3

Lytton Strachey, like Clive Bell, is an advocate of 'significant form' which in its Bloomsbury sense means 'the aesthetically moving form'. 4

Lawrence makes some sarcastic remarks on the doctrine in his "Introduction to These Paintings" when he likens it to "a form of masturbation", 5 and Leavis approvingly refers to these

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2. *ibid*, p. 94
3. *ibid*, p. 113
4. *ibid*, p. 8
5. D.H. Lawrence, *Phoenix I*, p. 567
remarks in his review of the reissued Phoenix. In that introduction Lawrence points to Cezanne's dilemma as residing in a conflict between mind and intuition, and argues that...

... great discoveries of science and real works of art are made by the whole consciousness of man working together in unison and oneness, instinct, intuition, mind, intellect all fused into one complete consciousness. 2

Eliot on the other hand shows a marked and one-sided bias for intelligence. In 'The Perfect Critic' he says:

Aristotle had what is called the scientific mind, a mind which, as it is rarely found among scientists except in fragments, might better be called the intelligent mind. For there is no other intelligence than this, and so far as artists and men of letters are intelligent (we may doubt whether the level of intelligence among men of letters is as high as among men of science) their intelligence is of this kind. 3

In a review of Middleton Murry's 'Synthesis' Eliot wrestles with Murry's opposed terms 'intuition' and 'intelligence' endorsing intelligence and ostracizing intuition as an irresponsible Romantic criterion. 4

Thus it is Lawrence, and not Eliot that provides Leavis with a combination, a synthesis of both intelligence and sensibility, or what Leavis himself, in his review of Max Eastman's 'The Literary Mind' calls "sensitiveness of intelligence". 5

But Lawrence's advocacy of 'the whole consciousness of man', of 'unison' and 'oneness', does not only anticipate Lawrence's philosophy of vitalism discussed in the next chapter, but also Whitehead's philosophy of organism, and the integrative ideas of Collingwood and Polanyi.

2. ibid, pp. 573-574
CHAPTER 3

LEAVIS and LAWRENCE

"It is life we have to live by, not machines and Ideals"

*Fantasia of The Unconscious*, p.152

"Man is himself the vivid body of life", *Phoenix I*, p.431

In this chapter Leavis's dealings with Lawrence will be considered with a view to demonstrating the seminal ideas in Lawrence that bear on Leavis's critical practice. For the sake of both economy and convenience this chapter will be subdivided into sectional headings including:

i. Leavis's reasons for admiring Lawrence, i.e. points in common between them. This section will inevitably entail a consideration of Lawrence's critical and philosophical ideas.

ii. Leavis's change of emphasis in the course of his criticism of Lawrence. In other words Leavis's *Minority Press Pamphlet* on Lawrence will be set, for contrast and comparison, against his book *D.H. Lawrence Novelist*, and the other later essays.

iii. Lawrence Versus Eliot: Leavis's demonstration.

These headings may overlap as a result of the interrelation of the topics under consideration.

The course of this discussion will be largely controlled by an attempt to establish a relationship between its leading ideas and those outlined in the chapters on Santayana, Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi.
Leavis’s Reasons for Admiring Lawrence

Paying a handsome tribute to Lawrence Leavis in his introduction to *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, says:

I myself, in this book, am dealing with a writer who has been for me a major contemporary fact. I read him first before the war of 1914. I read a tale by him (not one of the good ones, but it made an impression on me) in Ford Madox Hueffer’s *English Review*, to which I subscribed at school, didn’t remember if I ever noticed the name of the author, but I found, when in 1919 having for the first time the opportunity to begin exploring contemporary literature, I took down *The Prussian Officer* from the First Class shelves of The Cambridge Union, and I registered that the author I had read six or seven years before was D.H. Lawrence. From then on I read him pretty steadily.

And later on reviewing the reissued *Phoenix* Leavis says:

Since, in 1936, the year of its original publication, I first read *Phoenix* through, it has seemed to me immeasurably the finest body of criticism in existence (and Lawrence left a good deal more critical writing than is included here). I am not, of course, claiming to speak out of a knowledge of all the criticism there is, but expressing my conviction that no collection as valuable can be found. The interest and profit it yields seem to me inexhaustible. I still find, every time I open it, new things to remember and to use, what a difference it would have made to me as an undergraduate, I tell myself.

This recognition of the influential role of Lawrence is bound to give rise to the inevitable question: What is there in Lawrence that Leavis found appealing and in what way did it affect his critical orientations? This question can be partly answered if we remember that for Leavis in 1955 Lawrence was “still the great writer of our phase of civilization.” The kind of importance he attached to him may be judged in part by the use made of the passage from *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*:

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There was a gap in the continuity of consciousness almost American, but industrial really. What next?  

In Culture and Environment Lawrence's perception of the loss of organic community constitutes the axis upon which the whole book turns. The diagnostic nature of the chapter in Lady Chatterley's Lover, from which Leavis quotes for the confirmation of one of his main points of interest is instructive. Lawrence depicts the people of the present phase of civilization as 

a people in whom the living intuitive faculty was dead as nails, and only queer, mechanical yells and uncanny will power remained.  

This Waste-land type of life has arisen because Shakespeare's England was blotted out, and replaced by  

a new race of mankind over-conscious in the money, and social and political side, on the spontaneous and intuitive side dead.  

It may be relevant to remark in passing that Leavis's deep-seated distaste for American society and life is probably inspired by Laurentian directives.  

The introduction to Culture and Environment which sets the tone for the whole book, is closely related to the Laurentian point of view (expressed in Chapter 12 of Lady Chatterley's Lover). Leavis says: 

What we have lost is the organic community with the living culture it embodied. Folk-songs, folk-dances, Cotswold Cottages and handicraft products are signs and expressions of something more, an art of life, a way of living ordered and patterned.

3. Ibid.  
4. This point is elaborated, and, in a sense, qualified in the introduction to this thesis.
involving social arts, codes of intercourse and a responsive adjustment growing out of immemorial experience to the natural environment and the rhythm of the year. 1

The phrase "rhythm of the year" can be found also in Lawrence's A propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover. 2 To Lawrence's mind the industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic but mechanical. 3

This is the "plight" (to use a term common to both Lawrence and Leavis) of our civilization. The blackness and ugliness that accompanied industrial life and engulfed the whole of England is acutely realized by Lawrence in images that strike a responsive chord in Leavis.

... the blackened brick dwellings, the black slate roofs glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal-dust, the pavements wet and black. It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty. 4

This is the Lawrence whom Leavis associates with Dickens.

Leavis's reaction to this symptomatic decadence can be gauged by his commentary on this description.

There are those who think D.H. Lawrence the greatest man of our time, and the reason is that he did more than anyone else to awake and spread a realization of what had happened. He devoted his splendid genius to making it impossible for us


4. ibid, p.173 and in Leavis's Culture and Environment, p.95.
to ignore the nature of our loss.¹

It is in this connection and under the impetus of this Lawrentian vision that Leavis develops two of his major critical terms - terms that assume central roles in his later critical discourse: normality and health². Leavis is aware that there is no going back, but we have got to halt this terrible advance of the machine or at least to slacken it to preserve a measure of normality and health. Indeed Lawrence himself seems to be speaking for Leavis when he says:

Nothing will excuse us from the responsibility of living even death is no excuse. We have to live. So we may as well live fully. We are doomed to live. And therefore it is not the smallest use running into pis aller and trying to shirk the responsibility of living. We can't get out of it.

And therefore the only thing to do is to undertake the responsibility with good grace. What responsibility? The responsibility of establishing a new system: a new organic system, free as far as ever it can be from automation or mechanism: a system which depends on the profound spontaneous soul of men.³

"Responsibility" and "responsibility towards life" have become key-terms in Leavis's critical discussion.⁴ This concern for living,

1. *ibid*, p.94.
2. "normal" occurs on p.97 and "health" on p.95 of *Culture and Environment*.
4. The term "responsibility" makes its appearance in *Revaluation*, p.179, and "responsibility for life" occurs in D.H. Lawrence *Novelist*, p.60. "Responsibility towards life" is also used in Leavis's address at the University of Nottingham, (ed) H. Coombes, D.H. Lawrence, p.404; "responsibility towards life" occurs in Anna Karenina, p.22, "responsibility towards life" is also used in Leavis's Introduction to Peter Coweney's *The Image of Childhood*, p.21, "human responsibility" is used in *English Literature in Our Time and The University*, p.108; "responsibility towards life" is used in Dickens *The Novelist*, p.278 and human responsibility is repeated nine times in Leavis's introductory chapter to *Nor Shall my Sword*, pp. 11-26.
for spontaneity and human responsibility can be contrasted with Eliot's view of tradition - a view that denies the individual the right to express himself. Here it must be noted that the social overtones of Lawrence's criticism inevitably infringe on the strictly literary implications of his critical writings. Juxtaposing Eliot's narrow view of tradition with Lawrence's concern with life and health Leavis says

... those of us who find no such approach to tradition (the approach based on a narrowly Christian interpretation) possible can only cultivate the sense of health we have. 1

The sense of health suggested by Leavis is the inalienable claim of personality that lends immediacy and livingness to human experience (livingness is a crucial term in the framework of both Leavis's and Lawrence's critical apparatus) 2. It is in terms of that livingness and health that Leavis vindicates the creative achievement of Lawrence:

My aim is to win clear recognition for the nature of Lawrence's greatness. Any great creative writer who has not had his due is a power for life wasted. But the insight, the wisdom, the revived and re-educated feeling for health, that Lawrence brings, are what, as our civilization goes, we desperately need. 3

It is in terms of this vitality and health again that Leavis relates Lawrence to both Dickens and Blake. They have in common a profound sense of life - a responsibility towards living that is opposed to

the inanimate classicism of Eliot, and in this sense they have
indisputably contributed to the "human heritage".

Something of indisputable high value the Romantic
movement brought to the human heritage was a distinctive
sense of responsibility towards life. Lawrence
implicitly invokes this truth in the comment with which
he dismisses Eliot's classicism. 1

Leavis argues that Eliot's "impersonality has for essential
purpose to deny that art expresses or in any way involves a
responsibility towards life" 2, and Lawrence in maintaining that
"The time to be impersonal has gone. We start from the joy we have
in being ourselves, and everything must take colour from that joy" 3,
helps to regain that sense of responsibility. To associate Lawrence
with Blake and Dickens 4 and with the Romantic tradition in general
is to point to a significant direction in which Lawrence's criticism
definitely moves; namely "the spontaneity and fullness of life" 5
that is the antithesis of Eliot's sense of restraint and bookish view
of tradition. Here it may be worthwhile to outline Lawrence's
vitalistic philosophy - a philosophy that has appealed to Leavis's
mind and which has Whiteheadian reverberations.

1. F.R. Leavis, Dickens the Novelist, p.276.
2. ibid.
4. Leavis has already associated Lawrence with the moral tradition
   of George Eliot, cf the chapters on Santayana and Eliot.
Lawrence advocates a philosophy of dynamism in which life or rather livingness inheres in a state of flux, a state of constant activity rather than of fixity or stasis. He conceives of life in terms of a conflict between polar opposites. To ensure continuity and dynamism these opposites must go on clashing with each other. The lion and the unicorn should go on fighting each other without final victory or defeat for any of them because it would mean the cessation of life:

But think if the lion really destroyed, killed the unicorn, not merely drove him out of town, but annihilated him, would not the lion at once expire, as if he had created a vacuum around himself? Is not the Unicorn necessary to the very existence of the lion, is not each opposite kept in stable equilibrium by the opposition of the other?

This is a terrible position to have for a raison d'être, a purpose, which if once fulfilled, would of necessity entail the cessation from existence of both opponents. They would both cease to be if either of them really won in the fight which is their sole reason for existing. 1

Emphasizing the need for the perpetuation of that conflict as a conflict that is essential for the continuation of life he again says:

And there is no rest, no cessation from the conflict. For we are two opposites which exist by virtue of our inter-opposition. Remove the opposition, and there is a collapse a sudden crumbling into universal nothingness. 2

So it is in that constant opposition of the lion to the unicorn, the darkness to the light that life resides. This is more or less the Whiteheadian view underlined in Process and Reality. 3 Again this philosophy obviously rules out the notion of the absolute and asserts a view of human and moral relativity. "We are in sad need

2. ibid, p.368.
3. cf the Chapter on Whitehead.
of a theory of human relativity"; and again he says "morality is a delicate act of adjustment on the soul's part, not a rule or prescription", and once again he says "morality is of temporary value, useful to its times". The darkness which Lawrence identified with the womb from which man has originally emerged is inconceivable without its integrative counterpart - the light which Lawrence equates with the soul to which we ultimately aspire.

If there is universal infinite darkness, then there is universal infinite light, for there cannot exist a specific infinite save by virtue of the opposite and equivalent infinite. So that if there be universal infinite darkness in the beginning, there must be universal light in the end. And these are two relative halves.

Into the womb of the primary darkness enters the ray of ultimate light, and time is begotten, conceived there is the beginning of the end. And there within the womb we ripen upon the beginning, till we become aware of the end. 4

The last two sentences in this quotation could furnish the thematic groundwork of Eliot's *Four Quartets* where the statements: in my beginning is my end and in my end is my beginning, have become familiar tags, but this point will be elaborated upon later. What is relevant to the present discussion is the notion of relativity that has been adopted by Leavis, and for which Lawrence, among others, is certainly responsible. But the notion of relativity is given adequate expression in the field in which Leavis is - under Lawrentian impulsion - remarkably interested, that is the novel everything says Lawrence - is relative - every commandment that ever issued out of the mouth of God or man is strictly relative; adhering to the particular time, place, and

2. *ibid*, p.54, p.475.
circumstance. And this is the beauty of the novel;  
everything is true in its own relationship and no further.  

And again he says

The novel is the highest form of human expression so  
far attained. Why? Because it is so incapable of the  
absolute. In the novel everything is relative to everything  
else, if that novel is art at all.  

Leavis in his turn, stressing the historical element of that relativity  
raises this quality to the status of a critical maxim saying

Major quality in a creative writer manifests itself in his  
being very exceptionally alive to his age and responsive to  
its deeper-lying spiritual stresses and sicknesses.  

Yet one cannot leave Lawrence’s view of the novel without making one  
or two remarks. First that when Leavis quotes Lawrence’s contention  
that “the novel is a great discovery far greater than Galileo’s  
telescope or somebody else’s wireless”, Leavis is endorsing a view  
whose implications are worked out in his own critical practice. He  
talks of Lawrence as the great novelist of our phase of civilization,  
and devotes special attention to the novel as a literary genre  
thinking that the present age is the age of the novel - a view already  
expressed by Lawrence.

One may contend that if New Bearings and Revaluation were written  
under direct Eliotic influences, The Great Tradition is at the cross­  
road between Eliot and Lawrence, and D.H. Lawrence: Novelist,  
Dickens the Novelist, Anna Karenina and other Essays were inspired  
by Lawrentian suggestions, and that Lectures in America, English  
Literature in our Time and The University, and Nor Shall My Sword.

3. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.121.  
4. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and other Essays, p.11.
have Lawrence, Whitehead, Collingwood and to a certain extent, Polanyi as guiding principles, although such schismatic discrepancy is arbitrary, and hardly possible in the field of criticism where so many divergent elements come to merge and overlap. Together with this principle of relativity adequately exhibited in the novel, there is the added virtue of portraying the flux, the fluctuation of our psychic life, and hence it supremely embodies Lawrence's vitalistic philosophy. In this context a quotation from Lady Chatterley's Lover — one that is favourite to Leavis — is in place:

'It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel properly handled can reveal the most secret places of our life, for it is in the pasional secret places of life above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and refreshing.'

The cue here is towards the substrata of consciousness, the significant layers of experience that lie dormant in our life and which are mostly suppressed by our constant intellectualizing by our wilful thinking:

'By willing and intellectualizing we have done all we can, for the time being. We only exhaust ourselves and lose our lives — that is our livingness — our power to live, by any further straining of the will and the intellect. It is time to take our hands off the throttle, knowing well enough what we are about, and choosing our course of action with a steady heart.'

1. Leavis's interest in this passage goes far back to the early pamphlet titled D.H. Lawrence, Cambridge, Minority press, 1930, p.10.


This insistence on the instinctual and passional flow of life has a
twofold value for both Lawrence and Leavis. First it constitutes a
reaction against ideas and ideals; against conventions and social
masks; and directs attention to genuine life - life springing from
natural and real impulses; and it is in terms of this naturalness
and reality that Leavis develops his comments on the achievement
of Lawrence both as a novelist and as a critic. These comments turn
out to require the critical tools characteristic of Leavis’s critical
machinery. 'Reality' and 'sincerity' are two crucial terms that
Leavis applies to the evaluation of works of art and they are largely
inspired by such Lawrentian intimations. But an understanding of the
full implications of Lawrence’s philosophy necessitates that this
life of the unconscious should be pursued in more detail:

once we can admit the known, but incomprehensible presence
of the integral unconscious; once we can trace it home
in ourselves, and follow its first received movements,
once we know how it habitually unfolds itself, then at
last we can begin to live from the spontaneous initial
prompting, instead of the dead-machine principles of
ideas and ideals. There is a whole science of the
creative unconscious, the unconscious in its law-abiding
activities. 1

Lawrence’s claims for a spontaneous kind of life has far-
reaching effects. First, like his philosophy of vitalism, of the
dynamic "circumambient universe" it abolishes the conclusiveness
and finality of scientific and mental processes.

To know is to lose - when I have a finished mental concept
of a beloved, or a friend, then the love and the friend-
ship is dead. It falls to the level of an acquaintance.
As soon as I have a finished mental conception, a full
idea even of myself, then dynamically I am dead. To
know is to die. 2

And by "knowledge" here Lawrence means an overemphasis on
intellectual and mental pursuits at the expense of the indispensable
flow of physical and unconscious energy. In another context he

Books, p.216.
2. Ibid, p.72.
wages war against ideas and mental concepts saying

An idea which is merely introduced into the brain, and started spinning there like some outrageous insect, is the cause of all our misery today. Instead of living from the spontaneous centres, we live from the head. We chew, chew, chew at some theory, some idea. 1

To wage this life-long war against theories and ideas is also and simultaneously to question the validity of scientific facts and the utility of mechanical civilization. Lawrence says:

I honestly think that the great pagan world of which Egypt and Greece were the lasting living terms, the great pagan world which preceded our own era once, had a vast and perhaps perfect science of its own, a science in terms of life. In our era this science crumbled into magic and charlatanry. 2

In another context he says:

Let us look at a great seated statue of Rameses, or at Etruscan tombs, let us read of Assiburnipal or Darius and then say: How do our modern factory workers show beside the delicate Egyptian friezes of the common people of Egypt? or our Trafalgar Square lions beside those of Mycene? Civilization? It is revealed rather in sensitive life than in inventions: and have we anything as good as the Egyptians of two or three thousand years before Christ as a people? Culture and civilization are tested by vital consciousness. Are we more vitally conscious than an Egyptian 3000 years B.C. was? Are we? Probably we are less. 3

This switch to an old and coherent system of civilization is coupled with an attack on the modern mechanical civilization.

It is life - says Lawrence. We have to live by, not machines and ideals. 4

Aldous Huxley reports that Lawrence's dislike of science was passionate and expressed itself in the most fantastically unreasonable terms.

1. ibid, pp. 82-83.
2. ibid, p.12.
'All scientists are liars' he would say, when I brought up some experimentally established fact which he happened to dislike. Liars, liars. It was a most convenient theory. I remember in particular one long and violent argument on evolution, in the reality of which Lawrence passionately disbelieved. 'But look at the evidence, Lawrence,' I insisted, 'look at the evidence'. His answer was characteristic. 'But I don't care about the evidence. Evidence doesn't mean anything to me. I don't feel it here', and he pressed his two hands on his solar plexus. 1

Lawrence himself repudiates rational and rigid scientific thinking which does not take count of our emotional nature.

Man thought and still thinks in images. But now our images have hardly any emotional value. We always want a "conclusion" an end, we always want to come, in our mental processes, to a decision, a finality, a full stop. This gives us a sense of satisfaction. All our mental consciousness is a movement onwards, a movement in stages, like our sentences, and every full stop is a milestone that marks our "progress" and our arrival somewhere. On and on we go, for the mental consciousness. Whereas of course there is no goal, Consciousness is an end in itself...

While men still thought of the heart or the liver as the seat of consciousness, they had no idea of this on and on process of thought. To them a thought was a completed state of feeling - awareness, a cumulative thing, a deepening thing, in which feeling deepened into feeling in consciousness till there was a sense of fullness. 2

This reversion to a harmonious kind of life is of a focal importance as it attempts to maintain the spontaneity of life without being hampered by too much intellectualization. Through this spontaneity our imagination is given full play, and contrary to methodical and rational expectations, the finest and highest level of perception is attained. The knowledge so far attained is intuitive knowledge

... and our imaginative life is a great joy and fulfilment to us, for the imagination is a more powerful and more comprehensive flow of consciousness than our ordinary flow. In the flow of true imagination we know in full, mentally and physically at once, in a greater enkindled awareness. At the maximum of our imagination we are religious. And if we deny our imagination, and have no imaginative life, we are poor


worms who have never lived. ¹

This life from the deep centre, from the spontaneous flow is what Leavis designates as the morality of art, and here the affinity between Leavis and Lawrence is obvious.

Leavis recognizes the potency of this when in his essay on Wordsworth in *Revaluation* he defines Wordsworth's morality in Lawrentian terms:

Wordsworth's preoccupation was with a distinctively human naturalness, with sanity and spiritual health... His mode of preoccupation, it is true, was that of a mind intent always upon ultimate sanctions, and upon the living connexions between man and the extra-human Universe; it was, that is, in the same sense as Lawrence's was, religious. ²

But this persistent claim for a spontaneous and organic kind of life makes for another leading principle dear to both Lawrence and Leavis namely the integrity and independence of human individuals.

There is only one clue to the Universe. And that is the individual soul within the individual being. That outer Universe of suns and moons and atoms is a secondary affair.³

And in the same context he says

life is individual, and always will be. Life consists of living individuals and always did so consist, in the beginning of everything. ⁴

Therefore he discredits all attempts made by scientists and idealists at anatomizing and rationalizing life

... it is time for the idealist and the scientist - they are one and the same really - to stop his monkey-jargon about the atom and the origin of life, and the mechanical clue to the Universe. There isn't any such thing. ⁵

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² F.R. Leavis, *Revaluation*, p.165.

³ D.H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, p.150.


Elaborating on this challenging topic Lawrence says in another context:

This causeless created nature of the individual being is the same as the old mystery of the divine nature of the soul. Religion was right and science was wrong. Every individual creature has a soul, a specific individual nature the origin of which cannot be found in any cause-and-effect process whatever. Cause-and-effect will not explain even the individuality of a single dandelion. There is no assignable cause, and no logical reason for individuality. On the contrary, individuality appears in defiance of all scientific law, in defiance even of reason. 1

Leavis almost verbally repeats that concept saying:

Life is a necessary word; but what it denotes is there only in the individual. Psychology is individual psychology and is still that in its dealings with individuals in mutual relation. I mean psychology as a gifted novelist is concerned with it. A great novelist's interest in the individual focus engages a profound and conscious exploratory preoccupation with what the indispensable word "life" portends. I am thinking of the kind of greatness Lawrence denies Forster when he writes "life is more interesting in its undercurrents than in its obvious." 2

This is exactly where the wheel turns full circle to bring the views of Collingwood, Polanyi, Lawrence and Leavis into a meaningfull focus - whatever advances mechanical and technological civilization may make, the human individual remains paramount, indispensable and supremely predominant. Leavis's quotation from Lawrence in this connection shows how Lawrence is ever-present in Leavis's mind (the title 'Literarism versus Scientism' under which it appears has recognizable Lawrentian attributes).

But why so much - why repeat so often the mechanical movement. Let me not have so much of this work to do, let me not be consumed overmuch in my own self-preservation. Let me not be imprisoned in this proven, finite existence all my days.

This has been the cry of humanity since the world began. This is the glamour of kings, the glamour of men who had the opportunity to be.

Therefore I do honour to the machine and to its inventors.3

1. Ibid., p.214. 2. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.17. 3. Ibid., p.152.
And by way of commenting on that extract he reverts to Lawrence's critical vocabulary

And he (Lawrence) knew that living in the individual where only it can be, is an art, and one that is not merely individual, but depends on a heritage of arts of living that is kept alive and responsive to change. 1

And by way of defending the humane tradition, the one and indivisible culture antithetical to Snow's divisive view of human life, Leavis again invokes Lawrence

concerned with enforcing in relation to what may be called a quintessential presentation of the modern world the Lawrentian maxim that 'nothing matters but life', he (Lawrence) insists on the truth that only in living individuals is life there, and individual lives cannot be aggregated or equated or dealt with quantitatively in any way. 2

The point bears immediately on Snow's assumption that individuals instead of being considered as valuable entities can be grouped into social categories called 'community' or 'society' and rely on 'social hope' for their sustenance instead of being catered for as individuals. But the point has special value for both Lawrence and Leavis because it asserts the inherently vital human quality without which life would be meaningless and helpless in the face of the strong claims for scientific thinking and technology made by the proponents of social revolutions achieved by technical and scientific progress. It bears directly on human creativity in the face of the mechanical regularity of the machines and here the social and literary criticism of both Lawrence and Leavis intermingle. Reference has already been made to the kind of creativity Lawrence has - the creativity which Leavis diagnoses as involving no separation between the man who suffers and the mind which creates. It is basically in relation to the kind of artistic experience offered by Lawrence that Leavis reverses Eliot's dictum on the separation between the man who suffers and the mind.

1. ibid, p.153
2. ibid, pp.53-54.
which creates.  

To clarify the role of the personality of the artist in creating a work of art is to bring the reader face to face with the problem of form and content. Ideally form and content are interrelated, but for the sake of clarity they will be dealt with separately. To insist that there can never be any separation between the creative artist and the same man in his ordinary moments is to make for that principle of relatedness that has been emphasized in the writings of Whitehead. The inseparability of the creative artist from the same man in his ordinary life shows the link between Santayana and Lawrence. Associated with this notion is the transfusion of the material of art with human feelings:

When Van Gogh paints sunflowers he reveals or achieves the vivid relation between himself, as man, and the sunflower as sunflower, at that quick moment of time. His painting does not represent the sunflower itself. We shall never know that the sunflower itself is. And the camera will visualize the sunflower more perfectly than Van Gogh can.  

Here Lawrence anticipates in the most articulate terms what Leavis finds in the philosophy so far outlined in both Collingwood and Polanyi. Lawrence's preoccupation with the positive part played by the artist in the formation of the work of art accounts for his attack on 'representation' in the sense of reproduction or copying. In his "Introduction to These Paintings" he speaks of the ever present danger of persistent mental activities, and imputes to Cezanne a unique value because his intuitive perceptions are given full play. It is this intuition being part of both the creative ability and the totality of human personality that Leavis highlights in his criticism of Lawrence, Blake and Dickens. In Twilight in Italy, Lawrence quotes from Blake's The Tiger and considers

the tiger as "the supreme manifestation of the senses made absolute."¹

He extracts these two lines:

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night.

and comments "It does indeed burn within the darkness."²

In Twilight In Italy Lawrence has at the centre of his attention
a major theme or Leitmotiv i.e. the flux, the co-presence of polar
opposites of darkness and light, of lion and lamb, and they are
always related, but never identical. This is by far the central idea
underlying The Crown. Leavis's strong passion for Blake is obvious,
and by way of elaborating on the symbolic value of the tiger he says:

What the tiger symbolizes is a fact of life and necessary.
The necessary is a recognition that a fact is a fact, it is
a recognition that entails a troubled sense of the nature of
energy - which life cannot do without. ³

This intuition again is part and parcel of Leavis's critical cam­
paign against the mechanization of life.

In his review of Phoenix, Leavis recommends the part on
'significant form', where its Bloomsbury aesthetic connotations are
satirized:

If you want to invoke an aesthetic ecstasy, stand in front
of a Matisse and whisper fervently under your breath:
"Significant Form! Significant Form!" - and it will come. It
sounds to me like a form of masturbation, an attempt to
make the body react to some cerebral formula. ⁵

Shifting the emphasis from the opposition between the artist and
his medium to the juxtaposition of the artist's mind on the one hand,
and his intuition on the other, Lawrence says:

2. Ibid.
3. F.R. Leavis, "Justifying our Valuation of Blake" The Human World,
No. 7, May 1972, p.52.
And what Cezanne had to learn was not humility - cant word - but honesty, but honesty with himself. It was not a question of any gift or significant form or aesthetic ecstasy; it was a question of Cezanne being himself, just Cezanne. 1

In another context Lawrence says

And the honour which the novel demands of you, is only that you should be true to the flame that leaps in you. 2

This "honesty" can be viewed as equivalent to Leavis's "sincerity".

Lawrence's notion of form is of a piece with his general philosophy of vitalism. Artistic form as Lawrence conceives it: the reconciliation of the two contradictory laws of love and law.

Artistic form is a revelation of the two principles of love and law in a state of conflict and yet reconciled with the spirit. 3

Significantly enough Lawrence underscores a point of major importance to the modern critical approach namely that every work of art is unique in the sense that it must have its individual quality.

Each work of art has its own form, which has no relation to any other form. 4

The idea behind form is to objectify, to impersonalize, so to speak, the personal experience of the artist

for form is not a personal thing like style, it is impersonal like logic. 5

Here Lawrence comes very close to Eliot's later view of impersonality 6 and affirms one of the modern critical canons.

But an overemphasis on form at the expense of matter or the "Spirit" as Lawrence would call it, produces a pernicious effect. In this respect Lawrence lumps Flaubert and Thomas Mann together as

1. ibid, p.573.
4. ibid, p.477.
5. ibid, p.3 & 8.
6. of the Chapter on Santayana.
proponents of form. The former "stood away from life as from a leprosy"\(^1\), and the latter had to suppress spiritual values, and suffer "a soul-aliment just to produce the formal art to which he aspired"\(^2\). In his assault on aestheticism, Leavis draws on these pronouncements.

Against the class of Faubert and Thomas Mann must be set authors like "Shakespeare and Goethe who gave themselves to life as well as to art"\(^3\). In Lawrence's view life comes first and art second and on this score Lawrence and Leavis are in full accord. It should also be clear that Lawrence's shift of emphasis from form to content is an attempt to secure the preponderance of life or "the State of the Soul of the great old artist,"\(^4\) as Lawrence would call it, and here we are not very far from Leavis's preoccupation with the moral centrality that a work of art must reveal, but this will come up in due course. It is in the interests of life and the spontaneity of human passions that Lawrence designates the neat tidiness and methodical arrangement in a work of art as mechanical.

As a matter of fact, we need more looseness, we need an apparent formlessness. Definite form is mechanical. We need more easy transition from mood to mood, and from deed to deed. A great deal of the meaning of life and art lies in the apparently dull spaces, the pauses, the unimportant passages, the places of passing over. \(^5\)

It is with this idea in mind that Leavis forms his judgement of Anna Karenina. It may sound paradoxical that Leavis should draw on Lawrence's views on a subject on which they disagree. Lawrence speaks unfavourably of both Tolstoy and Anna Karenina, but Leavis

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does not concern himself with the judgement, but rather with the application of the leading Lawrentian notions of livingness and vitality to the evaluation of that work. Leavis comes to disagree with both Lawrence and Arnold on Tolstoy's novel. Leavis's point is that, in repudiating the formal and aesthetic approach to the novel and in endorsing the more urgent claims of life, Tolstoy was acting in accord with Lawrentian principles.

I want to insist that the relation between art and life it (Anna Karenina) exemplifies for us is the characteristic of the highest kind of creativity - a higher kind than James's. If Tolstoy gave no heed to any Jamesian canons it was not because he failed to give the most intelligent kind of attention to the demands of art. To confute James's critical censures and show what is the nature of the composition that makes Anna Karenina superlatively a great work of art is to illustrate what D.H. Lawrence had in mind when he wrote:

The novel is a great discovery, far greater than Galileo's telescope or somebody else's wireless. The novel is the highest form of expression so far attained.

Leavis's amplification here is Lawrentian in the sense that he identifies Lawrence's "highest form of human expression" with thought - but thought that is both significant and impressive for it pertains to weighty human issues and assumes the persuasive form of art. "It precludes and defeats the distorting effects of abstraction" to use Leavis's words. In fact Lawrence has the precedence in this regard when he describes the novel as "having got the courage to tackle new propositions without using abstractions". Leavis again draws on Lawrence when he says:

The organization of Anna Karenina expresses intense devotion to the pursuit of truth and Lawrence might have had the book in front of him when he wrote "The novel is the highest form of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered."
The idea of relatedness rules out the concept of architectural patterns in which the form of the work of art is manipulated apart from the equally urgent claims of content (Percy Lubbock's interpretation of this doctrine in Henry James is expounded in The Craft of Fiction); but it also abolishes the discrepancy between the artist as a creative power and as an ordinary man.

The relation of art to life in Tolstoy is such as to preclude this kind of narrowly provident economy. It is an immensely fuller and profounder involvement in life on the part of the artist, whose concern for significance in his art is the intense and focussed expression of the questing after significance that characterizes him in his daily 'living'.

This inter-relatedness again prompts Leavis to draw a further analogy between Tolstoy and Lawrence on the crucial question of morality.

Tolstoy is a different kind of man from James—he is the kind of man the greatest artist necessarily is. Tolstoy might very well have answered as Lawrence did when asked not long before his death, what was the drive behind his creating: "one writes out of one's moral sense, for the race, as it were". And the morality which Lawrence seeks is identified with ultimate human values, with the profound cravings and workings of the human psyche. Here it is in place to enlarge on Lawrence's concept of morality.

Lawrence's view of morality is rendered in natural, even physical terms.

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds, but what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle, and when he defines religion he says

... religion is an experience, an uncontrollable sensual experience, even more so than love. I use sensual to mean an experience deep down in the senses, inexplicable and inescrutable.

1. F.R. Leavis, The Craft of Fiction, pp. 11-12.
2. ibid, p.12.
In another context he says

The supreme lesson of human consciousness is to learn how not to know. That is how not to interfere. That is how to live dynamically, from the great source, and not statically like machines driven by ideas and principles from the head, or automatically from one fixed desire.  

Once again he says

I don't care about physiology of matter — but somehow — that which is physical — non-human in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turgenev, and Tolstol and Dostoevsky the moral scheme into which all the characters fit, and it is nearly the same scheme — is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull — old, dead.

In his "Introduction to These Paintings" he again says

We have become ideal beings, creatures that exist in idea, to one another, rather than flesh-and-blood kin. And with the collapse of the feeling of physical, flesh-and-blood kinship and the substitution of our ideal, social or political oneness, came the falling of our intuitive awareness, and the great unease, the nervousness of mankind.

Lawrence then goes on to deal with matter familiar in Leavis's critical writing:

But by intuition alone can man be really aware of man, or the living, substantial world. By intuition alone can man live and know either woman or world, and by intuition alone can he bring forth again images of magic awareness which we call art.

Lawrence defines imagination as a combination of physical and intuitional perception.

Lawrence suggests that modern morality "has its roots in hatred, a deep, evil hate of the instinctive intuitional, procreative body.

1. D.H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 76.
4. ibid, p. 556.
5. ibid, p. 557.
6. ibid, p. 558.
and later he clarifies this suggestion saying:

But of course this fear and hate had to take on a righteous appearance so it became moral, said that the instincts, intuitions and all the activities of the procreative body were evil and promised a reward for their suppression. 1

In one of his most revealing statements Lawrence says:

An artist can only create what he really religiously feels is truth, religious truth really felt, in the blood and the bones. 2

Characterizing the sense of tragedy as a recurrent theme in Hardy's novels, Lawrence in his "Study of Thomas Hardy" indicates that the individual is torn between two irreconcilable tendencies

first, that he is a member of the Community, and must, upon his honour, in no way move to disintegrate the Community, either in its moral or its practical form, second that the convention of the Community is a prison to his natural, individual desire - a desire that compels him, whether he feel justified or not, to break the bounds of the Community. 3

This human morality irresistibly raises the question of sincerity which is germane to both Lawrence's and Leavis's criticism and here again both Lawrence the novelist and the critic affords Leavis the example "Before everything I like sincerity and a quickening spontaneous emotion" 4. In Lawrence's view morality is synonymous with sincerity

The only morality is to have man true to his manhood, and woman to her womanhood and let the relationship form of itself, in all honour, for it is to each life itself. 5

And again he says

Morbidity in the novel is the trembling instability of the

1. ibid, p.559.
2. ibid, p.562.
3. ibid, p.411.
5. D.H. Lawrence, Green, p.531.
balance. When the novelist puts his thumb in the scale to pull down the balance to his own predilection, that is immorality. 1

Leavis also makes morality synonymous with life when he says

... Far from having anything of Flaubert's disgust or disdain or boredom, they (the great English novelists) are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity. 2

Leavis's use of sincerity as a critical term has been elaborated in the chapters on Santayana and Whitehead, and it is worthy of notice that whenever he talks of Eliot's accomplished poems he insists that "Eliot's technique is a technique for sincerity." 3 This high valuation of sincerity has implications for both the nature of literary criticism and the function of the critic. It is all the more important as Leavis himself has made spectacular claims for Lawrence as a literary critic and as so much of that criticism is at work in Leavis's critical practice. The clearest statement of Lawrence's views on literary criticism, especially on sincerity and intuition is to be found in the essay on "John Galsworthy", to which Leavis refers a number of times:

Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science; it is in the first place much too personal, and in the second much too concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analyzing of books in an imitation botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon. 4

1. ibid, p.528.
3. The present line of argument may help to counter Lionel Trilling's contention that "When F.R. Leavis, in all seriousness distinguishes between those aspects of T.S. Eliot's work which are sincere and those which are not, we are inclined to note the distinction as an example of the engagingly archaic quality of Dr. Leavis's seriousness". Sincerity and Authenticity, Oxford University Press, 1972, p.6.
In these statements Lawrence drives home all the essential points that Leavis deems central to the definition of criticism. Literary criticism is "a reasoned account of" the reactions of the critic to the work of art he has in view. This reaction assumes the form of certain feelings generated by that work. But these feelings far from being sentimental, anarchic or otherwise irresponsible are controlled by the dictates of reason, and Lawrence's insistence on the qualifying adjective "reasoned" confutes Eliot's contention that Lawrence is guided or rather misguided by

The "Inner Voice" is the most untrustworthy and deceitful guide that ever offered itself to wandering humanity. 1

To produce a reasoned account is to use the human mind with care and forethought, but to use it in the interpretation of one's own feelings, hence the inevitability of personal involvement or response. This personal tone is justifiable on two main counts. First because criticism is not and does not claim to be a science; and second because the work of art which the critic sets out to criticize is neither scientific nor mathematical, but imaginative and emotional, hence absolute dispassionateness and impersonality seem to be a remote possibility. In this connection Leavis's axiom that "a judgment is personal or it is nothing" 2 is pertinent. This personal element belongs to what Lawrence elsewhere calls "the fourth dimension" 3 and Leavis in a pseudo philosophic way terms the "third realm", 4 but the point needs elaborating.

2. F.R. Leavis, Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow, p.28.
4. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, pp.98-110.
Clarifying the viewer's reaction to a painting by Van Gogh

Lawrence in his intuitive, rather visionary way says:

The vision on the canvas is for ever incommensurable with the canvas, or the paint, or Van Gogh as a human organism. You cannot weigh nor measure nor even describe the vision on the canvas. It exists to tell the truth, only in the much debated fourth dimension. It is neither man in the mirror, nor flower in the mirror, neither is it above or below or across anything. It is in between everything in the fourth dimension. 1

In a similar way Leavis says:

... the literary-critical judgment is the type of all judgments and valuations belonging to what in my unphilosophical way I've formed the habit of calling the "third realm"—the collaboratively created human world, the realm of what is neither public in the sense belonging to science (it can't be weighed or tripped over or brought into the laboratory or pointed to) nor merely private and personal. 2

And Leavis's famous phrase "This is so, isn't it"? is an attempt to invite others either to confirm or qualify the personal view of the critic in an effort to reach some kind of consensus or common approach to the work in view. Thus the poem provides a scope for a collaborative activity in which the poem has its life in the creative response of the individuals, who together renew and perpetuate what they participate in, a cultural community or consciousness. So, though the judgment is tinged with personal views, it is impersonalized in the sense that it is validated only when it is confirmed or qualified by a consensus. It should be noted that Lawrence, while being a staunch supporter of individuality is simultaneously an arch-enemy of egoism. The livingness and vitality of the individual is seen at its highest in relation to other living individuals and herein lies Lawrence's idea of "at oneness"; and Leavis's notion of "collaboration". This view, taken in its entirety, is bound to cast

2. F.R. Leavis, *Nor Shall My Sword*, p.98.
doubt on Arnold’s formulation that "criticism is a disinterested
ever to see the object as in itself it really is" because
unless the critic is personally interested his criticism will not
contribute a sense of personal involvement in the evaluation of the
work of art. It will rather be anonymous. And so long as criticism
is not a scientific treatise, and so long as the touchstone is emotion,
not reason as Lawrence says, the attempt to see the object dispassion-
ately as it really is seems to be an inexact formula because the
notion of taste is by definition "relative and creative"¹ as Leavis
himself suggests. This relativity is seen in terms of life "the
judgements: the literary critic is concerned with are judgments about
life"².

This view again implies that, while the critic
should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and
orakis, tares to which we are all subject — and compose his
differences with as many of his fellows as possible in the
common pursuit of true judgment,
it definitely negates Eliot’s notion of
the relation of the work of art to art, of the work of
literature to literature, of criticism to criticism. ³

This autonomy of the work of art, which is reminiscent of the school
of art for art’s sake is condemned and sensibly replaced by a
reciprocal relation between literature and life, between the function
of the critic as an assessor of the artistic values which become
valuable only in a human and moral scale.

Yet Lawrence’s statement of the nature of criticism still
contains two key-terms that play a conspicuous role in Leavis’s
criticism —

We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and
vital emotion,
sincerity and vitality are crucial to the appreciation of works that

1. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.97.
2. ibid.
Leavis singles out for particular study: his essay on Wordsworth, on Blake, on Little Dorrit, and his book on Lawrence as a novelist.

Lawrence's lack of interest in form or technique seems important in the formation of Leavis's critical taste. He is an opponent of the formalists who would reduce literature to architectural patterns. In passage quoted Lawrence protests against the "twiddle-twaddle about style and form"; elsewhere he declares "Art (meaning formal art) doesn't interest me. Only the spiritual content".¹ This principle underlies Leavis's critical work.

Lawrence's phrasing of his anti-scientific and anti-formalist approach to literature still repays further study. His choice of words is significant. The reduction of literature to a scientific method of classification and analysis - a reduction against which Lawrence reacts - does a great deal of harm and violence to the unified subliminal impact that a work of art is reckoned to produce in the reader. It is also a "dull jargon"; it does not properly recognize the very creative nature of literature in which language is ever adaptable to varying human moods and situations. In other words what Lawrence is objecting to is the rigidifying and hardening of language into standardized scientific formulae. Lawrence, it should be noted, is a master of form, but form that is intuited and informed by vibrant human values and feelings. He tries to adapt language to fluctuating human modes and sensations. In a letter to Edward Garnett he describes the style of *Women in Love* as different from that of *Sons and Lovers*.

I shan't write in the same manner as *Sons and Lovers* again. I think, in that hard, violent style, full of sensation and presentation. ²

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Repudiating the traditional type of predictable and uniform characters, he again addresses himself to Edward Garnett saying:

> You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose actions the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise,

and in the same letter he diagnoses this characterization as "the real thing". Reality here is identified with sincerity because it answers to Lawrence's philosophy of human life as inhering in a state of flux and dynamism. This quality in Lawrence induces Leavis to say of him that

> he is a most daring and radical innovator in form, method, technique, and his innovations and experiments are dictated by the most serious and urgent kind of interest in life.

Supplying the critics with the right cue Lawrence says

> Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it. (This is grounded on his belief that) "art speech is the only truth".

Lawrence's statement inevitably recalls to mind Leavis's aphorism that "Intentions are nothing in art except as realized". Leavis goes on to point to the antinomy that the intention animating the work of art may considerably vary from the original intention of the artist, and in this respect the analogy with Lawrence is obvious. To define the function of the critic as residing in saving the tale from the artist who created it is to say - in Leavisian terms - that

> the critic should be concerned with the work in front of him as something that should contain within itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise, and to determine what is actually there in the work of art.

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1. *ibid*, p.198
4. *ibid*.
This is, in effect a restatement of Lawrence's maxim that art speech is the only truth - a maxim which also specifies the nature of the creative process in art. The material of art should speak for itself independently of the artist who created it, and this necessitates that the artist should employ a method of indirection through which he can render and not state his experience. Lawrence says

If the novelist puts his thumb in the pan, for love, tenderness, sweetness, peace, then he commits an immoral act. ¹

and when urged by his English publishers to excise some parts from Lady Chatterley's Lover he says

... impossible, I might as well try to chip my own nose into shape with scissors. The book bleeds. ²

Lawrence's choice of the term "bleeds" is highly fortunate, and speaks of the lively, organic relationship between the vital parts that form the work of art. It is again in keeping with the philosophy of organism outlined by Whitehead.³

3. cf the Chapter on Whitehead.
ii. Leavis's Criticism of Lawrence

In his introduction to D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, Leavis describes his first attempt to write on Lawrence in 1930 as "a quixotic folly".¹ To account for this change of tone it is necessary to compare Leavis's Minority Pamphlet on Lawrence with his book D.H. Lawrence, Novelist.²

This change will be considered in the light of Leavis's development as a critic. If a summary view is permissible it can tentatively be suggested that the Minority Pamphlet was largely inspired by Eliotic ideas or more generally by technical analysis. By the time Leavis started reconsidering Lawrence, he was drawing on other sources - sources that form "the human world", of which Lawrence himself among others including Whitehead, and later Collingwood and Polanyi, form a part. But this is a crude oversimplification since Leavis's object as he states it in both the Minority Pamphlet and D.H. Lawrence, Novelist is "to vindicate Lawrence" yet here a distinction must be drawn between the two forms of vindication. In the pamphlet vindication is rendered by ascribing "genius" to Lawrence; in the book it is mainly with Lawrence the artist, the novelist that Leavis is preoccupied.

The quality of genius imputed to Lawrence in the first essay gradually diminishes as the reader goes on reading it (one presumes that genius is used in its laudatory sense as it is meant to be a vindication). In imputing "genius" to Lawrence Leavis draws a comparison between him and Blake on the ground that both were most unconventional, terribly honest in recording human experience, and primarily interested in vindicating impulse and spontaneity against conventional attitudes. But immediately after this Leavis quotes the following from Women In Love:


He turned away. Either the heart would break or cease to care. Whatever the mystery which has brought forth the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion. Best leave it all to the vast, creative, non-human mystery. The eternal creative mystery could dispose of man and replace him with a finer created being. Just as the horse has taken the place of the mastodon.

It was very consoling to Birkin to think this. The fountain-head was incorruptible and unsearchable. It had no limits.... To have one's pulse beating direct from the mystery, this was perfection, unutterable satisfaction. Human or unhuman matters nothing.

And then comments:

Blake, if he could have thought this, would not have found it consoling. Birkin, of course, though one of Lawrence's obvious self-dramatizations is not to be taken as completely representative, but it is fair to make this passage an opportunity for noting that Lawrence's preoccupation with the primitive foaters in him a certain inhumanity. The context gives the judgment its appropriate force.

After recommending Sons and Lovers as the record of emotional life such as is possible only to a genius,

Leavis concludes by dismissing both Sons and Lovers, and The Rainbow for being difficult and monotonous:

Sons and Lovers for all its poignant beauty, everyone I have discussed it with agrees with me in finding difficult to get through. The Rainbow is a great deal more difficult. We do not doubt the urgency for the author of these shifting tensions of the inner life; this drama of the inexplicit and almost inexpressible in human intercourse, but for us the effect is one of monotony. Lawrence's fanatical concern with the "essential" often results in a strange intensity, but how limited is the range, and the intensity too fails to come through to us.

It may be observed that this obsessive intensity here condemned is later seen as one of the virtues of Lawrence's art; and in

2. Ibid, p.6.
the same context: that is *The Rainbow*.

Reviewing *Women In Love*, in the light of Lawrence's notion that the novel has the ability "to inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness", Leavis says:

> When, so authorized, we consider as a work of art *Women In Love* (written in 1916) a novel in which the mature conclusions are embodied, our judgment cannot be altogether favourable to them. For *Women In Love* hardly informs and leads into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness. 1

Leavis further argues that

> the characters in *Women In Love* tend to disintegrate into swirls of conflicting impulses and emotions. It is difficult to keep them apart. 2

Leavis also maintains that in *Women In Love* Lawrence is concerned to convey a kind of knowledge that can only be communicated by subtle and poetic shades of meaning:

> But Lawrence uses for the purpose a specialized vocabulary of terms that he tries to invest with a new potency by endless re-iteration: "dark", "pure", "utter", "inchoate", "disintegrate", "uncreated", "violated", "abstract", "mindless", "lapse out", "loins of darkness" and so on. This method is to use one of Lawrence's own terms of reprobation, mechanical. 3

And later on he says:

> A great part of the book gets no nearer to concrete particularity than that (the specialized vocabulary). And such methods as the insistent minute description of the colours of clothes are equally mechanical. 4

As Leavis proceeds to discuss the other novels he says

> his later novels, as he wanders from country to country, Italy, Sardinia, Australia, Mexico, exhibit in varying measure the kind of defect indicated above; they are fascinating, exasperating and difficult to go through. 5

Lawrence's philosophy of spontaneity and elemental life is chastized and rebuked for its escapist nature and its lack of intelligence:

... let man be as primitive as primitive can be, he still has a mind, but it is plain that the civilization that he still seems in some way to care for could not exist if no one cared more about mind than he does. It is plain that his (Lawrence's) devotion to the dark God is not so much an evangel of salvation as a symptom, a refuge from the general malady than a cure. 1

Having dismissed most of Lawrence's novels Leavis settles down to a simple admiration for The Lost Girl, then considered as Lawrence's best novel 2 and Lady Chatterley's Lover; the first because of its "sensuous vitality" 3 and the second because of its "sensuous concreteness" 3.

These two works were largely superseded, in Leavis's final assessment, by The Rainbow and Women In Love.

In attempting a more judicious approach to the subject Leavis apologises for his imperfect understanding saying:

I cannot judge that my sense of being critically qualified was well-grounded. And yet when I ask where I could have found the hint for a better understanding of (say) Women In Love, the answer is nowhere. There was, so far as I know, nothing more enlightened or enlightening critically than Middleton Murry's review of the book. - 5

Leavis's apology can be accepted as D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, redresses earlier shortcomings.

In fact, quixotic and confusing as the early essay is, it still contains some of the original ideas that were to feature not

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1. ibid, p.18.
2. ibid, p.14.
3. ibid, p.17.
4. ibid, p.20.
5. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, pp. 9-10.
only Leavis's later criticism of Lawrence, but also the whole of Leavis's critical apparatus, and before enlarging on this point, it should be noted that in both the first essay and the book Leavis's admiration for the short stories and St Mawr is consistently maintained.

The notion of the "organic community" on which Leavis draws in Culture and Environment is, as I have indicated in the first section, Lawrentian. Leavis's interest in the opening part of The Rainbow underlines one of his major concerns with "The mysterious intercourse of man with the world around him".

Leavis further draws an analogy between Lawrence's writings and Spengler's The Decline of The West regarding the sense of communion between man and his native land through which we can discern that Leavis is developing a leading critical principle that figures in his writings. His interest in the points in common between Lawrence and Spengler gives a glimpse of F.R. and Q.D. Leavis's interest in anthropology and the social context of literature seen at work in Fiction and The Reading Public, and their interest in Professor Chadwick.

The notion of "sincerity" which was to assume a central place in Leavis's criticism is latent in the pamphlet. Speaking about Sons and Lovers, Leavis says:

In Sons and Lovers (1913) his third novel, he is mature in the sense of being completely himself. It is a beautiful and poignant book showing a sincerity in the record of emotional life such as is possible only to a genius.

4. F.R. Leavis, op. cit, p.5.
Furthermore there is the nebulous realization that "life" as Lawrence describes it, and as Leavis later sums it up depends upon emotional spontaneity and this has been made impossible for us by self-consciousness, by ideals, by mind-knowledge. 1

There is even a glimpse of Leavis's later consideration of Lawrence's works as "dramatic poems":

... the early work leads one to talk loosely of the author as a "poet". (He did indeed write verse, but not much of it is poetry, though it is very interesting in various ways he rarely attained the level of The Ballad of a Second Ophelia). 2

Leavis's distinction between verse and poetry helps to mark off his earlier criticism of Lawrence from the later. The series of essays in which those on Lawrence appeared are suggestively titled "The Novel as dramatic poem". Leavis does not only attribute to Lawrence's works a poetic quality, but a dramatic element which characterizes the finer layers of poetry. He is thereby refuting the notion that Lawrence's genius is lyrical, as will be demonstrated later.

In the book we find that the vindication, "the long battle to win recognition for Lawrence" 3 is substantially justified and Leavis comes to grips with the real prejudices that hampered the placing of Lawrence in the tradition.

In settling down mainly to The Rainbow, Women In Love, and The Tales as representative of Lawrence's achievement as a novelist, Leavis, by implication, adopts a sociological and psychological kind of criticism rather than one based on formal excellence. Thus while parting company with the "technique" of Eliot's criticism, he is acting in accordance with the fundamental principles of Whitehead, Collingwood,

2. Ibid, p.6.
and later Polanyi. The key-note which Leavis's introduction to
DH. Lawrence; Novelist, strikes is that of the supersession of The
Lost Girl and Lady Chatterley's Lover by The Rainbow and Women In Love:

I deal with the lesser novels from The Lost Girl to Lady
Chatterley's Lover, and in dealing with them concede to
adverse criticism of Lawrence what I think has to be
conceded. 1

In moving in that direction Leavis is following the Lawrence whose
attack on Flaubert's aestheticism is so high in his esteem.

Accounting for his early imperfect appreciation of Lawrence,
Leavis ascribes it partly to the uncongenial conditions prevalent in
the thirties, and partly to the lack of genuinely appreciative critiques
of Lawrence. He has in mind Murry's Reminiscences of D.H. Lawrence
(1930) and Son of Woman (1931). The first relates a series of episodes
in the lives of Lawrence. Murry and Katherine Mansfield, and offers
the biographical background that, in Murry's view, explains or
conditions Lawrence's works. Murry's interpretation of Lawrence is
primarily biographical and impressionistic. In Reminiscences of
D.H. Lawrence the emphasis falls on Lawrence's works as reflections of
various stages of his experience of life. In Son of Woman, as the title
indicates, Lawrence's failure to lead a normal and healthy kind of life
is traced back to his crippling passion for his mother. It is a mother-
complex that impedes him from establishing normal and natural relations
with other women, and more specifically with Frieda, his wife. This
failure prompts Lawrence to seek relation with men, and in
Reminiscences of D.H. Lawrence Murry tells us that he is the Gerald of
Women in Love and that Lawrence looked to Murry for an ideal kind of
friendship. These general outlines need further elaboration.

1. ibid. p.14
Son of Woman which Murry professes to be a critical appraisal of Lawrence's works, derives its substance from one central assumption namely that Lawrence the man is the ever-present subject of his works.

The White Peacock (he says) is a story – Sons and Lovers is the life of a man. It is easy to see that the experience which is so richly recorded in Sons and Lovers had supplied the solid foundation for the imaginative structure of The White Peacock. 1

and then with an obvious contradiction he says

For those who do not care to follow Lawrence in the passionate exploration of life which subsequently engrossed him it (Sons and Lovers) will probably remain his greatest work. If Lawrence is to be judged as the "pure artist", then it is true that he never surpassed and barely equalled this rich and moving record of life. 2

He later tells us that in Lady Chatterley's Lover, Mallors is more or less identified with Lawrence himself 3, and that The Rainbow is the story of Lawrence's "sexual failure" 4. He identifies Lawrence with Will Brangwen and Anton Skrebensky 5, whereas all biographical information in the third generation of The Rainbow, goes to show, as far as I can see – that if Lawrence is to be identified with any character it is with Ursula whose teaching experience and family relations bear directly on those of Lawrence.

Adopting the same procedure in his approach to Women in Love, Murry says:

As a matter of fact, Lawrence is so immersed in his personal experience that he forgets his story. Birkin had not taken this knowledge of Ursula in the novel, Lawrence had taken it of the woman in life, and the record is in "Manifesto". There it only remained for him to be known, even as he knows, without which he cannot be free. Now, in the novel, where he is master, he gives himself this "liberation". Ursula Brangwen is made to desire what the poet of "Manifesto" desired that his woman should desire. 6

2. Ibid, p.23.
4. Ibid, p.89.
5. Ibid, p.82.
6. Ibid, p.117.
Aaron's Rod, which he views as Lawrence's masterpiece - is an attempt on the part of Lawrence to solve his personal problem; and he cannot solve it. He needs a man - and he needs a man of realization like his own. He creates the man - Aaron Sisson. Sisson is a dream-Lawrence. 1

The point to be emphasized in this context is that Murry never mentions or makes use of the notion of impersonality which he holds essential to the plausibility and effectiveness of a work of art 2, and the reason is that Lawrence, as Murry apparently thinks, does not secure this quality in his works. When Leavis reminds us by way of apology for the lack of a more adequate understanding of Lawrence - that there was nothing more enlightening than Murry's writings, one has to take note of that. The biographical and personal interpretation initiated by Murry is seen at work in Leavis' early essay. He, for instance says

Sons and Lovers bears obviously a close relation to Lawrence's personal history. The Rainbow deals with three generations, yet it seems to bear much the same relation to personal experience. In fact, Lawrence here is exploring his own personal problems living them in the book. 3

And though Leavis, at the end of his essay gives a glimpse of what amounts to a notion of impersonality (talking about The Woman who Rode Away) he says

it has the air of starting in the common world, but it achieves a transmutation of ordinary reality so complete and intense that we have to go to such poetry as "The Ancient Mariner" for parallels 4

he never employs the term "impersonality" as a critical instrument here. This biographical criticism does not, in effect, take us far away from Eliot's view of Lawrence as a exponent of "The Inner Voice."

1. ibid, p.2 & 5.
4. ibid, p.33.
and Leavis's ascription of genius to Lawrence in the first essay implies an erratic nature liable in effect to the "personal heresy" noted by Eliot. Though Leavis's earlier essay was meant to extort recognition for Lawrence it was substantially reduced to acquiescence in the climate of opinion then furnished largely by Murry and Eliot. This view of Lawrence as a "man" and not "an artist" dominated the scene for almost two decades, so much so that when H. Coombes quotes illustrative specimens of derogatory criticism of Lawrence\(^1\), one is struck by the bulk of pernicious criticism of Lawrence, arising largely from the influence exercised by such early critics as Lawrence. E. S. Savage, for example, carries on these early misconceptions about Lawrence. In The Personal Principle he says

> The significance of Lawrence lay in his life rather than in his works; his refusal to allow art its due rights and to be himself the considerable artist which he was. Lawrence's abandonment of all that we understand by the spiritual heritage of the west, and his turning to vital primitivism. Because Lawrence was not a thinker... Lawrence's view of life, his biologism, which is a similarly retrogressive dissolution back into primary life, implies a refusal of spiritual values. 2

I have quoted this passage at second hand because it was published, among others, by Leavis in Scrutiny at the request of H. Coombes who called upon some of the Scrutiny editors to do something to save the reputation of Lawrence; and Leavis's editorial note gives a promise of fulfilling that task\(^3\). The fulfilment came in the following year with the first instalment of Leavis's new work on Lawrence. The fact that he quotes some of the passages given by Coombes\(^4\) emphasizes

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3. Ibid, p.44.
4. See the footnote to D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, p.20, where Leavis requotes V.S. Pritchett, in The Living Novel.
that Leavis's defence of Lawrence is made against these perpetuated prejudices.

Leavis argues that these prejudices and misunderstandings persisted under "the prestigious influence of Eliot". He reminds the reader of Eliot's adverse criticism of Lawrence, making particular mention of Lawrence's lack of humour, his sexual morbidity, and his inability to transcend his own personal life and achieve artistic excellence. Leavis explains Eliot's failure to recognize Lawrence's artistic merit by reference to Lawrence's attack on Flaubert and Thomas Mann, and this brings us back to that constant opposition between art as a manifestation of life and art as a form of technical excellence - the first espoused by Lawrence and the second championed by Eliot.

Leavis's argument in D.H. Lawrence, Novelist shows him exploring the possibilities of different critical ideas and if New Bearings and Revaluation of the early Leavis bear the indelible imprints of Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, Novelist asserts the supremacy of Lawrentian ideas. In other words the book shows Leavis's later critical ideas in mature form (in fact they have already begun with The Great Tradition), and if "genius" in the first essay on Lawrence is virtually void of any significant meaning (due to Eliot's influence), in the book it becomes associated with artistic achievement - with life or rather with reverence for life - it is the genius that portrays civilization rendered through the individual. But to leave the analogy.

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3. Of the first section of this chapter.
4. F.R. Leavis's D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, p.75.
between Eliot and Flaubert at this point is to miss Leavis's intention, because in his endeavours to refute Eliot's charges against Lawrence Leavis associates Eliot's attitude with that of Flaubert, one of "disgust and distaste". He further identifies this lack of interest in life with artistic deficiency.

I am thinking of the Flaubert the stultifying nature of whose inner self-contradiction - art-defeating because life-defeating - exposes itself so dismally in L'Éducation Sentimentale. And by way of substantiating this analogy Leavis alludes to the strait-jacket form, la pièce bien faite of The Cocktail Party where there is the sick poverty, the triviality, and finally, the nothingness of the dones, the human and spiritual nullity.

Leavis reinforces his point by reminding his reader that the Eliot who is interested in Pound's Cantos not because of what they say, but because of the way in which Pound expresses himself cannot be found reliable in distinguishing between what makes for health and what makes against it.

The phrase inevitably reminds us of the criticism applied in The Great Tradition where the major novelists are significant in terms of the human awareness they promote, awareness of the possibilities of life; far from having anything of Flaubert's disgust, disdain or boredom (the words are taken verbatim from Lawrence) they are all distinguished by a reverent openness before life and a marked moral intensity.

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1. ibid, p.25.
2. ibid, p.25.
4. ibid, p.26.
7. F.R. Leavis, op. cit., p.9.
Hence the rightness of including Lawrence in "The Great Tradition".

Is there no name later than Conrad's to be included in the great tradition? There is, I am convinced one: D.H. Lawrence. Lawrence in the English language was the great genius of our time. 1

and later in his introduction to D.H. Lawrence: Novelist he says

"this book carries on from The Great Tradition."

It should be noted that Leavis starts off his discussions in the first and second chapters of D.H. Lawrence: Novelist with some of Eliot's views on Lawrence; that is, Eliot's present in Leavis's mind, but his influence is negative and the course of argument reveals Leavis's consistent disenchantment with Eliot. Associated with Eliot is The Bloomsbury Group to whom I have already referred. The aesthetic interests advocated by that group are essentially at variance with Lawrence's moral and human pursuits.

To realize the impact of all these hostile factors is to call for a juster appraisal of Lawrence; and that is what Leavis's book sets out to do. Here it may be recorded that Leavis's change of mind (from the early essay into the book) should not be regarded as a kind of inconsistency, but as a development of his own critical spectrum - a "maturing" of his own experience, so to speak. In a revealing statement he says

It is Lawrence's greatness that to appreciate him is to revise one's criteria of intelligence, and one's notion of it, 3

and before that he has said that to understand Lawrence one has

to overcome certain difficulties - and the worst difficulty we have in coming to terms with his art is that there is resistance in us to what it has to communicate. 4

3. ibid., p.27.
4. ibid., p.24.
The works that relate Lawrence to the great tradition are

The Rainbow, Women In Love and The Tales. To justify this verdict Leavis
is bound to show why the other works fall short as integrated novels.

The Lost Girl, formerly viewed as Lawrence's best work (mainly because
of its sensuous sensibilities) is now seen as illustrative of Lawrence's
sense of humour and comedy

( but ) we realize that there is no compelling total significance
in control. 1

The significance found wanting is conceived in terms of social and
moral relativity — a significance of the kind that Leavis discerns in
The Rainbow and Women In Love. This significance partly derives from
Lawrence himself who is essentially a relativist. 2

Aaron's Rod is different from The Rainbow and Women In Love, on
the one hand, and Sons and Lovers on the other. The first two are
remarkable for the measure of impersonality therein achieved, and the
other, though directly bearing on the personal life of Lawrence, yet
in the final analysis it has the virtues of a good work of art that can
stand on its own merits (it should be noted that Leavis's references
to Sons and Lovers are very fleeting and evasive and he tries to
justify this attitude by maintaining that it has had enough attention).

Aaron's Rod (says Leavis) is far more tentative, much more
like an actual living of the problem of the author's own
predicament; something experimental embarked upon in the
expectation that the essential insight will have sufficiently
clarified and established itself by the close... 3

To Leavis's words one must add that there is no sense of direction
controlling the narrative. Lawrence precariously alternates between
Aaron and Lilly. The end of the novel where Lilly proposes a spiritual
relationship between himself and Aaron is quite different from the

1. ibid., p.31.

2. See the first section of this chapter.

3. ibid., p.31.
beginning in which we are given Aaron trying to escape the possessiveness of his wife. In other words Lawrence the man seems once again to intrude upon the course of events to live his own problems through regardless of the exigencies of the work of literature that call for coherence and organic relations. The point of weakness is again shown in Lawrence's shift of emphasis (which does not receive enough justification) from the social context of family life to the idea of leadership and the political problem it involves.

Leavis further argues that the 'tentative' nature of Aaron's Rod can be represented by Lawrence's attitude to the character of Jim Bricknell. His eccentric attitude occupies so much space in the early part of the book that we expect it to play an effective role in future developments, but after the eighth chapter Lawrence discounts him. What is worse is that Lawrence's diversions into descriptions of the life of Sir William and Lady Franks, the party at Novara, the English speaking community at Florence, his love for the Marchesa are revisions of immediate personal experience that can be easily excised from the text without much harm.

Eliseo Vivas's criticism of Lawrence provides a good example of the influence expected by Leavis on later critics of Lawrence. The distinction he drawn between the good and the poor in Lawrence's works is inspired by Leavisian suggestions

... the difference between his best as represented by Women In Love and The Rainbow, and some of the short stories on the one hand, and the poor work on the other is abysmal. 1

And then he goes on to say

And the worst of his novels is, in my opinion, Aaron's Rod. I say it fully aware that Mr. Leavis praises it highly. 2


Leavis's criticism of the story as stated above does not show that he praises it highly at all. The reasons that Vivas gives for condemning the novel are exactly Leavisian. He says:

The book is a mere transcription; mere reportage, and the poverty is the result of "pure padding." These are precisely the faults which Leavis finds with the book, and when Vivas says that the book shows no trace of creative imagination, he is repeating Leavis's notion that the book manifests a failure of imagination.

Vivas is obviously echoing Leavis's notion in saying:

When we consider the changes that have taken place between the year 1911 (when Lawrence's first novel appeared) and the present, it seems that this is as much Lawrence's century as that of any other writer of the period. For he was one of the writers who helped give form to the sensibility we now possess, and who helped define the values and concerns that are the substance of our lives.

With Aaron's Rod Kangaroo is associated by reason of the urgency of personal problems. As Aaron's Rod gives intimations of Lawrence's difficulties with Frieda, and the feasibility of political action, Richard Lovat Somers being the central character in Kangaroo is obviously Lawrence himself and Harriet is Frieda. Somers's complicity with Calcott in political agitation in the interests of the working classes - a complicity from which Harriet is excluded - is a variation on Aaron's escape from the possessiveness of his wife. In both Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo we notice that Aaron and Somers are attempting to establish human relations beyond female love - relations of men to men. Leavis traces this attitude of Lawrence back to the inescapable hold which his mother had on him, and the quotations which Leavis takes from that work Leavis extracts the following from the chapter called "Coo-EE".

1. Ibid, p.22.
2. Ibid, p.23.
3. Ibid, p.4.
The Somers of the dream was terribly upset. He cried tears from his very bowels, and laid his hand on the woman's arm saying, "But I love you. Don't you believe in me? Don't you believe in me?" But the woman, she seemed almost old now — only shed a few bitter tears, bitter as vitriol, from her distorted face, and bitterly and hideously she turned away, dragging her arm from the touch of his fingers, turned as it seemed to the dream-Somers away to the sullen and dreary, everlasting hell of repudiation. He woke at this, and listened to the thunder of the sea with horror.

And by way of commenting on that quotation Leavis says:

For all the emancipating triumph of intelligence represented by Sons and Lovers, the too-close relation established with him by his mother had its permanent consequences. The dream-confusion of the mother with Frieda is significant, forcing himself to "come right awake", Somers tells himself that when he is asleep and off his guard his old weaknesses, overcome in his full, day-waking self, rise up and take their revenge on the victorious healthy consciousness. The dream "means that the actual danger is gone".

Leavis carries on his quotations from Kangaroo with a passage in which we learn of Somers that

he could never take the move into activity unless Harriet and his dead mother believed in him. In the individual man he was, and the son of man, they believed with all the intensity of undivided love. But in the impersonal man, the man that would go beyond them, with his back to them, they did not find it so easy to believe.

Leavis's commentary runs as follows:

... though he (Lawrence) was supremely intelligent, with the intelligence that manifests itself in a rare degree of self-knowledge, clearly his peculiar experience of emotional forcing, strain, and painful re-adjustment had some lasting consequences that made it very difficult for him to be sure of his poise and centrality as a reporter on some of the most delicate problems his genius drove him to explore.

In quoting from both Lawrence and Leavis at such a length I would like to drive home the following point: that Leavis's conclusions on

1. Quoted in F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, p.46.
2. Ibid., p.46.
3. Ibid., p.47.
4. Ibid., p.47.
Lawrence are drawn from a close consideration of texts, and not from personal acquaintance as Murry does in both *Son of Woman* and *Reminiscences of D.H. Lawrence*. Leavis has his eye on the text as a work of art that is sometimes vitiated by the intrusion of Lawrence's personal problems upon it, whereas Murry takes these problems as the substance of these works. To put it succinctly Leavis sees the work from within, but Murry views it from without; and unlike Murry, Leavis is aware that to draw normative conclusions about man's relation to woman on one hand and to man on the other is obviously a delicate matter.

Lawrence's complexity of attitude, characteristically conveyed in his work as in (*say*) *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo*, shows how far from unaware he is of the delicacy. 1

It is this insight into the complexity and subtlety of Lawrence's attitude to human relations discernible in his works that marks Leavis off from Murry and the other critics cited by H. Coombe in his letter to *Scrutiny* of which Leavis speaks in *D.H. Lawrence, Novelist*. The delicacy referred to by Leavis is illustrated by the complex nature of *Kangaroo*. The book may be read as a day-dream in which Lawrence fictitiously imagines himself as a political activist, but such a reading will be inadequate because side by side with this imaginary aspect of the book - this self-indulgence so to speak - there are arresting moments of aloofness and detachment. Leavis takes the dramatic chapter titled "At Sea in Marriage" as an example. In this chapter Lawrence plays with one of his favourite ideas - the leadership assumed by the husband towards his wife, and the submission of the wife to, and recognition of, that leadership. The idea is worked out in


2. of the early part of this section.
suggestive terms as family life is represented by a ship that can be steered only by the real Captain - the husband - who in Lawrence's view stands not for love but for power - the power of the dark God. But at a moment of dispassionate realization Lawrence recognizes the equally valid claims of Harriet as she addressed him saying:

You! (she exclaimed) You a lord and master! Why, don't you know that I love you as no man ever was loved? You a lord and master! Ph! You look it! Let me tell you I love you far, far more than ever you ought to be loved, and you should acknowledge it. 1

This is the sense of equipoise which achieves a fullness of response, and which makes any abstract formulations about Lawrence incomprehensive and inaccurate.

"The dark God", or rather the dark male power being the central theme of Kangaroo, is also the subject underlying The Ladybird. The tale has a diagnostic value as it portrays the maladies of post-war England and Europe. It exposes the fallacy of traditional ideas like the "love" and "truth" adopted by Lady Beveridge and the adoration - lust of Basil - Lady Daphne's husband. Lady Daphne is so constituted as to rebel against the humanitarian tendencies of her mother, and the adoring attitude of her husband. So her own blood turned against her, beat on her own nerves and destroyed her.2

When Dionys tells her that she looks ill and that something had struck her across the face, and she could not forget it, she identifies this thing with the war.

Throughout the stress falls on the dark eyes of Dionys...

his eyes were dark and haughty... and from across this shadow he locked with his dark, beautifully fringed eyes, as

a proud little beast from the shadow of its lair. 1

It is the magnetic attraction of these dark eyes that awakens in her a new sense of power and approximates her to that spontaneous energy to that real livingness which is lost by willing and intellectualizing 2.

Leavis's commentary on the ending of the tale is illuminating in two important respects. First it draws a distinction between the tests of reality and the laws of art. The first would suggest the possibility of Daphne's divorce from Basil and her remarriage to Dionys as a feasible solution; the second would rule out that suggestion as naive.

The tale doesn't move on the plane of such denouements; it is too portentous, too large, in the kind of significance it has proposed. 3

The portentousness and largeness are justified by Dionys's faith in the continuity of his relation with Daphne after death in the darkness where he will be king of Hades. But the way this faith is brought out brings in the second main point made by Leavis:

instead of the frank inconclusiveness of Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo, we have this show of something positive and confident, which, when we see all the larger suggestion of the tale, must affect us as something like an attempt to conjure the actual world, with its tests and problems away. There is a betraying obviousness - it is of the order of sentimentality - about the quality of the final, would-be clinching incantations. 4

Leavis is right in indicating that the close is overemphasized and sentimental. These are Lawrence's words at the end of the tale:

Future in the world he could not give her. Life in the world he had not to offer her. Better go on alone. Surely better go on along. But then the tears on his feet; and her face that would face him as he left her. No, no.

1. Ibid, p.27.
2. cf the beginning of this chapter.
4. Ibid, p.64.
The next life was his. He was master of the after-life. Why fear for this life? Why not take the soul she offered him? Now and forever, for the life that would come when they both were dead. Take her into the underworld. Take her into the "dark Hades" with him, like Francesca and Paolo. And in hell held her fast, queen of the underworld, himself master of the underworld. Master of the life to come. Father of the soul that would come after. 1

This overemphasis comes only when there is a lapse of imaginative grasp; that is when Lawrence's imagination fails him, and he resorts to his own personal feelings to offset it; that is when the world of reality intrudes upon an artistic experience imaginatively conceived. This is what Leavis himself has indicated earlier in his analysis of Aaron's Rod. The obviousness of The Ladybird's ending inheres in a positiveness which takes us away from the world of art to that of reality. In other words it does not show the "self-questionings and partial recoils" which characterized the earlier phases of the book, and made the conclusion or rather inconclusion of both Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo artistically acceptable.

The same defect is manifest in The Plumed Serpent. It is too emphatic. Leavis's commentary helps to bring out this point.

The Plumed Serpent has none of that flexibility of mode and mood for which the preceding novels are remarkable; it is single-mindedly intent on imagining, as a piece of contemporary history, a revival of the ancient Mexican religion. The complexities of attitude in Lawrence are played down—for complexities there inevitably are, and the evidence of them has not been wholly eliminated from the book, of which single-minded is a description that would have to be qualified in a full analysis. But the deeper governing intention or impulse (underlying the writing of the book) has clearly been to escape as much as possible from that inner drama of doubts and self-questionings and partial recoils, which the evidence of Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo so amply proves, would have made sustained imaginative conviction in such an enterprise as The Plumed Serpent impossible. 3

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2. F.R. Leavis, op. cit., p.67.
Leavis attributes the failure of the book to Lawrence's lack of full engagement.

The evoking of the pagan renascence strikes one as willed and mechanical. 1

The long tracts dealing with dances and rituals are redundant, tedious and can easily be excised. Kate's final decision to stay in Mexico does not carry much weight. Her fear of the drawing-room life back in London with the sense of enclosure it involves does not make her life in Mexico - a life from which she herself recoils - appealing or convincing.

The Daughters of The Vicar, affords Leavis a good example refuting a contention that no man was ever more conscious of class-distinctions than Lawrence. The sense of class-distinctions permeates the tale, but Leavis has the clairvoyance to distinguish between snobbery and the existence of such feelings in actual life.

The part they play in the given tale is a sinister one and the theme is their defeat - the triumph over them of life; 2 and Leavis as if anticipating objections to the vagueness of such terms resorts to one of his characteristic arguments; namely that only in context can such terms get their definition. 3 In point of fact objections have been raised by a number of critics including Eliseo Vivas, Philip Rahv, and Roger Poole, but let me outline Leavis's argument first.

When Leavis treats the vicarage as the enemy of life he satisfies himself by pointing to the destructive nature of the father and the mother. This destructiveness arises from their paradoxical situation. The mother belongs, by birth, to a higher class. She suffers humiliation and isolation as a result of her marriage. In

2. *Ibid.,* p. 73.
consequence she lives in constant turmoil, hates her husband and takes
to a constant state of illness. The husband on the other hand,
realizing his uselessness and redundancy in an active mining-
community begins to hate himself and that community. This fact is borne
in upon him by his realization that whilst supposedly belonging to the
higher strata of society, in fact he is enduring poverty. Hence the
irony of his situation. This paradoxical situation is reflected in the
upbringing of their children. Socially they have to retain "class pride"
inherited from their parents, but they have also to put up with conditions
hostile to that pride and potentially destructive of it. But the tale
does not make for such a clear-cut and straightforward argument. There
are shades of meaning created by Lawrence, and brought out by Leavis.

"The unbeautiful pride" says Leavis

places itself as hateful in its manifestations and as
essentially destructive of all fineness and nobility. And
yet it appears as having something heroic about it —
something almost tragic. That is, the attitude implicit in
the presentation of the drama is not one that goes with
contemptuous exposure or satiric condemnation — it is more
subtle and poised. 1

And by way of substantiating this "poise" Leavis forwards the following
quotation from the tale:

The children grew up healthy, but unwarmed and rather rigid.
Their father and mother educated them at home, and made them
very proud and genteel, put them definitely and cruelly in
the upper classes, apart from the vulgar around them. So
they lived quite isolated. They were good-looking, and had that
curiously, semi-transparent look of the genteel, isolated
poor. 2

I would argue that if Lawrence manages to maintain that
equilibrium in this situation, one feels that it does not last long,
because in the opposition between the forces that make for life

1. ibid. p.78.

2. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, p.75.
(Louisa and Alfred) and these that make against it (Massy and Mary) later symbolized by the opposition of the Cottage and the vicarage, Lawrence "puts his thumb in the scale to pull down the balance to his own predilection". If we adhere to his own principle that one should not trust the artist, but trust the tale, one senses that the treatment of Massy and Mary is wilfully artificialized so as to conform to type and press home the "moral" inherent in the contrast between the vitality of (Louisa and Alfred) and the mechanicality of (Mary and Massy). If morality, on Lawrence's own terms, lies in "the trembling instability of the balance"; one is bound to think that the balance is stable and even fixed, and that Lawrence, is working according to preconceived concepts; that subtle shades of meaning to which Leavis alludes disappear to be replaced by a rigid demarcation between Massy "the little abortion" whose reactions are always mechanical and lifeless, and "the fine jet of life" symbolized by Alfred. Massy is invariably described as lacking normal powers of perception and the full range of human feelings.

He is presented as having an abstract mind in which he lives, and which debar him from responding to art, and to an Irish sort of humour he listened curiously, examining it like mathematics. In normal human relationships he was not there. Quite unable to take part in simple everyday talk, he padded silently round the house, or sat in the dining-room looking nervously from side to side, always apart, in a cold, rarified world of his own.

And if the humour of poking fun at the absurdities of others is shown in the tale as a major defect, Lawrence himself takes delight in poking fun at Massy. Take, for example, these words:

2. Ibid, p.528.
5. Ibid, p.76.
Nothing that he realized he could do for anyone did he leave undone although he was so incapable of coming into contact with another being, that he could not proffer help. 1

Or this picture of (Massy, Louisa and Mary) as they pay a visit to the paralyzed, old Mr. Durant. Louisa is seen as obstinate, but heavy-hearted under the load of unlivingness. It was Mr. Massy who kept her there in discipline. His non-human will dominated them all. 2

As Alfred comes back from the navy just before his father’s death, Louisa’s reaction is given in these words:

she could not bear it that she and Mr. Massy should be there. The latter stood nervously, as if ill at ease, before the emotion that was running. He was a witness, nervous, unwilling, but dispassionate. 3

The reasons given for Mary’s acceptance of Massy’s proposal to marry her namely her need for material support and his social distinction are plausible, but Lawrence’s resort to the use of specialized vocabulary, like “rigid”, “lack of feeling”, “pure reason”, which he had already applied to Massy, makes the whole enterprise sound unconvincing. Here is Lawrence’s commentary on the situation:

Mary, in marrying him, tried to become a pure reason such as he was without feeling or impulse, she shut herself up, she shut herself rigid against the agonies of shame and the terror of violation, which came at first. She would not feel, and she would not feel. She was a pure will acquiescing to him. She elected a certain kind of fate. She would be good and purely just. She would live in a higher freedom than she had ever known, she would be free of mundane care, she was a pure will towards right. She had sold herself, but she had a new freedom. She had got rid of her body, she had sold a lower thing, her body, for her freedom from material things. 4

I would further argue that, following the marriage of Massy and Mary, Lawrence shifts the emphasis on the specialized vocabulary to

1. ibid. p.77.
2. ibid. p.80.
3. ibid. p.81.
4. ibid. p.88.
an equally rigid and static picture — namely Massy's obsession with the child. When they go for Christmas to Mary's family, Massy has nothing to do but to close the windows of the train lest the child should catch cold. When they are with the family he has no concern but for the child. When Alfred dares the whole family by proposing to Louisa who stands by him

All the time Mr. Massy had sat obscure, and unnoticed in a corner of the room. At this juncture he got up saying "there is a baby Mary." 1

I would, therefore, conclude that Massy and Mary are, ineffect, mere puppets voicing ideas against which Lawrence the man revolts. If "art speech" according to Lawrence "is the only truth" there is definitely a failure of artistic realization in the portrayal of these two characters.

Similarly if life according to Lawrence resides in a state of flux, a constant opposition between the unicorn and the lamb, it also manifests itself on his own evidence in a state of ebb and flow — of instability of the balance — and vitality being the quintessence of life necessitates the constant activity of polar opposites. To render one of these opposites static and "abstract" is to stop the constant tension necessary for action. The story, as we see, reduces Lawrence to a moralist in the vicious sense of the word. This morality, instead of serving life, is, in effect impoverishing it because it is not rendered through the convincingness of art. If in life as well as in art the balance is always trembling from one extreme to another a clear-cut distinction is very difficult to draw, and to draw it deliberately is precisely to commit oneself to what Lawrence terms immorality, because

1. ibid., p.137.
it is only in the spontaneity of life, the spontaneous creativity of art, that an experience becomes convincing. This bears directly on Leavis's criticism of this tale and the notion of art and life and art therein discerned. Leavis has already identified the spontaneity and vitality of life with the creativity of art; meaning thereby a fullness and naturalness of human experience. Fullness and naturalness in art are secured by a dramatic representation of the characters and situations involved in the work. It is true that in the declination of both Louisa and Alfred there is a dramatic element making for the sense of life and vitality valued by Leavis, as opposed to the "nothingness and nullity" manifested by the class-conscious Mr. and Mrs. Lindley, but this dramatic element is obviously lacking in the presentation of Mary and Massy, and they are given in terms of abstract ideas. Leavis describes the originality of Joyce as a matter of "contrivances" where insistent will and ingenuity confess the failure of creative life. I think this kind of criticism can be applied to Lawrence in this particular tale, because both Mary and Massy are subjugated to a frame-work effect. I am inclined to relate the tale to Lady Chatterley's Lover where Clifford more or less receives the same treatment which Massy here gets. Leavis himself has noticed the preconception, the intentionality of the whole scheme of the novel in consequence of which, he has, ironically enough, preferred A Passage of Lady Chatterley's Lover to the novel itself. His words are illustrative:

Lady Chatterley's Lover is a courageous, profoundly sincere and very deliberate piece of work; if it errs it is not through lack of calculation. The trouble rather lies in its being in certain ways too deliberate - too deliberate at any rate, to be a wholly satisfactory work of art, appealing to imaginatively sensitized feelings.

1. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence, Novelist, p.27.
2. Ibid, p.70.
Therefore when Leavis keeps on reiterating that the tale is an artistic piece dramatically enacted, one does not feel absolutely convinced because the abstract ideas go side by side with the concrete presentation in the tale and seriously confound its effect. Furthermore Alfred's "centralization in his mother," to use Lawrence's words, does not seem to have any artistic function in the tale. If it has any at all it is far from enabling Alfred to be "a jet of life". It inevitably reminds the reader of the unhappy effect such a centralization has on Paul in Sons and Lovers, a centralization that deprives him of establishing healthy and normal relations with others. Paul's failure to achieve a successful love-relation with both Miriam and Clara (but basically Miriam) is the outcome of this mother-complex. So centralization in the mother in this tale, far from promoting the idea of fullness of being produces a contrary effect. One would say that the presence of this idea here apart from being one of the obsessions of Lawrence the man, augurs ill for any future relation between Alfred and Louisa.

So while Leavis manages to impress upon his readers that Lawrence is neither snobbish nor class-conscious as Eliot contends, and that the tale is an epitome of what makes for life and what makes against it, he forgets his own principle that actual intentions, however sublime they may be are nothing unless they are embodied in a compelling piece of art, and while Leavis emphasizes the reality of Louisa's attitudes, he begs the central question because the very essence of reality is to convey a sense of genuineness of attitude in both art and life - this

1. Ibid, pp. 77-78.
3. F.R. Leavis, op. cit. pp.78-82.
genuineness is lacking in the case of Massy and Mary. To reinforce this point I would cite Michael Polanyi's passage which Leavis quotes in *Nor Shall My Sword*:

> At whatever level we consider a living being, the centre of its individuality is real. For it is always something we ascertain by comprehending the coherence of largely unspecifiable particulars, and which we yet expect to reveal itself further by an indeterminate range of future manifestations. Thus the criteria of reality are fulfilled.

The "unspecifiable particulars and the indeterminate range of future manifestations" are deficient in the patterned presentation of Mary and Massy, and thus would seriously call into question Lawrence's view of reality, and by extension Leavis's too.

We cannot say of *The Daughters of The Vicar* as Leavis says of *The Rainbow*:

> that the marvellous reality of the evocation cannot be distinguished from an intense specificity of dramatic significance.

And this brings the theme of *The Rainbow* into play.

Leavis conceives of life in this novel as a process of "fulfilment" seen at its highest in the relationship between Tom and Lydia as opposed to the failure represented by Ursula and Skrebensky. The variant that makes either for success or failure in this relation is the conception of love. In the first there is nothing sentimental. Each realizes the separateness and individuality of the other, yet deep down in their recesses they feel a need to come together. This recognition of the separateness, and yet the need for togetherness gives a concrete representation of Lawrence's - and by extension - Leavis's maxim that

> life is fulfilled in the individual or nowhere.

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The relation between Ursula and Skrebensky is, by contrast, a failure because it is based on a sentimental view of love that dissolves all distinctions of individuality.

This view of life seen at work in separate individuals presented in the concrete by Lawrence and critically brought out by Leavis crystallizes Polanyi's idea of "coherence" as the quintessence of "livingness" (Lawrence's word and by extension Leavis's) where unspecifiable particulars and indeterminate manifestations are portrayed and recognized, and thus the creative achievement of Lawrence, the critical views of Leavis, and the philosophical ideas of Polanyi and Whitehead (Whitehead too, as will be shown, is a staunch supporter of human individuality) come together. The Rainbow offers an example of the reciprocal interaction between art and life enhancing both, and the identification of art with life favoured by Leavis is firmly established. Lawrence's and again by extension Leavis's phrase "spontaneous creative fullness of being" is effectively given a dramatic meaning.

The notion of preoccupation with the children once the marriage relation fails - a notion that does not carry much weight in The Daughters of the Vicar, because it is given in abstract terms, now assumes a convincing form in Anna's attitude to her children, and the character of Skrebensky, who is, in a sense, the counterpart of Massy - has the plausible traits of a human being. It is true that he stands for the Benthamite view of "the good of the greatest number", and for the nation as having precedence over the individual, but this is the idealism that defeats life - an idealism against which Lawrence rebels not just in The Rainbow, but in other works like Kangaroo, and England My England. One of his favourite maxims is that everyone should be first and foremost true to himself. The relation between Ursula and Skrebensky shows that, though Lawrence is up against Skrebensky's conformist and collectivist doctrines, he does not fail to present him in a convincing and dramatic form. Ursula says:
I hate soldiers, they are stiff and wooden. What do you fight for really?

Skrebensky replies -

I would fight for the nation.

For all that, you aren't the nation. What would you do for yourself?

I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation.

But when it didn't need your services in particular. When there is no fighting? What would you do then?

He was irritated:

I would do what everybody else does.

What?

Nothing. I would be in readiness for when I was needed.

The answer came in exasperation.

It seems to me (she answered) as if you weren't anybody, as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me. 1

This situation is later objectified when Lawrence sets Skrebensky in contrast with the bargee who manages to suggest to Ursula what physical and spiritual love would be.

Skrebensky was envying the lean father of three children, for his impudent directness, and his worship of the woman in Ursula, a worship of body and soul together.

Why could not he himself desire a woman so? Why did he never really want a woman, not with the whole of him, never love, never worship, only just physically wanting her? 2

This is the conflict which simply illustrates Leavis's view of the novel as a dramatic poem. At the wedding party of Frederick Brangwen, Skrebensky draws Ursula's attention to the rise of the moon:

She turned, and saw a great white moon looking at her over the hill. And her breast opened to it, she was cleaved like a transparent jewel to its light. She stood filled with the full moon offering herself. Her two breasts opened to make way for it, her body opened wide like a quivering


2. ibid, p.316.
anemone, a soft, dilated invitation touched by the moon. She wanted the moon to fill in to her, she wanted more, more communion with the moon, consummation. But Skrebensky put his arm round her and led her away. He put a big, dark cloak round her and sat holding her hand. Whilst the moonlight streamed above the glowing fires. 1

This presents the clash of opposite forces, the tension necessary for making life, manifest in human individuals, feasible and convincing. Leavis is quite right here when he points out that Ursula's judgment 
"You seem like nothing to me", has been fully done, Babbie forth. 2

Lawrence's interest (as Leavis says) in the deeper life of the psyche cannot be an interest in the individual abstracted from the society to which he belongs. 3

Skrebensky's failure here is the product of the Benthamite material world into which he is born. Lawrence's hostility to Benthamism, his ability convincingly to present it in terms of art, accounts in part for Leavis's claim for Lawrence that "he is the greatest writer of our present phase of civilization". The Rainbow offers another specimen of this failure in the relation between Tom Brangwen and Winifred Iger.

If Skrebensky is a Benthamite, Tom is a worshipper of the machine - a materialist who has lost all the distinctive qualities of a human being.

He did not care any more, neither about his body nor about his soul. Only he would preserve intact his own life. Only the simple, superficial fact of living persisted. 4

Lawrence's evocation of the social setting in which Tom Brangwen makes his appearance has more than one importance:

He lived in a large new house of red brick, standing outside a mass of homogeneous red-brick dwellings, called Wiggiston. Wiggiston was only seven years old. It had been a hamlet of eleven houses on the edge of heathy, agricultural country. Then the great seam of coal had been opened. In a year Wiggiston appeared, a great mass of pinkish rows of thin, unreal dwellings of five rooms each. The streets were like

1. ibid, p.319.
2. J.R. Leavis, op. cit. p.140.
3. ibid, p.123.
visions of pure ugliness: a grey-black macadamized road, asphalt causeways, held in between a flat succession of wall, window and door a new-brick channel that began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Everything was amorphous, yet everything repeated itself endlessly. Only now and then, in one of the house-windows vegetables or small groceries were displayed for sale.

In the middle of the town was a large, open, shapeless space, or market-place of black trodden earth, surrounded by the same flat material of dwellings, new red-brick becoming grimy small oblong windows, and oblong doors, repeated endlessly, with just at one corner, a great and gaudy public house and somewhere lost on one of the sides of the square a large window opaque and darkish green, which was the post-office.

The place had the strange desolation of a ruin. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation.

The passage confirms our belief in the topicality of Lawrence, but this is not all the value it has. Related to this is the sense of uprootedness, and disappearance of the agricultural organic community resulting from a sweeping industrial advance. This sense is bitterly deplored by both Lawrence and Leavis, and is a governing principle in their writing. The sense of ugliness, unreality, uniformity and sterility definitely recalls the sombre Dickensian world of *Hard Times* and the Blakean world of "London". This point is worth making because it rightly places Lawrence in the literary tradition, and justifies the link which Leavis establishes between the three artists. The intuition informing their works commands Leavis's highest admiration.

But the sense of unreality, sterility, shapelessness and monotony also foreshadows Eliot's *Waste Land* (*The Rainbow* was first published in 1915 and the *Waste Land* in 1922) and the notion of death in life represented in this quotation is at the centre of Eliot's poem. The amorphousness and repetitiousness of that setting also give rise to a serious loss.

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of human individuality; "the colliers are hanging about in gangs and
groups" that recall "the grey block of flats" and the loss of individ-
uality is indicative of the loss of life. Here one is not just brought
back full circle to the original theme of what makes for life and what
makes against it, but is also reminded of fundamental concerns of
Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. The quotation furnishes a good
and common ground on which they all meet.

In marrying Winifred, Tom Brangwen confirms his worship of the
machine in almost the same way as Winifred does; and in protesting
against this match, in expressing her desire to smash the machine and
destroy the colliery Ursula redresses the balance in favour of human
life.

In this context it is appropriate to underline one of Leavis's
major emphases in D.H. Lawrence: Novelist; namely that Lawrence is
a great successor to George Eliot. The Rainbow provides a
good illustration of Lawrence's achievement as a recorder
of essential English history. 2

His minute rendering of the setting, his main points of interest, his
"human valuations" would be found appealing to George Eliot. But while
George Eliot's treatment of themes can be called "ethical"; Lawrence's
can only be described as "religious". His evocation of the background
comes in a form that is immediately sensuous and poetic, a form that
is alien to George Eliot and reminiscent of Shakespeare's use of
language.

In Leavis's view Lawrence's background, far from being a
hindrance, was really conducive to his maturity. His congregational
and nonconformist upbringing saved him from any dogmatic indoctrination

1. cf the fourth and fifth chapters on Whitehead, Collingwood and
Polanyi.

and helped him to achieve wider sympathies. The protestant community into which he was born contributed to that "sensuous immediacy" that relates him to Shakespeare.

The loss of human individuality issuing from the overpowering influence of mechanical and industrial civilization underlies Leavis's main emphasis in *Women In Love*. Leavis shifts the emphasis from Birkin and Ursula made by Middleton Murry, to Gerald and Gudrun. Murry views the novel as mainly concerned with Birkin and Ursula:

To the working out of this personal argument in the imaginary consummation of Birkin and Ursula, all else is really subsidiary in the novel. 1

Leavis's new critical perspective views the individual in relation to his social setting and is consistent with the line of argument so far pursued by him.

I will consider the treatment of Gerald Crich's case. There we have peculiarly well exemplified the way in which, in Lawrence's art, the diagnosis of the malady of individual psyche can become that of the malady of a civilization. 2

After taking over the running of the factory from his father Gerald comes to exemplify Skrebensky's approach to life by emphasizing the need for productivity and the "good for the greatest number"; an idealism falsely maintained at the expense of an integrated and living human personality. I would offer the following dialogue between Birkin and Gerald as illustrative of Gerald's likeness to Skrebensky:

Can't you see (said Birkin) that to help my neighbour to eat is no more than eating myself. I eat, thou eatest, he eats, we eat, they eat - and what then? Why should every man decline the whole verb. First person singular is enough for me.

You've got to start with material things (said Gerald, which statement Birkin ignored)

And we've got to live for something. We're not just cattle that can graze and have done with it (said Gerald).

Tell me (said Birkin) What do you live for? (Gerald's face went baffled)

What do I live for? (he repeated) I suppose I live for work, to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being. Apart from that I live because I am living.

And what's your work? Getting so many more thousands of tons of coal out of the earth everyday. And when we've got all of the coal we want, and all the plush furniture, and pianofortes and the rabbits are stewed and eaten, and we're all warm, and our bellies are filled, and we're listening to the young lady performing on the pianoforte. What then? What then when you've made a real fair material start with your material things?

Gerald sat laughing at the words and the mocking humour of the other man. But he was cogitating too.

We haven't yet got there (he replied) A good many people are still waiting for the "rabbit", and the fire to cook it.

So while you get the coal I must chase the rabbit? (said Birkin, mocking at Gerald.

Something like that (said Gerald).

Birkin watched him narrowly. He say the perfect good-humoured callousness, even strange, glistening malice in Gerald, glistening through the plausible ethics of productivity.

Leavis's admiration for the author of this passage is consistent with his hostility to C.P. Snow's defence of a technological civilization based on material well-being. This material well-being falls far short of meeting the profound psychological and spiritual aspirations of man and to say that the scientists have the future in their hands is to be blind to these aspirations. Leavis's commentary on the last quotation not only recalls the criterion of excellence in The Great Tradition but also foreshadows a ruling principle running through his later critical works: Dickens The Novelist, Anna Karenina and other Essays, Lectures in America and more particularly Nor Shall My Sword

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The plausible ethics of productivity is not only an irrelevance in the face of this problem (what do we live for?) it represents by the criterion that Lawrence’s creative genius compels us to apply, a refusal of responsibility, of responsibility towards life. 1

But the difficulty with Lawrence’s distinction between what makes for life and what makes against it as illustrated in The Daughters of The Vicar, The Rainbow and Women in Love is that it is represented in a didactic - rather missionary spirit. We can understand that Lawrence is both an artist and a preacher, but we also presume that preaching is persuasively conveyed if it takes an impressive literary shape. It lacks the sense of humour and irony characteristic of the Lawrence of The Captain’s Doll, and of The Dickens of Hard Times. To compare the previous dialogue between Birkin and Gerald with a quotation which Leavis himself extracts from Hard Times may serve to show the difference in approach

Girl number twenty (said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger) I don’t know that girl. Who is that girl?

Sissy Jupe, Sir (explained number twenty, blushing standing up and curtseying)

Sissy is not a name (said Mr. Gradgrind) Don’t call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.

It’s father as calls me Sisssy, Sir (reiterated the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey)

Then he has no business to do (said Mr. Gradgrind) Tell him he mustn’t. Cecilia Jupe, what is your father?

He belongs to the horse-riding — if you please, sir.

(Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.)

We don’t want to know anything about that here. You mustn’t tell us about that here; Your father breaks horses, don’t he?

If you please, Sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.

You mustn't tell us about the ring here. Very well then, describe your father as a horse-breaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?

Oh, yes, sir.

Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and a horse-breaker. Give me your definition of a horse.

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand)

Girl number twenty unable to define a horse! (said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general benefit of all the pitchers. Girl number twenty possessed of no facts in reference to one of the commonest animals! some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, Yours.

Quadruped - Graminivorous, forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.

Mr. Gradgrind with his dominating tone in which he derides at Sissy's background represents the overwhelming triumph of the material and industrial civilization, and Bitzer, in his automatic and mechanical response, is the epitome of that civilization. The apparent physical indications show that they have the upper hand, and that Sissy's inability to meet their requirements is a failure. But this impression turns out to be an illusion as Dickens uses the symbol of the "sun" to show where genuine life really exists; not in calculated facts, but in spontaneous activity; not in mechanical response, but in natural reactions:

But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge that he looked as though, if it were cut, he would bleed white.

Through the use of symbolsm Dickens manages to draw the distinction between appearance and reality, and eventually we are left in no doubt as to where life as opposed to death resides. The distinction is worked out in the concrete, and unlike Lawrence, Dickens gives each of the opposed forces here his due, so that the clash between them is rendered plausible and convincing. Leavis himself describes the difference between these two forces as rendered in terms of sensation, so that the symbolic intention emerges out of the metaphor and the vivid evocation of the concrete. Sissy is generous impulsive life. 1

In Lawrence, in short, the opposition between life and death is stated, whereas in Dickens it is suggested, and in his passion to heap praise on Lawrence, Leavis seems to lose sight of what is abstract in that opposition. However, if fullness and spontaneity of life are checked by mechanical and materialistic factors, they are equally hampered by platonic and idealistic theories, and it is part of the achievement of Women in Love that the two extremes—as emblematic of the maladies of modern civilization—are brought together. In the following conversation between Gerald, Gudrun and Birkin we find Gerald saying:

... the idea was that every man was fit for his own little bit of a task—let him do that, and then please himself. The unifying principle was the work in hand. Only work, the business of production held them together. It was mechanical, but then society was a mechanism.

Oh! (cried Gudrun) Then we shan’t have names any more—we shall be like Germans, nothing but Herr Obermeister and Herr Untermeister. I can imagine it. I am Mrs. Colliery-manager Crich. I am Mrs. member of parliament Roddices. I am Miss art-teacher Brangwen. 2

This is, in substance, the world of Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World, where distinct human individuality is dissolved and replaced by

1. ibid., pp. 230-231.

uniform types hatched by incubatory machines. Leavis's reaction to this
danger is very decided;

life is individual and individual lives cannot be aggregated
or equated or dealt with quantitatively in any way;

And it is a reaction that draws on Lawrence's critical principles.

The other banal defect is described by Birkin in his scathing
attack on the abstract notion of equality. This notion is seriously
questioned by Lawrence in his essay on "Democracy".¹

After a lengthy discussion of Sir Joshua's social equality of
man, and as the members of the party began to disappear after lunch,
Birkin gives us his view on the subject, a view which seems to be
endorsed by Lawrence himself:

We are all different and equal in spirit, it is only the
social differences that are based on accidental material
conditions. We are all abstractly and mathematically equal
if you like... But I, myself who am myself, what have I to
do with equality with any other man or woman? In the
spirit, I am as separate as one star is from another, as
different in quality and quantity. ²

Lawrence, it is true, argues here for an integrity of human
individuality, for fullness of living, or for what Leavis would call
"psychic health" and not for a state of egocentricity or selfishness of
which he is wrongly accused. But again one is conscious of a sense of
artificiality creeping in. Considered in context the argument is too
late to produce the desired effect. Lawrence himself describes it as
"intellectual and artificial"³, and even Birkin's strictures on equality
are, in Lawrence's words, "a bitter declamation", ⁴ a defect on account
of which Leavis takes Lawrence to task in his Minority Pamphlet.

³. ibid, p.114.
⁴. ibid, p.115.
But Lawrence's conclusions (argues Leavis) involve a great deal of declaiming against "ideas" and "ideals" and mind-knowledge. 1

Under the spell of the relevance and appeal of these ideas to his critical tendency Leavis now glosses over the question of their appropriateness within a literary context.

Gerald's relation with Gudrun is an illustration of the antithesis between life and death. His character is symbolic of ruthless and insistent will. He takes over the management of the colliery after his father's death, and runs it on authoritarian lines — an attitude that breeds hatred and grudge among miners. His father was the mainstay on which he depended, and in the absence of this support he is left desperate and unsettled. He rushes towards Gudrun with a delusion that he can achieve a love-relation with her. Gudrun's encounters with him serve to uncover the superficiality and falsity of that relation and in consequence she begins to hate him. Nevertheless Lawrence is subtle enough, in this situation, to maintain "the instability of the balance" in depicting Gerald's character. He does not satirize him, and Gerald has the ability to flirt with other girls, to provide the necessary male complement to Birkin. Above all he manages to exert an effect on Gudrun herself:

He was so attractive and repulsive at once. The sardonic suggestivity that flickered over his face and looked from his narrowed eyes, made her want to hide, to hide herself away from him and watch him from somewhere unseen. His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. 2

But in the last analysis he makes against life, Lawrence describes his effect on Gudrun as "a frost deadening her," and the simile foreshadows the fate of Gerald himself who dies out of jealousy and

3. ibid, p.496.
envy in the frosty cold on top of the mountains. This finishing touch has two major dramatic functions. First it depicts the defeat of the forces that make against life, or rather it shows that these forces being bent on destruction, eventually turn into self-destructiveness, and there is a hope, however flimsy it may be, for the positive factors that conduct to life.

Second it suggests that Lawrence's preoccupation with the primitive and elemental life does not always - as Leavis himself argues - foster health and vitality. On the contrary the snow and cold here are part and parcel of the factors that make for death. The point is worth making because Lawrence is wrongly accused of seeking a return to, and glorification of primitivism. Birkin's relation with Ursula provides the other constructive opposite - the element that makes for life.

To answer Murry's charge that Lawrence is almost personal and autobiographical in his presentation of characters, and that Birkin is a reproduction of Lawrence the man, Leavis points out that Lawrence is primarily an artist who achieves the impersonality necessary for art, and that he transcends his personal concerns. To substantiate this claim he refers to the chapter entitled "class-room",¹ in which Hermoine voices some of the ideas on education and on the detrimental effect which a premature consciousness raised in children has on their future life.² Birkin rejects the idea straightaway and through this gesture Lawrence transcends his immediate personal concerns to enable the character of Birkin as a unique and independent dramatic persona to develop. I am inclined to think that in this particular instance Leavis is right because Lawrence manages to distance the character of Birkin from the ideas dear to him personally. But Murry's accusations

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1. ibid, pp. 38-48.
2. ibid, p.43.
are not only confined to this lack of impersonal approach, but go so far as to deny Lawrence the capacity for creating distinct and recognizable characters:

... We can discern no individuality whatever in the denizens of Mr. Lawrence's world: we should have thought that we should be able to distinguish between male and female at least. But not! Remove the names, remove the sedulous catalogues of unnecessary clothing - a new element and a significant one, this, in our author's work - and man and woman are indistinguishable as octopods in an aquarium tank. 1

Vindicating Lawrence against this charge Leavis instances the character of Hermoine Roddice as illustrative of a unique and distinguishable character. Leavis is correct in drawing the analogy between Gerald and Hermoine as forces antithetical to life, the first by reason of his rapid interest in mechanical and industrial advance, the second by virtue of her "intellectuality" and her "insistent will". As Gerald, out of a feeling of personal insufficiency, desperately sticks to the idea of loving Gudrun, Hermoine, in a similar way, sticks to "intellectual knowledge" as a means of advancing towards a love-relation with Birkin. The presence of "insistent will" in both is obvious, and naturally both of them fail in their endeavours, and from the passages quoted by Leavis respecting Hermoine Roddice 2, the notion of enactment, of dramatic presentation is brought out in the concrete.

I have deliberately postponed a number of objections to Leavis's criticism of Lawrence to provide scope for discussing Leavis's distinction between life and death as worked out by Lawrence and critically stated by Leavis. It is high time to consider these objections.

In his essay on "F.R. Leavis and D.H. Lawrence" Philip Rahr says:

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2. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, pp. 184-188.
Leavis's emphasis on "health" and sanity, and his mandatory distinction between what makes for life, and what does not are singularly "inappropriate" to placing Lawrence. Terms like "health", "sanity" and even "life" are at once too vague and too inclusive, too invertebrate as it were, for use in any precise analysis, and above all too moralistic to make much sense in literary discourse. 1

Reference has been made to Leavis's awareness of the difficulty in using such general terms, but judging by the argument advanced above regarding the distinction between what makes for life, and what does not, one is at least conscious of the validity of the distinction. To say that it is inappropriate to placing Lawrence is to gloss over Lawrence's own views on what he felt he should be doing, already outlined in the first section of this chapter. To say that these terms are too moralistic to make much sense in a literary discourse, is to deny the interaction between art and life which is at the heart of Leavis's way of reading literature. In Leavis's view there is no segregation between the creativity of life and that of art because both are supposed to contribute to each other. This is the meeting-place between Arnold and Leavis, and the point should be emphasized because Leavis's tradition is by definition British and moral, and not as Philip Rahv wants it to be, American and formalistic. Again to say that by radically separating his art from his doctrine, without fully acknowledging what he is up to, Leavis has been able to create a Lawrence who never really existed, 2 is to distort the nature of Leavis's attempt and achievement. Leavis's quotations from and references to Psychoanalysis and The Unconscious, Fantasia of The Unconscious, Phoenix, A Propos of Lady Chatterley's

4. Ibid, pp. 103-147-150.
Lover and Assorted Articles serve to confute this allegation. Quoting from Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious to diagnose the character of Gerald, Leavis gives us this passage:

True, we must all develop into mental consciousness. But mental consciousness is not a goal; it is a cul-de-sac. It provides us only with endless appliances which we can use for the all-too-difficult business of coming to your spontaneous creative fulness of being. It provides us with means to adjust ourselves to the external Universe. It gives us further means for subduing the external, materio-mechanical Universe to our great end of creative life. And it gives us plain indications of how to avoid falling into automatism, hints for the applying of the will, the loosening of false automatic fixations, the brave adherence to a profound soul-impulse. This is use of the mind - a great indicator and instrument. The mind as author and director of life is anathema.

And commenting on that passage Leavis says:

But that is what it has become in Gerald; hence the destructiveness of his "go" (the "go" which Ursula qualifies as pertaining to applying the latest appliances) as the following passage from the same essay explains.

(Leavis goes on quoting from Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious)

The mind is the dead end of life. But it has all the mechanical force of the non-vital Universe. It is a great dynamo of super-mechanical force. Given the will as accomplice, it can even arrogate its machine-motions and automatizations over the whole life, till every tree becomes a chipped-tea-pot and every man a useful mechanism. So we see the brain, like a great dynamo and accumulator, accumulating force, and presuming to apply this mechanical force-control to the living unconscious; subecting everything spontaneous to certain-machine-principles called ideals or ideas.

Commenting on the relevance of these quotations to Gerald's situation Leavis says:

The significance of these propositions reveals its full force and scope in the life and death of Gerald. A certain verbal identity may have been noticed between what Ursula says of his "go", and what Lawrence says of "mental consciousness".

2. ibid, p.87.
4. ibid, p.157.
5. ibid, p.157.
6. ibid.
Adopting a line of argument similar to that of Rahv, Roger Poole says:

there is a sense in which the claim for life had not been securely enough established. Reading D.H. Lawrence as a Novelist is rather like being submitted to prolonged indoctrination. It is not so much that life is shown to be present in Lawrence, as that it is insisted upon as being there, again and again. Ostensibly, repeatedly, Leavis points to this passage and that, indicating his conviction that this is virtually ineffable, that this is transcendent art. If one cannot respond to this, it is implied, then one's sense of what life is is radically defective. There is no proof that Lawrence's sense of life is not some of the things, hostile readers, like Middleton Murry, have claimed it to be. Leavis dismisses the case, but does not prove his own.

These objections bring us closer to Eliseo Vivas's argument that Leavis's "emotional ties to his subject tend to make him see virtues that are not there." The point I have been trying to make in this section is that life is there in Lawrence, but in some cases it is not objectified enough in the characters symbolizing it, and the reader sometimes senses that the ideas enunciated by these characters do not naturally spring from these characters but are rather imposed on them by Lawrence's conscious mind and philosophy, so much so that they are turned into mouthpieces voicing his favourite ideas, but this is not always the case, and the characters of The Rainbow and Women In Love redeem these shortcomings. To argue then, as Roger Poole does, that Lawrence's sense of life is not some of the things hostile readers like Middleton Murry have claimed it to be, is to deny the very nature of life outlined in that section, and Lawrence's right to being an artist.

Murry in Son of Woman, and Reminiscences of D.H. Lawrence, considers

Lawrence, as I have already indicated, not as an artist, but as an autobiographical writer, a judgment which, where *Women In Love*, *The Rainbow* and the tales are concerned, one agrees with Leavis in strongly repudiating. But this final point gives rise to the discussion of the tales.

The *Captain's Doll* provides another interesting example of the indeterminateness and flexibility of human character. In point of fact Leavis's analysis of the tale comes to consolidate this contention. The doll which Hannele makes as a reproduction of the character of Alexander Hepburn turns out to be not a reproduction at all, and is nullified once Alexander himself appears on the scene, hence the contradiction between what Alexander Hepburn actually is and what Hannele takes him to be. As she hands him the puppet the following dialogue is carried on:

You've got me; (he said at last, in his amused melodious voice.)

What? (she said)

You've got me, (he repeated)

I don't care (she said)

What — you don't care — (his face broke into a smile. He had an odd way of answering, as if he were only half-attending, as if he were thinking of something else. 2

Hannele has "not really got Hepburn" and the melodious voice which sounds the statement is meant as an irony on the conventional terms of love on which she wants to possess him; and the tale is, in a sense, a process of disillusionment which ultimately culminates in Hannele's acceptance of Hepburn on his own terms of reality. Leavis's commentary is worth quoting:


Her sense in his presence when she can see him and hear him speak that what communicates with her through the voice and the dark eyes is something unknown and unpossessable imposes itself upon us with compelling force. Troubled and baffled, she rebels, and yet has to reckon with the fact that what she rebels against is what irresistibly attracts her. 1

Meanwhile Hannele too, though a plausible presence to the reader in the tale is also indeterminate and unspecifiable "she never knew what he saw when he looked at her". Leavis's words are again illuminating.

she too - in her reality, is unknown, for all the ostensible definitiveness of her outward presence, her face and her personality: The problem that preoccupies her and the enactment of which provides the dramatic tension of the tale is that of determining whether the spell exercised upon her by the man owes its power to reality or illusion. 3

But if the doll symbolizes the feeling of possessiveness which Hannele first entertains towards Hepburn, it also connotes the adoration, the kneeling at the feet which Mrs. Hepburn expects from her husband. Both attitudes deny the independence and individuality of Hepburn, and in this sense they join the forces that make against life. In this connection Leavis's words are an echo of Lawrence's

one cannot live to make another person happy, and to propose to do so, to take that for a raison d'être, is a denial of life that can only breed ill. 4

The Dickensian sense of humour is here manifested in the amused melodious voice of Hepburn, his tartan trews, and the mistaken identity of Mitchka whom Mrs. Hepburn takes for Hannele. The theme is evoked by situations, symbolism and scenes that adequately illustrate Eliot's notion of the "objective correlative". When asked by Hannele whether he loved his wife Hepburn says:

4. ibid, p.213.
Yes. But in this way. When I was a boy I caught a bird; a black-cap, and I put it in a cage. And I loved that bird, I don't know why, but I loved it, I simply loved that bird. All the gorse, and the heather, and the rock, and the hot smell of yellow gorse-blossom, and the sky that seemed to have no end to it, when I was a boy, everything that I almost was mad with, as boys are, seemed to me to be in that little fluttering black-cap, and it would pick its seed as if it didn't quite know what else to do, and look round about, and begin to sing. But in quite a few days it turned its head aside and died. Yes it died. I never had that feeling again that I got from that black-cap when I was a boy - not until I saw her.

And when Hepburn takes Hannele on a trip to the top of the glacier we find her very much impressed by the height of the mountain, whereas Hepburn looks down for the sea and wants to live near the sea-level, the first symbolizing the sense of uplift associated with ideal love conceived by Hannele, the second indicative of the down to earth and matter of fact approach of Hepburn. At the close of the tale Hannele takes the doll to burn it, thereby announcing the renunciation of her conventional idea of love and the triumph of the principle of reality of life. Here the doctrine of impersonality in art receives adequate expression and Lawrence's creativity far from being autobiographical is marvellously objective and at its highest. It may be argued that the theme is one of Lawrence's favourite topics namely male dominance and female submission, but nobody can accuse Lawrence of "declaiming", stating or intruding personally to press the scale. The shattering of the doll at the close of the tale is, in effect, a shattering of conventional ideas and attitudes that check the natural flow of life and the vitality of human activity.

The situations and symbols that adequately stand for human relations and emotions in this tale resist Graham Hough's contention that "in writing of human relations he (Lawrence) often leaves a residue of

1. ibid, pp. 206-207.
The tale instances an integrity of art making for the requisite vitality of life and the reciprocal interaction between art and life desiderated by Leavis is here most consummately brought home. Graham Hough does not deny the success of such a tale.

_St Mawr_ is a very controversial tale and does not so easily fit into the line of argument developed in this section.

Leavis's high praise for it has caused a wrangle among a number of critics on the pages of *Essays in Criticism*. Robert Liddell started the argument and was later replied by a set of critics including David Craig, Mark Roberts and T.W. Thomas.

Graham Hough thinks that it is not an authentic piece of work, that there is a falsity in the motive and the conception that fatally affects the whole.

But Frank Kermode regards Leavis's reading of the tale as "surely the best study of any single Lawrence tale." In view of these contradictory assessments of both the tale and Leavis's critique of it, it is in place to put the whole thing in some perspective.

In principle the tale raises a number of difficulties, but Leavis's points of emphasis cannot be missed. The affirmation emerging from the conflict between the positive and the negative is clear. The horse

stands for forces of life that the modern world frustrates; standing we see for the deep springs of life, for the life impulsion.

and the negative aspect is represented by Ricv. Leavis also says

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7. F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p.239.
that the horse has been mishandled and outraged by his human master so that his "break" isn't mere viciousness but a compelled protest of life,\(^1\) and correctly reminds us of Gerald and the Arab mare,\(^2\) but Leavis’s claims that

St Mawr seems to present a creative and technical originality more remarkable than that of The Waste Land, \(^3\) (and that its achievement is something that) "couldn't be done outside Shakespearian dramatic poetry", \(^4\)

Are too much exaggerated. What unsurprising after all these high claims is that Leavis himself casts doubt on the close of the tale.

First he tells us that "if St. Mawr" deserved to be called a dramatic poem it is not because it comes to what would ordinarily be called a dramatic close"; although he also says that "the actual close is as clear proof of genius as anything else about the work"\(^5\), then he contradicts this effect in comparing the close of "Mother and Daughter" with that of "St Mawr" saying "

Its range, of course is less than that of "St Mawr", but not so much less as may appear at first sight, and the advantage it gains is the unquestionable, the immediately convincing perfection. No doubt arises like that which puts itself when one has finished "St Mawr". \(^6\)

The emergence of St Mawr (the horse) as a symbol and substitute for Lou’s frustration in her marital life with Rico is not adequately justified because after the realization of their failure they accept their marriage as a "friendship

friendship, platonic. It was a marriage but without sex. Sex was shattering and exhausting; they shrank from it and became like brother and sister. But still they were husband and wife. \(^7\)

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1. ibid, p.238.
2. ibid, p.239.
3. ibid, p.225.
4. ibid, p.238.
5. ibid, p.243.
6. ibid, p.276.
I would further argue the marital relation is so sketchily portrayed that it does not compellingly call for the dramatic course of events that has ensued.

To come now to the crucial opposition between the characters that make for life and those who do not, and remembering the "constant instability of the balance" essential for action and life, one finds that Lawrence's attitude is again one-sided. The balance is always in favour of the horse, Lou, and in a sense, Mrs. Witt whereas Rico is lost sight of, and when Lawrence turns his attention to him it is with the object of making him more repulsive. After the cursory beginning of the tale attention focuses first on Mrs. Witt's interest in horses, and in riding in Hyde Park, then the focus shifts in two directions; first to Lou's hatred of Rico whose "claim was a sort of anger, and his love was a destruction in itself". Later on we are told

"Curious how pleasant it was to sit there in the garden when Phoenix was about, or Lewis. But when Rico was there, she was all aching nerve."

Then we get long stretches of description given to both Mrs. Witt and Lou; the first is restless and full of life - the second is bored with men because "they have gone perverse, or cringing."

Lawrence's doctrine of relativity should have brought him to a realization that there is nothing absolutely good, or utterly evil.

Leavis's criticism of the tale too, out of a sense of loyalty to Lawrence, is also one-sided. He restricts our view of the horse to the way in which we see him "through Lou's eyes". He points to passages where the beauty of the horse is shown even after the "break".

1. ibid, p.33.
2. ibid, p.50.
3. ibid, p.61.
She (Lou) saw the pale, gold belly of the stallion upturned, the hoofs working wildly, neglecting the afflictions of Rico, because Lawrence wants to concentrate attention only on the sufferings of the horse, whereas a beneficent imaginative vision should have done justice to both. Shakespeare's evil characters are portrayed as having saving graces that endear them to us. In this tale there is a lack of sympathy betraying a failure of imagination. Mark Roberts' view of both Leavis and Lawrence represents the point I have been trying to advance:

Dr. Leavis has a deflecting interest in St Mawr; he agrees so strongly with what Lawrence here says that the imaginative deficiency escapes his notice. 2

"The trembling instability of the balance" or rather the poise between forces that make for life and the others that counter them is maintained in a number of the other tales singled out for analysis by Leavis. Needless to say that to maintain this poise is at the same time to maintain an impersonal tone on the part of the artist allowing the drama to be enacted; hence to achieve an artistic maturity coalescing with the renewal and vitality of life. In other words it involves an interaction intensifying the value of both life and art. This interaction which is favourite to Leavis, Lawrence, at his best, secures. Leavis's criticism of England My England comes readily to substantiate this contention and consolidate the line of argument suggested in this section. Egbert, as the tale suggests, refuses responsibility because he has pretensions to being an artist, but he is not genuine, he is a dilettante who lacks the creative urge. If he had been genuine, even without earning sufficient money to cater for his family, his dependence on his father-in-law would not have much mattered, the trouble is that he is not serious enough.

1. ibid, p.239.

Winifred his wife loves him passionately. The interesting thing is that he is not reduced, nor dwarfed nor even denigrated by Lawrence. In fact he commands our sympathy. Leavis's words come relevantly to reinforce this line of argument:

... the tale is so painful because he (Egbert) commands so large a measure of our sympathy. Essentially a dilettante, he is nevertheless not weak, and it is a remarkable triumph of the tale to make him decidedly not contemptible. Indeed the quiet endurance with which he continues without deflection to be what he is, when his world has turned against him, has an effect of resistant strength of character and gives his dilettantism a kind of stoic dignity. In the matter of the scythe and Joyce's cut knee, which raises the painlessness of the tale to its highest pitch, he is put so terribly in the wrong that he commands something of the sympathy that goes out to a victim.

The same poise is seen at work in "The Fox". It is Banford being the opposite of life, who welcomes Henry and treats him as a brother at the beginning of the tale and refuses to charge him any money for his stay.

Banford was quite charmed by him. He was so soft and courteous in speech, not wanting to say much himself, preferring to hear what she had to say and to laugh in his quick, half mocking way.

When Henry proposes to March his persuasive argument inclines her to accept him, but once she goes back home, she thinks of Banford's future, and out of a sense of loyalty to her, goes back on her earlier decision, and sends Henry a letter rejecting the offer. Leavis's words in that respect are again illustrative:

She accepts under his compulsion to marry him. When she is with him, and relapses when she is with Banford. The drama of resolution on his side and irresolution on hers has the dignity given it by her loyalty to Banford.

The conflict in psychic fields of force is almost inarticulate, and in a sense inexpressible. March knows that she cannot get along

1. F.R. Leavis, op. cit., p.267.
3. F.R. Leavis, op. cit., p.263.
forever with Banford. Their failure to get things right on the farm is a manifestation of their inner conflict. Therefore the fox in preying upon the chickens is tacitly attacking this incongruous way of life. Once the soldier appears on the scene March immediately identifies him with the fox. Her unconscious mind tells her that he is the force that will effect her salvation but her loyalty to Banford keeps her in a state of conflict:

Nellie and I are going to be married (says Henry)

(Banford put down her knife out of her thin, delicate fingers as if she would never take it up to eat any more. She stared with blank, reddened eyes)

You what? (she exclaimed)

We're going to get married. Aren't we, Nellie? (and he turned to March)

You say so, anyway (said March laconically. But again she flushed with an agonized flush. She too could swallow no more).

(Banford looked at her like a bird that has been shot; poor little sick bird)

The image of the bird that has been shot prepares our mind for her final death by Henry. The night on which Henry shoots the fox, March has another dream which is ominous

She dreamed that Banford was dead, and that she March was sobbing her heart out. Then she had to put Banford into her coffin, and the coffin was the rough-wood-box in which the bits of chopped wood were kept in the kitchen by the fire. This was the coffin and there was no other, and March was in agony and dazed bewilderment, looking for something to line the box with, something to make it soft with, something to cover up the poor dead darling. Because she couldn't lay her in there, just in her white, thin nightdress in the horrible wood-box. So she hunted and hunted and picked up thing after thing, and threw it aside in the agony of dream-frustration. And in her dream - despair all she could find that would do was a fox-skin.

The dream embodies the suppressed desire of March, and its significance is that it gives the sense of artistic inevitability, namely Henry's

willed death of Banford by the branch of the tree. The box and the chopped bits of wood that make up the coffin are prophetic, and the fox-skin is, as it were, a look backward. To read the tale in this was is not "to take the intention for the achievement"¹, as Ian Gregor accuses Leavis of doing. Commenting on Henry's wilful death of Banford he says:

... his final act must in some way command our approval. It must that is, be seen as fundamentally human, in the reverential human way Lawrence, above all people, has taught us to appreciate. ²

Lawrence attempts to justify Henry's "final act" by intimating the supercilious tone adopted by Banford towards him

... her manner was more remote and supercilious than ever; the way she turned her head if she spoke at all, as if he were some tramp or inferior intruder of that sort made his blue eyes go almost black with rage. ³

The black rage develops into a grudge borne by Henry towards Banford and the conflict now assumes the form of a clash between conventional feelings of class-consciousness and superiority represented by Banford, and the forces of life symbolized by Henry, and in his victory over Banford we have the triumph of life. But does the triumph of life justify murder? The tale seems to offer an affirmative answer. Leavis himself seems to overlook the nature of the murder and describes it as "a willed accident"⁴, whereas Henry was, in fact, fully conscious of the murder he was going to commit. It is true that Henry stands for life, and that Banford is a symbol of the defeat of that life, but to murder her is to be one-sided, and what is more serious, to end

2. ibid, p.15.
the opposition between hostile forces that is necessary for life and action. It is only at the close of the tale that we see Lawrence switching the balance in its instability. Both Henry and March are shown as uncertain about the rosy future they were dreaming of, and they wishfully hope for a better life in Canada. Leavis's awareness of this fact is consistent with the view of life's unstable current, and the compelling end of the tale: "The difficulty of adjustment - he says - is what the tale ends on."\(^1\)

One or two words must be said about Leavis's criticism of Lawrence in general, before ending this critique. It may, for instance, be objected that Leavis's choice is eclectic and limited in scope, as Eliseo Vivas argues:

had he not rigorously restricted the number of works of Lawrence he chose to examine thoroughly he would have to indicate failure much more often than he did, \(^2\)

but it may be answered that Leavis did not aim at exhaustiveness, and to vindicate Lawrence as Leavis wants to do is not to go hunting for his failures.

Secondly though Leavis sets the right tone for appreciating Lawrence yet in his final assessment he bypasses works such as *Sons and Lovers*, considered by some critics to be Lawrence's best work.

Leavis's criticism of Lawrence also betrays a nationalistic tone which is not, I think, to its advantage. He prefaces his book with a quotation from Lawrence's *Letters*: "And I am English, and English is my very vision"\(^3\) and at the end Leavis identifies himself with Lawrence's cause against Eliot saying: "I am a fellow-countryman of D.H. Lawrence, Mr. Eliot is not."\(^4\) To be fair this occurs in the course of Leavis's insisting on Lawrence's rootedness in the English tradition

2. Eliseo Vivas "Mr. Leavis on D.H. Lawrence", p.131.
a point which one may readily grant, and of which Leavis is much more conscious than Eliot, but this is not the happiest way of putting it. However, this is to anticipate Leavis's juxtaposition of Lawrence with Eliot.
III. Lawrence Versus Eliot: Leavis’s Demonstration

Opposing Eliot to Lawrence Leavis sums up the contrast in the following words:

That the creative Eliot could not draw on any wholeness of being, or free flow of life, has consequences for criticism and the social poverty of the spirit the unheroism (it led him to call Lawrence a snob), was a manifestation of the disunity, the disability, the inner disorder that characterized him. There is much significance in its allying itself so readily with his instinctive animus against Lawrence. 1

Leavis’s terms of reference in this extract are Lawrencean in origin and fall in line with the integrative philosophy of Whitehead, Collinswood and Polanyi. That there is a contrast between Eliot and Lawrence is out of the question, that there is even a strain of hostility is also true. Eliot’s adverse remarks in After Strange Gods cannot but come to mind when we read his later preface to Father William Tiverton’s D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence. Eliot’s tone is ambivalent:

Perhaps one of the reasons why Lawrence’s books are now less read by young people than they were twenty or thirty years ago, is that the books about him give the impression that he is a man to read about rather than an author to read: a Johnson surrounded by a school of Boswells, some of them less tender towards the great man than was Johnson’s biographer.

This is not the only reason why Lawrence’s work needs to be examined from a new perspective. He was an impatient and impulsive man (or so I imagine him to have been). He was a man of fitful and profound insights, rather than of ratiocinative powers, and therefore he was an impatient man. He expressed some of his insights in the form least likely to make them acceptable to most of his contemporaries, and sometimes in a form which almost wilfully encouraged misunderstanding. If the foolish or the ill-disposed chose to regard him as a blasphemer, fascist or pornographer, Lawrence would not put himself out to persuade them. Wrong he often was (I think) from ignorance, prejudices, or

1. F.R. Leavis, English literature in our time and the University, p.139.
drawing the wrong conclusions in his conscious mind from the insights which came to him from below consciousness, and it will take time to dissociate the superficial error from the fundamental truth. To me also he seems to write very badly; but to be a writer who had to write often badly in order to write sometimes well. As for his religious attitude we can now begin to see better how much was ignorance, rather than hostility; for Lawrence was an ignorant man in the sense that he was unaware of how much he did not know. His strictures upon Christianity (and indeed upon Buddhism) are often ill-informed. ¹

After Strange Gods has been suppressed; and the ambivalent tone manifest in the last quotation is changed into a much more conciliatory attitude in Eliot's final statement on Lawrence - a statement which touches on Leavis's remarks on Lawrence:

My opinions of D.H. Lawrence seem to form a tissue of praise and execration. The more vehement of my ejaculations of dislike are preserved, like flies in amber or like wasps in honey, by the diligence of Dr. Leavis, but between two passages which he quotes, one published in 1927, and the other in 1933, I find that in 1931 I was wagging my finger rather pompously at the bishops who had assembled at The Lambeth Conference, and reproaching them for missing an opportunity for dissociating themselves from the condemnation of two very serious and improving writers, namely Mr. James Joyce and Mr. D.H. Lawrence. I cannot account for such apparent contradictions. Last year, in the Lady Chatterley case, I expressed my readiness to appear as a witness for the defence. Perhaps the Counsel for the defence were well advised not to put me into the witness-box as it might have been rather difficult to make my views clear to a jury by that form of inquisition, and a really wily prosecutor might have tied me up in knots. I felt then, as I feel now, that the prosecutor of such a book - a book of most serious and highly moral intention was a deplorable blunder - the consequences of which would have been abhorrent to the author. But my antipathy to the author remains on the ground of what seems to me egotism, a strain of cruelty, and a falling in common with Thomas Hardy - the lack of a sense of humour. ²

Some of the old strictures are retained not just "by the diligence of Dr. Leavis" but also by the intention of Eliot himself, yet the tone is much more benign.

Martin Jarrett-Kerr points to a further reconciliation saying there is evidence (which will no doubt appear if and when Eliot's letters are published) that he modified his view of Lawrence towards the end. He told me (I think in 1960) that he hoped to re-read Lawrence and write afresh about him. 1

C.E. Baron in an essay titled "Lawrence's Influence on Eliot" points among other things, to the insistence in both writers on the necessity for a

naked and transparent language in poetic composition, to notions of past and future, beginning and end, time and timelessness - with the object of illustrating that "at the time of the gestation of Four Quartets Eliot was soaked in Lawrence's writings. 2

These notions are given adequate expression in The Rainbow in a chapter called "Cathedral". The relevance of the chapter should not have escaped the notice of C.E. Baron in his meticulous examination. It compels one to quote at some length:

Here, in the church, "before" and "after" were folded together all was contained in oneness. Brangwen came to his consummation. Out of the doors of the womb he had come... knowledge after knowledge, and experience after experience remembering the darkness of the womb, having presence of the darkness after death. Then between-while he had pushed open the doors of the Cathedral, and entered the twilight of both darkesses, the hush of the two-fold silence where dawn was sunset and the beginning and end were one.

Here the stone leapt up from the plain of earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the meeting, the clasp, the close embrace, the neutrality, the perfect, swooning consummation, the timeless

ecstasy. There his soul remained at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy.

And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from earth, and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy. This was all, this was everything. Till he came to himself in the world below. Then again he gathered himself together, in transit, every jet of him strained and leaped, leaped clear into the darkness above, to the fecundity and unique mystery, to the touch, the clasp, the consummation, the climax of eternity, the apex of the arch. 1

The co-presence of beginning and end, of time and timelessness is a major theme in Eliot's Four Quartets.

K.P. Connelly notes that Fantasia of the Unconscious was serialized in The Adelphi at a time when Eliot was reading that journal with keen interest. He also suggests that Eliot was impressed by Lawrence's notion of consorting instinctive with intellectual knowledge, in the Clark Lectures of 1926 Eliot was pointing to the dissociation of these two categories in The Renaissance. These lectures were meant to form the substance of a projected book called "The disintegration of Intellect" but unfortunately the book did not come out.

Connelly also argues that Eliot's interest in Lawrence's philosophy has encouraged Eliot in his reaction against modern civilization and his nostalgia for the past.

Concluding this analogy Connelly says:

In the Clark Lectures, we can see the change from a philosophical to a religious way of conceiving the act of writing a poem. When it came to a fundamental decision Eliot did not view the creation of poetry as an affair of craftsmanship only, though some of his remarks tend to suggest this. It was through poetry and philosophy that he viewed the spiritual predicament of society, and his indictment of its awful state runs parallel to the living death of modern civilization. Lawrence always thought of himself as a religious artist but we have to take

the word religion in its broadest sense with him. ¹

These points indicate the complementary relation of Lawrence to Eliot which underlies Leavis's interest in both of them.

Eliot's classical sense of restraint and sobriety appealed to the early Leavis because he found that it was urgently needed in the early twenties to save poetry from the sentimental dream-world in which he thought it was immersed. The sense of order and control was then desirable to give poetry a new start, but he later came to realize that this approach was in a sense, one-sided, and did not take count of other types of creativity notably represented by Blake, Wordsworth, Lawrence and Dickens. It did not couple other words account for the whole panorama of human experience. It was too restrictive. Coupled with this realization is Leavis's predominant concern for "the loss of the organic community", a concern that derives from Arnold and Lawrence. This tragic loss of the organic community was represented by the alarming and blatant growth of industrial and mechanical civilization. It is in this context that Lawrence's significance came to the fore, and here we find that Leavis follows the principle of historical relativity derived from Santayana, Collingwood, Whitehead and Lawrence himself. Related to the change in emphasis in Leavis's writing is Eliot's early affiliation with the Bloomsbury Group and their exclusive aesthetic bias and their contempt for Lawrence - the Lawrence whose preoccupation with the vindication of the human individual and the human life he now saw to have a peculiar relevance to the stresses of his time. For Leavis Lawrence embodies the predicament of the age seen first in the domination of the machine over human spontaneity, and secondly in the obliteration of human individuality. The situation in Snow's The Cultures and The

Scientific Revolution, was seen as part of the technological transformation of human culture to which D.H. Lawrence was opposed. (It should be noted that Leavis was consistently registering this cultural decline from the point of view of the literary critic in Culture and Environment, Mass Civilization and Minority Culture, his introduction to Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, and in Education and the University. Thus a principle of historical and moral relativity induces Leavis to invoke Lawrence in support of his claim for a human life in which human creativity and individual integrity, not computerization nor material well-being are urgently heeded. Hence the prominence which Leavis assigns to Lawrence in his later critical writings - a prominence that falls in line with the advocates of "the human world"; Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. Even Eliot himself came to be evaluated in terms of the principle of historical relativity. Leavis's gesture towards Four Quartets is telling and the title which he gives them "Why Four Quartets matters in a technologico-Benthamite Age" is much more confirmative of this evaluation. The Cheltenham lecture appraises Eliot as a great poet because he has managed to change the sensibility of the age - that is to bring poetry in close touch with the spirit of the age - to show that the creativity of the individual artist, the human individual is a manifestation of the vitality of life.
Leavis's references to Whitehead are not uniformly admiring. Whitehead seems to have become more important for Leavis in recent years. When Whitehead's name appears in Leavis's work of the thirties there is more than a trace of criticism.

Leavis mentions Whitehead for the first time, in his review of G. Wilson Knight's *The Christian Renaissance*: "And myself I remind that the age of Professor Whitehead, Canon Streeter, and Mr Middleton Murry is an age unfavourable to the development of critics, as it is of poets." But if the reference here is negative it is not because Leavis dislikes Whitehead's writings - as he later recommends them for study by students of English literature, but because he strongly reacts to the Marxising decade with its tendency towards political ideologies and philosophical doctrines.

1. Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) a distinguished mathematician (the teacher of Bertrand Russell, later his collaborator in *Principia Mathematica*), logician and philosopher, was born into a family of school teachers. From school at Sherborne he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1880 and became a fellow of the College in 1885. In 1910, he resigned and moved to London - teaching at University College from 1911 to 1914 and at Imperial College from 1914 to 1924. In that year he accepted an invitation to join the philosophy department at Harvard, where he became eventually professor Emeritus. See: A. Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed) *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, New York, Tudor Publishing Company 1951, pp. 3-14, and B. Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.23, p.483.


Whitehead's name recurs in the exchange between Leavis and René Wellek of 1937. Wellek invokes Whitehead's reading of Wordsworth in order to "maintain the coherence, unity, and subtlety of Wordsworth's thought" against Leavis's view in Revaluation that, "his philosophizing ... had not the value he meant it to have." 1

The relevant passage in Wellek reads:

I grant that we to-day may not be increased by these speculations (these speculations are related to Wordsworth's view of 'the one interior life that lives' in all things, and the life of all beings with God') but they are the very life-blood of a great European tradition descended from Plato, and they are still considered valid and valuable by many prominent thinkers, I recall e.g. A.N. Whitehead's interesting comments on Wordsworth's philosophy of nature, where the eminent mathematician, logician, and speculative philosopher commends Wordsworth precisely because he grasps the whole nature in the tonality of the particular instance. 2

Leavis's reply is to insist that, as critic, he is only concerned with Wordsworth's poetry; not with his 'thought'.

In consequence, Whitehead, in his role of one who would elevate Wordsworth's 'thought' must be exorciated:

I do not see what service Dr Wellek does either himself or philosophy by adducing Chapter V of Science and The Modern World. That an eminent mathematician, logician and speculative philosopher should be so interested in poetry as Professor Whitehead there shows himself to be is pleasing; but I have always thought that the quality of his dealings with poetry to be exactly what one would expect of an authority so qualified. I will add, perhaps wantonly and irrelevantly, that the utterances of Professor Whitehead quoted by Dr Wellek look to me like bad poetry; in their context, no doubt, they become something different, but I cannot see why even then they should affect a literary critic's view of Wordsworth and Shelley. 3

1. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, p. 164
3. F.R. Leavis, "Literary Criticism and Philosophy: A Reply", Scrutiny, Vol.VI, no.1, June 1937, p. 68
As far as Whitehead is concerned, Leavis's remarks are double-edged. At the same time as Wellek's conversion of Wordsworth's poetry to philosophy is rejected, and along with it Whitehead's ability to read poetry, the philosopher's ability in his own field is conceded. But a further consideration of what Leavis and Whitehead have to say about Wordsworth reveals far more in common than the sharp exchange with Wellek would suggest. Indeed, Leavis's view that Wordsworth is essentially a poet and not a philosopher finds confirmation in Whitehead's dictum "Wordsworth is a poet writing a poem, and is not concerned with dry philosophical statements." ¹

Again the original view which Leavis brings to bear on the traditional appreciation of Wordsworth as a poet of nature springs to mind as a point in common between Whitehead and Leavis. Repudiating this traditional view Leavis says:

Wordsworth, we know, is the poet of nature, and the associations of the term 'nature' here, are unfortunate, suggesting as it does a vaguely pantheistic religion-substitute. If this is all Wordsworth has to offer, or if, as Mr Empson, expressing (apparently) very much this notion of him, states, 'he had no inspiration other than his use when a boy of the mountains as a totem or father-substitute', then (the world being what it is) one may save one's irony for other things than his supersession, as the presiding genius of Lakeland, by Mr Hugh Walpole. But Wordsworth himself, in the famous passage, "that taken from the conclusion of the first book of The Recluse," he offers 'as a kind of prospectus of the design and scope of the whole poem,' proposes something decidedly different when he stresses the Mind of Man as:

My haunt, and the main region of my song. ²


On this evidence Leavis qualifies the term 'nature' associated with Wordsworth to mean 'human nature' and not 'natural scenery'.

Wordsworth's preoccupation was with a distinctively human naturalness, with sanity and spiritual health and his interest in mountains was subsidiary. 1

This view is again adumbrated in Whitehead's conception of the nature poetry of Wordsworth:

In citing Wordsworth, the point which I wish to make is that we forget how strained and paradoxical is the view of nature which modern science imposes on our thoughts. Wordsworth to the height of genius, expresses the concrete facts of our apprehension, facts which are distorted in the scientific analysis. 2

This protest against 'scientific analysis' is meant to counteract the over-emphasis on the material aspect of nature disseminated by both Locke and Newton and the consequent splitting up of nature into material and mental aspects - Whitehead refutes this view asserting that through nature is inanimate it is only through human feelings and evaluations that it is rendered alive. This organic bond is at the centre of Whitehead's philosophy of organism. It confirms a ruling principle in Leavis's criticism and logically falls in line with leading ideas in both Collingwood and Polanyi. This creativity of the human mind which bestows value on external nature is adequately exemplified when Leavis writes on Blake saying:

Perception, he insists in art and aphorism, is creative, and there is a continuity from the creativeness of perception to the creativeness of the artist. 3

1. *ibid*, p. 165
2. A.N. Whitehead, *op.cit*, p. 104
Elaborating the same point Whitehead says:

... the mind in apprehending also experiences sensations which, properly speaking, are qualities of the mind alone. These sensations are projected by the mind so as to clothe the appropriate bodies in external nature. Thus the bodies are perceived as with qualities which in reality do not belong to them, qualities which in fact are purely the offspring of the mind. Thus nature gets credit, which should, in truth, be reserved for ourselves: the rose for its scent; the nightingale for his song; and the sun for his radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves, and should turn them into odes of self-gratulation on the excellency of the human mind. Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly. 1

Reverting to the same topic and almost on the same subject, Whitehead says:

"Value is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. Value is an element which permeates through and through the poetic view of nature. We have only to transfer to the very texture of realization in itself that value which we recognize so readily in terms of human life. This is the secret of Wordsworth's worship of nature. 2"

1. A.N. Whitehead, op.cit, pp. 68-69. It may be noted that M.H. Abrams disagrees with Whitehead's interpretation of Wordsworth's organic view of nature arguing that Wordsworth 'retained to a notable degree the terminology and modes of thinking of eighteenth century associationism' (The Mirror and The Lamp, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 181-182). Nor does he accept Whitehead's notion that poets felt an urge to compose their lyrics as forms of 'self-gratulation' on the excellency of the human mind, because a poet - as Abrams argues - 'was usually inspired, like Addison, to praise not his own excellence, but the foresight and bounty of Providence which motivated him to add supernumerary ornaments to the universe, and make it more agreeable to the imagination', (ibid, p.265). Abrams also disagrees with Whitehead's suggestion that Wordsworth's contemporaries viewed nature as 'a dull affair' because it is not a view that harmonizes with his theory of the 'lamp'; the objective reality outside ourselves which he defines in terms of vegetable growth, and which comprehends 'those aspects and relations of an aesthetic which (the) archetype of the work of art, as mirror leaves marginal or omits' (ibid, p. 35)

In other words, it is Wordsworth the poet, the human being, who infuses life into and assigns value to nature. In his essay on Wordsworth, James Smith comes close to this view. He says:

As he (Wordsworth) thought that nature, instead of repeating herself, provides for a development of the spirit or a gradual revelation of truth, it must have been because he felt he had something new within him... He was part of what he saw or what he saw was part of him. And as early as the Descriptive Sketches, he speaks of 'abandoning the cold rules of painting' to consult both 'nature and his feelings'. From that date onwards he gives no mere lists of natural appearances, but groupings of them as they served to prompt a dominant emotion. 1

And later on he says:

... he creates and it is part of his own experience - a kind of being in which both the external world and himself can share. 2

Whitehead develops this argument to its logical conclusion and comes to assert that "The Romantic reaction was a protest on behalf of value". 3 Probably Leavis has a similar notion in mind when he suggests that the Romantic movement 'enriched the human heritage' 4 because it is in terms of human creativity, spontaneity and intuition that Leavis speaks of the Romantic tradition. In the course of his interpretation of Dickens's genius he refers to the novelist's familiarity with Wordsworth and Romantic poetry in general and to his flair for assimilating those promptings of the Romantic heritage which confirmed his response to early Victorian England, confirmed the intuitions and the

2. ibid, p. 48
3. A.N. Whitehead, op.cit, p. 118
4. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Dickens The Novelist, p. 276
affirmations, that, present organically in the structure of *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit*, make one think of Blake. ¹

In this respect Whitehead's unequivocal assertion of human life and the right of the individual to be himself is consonant with Lawrence's life-long battle for 'individual and human life', ² and in turn strikes a sensitive and responsive chord in Leavis. Whitehead's concern with 'human value' impresses itself on Leavis and confirms his intense admiration of Lawrence. Leavis subtitles the introduction to his latest book *Nor Shall My Sword*, with a curt, but highly expressive sentence: "Life is a necessary word", ³ and by 'life' is meant the human life that is being challenged and jeopardized by the horrifying advance of a technology heralded by the age of Locke and Newton.

It is interesting to note that Whitehead's plea for an integral and organic view of life and his relentless and incessant war against what he calls 'bifurcation', has not just influenced Leavis, but has had a far-reaching effect on a number of other critics and philosophers.

Susanne Langer, in *Philosophy in a New Key*, which she dedicates to Whitehead, models her argument on the original Whiteheadian doctrine. She argues that "The limits of thought are not so much set from outside, by the fullness or poverty of

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2. F.R. Leavis, *Nor Shall My Sword*, p.17

experiences that meet the mind, as from within, by the power of conception, the wealth of formulative notions with which the mind meets experiences.¹

Dorothy Emmett, in The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking, which, she too, dedicates to Whitehead, explains his view of nature in the following terms:

Whitehead's theory of perception in his epistemological theory is developed out of a view of nature in which perception is given a much wider significance. In fact he is concerned to show that perception in the epistemological sense is a particular instance of a much wider relationship which he describes under the general term 'prehension'. 'Prehension' is the general word used of any reaction of an organic entity to its environment, whereby the environment is organized into a perspective related to that entity. ²

These passages reflect the cardinal importance of the human mind with its organic, dynamic and animating nature and it is this leading concept that binds this group of thinkers to each other.

It is relevant to pursue Whitehead's doctrine of nature still further in the hope that it will disclose further affinities between Whitehead and Leavis.

In The Concept of Nature, Whitehead argues against the division of nature into internal and external because these two aspects ultimately meet in the human mind which is one and indivisible. ³ In a similar way he disavows the split of nature into material and mental and argues for a view of nature based upon the concept of organism, and not upon the concept of matter. ⁴

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Whitehead's principle of organism can be seen as a major force behind Leavis's concern with the 'dissociation of sensibility,' but to understand this contention one must refer to Whitehead's 'commonsense notion of the universe.' Leavis uses the phrase approvingly:

What the student needs to acquire a minimum knowledge of is the way in which the 'commonsense notion of the universe' (Whitehead's phrase) took possession of the ordinary man's mind, and with what consequences for the climate of the West and the ethos of our civilization. This involves being able to state intelligently what the Cartesian Newtonian presuppositions were and to what kind of philosophical impasse they led—that still exemplified in the philosophies of science and the positivist and empiricist fashions that prevail. 1

Whitehead explains the phrase as embodying the relatedness of different disciplines or what Whitehead likes to call "the inter-relations of matter, life and mentality," 2 that is, what Whitehead in his philosophical vocabulary terms 'prehensions' or 'prehensile unities'. Elaborating on this idea of commonsense Whitehead traces it back to the early sixteenth century when it began to take form in Europe. It derived from a medley of Greek and Medieval ideas and governed the attitude of the early Renaissance thinkers so that they envisioned it in all their approaches to any question. With the advent of the seventeenth century this sensible doctrine was shattered by the Cartesian and Newtonian schemes and the resultant bifurcation of nature. This version of history tallies with Eliot's dissociation of sensibility, a notion to which Leavis critically adheres.

1. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 126
2. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, Cambridge University Press, 1938, p. 176
Whitehead wrote a book called The Aims of Education, outlining most of the views that Leavis finds necessary for a humane system of education. On the first page of this book Whitehead strikes the central note when he defines 'culture' saying:

Culture is activity of thought and receptiveness to beauty and human feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. Their expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from, and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art. 1

These words, in effect, embody Leavis’s ideal of a University education. In his Introduction to Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, Leavis makes fun of the traditional picture of the 'bright' student whose mind is packed with information and lecture-notes and comes to vomit them in the examination. 2 The object of University education, as Leavis repeatedly emphasizes, is not to create the best memorizing students but to foster a climate of thought in which critical training is promoted and individual opinions encouraged, because it is only in this spirit that the idea of research, of academic progress and of personal development in future life can be carried forward. Whitehead holds a similar opinion; he says "When we have once rid our minds of the idea that knowledge is to be emacted, there is no special difficulty or expense involved in helping the growth of artistic


enjoyment." Whitehead is quite emphatic on this 'personal appreciation' as a prerequisite for a University Prospectus so much so that when he comes to tackle the most crucial issue of 'impacting knowledge' traditionally associated with a University syllabus, he is at pains to define it in imaginative terms to secure the development of personal views and critical sensibility. "The University", he says "imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively. At least this is the function which it should perform for society. A University which fails in this respect has no reason for existence." 2

Both Whitehead and Leavis are in full agreement as to the dangers arising from a rigid and narrow specialization and the consequent need for related and cohesive disciplines. In one of his famous statements Whitehead says; "... the increasing departmentalization of Universities during the last hundred years, however necessary for administrative purposes, tends to trivialize the mentality of the teaching profession", and in consequence of this Whitehead postulates that "Every special science has to assume results from other sciences". 3

Leavis's view is similar to Whitehead's. He says that the student should familiarize himself with and complement his speciality by other disciplines of thought "and the more ... he can feel that it (this speciality) transcends departmental frontiers the better". 4

2. ibid, p. 139
4. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 109
Whitehead's views on education seem in many ways to anticipate those of Leavis. Enumerating the three systems of education prevalent in England Whitehead says that they are the literary, the scientific and the technical, and that each of these implicitly embraces or should embrace the other two.

What I mean is that each form of education should give the pupil a technique, a science, an assortment of general ideas and aesthetic appreciation, and that each of these sides of his training should be illuminated by others. 1

It is interesting to notice that Whitehead's drive at 'an assortment of general ideas' is intended to focus on a comprehensive understanding of life such as both Whitehead and Leavis discern in art and literature. Whitehead launches a life-long battle against the division of educational disciplines in a bid to secure a study of 'life in all its manifestations'. 2

It is appropriate to indicate that this preoccupation with 'life' permeates Leavis's vision of reforming University education. If Whitehead insists that University education should be conducted in terms of living in the 'midst of life', 3 Leavis finds that it is of the utmost importance that 'human centrality' to quote one of his favourite phrases, should be the pivot around which all curricula should revolve. In his essay entitled "Literarism" Versus 'Scientism': The Misconception and the Menace", Leavis explicitly states that he does not deny value to science 4 nor does he advocate an aesthetic doctrine that would induce a

1. A.N. Whitehead, The Aims of Education, p. 75
2. ibid, p. 10
3. ibid,
4. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 140
belief in art for art's sake. On the contrary he is at pains to witness the interplay between both science and literature, thereby guaranteeing the organic relation and the continuity of the human tradition. What he is up against is the disproportionate mechanical progress that will eventually reduce man to the status of the machine. Life as Whitehead conceives it is essentially organic, throbbing with human intelligence and emotion.

You cannot put life into any schedule of general education unless you succeed in exhibiting its relation to some essential characteristic of all intelligent and emotional perception. It is a hard saying, but it is true and I do not see how to make it any easier. 1

Intelligence and emotional perception are focal points in Leavis's criticism. In view of this perception of life Whitehead, like Leavis, turns to art and literature to crystallize latent human emotions and ideals.

It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression. Accordingly it is to literature particularly in its more concrete forms, namely in poetry and in drama, that we must look, if we hope to discover the inward thoughts of a generation. 2

And in another context he says:

Art and literature have not merely an indirect effect on the main energies of life. Directly they give vision. Vision is the necessary antecedent to control and to direction. In the contest of races, which in its final issues will be decided in the workshops and not on the battlefields, the victory will belong to those who are masters of stores of trained nervous energy, working under conditions favourable to growth. One such essential is Art. 3

With some reservations about the last part of this quotation which smacks of Richardsian psychology and theory of values, I would suggest that Whitehead's notion recurs in such passages from Leavis as this:

What we need, and shall continue to need not less, is something with the livingness of the deepest vital instinct; as intelligence, a power rooted, strong in experience, and supremely human - of creative response to the new challenges of time;

and this "... there is a prior human achievement of collaborative creation, a more basic work of the mind of man." I have expressed my reservations about the last part of Whitehead's quotation because his phrase 'trained nervous energy' has a connotation quite different from Leavis's conception of the function of literature. It is clarified in the light of his statement that "Art can be described as a psychopathic reaction of the race to the stresses of its existence". Whitehead assigns to art a curative function which reminds us of Richards's systematization of impulses and the sense of equilibrium that the work of art produces in the reader, which Leavis looks upon as utilitarian. Leavis indicates that the experience of a mature work of art strikes at human depths that may be called 'religious':

1. F.R. Leavis, Two Cultures, London, Chatto and Windus, 1962, p. 29
2. ibid
In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe. What for - what ultimately for? What do men live by? - the questions work and tell at what I can only call a religious depth of thought and feeling.  

If Leavis speaks of literature in sublime and transcendental terms, he was, however, preceded in this also by Whitehead.

Art heightens the sense of humanity. It gives an elation of feeling which is supernatural. A sunset is glorious, but it dwarfs humanity and belongs to the general flow of nature. A million sunsets will not spur on men towards civilization. It requires art to evoke into consciousness the finite perfections which lie ready for human achievement.

At first glance, the reader may be surprised by Whitehead's statement that "The merit of Art in its service to civilization lies in its artificiality and its finiteness," but this sense of surprise and apparent paradox will be immediately resolved if we read the statement in the context of Whitehead's particular philosophy in which the term 'artificiality' is not used in any derogatory sense. He associates the word with 'appearance' on the one hand and with 'consciousness' on the other; and an interpretation of these two crucial terms will help to show that he uses 'art' and 'artificiality' in a commendatory rather than in a vicious Platonic sense.

In Whitehead's scheme of philosophy, truth, like God, is 'dipolar'. It has a twofold element of reality and appearance. Reality, as Whitehead interprets it, is the set of data elicited

1. F.R. Leavis, op. cit., p. 23
2. A.N. Whitehead, op. cit., p. 348
3. ibid
from the past, whereas appearance is the manifestation of the present. ¹ But a full understanding of these terms must involve their inter relationship if it is to be congruous with Whitehead's philosophy of organism. "The appearance of the contemporary regions has its truth relations to the past, and its truth relation to the contemporary reality." ² The perception of this truth necessitates the existence of a percipient whose prehension effects a link between appearance and reality, and in the case of 'symbolic reference' which Whitehead identifies with language and consequently with literature (Whitehead and Leavis consider literature as the supreme manifestation of language) this appearance becomes a reflection of the reality; and the percipient can detect that reality through his affective mode. ³

There is a right and a wrong use of any particular language among the group of people who are properly conditioned. Also, having regard to the aesthetics of literature, language, not only conveys objective meaning, but also involves a conveyance of subjective form. ⁴

Thus it is this fusion that constitutes the indirect interpretative power of Art to express the truth about the nature of things. ⁵ This truth attains perfection when there is conformity between appearance and reality. It is in appearance

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1. ibid, p. 317
2. ibid,
3. Whitehead identifies the affective mode with the subjective form which determines the effectiveness of prehensions. ibid, p. 227
4. ibid, p. 319
5. ibid, p. 320
that the affective tone manifests itself. "Appearance raises into a distinctness of feeling factors which can be generalized for salvation from the welter of fact." \(^1\) And again he says:

It simplifies the objects and precipitates upon the simplification the qualitative contents of the given world. It saves intensities and massiveness at the cost of eliciting vivid experiences of affective tones. \(^2\)

Consciousness on the other hand is the element of perception which embraces both appearance and reality. It comes into existence as a conjunction of the fact and a supposition about the fact. It is also selective in the sense that it brings into prominence only certain aspects of experience. These aspects, as Whitehead contends, belong more to appearance than to reality.

It is appearance which in consciousness is clear and distinct, and it is reality which lies dimly in the background with its details hardly to be distinguished in consciousness. \(^3\)

Whitehead extends this distinctness and selectiveness characteristic of consciousness to the nature of art, hence his view that the service that art renders to humanity lies in its artificiality. He defines artificiality in terms of human effort or labour or 'artifice', and finiteness in terms of precision and accretion, or what we would call the specific individuality of the work.

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1. ibid, p. 336
2. ibid, p. 336
It (art) exhibits for consciousness a finite fragment of human effort achieving its own perfection within its own limits. The work of art is a fragment of nature with the mark on it of a finite creative effort, so that it stands alone, an individual thing detailed from the vague infinity of its background. 1

With these thoughts in mind Whitehead comes to conclude that art 'heightens the sense of humanity', thereby affirming a principle strongly upheld by Leavis. The artist directs his telescope upon the vague infinity of the universe to single out a limited region for clarification and prominence, and in so doing he saves it from the limbo and indefiniteness of the macrocosm.

In this sense art can be described as an attempt to explore the possibilities that 'lie ready for human achievement'. The purpose of art, as Whitehead insistently indicates, is to fuse reality with ideality, the objective with the subjective, with the object of creating a significant and integral whole. 2

Leavis understands this sense of transcendence and sublimity created by the work of art on a basis of the collaborative nature that language works out outside the narrow specialisms of each member of society. This language creates a common ground on which people meet and assert their human attributes beyond their departmental frontiers. This language is pre-eminently embodied in literature. The sense of community which Leavis discerns in language is supposed by him to counter the ruthlessness and insularity effected by

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1. ibid
2. ibid, pp. 325-326 and 348-349
mechanical civilization; and in this connection Leavis seems to have been inspired by Whitehead. When Leavis objects to Snow's complacent faith in technological advance, he says:

... there is a prior human achievement of collaborative creation, a more basic work of the mind of man (and more than the mind), one without which the triumphant erection of the scientific edifice would not have been possible: that is, the creation of the human world, including language. 1

In framing this notion possibly Leavis had the following Whiteheadian statement in mind;

Language is the triumph of human ingenuity, surpassing even the intricacies of modern technology. It tells of widespread intelligence, sustained throughout scores of thousands of years. 2

For both Whitehead and Leavis the critical activity is a creative one involving personal response (but it is, as Leavis qualifies it, pondered and responsible) and the establishment of values is largely based on this personal response.

Qualifying the nature of the critical activity Leavis, for example, speaks of 'That critical function which is a creative one'. 3 The phrase is adumbrated in Whitehead's statement that 'The appreciation of literature is really creation. The written word, its music, and its associations, are only stimuli. The vision which they evoke is our doing'. 4

Again both Whitehead and Leavis concur in the identification of tradition with a constantly realized present. 'The only use of a knowledge of the past is to equip us for the present'. 5

1. F.R., Leavis, Two Cultures, p. 27
2. A.N., Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 144
5. ibid, p. 3
Leavis's saying 'a work of art has its life in the present or nowhere' has become a commonplace. To both Whitehead and Leavis tradition implies that the past contains within itself the seeds of future development. "The complete analysis of the past must disclose in it those factors which provide the conditions for the present", 1 in another context Whitehead says "The how of our present experience must conform to the what of the past," 2 and elsewhere 3

You can only interpret the past in terms of the present. The present is all that you have, and unless in this present you can find general principles which interpret the present as including a representation of the whole community of existents, you cannot move a step beyond your little patch of immediacy. 3

Thus 'the present controls the past as much as the past directs the present', to quote a statement from Eliot that is seen in practice in the critical writings of F.R. Leavis.

Both Whitehead and Leavis reject the doctrine of art for art's sake. For Whitehead art should be concerned with the "revelation of truth regarding the nature of things, and hence the idea of art as the pursuit of Beauty is shallow." 4 But while Whitehead describes this penetration of truth as 'psychopathic', Leavis terms it 'religious'. 5 This leads

2. ibid, p. 63
5. F.R. Leavis, *Revaluation*, p. 161, and *Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow*, p. 23
to a related point respecting aesthetics and morality, expounded by both Whitehead and Leavis. Leavis's unflinching advocacy of the morality of art is well-known. 1 To him a work of art is beautiful because it is essentially morally significant. Thus the aesthetic element of a work of art should be conceived as subservient to an all-embracing moral vision. Whitehead's manipulation of this notion is very subtle. His organic view of the universe ultimately issues in a comprehensive harmony manifested in God. This harmony being by nature aesthetic, is simultaneously moral; but because Whitehead originally sets out to refute the groundwork of Kantian philosophy based on cognitive and 'conceptive' assumptions he argues his cause from a specific standpoint. Kant reasons it out that there is a discernible moral order in the universe, and that, God being by nature beneficent and good, He must by necessity fall into that order. Whitehead's assumptions reverse this argument. He suggests that the harmony inherent in God is in the first place an aesthetic element and that the moral order is a by-product of it. "All order is therefore aesthetic order, and the moral order is merely certain aspects of aesthetic order". 2 Thus the harmony in this world is a derivative of the major harmony latent in God. The actual world is the outcome of the aesthetic order "and the aesthetic order is derived from the immanence of God". 3 But is it not true that this ruling harmony which Whitehead insists

1. cf the chapters on Santayana and Lawrence.
2. A.N. Whitehead, Religion In The Making, p. 91
3. ibid, pp. 91-92
upon as being aesthetic, is ultimately moral in its connotation? This seems to be Whitehead's implication when he states in another context that God "is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature," If Whitehead insists that God is "a poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty and goodness", I should imagine that these ideals proposed by God and the mere endeavour to secure them must have a moral end in view. This image of God as a poet directing the world has aesthetic implications, of course, and can be best understood in relation to Whitehead's distinction between "Truth" and "Beauty". In Process and Reality, God is likened to a poet; in Adventures of Ideas, Beauty is given priority to truth. Whitehead even goes so far as to make truth subservient to beauty. He contradicts the Keatsian view that beauty is truth and truth beauty by contending that an object may be true but ugly

... a truth relation is not necessarily beautiful. It may not even be neutral. It may be evil. Thus beauty is left as the one aim, which, by its very nature is self-justifying.

Pursuing the same line of thought, Whitehead exhibits a similar tendency when he comes to specify the respective importance of these two crucial terms with regard to the work of art. At first sight he may give the impression that he is going to assign equal values to the two terms, but we are immediately reminded of the preponderance of Beauty, and in his concluding sentence, truth comes as a corollary to beauty. By way of characterizing the end

1. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 488
2. ibid, p.490
3. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 342
which art sets for itself Whitehead says:

This end, which is the purpose of art, is two-fold — namely Truth and Beauty. The perfection of art has only one end, which is Truthful Beauty. But some measure of success has been reached, when either Truth or Beauty is gained. In the absence of Truth, Beauty is on a lower level, with a defect of massiveness. In the absence of Beauty, Truth sinks to triviality. Truth matters because of Beauty. 1

Whitehead does not deny the importance of truth in bringing forth the sense of beauty but he gives beauty the upper hand. This gesture on his part does not mean that he advocates art for art's sake, since he openly condemns it as has already been indicated, 2 but it rather points to the fact that in visualizing the notion of organism with Kant's moral order at the back of his mind, he confers upon beauty a greater importance and conceives of it as a stronger and wider link in the chain of harmony he desiderates.

Having invoked Keats in this argument it is necessary to refer to the antithetical direction in which Leavis is proceeding in interpreting the Keatsian phrase. Leavis is keen to bring Keats's aesthetic interests under the general heading of 'life', an attempt whereby he secures an avoidance of the polar opposition between Art and Life assumed by the advocates of the doctrine of art for art's sake. Leavis's gesture is consistent with his imputing value to the realm of life and morality, that is, with his effort to harness aesthetics to the service of life and morality. In other words for Leavis aesthetics is a component in a comprehensive pattern he alternatively calls 'life' or 'morality', whereas for Whitehead morality or truth is a component in an inclusive

1. ibid, p.344
2. cf, p.26
framework called 'harmony' or 'beauty'. Leavis says:

Keats may be an aesthete, and he may contemplate, among other "things of beauty", a Grecian Urn or a Titian, but even then his joy would be better described as being in 'life' (the word 'art' could not have been used by Keats —or by any one of his time—in Johnson's way)... Keats's aestheticism, in short, does not mean any such cutting off of the special valued order of experience from direct, vulgar living ('Live! —our servants will do that for us') as is implied in the aesthetic antithesis of Art and Life. 1

Whitehead's denial of Kant's doctrine of experience as cognitive and 'conceptive' and his endorsement of an intuitive and personal realization is echoed by Leavis on a number of occasions. In his exchange with W.W. Robson on literary studies Leavis attacks the 'intellectualist conception' of education charted by Robson. He associates Robson's term 'content' with cognitive denotations which would render the poetic experience dry and lifeless, a mere container of information. In this regard Leavis introduces his alternative view of an intelligent perception of the creative experience presented by a work of literature. He insists on "a more inward grasp" of the work of art. Together with what Robson calls the 'historical sense' that is required for an understanding of works of art, Leavis introduces the more vigorous term 'intelligence', that involves personal appreciation and intuition. 2 One might compare him here with Whitehead when the latter stipulates that if the university is to communicate any information at all, it should assume an imaginative form,

2. F.R. Leavis, "Literary Studies: A Reply" Universities Quarterly Vol.II, no.1, November 1956, p. 25
thereby affording the student the chance of personal and intuitive apprehension.

Both Whitehead and Leavis share an attitude of irony and distrust towards much in the university and its men, and the sarcasm of both is levelled against the guardians of their common institution: Cambridge. Exposing the arrogance of Dr Whewell, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge from 1841 to 1866, Whitehead quotes him as saying:

I am Master of this College
And what I know not
Is not knowledge.

"This attitude", Whitehead continues, "is always prevalent in the learned world. It sterilizes imaginative thought, and thereby blocks progress." Leavis's criticism of Cambridge and its custodians pervades most of his writings.

If Leavis postulates that a university student, in order not to be parochial, should familiarize himself with departments of thought outside the domain of his speciality; in the sense that a student of literature must know something about science and mathematics, and the other way round; the point had already been made by Whitehead. Attacking the narrow view of specialization Whitehead says:

... the modern professionalism in knowledge works in the opposite direction so far as the intellectual sphere is concerned. The modern chemist is likely to be weak in zoology, weaker still in his general knowledge of the Elizabethan drama; and completely ignorant of the principles of rhythm in English versification.

2. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 59
3. Wide F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p. 13, Letters in Criticism, pp. 54-147, and Q.D. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol. VII, no.4, p. 415
In Whitehead's view this specialization results in a hardening of the human mind and a lack of balance. Whitehead's alternative solution which effects a blend of scientific and literary topics aims at an 'appreciation of variety of values', an aesthetic growth; and this brings us again to Leavis's favourite topic, that is artistic and literary appreciation as a clue to the understanding of life, the intelligent sensibility requisite for the realization of value and human worth. Leavis offers the literary discipline as an ideal on which other disciplines should be modelled. This point is so elegantly worded by Whitehead that it compels quotation:

There is something between the gross specialized values of the mere practical man, and the thin specialized values of the mere scholar. Both types have missed something; and if you add together the two sets of values, you do not obtain the missing elements. What is wanted is an appreciation of the infinite variety of vivid values achieved by an organism in its proper environment. When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. There is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality. We want a concrete fact with a high light thrown on what is relevant to its preciousness. What I mean is art and aesthetic education.

In this respect it may be pertinent to point to the streak of pessimism and even despondency observable in both Whitehead and Leavis regarding the gloomy future of civilization to be expected from the vitiating influence of the machine. "The evils of the early industrial system", says Whitehead, "are now a commonplace of knowledge. The point which I am insisting on is

1. F.R. Leavis, Introduction to Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, p. 27
2. A.N. Whitehead, op. cit, p. 248
the stone-blind eye with which even the best men of that time regarded the importance of aesthetics in a nation's life".  

In consequence of this Whitehead is apt to take a desperate view of the pernicious impact of technology; "It may be that civilization will never recover from the bad climate which enveloped the introduction of machinery".  

Leavis adopts the same tone with notable verbal similarities, "The prospects of culture then", he says, "are very dark. There is the less room for hope in that a standardized civilization (what he calls in Culture and Environment 'levelling down') is rapidly enveloping the whole world", and elsewhere he characteristically says "... the prospect is discouraging".  

Leavis tries to remove this note of despair by resorting to the idea of University education and the appreciation of literature as a means of maintaining humane values and countering gross materialism.  

"This battle", he says, "desperate as the odds look, must not, shall not be lost."

In the chapter on Santayana I have referred to Leavis's advocacy of historical and moral relativity. When he dubs Lawrence the 'greatest novelist of our century' he relates Lawrence's writings to the temper of our age, its plights and predicaments. The same principle of historical relativity is 

1. ibid, p. 254
2. ibid, p. 253
3. F.R. Leavis, Education and The University, p. 169
4. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 35
5. F.R. Leavis, English Literature In Our Time and The University, p. 33
to be noted in his endorsement of Peter Coveney's judgment of Dickens as the 'greatest romantic novelist'. This endorsement Leavis justifies by referring to Dickens's skilful engagement with the problems of his age and his exposition of the defects of industrial civilization - defects which have been perpetuated in the twentieth century. The same principle is seen at work in his judgment of Blake. In other words the judgment of the literary critic - as Leavis lays it down as a rule - should be made in terms of 'relative human value'. This principle can meet a number of objections to Leavis's criticism. In his essay entitled 'The Absolutism of F.R. Leavis', Bernard Heyl argues that Leavis's critical tone is absolutist and exclusively final, and suggests as a proper alternative a judgment based on relativism. In so doing he glosses over a leading Leavisian formula 'this is so ... isn't it?' and then 'Yes ... but', the appeal for confirmation may be positive, but it may also come in a qualified, even modified, form. The judgment which the literary critic passes is not absolute, but rather relative to the audience whose response determines the ultimate value of the work. In his preface to The Common Pursuit, Leavis points out that judgment is a matter of agreement and disagreement, and it is very important to find truly good critics to differ with.

But this 'relative human morality', also meets an indirect

1. F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, p.29
3. F.R. Leavis, Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow, p.28
4. of the chapters on Santayana and Lawrence.
and implicit challenge posed a long time ago by S.L. Bethell, \(^1\) and recently renewed in a milder and more delicate form by Walter Stein. \(^2\) Each of them is trying in his own way to pin Leavis down to the Christian tradition. Bethell argues that if Leavis's criteria are moral and spiritual they should be affiliated to a defined Christian category, and Leavis himself must recognize the fact, since otherwise they could only be whimsical and cliqueish as in Bethell's view, the writers of Scrutiny bore witness. Stein argues that Christianity can include the kind of morality that Leavis desiderates (the book is written on the assumption that Christianity has a comprehensiveness that enables it to accommodate a large body of moral doctrines and this belief helps Stein to bring the writers whom he examines to fit in with his general conception) and in consequence of this he argues that, though Leavis does not acknowledge 'Christian criticism' yet his moral tone can be interpreted as ultimately Christian in spirit.

In any case, it seems a final vindication of the idea of a Christian criticism that our greatest living critic, though specifically concerned to preserve a 'liberal' independence in his work, should yet, again and again, embody the virtues, essentially, of the Christian critical ideal. \(^3\)

I need hardly refer to the loose and imprecise way in which Stein approaches this subject since it has already been elaborated upon in a stringent review by Vincent Buckley. \(^4\)

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but what I would like to draw attention to is that Leavis's morality is human and is adaptable to changing conditions, and in this sense resists any religious denomination or rather delimitation.

Whitehead's treatment of this doctrine comes quite close to Leavis. The principle is seen in practice in such statements as this:

Goethe surveyed the world, but it was from Weimar; Shakespeare is universal but he lived in Elizabethan England. We cannot think of Socrates outside Athens.

This applies to historical or rather spatial relativity. As for moral relativity, it is brought home in Whitehead's statement, "The point is that moral codes are relevant to presuppositions respecting the systematic character of the relevant universe. When the presuppositions do not apply that special code is a vacuous statement of abstract 'irrelevancies'"

In this context it is fitting to explain Whitehead's doctrine of relativity as he conceives it philosophically because it has strong bearings on the issue. Whitehead repudiates the notion of absolute finality for any actuality or occasion. Actuality can only be conceived in process or, as he says, in becoming. It has no absolute existence; since it can be perceived only in relation to other actualities; In this way he ensures the idea of interrelatedness which is at the root of his philosophy of organism. This interrelatedness is also the basis for his rejection of the bifurcation of nature. Referring to the mistake of

2. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 18
preceding philosophers Whitehead contends that their difficulty was not with dogmatic theology as much as it was with dogmatic finality.

Their true enemy was the doctrine of dogmatic finality, a doctrine which flourished and is flourishing with equal vigour throughout Theology, Science and Metaphysics. The methodology of rational thought from the Greeks to our times has been vitiated by this fundamental misconception. These errors are not confined to religious thought. They have infected all departments. Their total effect has been to introduce in each age a dogmatic sense of finality. The emphasis of certainty has been wrongly placed and with equal error dogmatic rejection. 1

When Whitehead comes to define art he combines absoluteness with relativity in a dexterous way. He identifies relativity with the internal details that go into the making of the work of art or what Leavis calls 'the local concreteness', and absoluteness with the ultimate significance and individuality of the work of art.

Art at its highest exemplifies the metaphysical doctrine of the interweaving of absoluteness upon relativity. In the work of art the relativity becomes the harmony of the composition and the absoluteness is the claim for separate individuality advanced by component factors. 2

It may be observed in passing that Whitehead's definition of harmony as a combination of elements of discord within a general framework of concord or the blend of the real with the ideal is essentially Coleridgean. His whole philosophy of organism has a Coleridgean tenor. "All aesthetic experience", Whitehead

1. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 208
2. ibid, pp. 339-340
reports, "is a feeling arising out of the realization of contrast under identity". ¹ This view is Coleridgean in principle and even in formulation, and there is nothing surprising in this. Throughout his career Leavis expresses his concern over the loss of organic community and the arbitrary breach between the past and the present arising from industrial development. The organic relation between the artist and his environment that contributed to the emergence of a Shakespeare and a Bunyan was, in his view, dissolved by industrial growth. Furthermore, in his constant references to Eliot and Richards, Leavis assigns to Eliot the credit of changing the sensibility of our age, and to Richards the role of popularizing Coleridge's ideas and the emphasis on analysis as a proper tool of literary criticism.² I may even remark that Leavis's favourable references to Richards occur largely in Culture and Environment, and mostly in the context of this idea of organism which received adequate expression at the hands of Coleridge.

Whitehead seems to be speaking for Leavis when he draws a distinction between the generality of philosophical thought and the particularity of the work of literature. When philosophy tackles an idea it moulds it in an abstract, generalized way, but in the realm of art it is rendered in a concrete, individualized form. "... good literature avoids the large philosophic generality which the quality (of vagueness) exhibits. It fastens upon the accidental precision which inevitably clothes the

¹. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 396
². F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.I, no.2, September 1932, p. 132
In his protest against Snow's concern with the superficial aspects of material civilization and his exultation in technological advance, Leavis adduces Lawrence as indicating that life is much more interesting in its undercurrents than at its surface-level. These undercurrents, as both Leavis and Lawrence intimate, pertain to the spiritual and humane attributes of man and are supremely evoked in literature.

Whitehead imputes to literature a similar role when he says:

"It is one function of great literature to evoke a vivid feeling of what lies beyond words". But Whitehead charges literature with another important task. This task resides in bringing man out of his solitariness into communion with others thereby achieving the interconnectedness that lies at the centre of his philosophy of organism. "Expression is the return from solitariness to society", and in another context he says, "The penetration of literature and art at their height arises from our dumb sense that we have passed beyond mythology; namely beyond the myth of isolation". This is the sort of thing that Leavis has in mind when he quotes Lawrence as saying that one writes out of one's moral sense for the race, as it were.

1. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p.6
2. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.17
3. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p.7
5. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p.9
6. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and the University, p.51
To consider Whitehead's views on the creative activity in relation to those of Leavis is to be conscious, not just of verbal similarities (at least on the formal level) but also of notional resemblances. This may seem to be a loose generalization especially in connection with two radically different frames of mind, but this is at least the impression which the following pages hope to convey. The phrase 'Modes of Thought', which Leavis uses in his writings, is the title of one of Whitehead's books, and the phrase 'Creative impulse', being the first chapter in this book, is a recurrent phrase in Leavis.

Associating the weak points in Forster with Bloomsbury standards Leavis says:

That those standards are not complete in themselves or securely based or sufficiently guaranteed by contemporary civilization there is no need to dispute; the recognition has been an essential part of the creative impulse in Mr Forster. 2

But this is just a superficial aspect and a closer examination of the operation of their minds will reveal closer affinities.

Affirming the correlation of thought with its concurrent expressive mode Whitehead says:

The notion of pure thought in abstraction from all expression is a figment of the learned world. A thought is a tremendous mode of excitement. Like a stone thrown into a pond it disturbs the whole surface of our being. But this image is inadequate, for we should conceive the ripples as effective in the creation of the plunge of the stone into the water. The ripples release the thought, and the thought augments and distorts the ripples. In other words to understand the essence of thought,

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p.130
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p.276
we must study its relation to the ripples amid which it emerges. 1

Elsewhere he describes this interrelatedness as a process of 'enactment.' 2 This 'enactment' is a favourite word in the body of Leavis's criticism. Diagnosing Johnson's deficient view of Shakespeare he says "... he cannot understand that works of art enact their moral valuations". 3 In another context he again says: "It is the beginning of the sustained criticism of English life that the book (Little Dorrit) enacts", 4 and again he says: "But in that set inquest into Victorian civilization which Little Dorrit enacts for us he (Clennam) is a focal agent". 5 Explaining Anna's feelings, Leavis says: "Anna, we are made to see, can't but feel (we are considering here an instance of the profound exploration of moral feeling enacted in the book). 6

Whitehead is concerned with the interdependence of thought and its expressive activities. 7 Belief in such an interdependence is what underlies, for example, Leavis's criticism of the idea of poetry put forward by Ezra Pound. "Language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree". Leavis attacks the implied division between the idea and the mode that bodies it forth:

1. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, pp. 50-51
2. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 321
3. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, pp. 110-111
4. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Dickens The Novelist, p. 216
5. ibid, p. 220
6. F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and Other Essays, p. 21.
7. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 50
The relation (says Leavis) may be suggested by saying that the two are of each other. Not only is language an apt analogy for literary tradition; one might say that such a tradition is a development of the language it belongs to, if one did not want to say at the same time that the language is largely a product of tradition. 1

Relations in which 'two are of each other' play an important part in the philosophy of Whitehead, and not least in his view of art. "All aesthetic experience", he says, "is feeling arising out of the realization of contrast under identity", 2 and 'feeling' is a term which embodies just the kind of relationship attributed by Leavis to language and tradition. "A feeling", says Whitehead, "cannot be abstracted from the actual entity entertaining it", 3 but this entity itself stands in an ambiguous relation to the feeling it incorporates. It has its being in relevance to other things among which are included feelings; but its "individuality resides in the combination of these relevant things into it". 4 Two things here are especially worth considering. First, for Whitehead a feeling is a 'particular' in the same sense in which each actual entity is a 'particular' and such a view could well buttress Leavis's own preference for particularity within poems. Second, feelings are closely related to the person who feels, and may in a sense be regarded as his creation, since, as they contribute to his

1. F.R. Leavis, Education and The University, p. 118
2. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 396
3. ibid, p. 313
4. A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, p.3
being, he is instrumental in theirs. A personal, creative principle of this kind is central to Whitehead's philosophy—and to Leavis's criticism. It is seen at work, for example, in his criticism of the part of Felix Holt that deals with Mrs Transome. He attributes the integrity of that work to the realized personal element, the perceptive tone that is focussed and grasped.

If we ask how this art is so astonishingly finer and maturer than anything George Eliot had done before, the answer is in terms of a perception that is so much more clear and profound, because the perceiving focuses the profound experience of years—experience worked over by reflective thought, and so made capable of focusing. What we perceive depends on what we bring to the perceiving...

This personal principle is ever present in Leavis's works and is markedly so in his later critical writings, Dickens; The Novelist, Lectures in America, English Literature In Our Time and The University and finally Nor Shall My Sword.

This personal principle is, I think, different from the doctrine of subjectivity as a critical tool. When Leavis insists that a 'judgment is personal and cannot be otherwise' he couples it with the qualification that it is 'pondered and responsible'; and when he says that it is only in individuals that life exists; he is gesturing towards a creativity that can be seen in the very nature of human life. In other words he is disavowing the aggregative view that reduces man to a mere number in a calculus, or to a screw in a machine. This personal judgment far from being anarchic or irresponsible or even 'romantic' in the vicious sense of the word should be a

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1. F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, p.54
highly controlled and disciplined activity. This judgment is calculated to promote something which may be provisionally called 'truth'. Defining the function of the literary critic Leavis says:

The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalizing of or from it. His first concern is to enter into possession of the given poem (let us say) in its concrete fulness; and his constant concern is never to lose his completeness of possession, but rather to increase it. In making value-judgments (and judgments as to significance) implicitly or explicitly, he does so out of that completeness of possession and with that fulness of response. He aims to make fully conscious and articulate the immediate sense of value that places the poem.

These words are self-explanatory and need hardly be elaborated upon. The sense of organization and self-discipline is sharply focussed. The sense of relevance and inward grasp of the text is predominant and is the antithesis of a sentimental, subjective or romantic tendency. Such measured words are the exact opposite, for example, of Pirandello's romantic definition of criticism as the "adventure of the soul among masterpieces".

Since Leavis epitomizes the function of the critic as an attempt to arrive at true judgment, and since that critic appeals to the audience or readers for a confirmation of his own personal judgment, he is aware of something concrete outside himself which claims his full attention and on which the judgment he pronounces may or may not differ from that of his audience and in view of which he may or may not modify his judgment. So if he is personal in

voicing his judgment, he is impersonal in his preoccupation with something outside himself. This notion is elegantly put by Whitehead as he says:

*Just as sense-perception seems to give knowledge of what lies beyond individuality, so action seems to issue in an instinct for self-transcendence. The activity passes beyond self into the known transcendent world.*  

and on the same page he again says "my point is that, in our sense-experience we know away from and beyond our personality".  

In consequence of this Whitehead distrusts subjectivism, and advocates an "objectivist philosophy adapted to the requirements of science and to the concrete experience of mankind*.  

Whitehead's distrust of subjectivism issues from the radical objection that it tends to centre attention on the self as the source of all possible knowledge. In his view, it amounts to some kind of solipsism which both he and Santayana repudiate. Whitehead's advocacy of an objectivist principle is not, I think, at odds with the philosophy of organism he champions. Both he and Leavis are at pains to distinguish between personal perception or intuition and selfish egotism. When Leavis notes that the 'naed' which Eliot attempts to assuage in 'trying to use words' is 'something more than merely personal' the implication is one of praise.  

Leavis's discussion of the creative process is often associated with an impersonalizing activity; but this impersonalizing

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2. ibid
3. ibid, p.110
4. F.R. Leavis, *English Literature In our Time and The University*, p.122
5. This point is brought home in his discussion of Lawrence's 'Ursula' in D.H. Lawrence: *Novelist*, Penguin Books, p.137
activity can involve personal feelings that are concretely rendered and dramatically realized. The point is illustrated in his essay 'Thought and Emotional Quality'. It follows from all this that Leavis's directives are impersonal and objective rather than personal and subjective and in this connection he again concurs with Whitehead.

The point is worth making because Roger Poole, in a recent essay seems not to grasp the distinction between the personal principle as developed in Leavis's work and a pure Romantic subjectivism. Summarizing Leavis's view of Four Quartets, for example, he says: "It is, as a work, subjective, inward and personal, everything that cock-a-hoop Benthamism is not". What this leaves out is precisely Leavis's sense of the drive beyond personality that is part of his conception of the personal struggle for truth. Leavis says: "Eliot's absorption in trying to use words is the intensity of his need; that is as something more than merely personal".

Poole's formulation omits, too, all that is present in Leavis's praise of its 'concreteness' and the implications for its anti-Benthamism; of its involvement in language - the common human creation "... the enforcing (of its opposition to neo-Benthamism) takes a form that compels a close attention to the subtleties of linguistic expression".

2. Roger C. Poole "Life Versus Death in The Later Criticism of F.R. Leavis", Renaissance and Modern Studies, June 1972, p.128
3. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and The University, p.122
4. ibid, p. 131
Closely allied to the personal principle adopted by both Leavis and Whitehead, is the notion of 'presentational immediacy' outlined in Whitehead's philosophy. The notion exercises some influence on Leavis as a critic, but before elaborating on this point, an explanation of the idea itself seems to be in place.

According to Whitehead "presentational immediacy is a mode of perception objectifying actual things," and it is associated with sense perception. His subsequent discussion of this mode is verbally and notionally congenial to Leavis's critical impulse. He says:

Presentational immediacy is our immediate perception of the contemporary external world, appearing as an element constitutive of our own experience. In this appearance the world discloses itself to be a community of actual things, which are actual in the same sense as we are.

The sense of immediacy must be stressed because the word 'immediacy' is a ruling principle in Leavis's critical writings and is perhaps Whiteheadian in origin. The notion that perception can be achieved only through individuals is again Leavisian in colouring. "It is only in the individuals that life exists," In an illuminating statement Whitehead says:

The pure mode of presentational immediacy gives no information as to the past or the future. It merely presents an illustrated portion of the presented duration. It thereby defines a cross-section of the universe, but does not in itself define on which side lies the past and on which side the future.

1. A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, p.21
2. ibid, p.25
3. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.17
4. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 233
What interests us in this statement is Whitehead's insistence on the concrete aspect of this mode represented in his use of the adjective 'illustrated'. The sense of immediacy is discerned in that spark which it throws on a limited 'cross-section' of the universe to bring out its significance. Thus Leavis strikes a Whiteheadian note when he approvingly quotes Blake's words 'To generalize is to be an idiot'; 'Truth only exists in minutely organized particulars'; 'The Infinite alone resides in Definite and Determinate Identity'; 1 and comments:

When he (Blake) used the verb 'generalize' in that pejorative way he was thinking of the problem facing anyone who aspires to present with cogent finality the essential truth about human nature. 2

In this commentary we notice the plea which the artist makes through concrete and definite particulars to achieve a general and universal appeal. But Whitehead also reminds us that this activity of presentational immediacy has nothing to do with the past or the future. What determines its efficacy is the personal principle that informs its activity. For the influence of the past and the future he reserves another mode called 'Casual Efficacy', and the combination of the two modes issues in what Whitehead calls 'Symbolic Reference'. 3 Leavis himself often uses the term 'immediacy'. Defining this term Whitehead says "Immediacy is the realization of the potentialities of the past; and is the storehouse of the potentialities of the future". 4

1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p.16
2. ibid, pp. 16-17
3. A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, p.21
4. A.N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p.136
Leavis, however, uses 'immediacy' in its presentational and sensuous sense. Relating this quality to Lawrence, Leavis says:

The point I want to make in stressing this obvious enough difference is that the given strength of Lawrence is not something separable from the strength which (I suggested) would have struck George Eliot as the poetic intensity of his art. This intensity is an extraordinary sensuous immediacy (it is no more merely sensuous than the charged intensity of Shakespearean poetry). 1

When Leavis uses the term in connection with Forster he charges it with a meaning that is more intimately concerned with direct apprehension and full realization of actual facts "Howards End (1910) the latest of the pre-war novels and the most ambitious, is, while offering again a fulness and immediacy of experience, more mature in the sense that it is free of the autobiographical, exhibits crudity of a kind to shock and distress the reader as Mr Forster hasn’t shocked or distressed him before. "2 When he applies the term to Blake he loads it with connotations that are at once visual and emotive. Discussing Blake's "The Sick Rose" Leavis says

We hesitate to call the Rose a symbol, because symbol is apt to imply something very different from the immediacy with which Blake sees, feels and states in terms of his image - the inevitableness with which the Rose presents itself to him as the focus of his observation. 3

Again Leavis links presentational immediacy with objectivity and detachment when he applies it to the Metaphysicals.

1. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, p.116
2. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, pp. 268-269
3. F.R. Leavis, A Selection From Scrutiny, Vol.I, p. 228
"Their attempts were always analytic" - to analyze your experience, you must while keeping it alive and immediately present as experience treat it in some sense as an object, he says; we are reminded of Whitehead's initial statement that presentational immediacy is a mode of objectifying things.

Applied to Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, the term crystallizes the sense of misery and solitude in which little Dorrit is involved. "In the chapter I have been quoting from (Leavis refers to Book the Second, Chapter III) they (the scene and the setting) give us in poignant immediacy - give us as an experience or suffered state - the peculiar loneliness and hunger of little Dorrit's situation." This immediacy is allowed to take on a realistic touch so that the figurative and the actual, the Whiteheadian 'symbolic reference' and the Leavisian 'symbolic significance' coalesce with actual events in a dramatic form. Describing the ominous and domineering presence of Clennam's mother at home Leavis says:

> Our acquaintance with that shored-up structure, the inmates and the gloom, is associated with these disturbing monitions, coming to us in the force of Dickens's prose with the immediacy of actual sensations, and having in terms of the symbolic significance a charging effect (the symbolism works as immediately as metaphor) that there is no need to enlarge upon.

These quotations serve to illustrate the fact that Leavis does not constrain himself to a rigid and preconceived use of terms. On the contrary he affords himself the freedom to cope

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2. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, *Dickens The Novelist*, p. 253
3. *ibid*, pp. 264-265
with varying situations by refusing to pin himself down to a certain conception. Simultaneously he enriches the connotations of such terms by enlarging the scope of their application. This applies to the term 'objectification'. In Whitehead the term has a meaning directly associated with the philosophy of organism.

"The philosophy of organism", says Whitehead, "is devoted to the task of making clear the notion of being 'present in another entity'. This phrase is here borrowed from Aristotle; it is not a fortunate phrase and in subsequent discussion it will be replaced by the term 'objectification'. Thus objectification as Whitehead conceives it is the connecting link, the 'vector', between two actual entities, and the realization that these two entities are actual only in the sense that they are present in each other.

When Whitehead uses the verb 'objectify' however, we are immediately reminded of its literary import. Specifying the functions of presentational immediacy and casual efficacy he postulates that they offer concrete and abstract qualities, which in their totality constitute human experience. "I will therefore say that they objectify for us the actual things in our environment". Reference has already been made to Leavis's use of Eliot's 'objective correlative' at the beginning of his career. In his later criticism he prefers terms like 'realization' and 'concreteness'. When he uses the term 'objectivity' in 'Judgment and analysis' he associates it with visual elements inherent in the experience "... it will be noted by the way how inevitably we ship into the visual analogy, the type and model of objectivity being the thing seen".

1. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p.69
2. A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, p.21
3. F.R. Leavis, Selection from Scrutiny, Vol.L, p.228
If James Smith complains of Whitehead's neologisms, Leavis too, has coined new words and modified their use to suit his, like the word 'constatation', which is not mentioned as a noun at all in The Oxford English Dictionary. There is only the verb 'constate' which is rarely used at present, and which means to ascertain, to verify, to certify. Leavis's use of this term is completely different from the lexical meaning. It is an emendation of the verb state into constate, with a view to defining the work of art in terms of sharp realization or specific situations. Comparing Lawrence's 'Softly in the dusk' with Tennyson's 'Tears, Idle Tears', Leavis says

... the vista of years leads back to something sharply seen, a very specific situation; that stands there in its own right, so that we might emend 'stating' into 'constating' in order to describe the effect of prose statement (we are inclined to call it) but the situation is vividly realized.

and in the same context he identifies 'constatation' with 'disinterestedness'; "the presentation of this situation involves a disinterested or 'constatin^' attitude", and in the same discussion he expands the implications of the concept to have a cohering or relating effect

... we have our licence for saying that however strong an emotional effect the poem has, that is essentially conditioned by thought; the constating, relating and critical mind has its essential part in the work of sensibility.

2. It is included only in the Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary.
4. Ibid, p. 217
5. Ibid
This cohering function is further reinforced in his subsequent use of the term. In another context he says "The considerations that dispose of the Cartesian dualism entail that constatation".  

Whitehead's congeniality to Leavis might have been enhanced by common debts, for example, to Leslie Stephen; in his Preface to Adventures of Ideas, Whitehead acknowledges that in the formation of his ideas, he is indebted, among other things, to Leslie Stephen's History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, and to a number of his well-known letters. Leavis capitalizes on this book in his Ph.D. thesis and in his subsequent critical writings, especially in Revaluation 3 and The Great Tradition 4, and Mrs Leavis, in the separate essay she devotes in Scrutiny to Stephen, describes him as "to be in the direct line of the best tradition of our literary criticism to exemplify the principal virtues of a literary critic, and to exhibit a tone, a discipline, and an attitude that were desirable models to form oneself on". 5 This may probably suggest some sort of common Cambridge background to which at least some of their formative ideas can be traced.

Similarly in his Preface to Symbolism, Whitehead acknowledges his indebtedness to Santayana's Scepticism and Animal Faith, and in most of his argument Whitehead adduces the support of Santayana. Leavis explicitly recognizes that Santayana is a definite influence upon him.

At the beginning of this chapter it has been indicated that

1. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 24
2. A.N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. VII
3. F.R. Leavis, Revaluation, pp. 76-163
4. F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, p. 35
5. Q.D. Leavis, 'Leslie Stephen; A Cambridge Critic' Selection from Scrutiny
Leavis reserves for himself the right to disagree, if necessary, with Whitehead; and as he has already differed with Santayana, the point of difference is again their appraisal of Shelley. But if Santayana has been idealizing Shelley, Whitehead endorses his poetry and vision because they fit in with his philosophy of organism; "Shelley's nature", says Whitehead, "is in its essence a nature of organisms, functioning with the full content of our perceptual experience". 

Shelley's view of nature testifies - in Whitehead's opinion - to 'a prehensive unification as constituting the very being of nature'. This unification is an intuitive vision and transcends the materialism of science. It is this idealistic strain in Shelley's vision that approximates Whitehead to Santayana. Distinguishing between Shelley's and Wordsworth's vision of nature Whitehead states that for Shelley nature is in a constant state of flux, 'of change that cannot die', and this vision harmonizes again with Whitehead's philosophy of organism, whereas, for Wordsworth, nature 'shows the minimum of change'. 'For him change is an incident which shoots across a background of endurance'; and paradoxically enough this concept is again Whiteheadian; because according to the philosophy of organism change is partial, and permanence too is partial, so that in every change there is a partial element of permanence; and in permanence there is a latent element of change. Everything is relative to other things. This accounts for Whitehead's admiration for both Wordsworth and Shelley.

2. Ibid
3. Ibid, p. 107
Leavis's difference with Whitehead on his evaluation of Shelley brings critical canons to bear on the subject. If Shelley has been an idealist and a visionary, this idealism and vision should be embodied in his poetry. 'Intentions are nothing except as realized in the work of art' is a favourite maxim of Leavis and Shelley always offers emotion in itself - for itself, for its own sake - emotion that has its life not in the poetry but in the life of Shelley himself; so that we are reminded all the time of Shelley the man. He fails to render, to realize, to concretize and this brings us back full circle to our starting point namely that philosophy is concerned with abstract theories and visions; but poetry always has its life in the concrete and the realized. Whitehead takes interest in Shelley's vision, but Leavis is keen to see how far this vision is rendered in a poetic form.

Does it not sound paradoxical to conclude on a note of difference, especially on a subject that is mainly devoted to harmony and relatedness? On reconsidering the subject we shall notice that Whitehead indicates that under every harmony and relatedness there are elements of disharmony and discord. In other words there is 'sameness with difference'; and it is this difference that secures further development and originality essential for the continuity of life. This is probably one of Whitehead's significant values which has escaped the notice of James Smith and of which Leavis has made proper use. It will help to clear up ambiguities as to 'the nature of his importance'.

Chapter V

Leavis, Collingwood and Polanyi

In this chapter an attempt will be made to trace the influence of both Collingwood and Polanyi on Leavis. In his recent critical writings Leavis frequently refers to the significance of Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi. The three of them are brought in, for example, when he discusses the desirability of expanding the English syllabus to include study of thought other than literary, their names are those with which he chooses to illustrate his argument.

1. A. Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943): born at Coniston in Lancashire, he received his first education at home because of the poverty of his parents, but at the age of thirteen he managed to go to a preparatory school and a year later to Rugby, thanks to the generosity of a family friend. In 1908 he went to University College, Oxford with a classical scholarship and in 1912 he was elected to a fellowship in Philosophy at Pembroke College. He served in the Intelligence department of the Admiralty in the First World War. In addition to his work at Pembroke, he taught Philosophy at Lincoln College from 1921 to 1928. From 1927 to 1935 he was University lecturer in Philosophy and Roman History. In 1935 he was appointed Waynflete professor of Metaphysical Philosophy and moved to Magdalen College. He died on the 11th of January 1943. Among his works: Essay on Philosophical Method (1933) Roman Britain (1935) The Principles of Art (1939) The New Leviathan (1942)

I am of course not assuming that, where expression in words is concerned, the 'significant' is confined to the creative work we call 'literature'. The educated public we need - and this emphasizes the importance of the point that it mustn't be thought of as a mere aggregation of individuals - will represent, for the creative writer and the critic (both of whom require such collaboration, for it amounts to that) a general lively awareness, or a readiness for it, of the significance of (say) Whitehead, Collingwood and Polanyi: I exemplify with a line of creative thought that is clearly of major significance for non-specialist intelligence and sensibility. 1

Again speaking about the function of the teacher in an English school, Leavis says:

... there should be at least one person in the school ready to read and discuss with students, say, Marjorie Grene's The Knower and The Known or key parts of it. Where the conditions were ideal there might very well be a small group of students being helped by a qualified guide, to appreciate the significance of Whitehead, Collingwood and Michael Polanyi. 2

To Whitehead I have devoted a separate chapter. To deal with Collingwood and Polanyi in one chapter may be justified in part by Leavis's own not infrequent bracketing of them and in part by the presence in both of similar ideas. To support his claim that knowledge of the physical and mechanical world - to be valuable and significant - must be complemented by an intuitive or rather religious apprehension, for example, Leavis invokes both Collingwood and Polanyi:

what human creativity has created and continuously re-creates in response to change is the human world; and it entails of its very nature the recognition

1. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, London, Chatto and Windus, 1972, p. 217
2. Ibid, p. 126
that (in Collingwood's words) it must ultimately depend for its existence on something other than itself; for as Polanyi insists, true creativity, like perception, is never arbitrary; but always seeks the real; which it knows that it can never with complete certainty, still less exhaustively or finally, know. 1

For the sake of clarity, however, these two writers will be treated separately, and whenever the need arises, an attempt will be made to relate their seminal principles. For chronological reasons I will begin by a consideration of Collingwood.

Leavis's interest in Collingwood dates back to the middle years of Scrutiny when J.C. Maxwell reviewed Collingwood's Autobiography, 2 and later his Three Laws of Politics. 3

It may be worthwhile asking why Leavis elected Collingwood and not Croce for his critical directives. The reason is, I think, that unlike Collingwood, Croce excludes moral considerations from our appreciation of the work of art, and believes in its autonomous and intrinsic values. Croce had too much in common with the Bloomsbury group whose exclusive aesthetic interests Leavis has relentlessly attacked. Croce says:

We have demonstrated that art as art is independent both of utility and of morality; as also of all practical value. Without this independence, it would not be possible to speak of an intrinsic value or art, nor indeed to conceive an aesthetic science,

1. F.R. Leavis, "Justifying one's Valuation of Blake" The Human World, no.7, May 1972, pp. 63-64
2. Scrutiny, vol.VIII, no.3, December 1939, pp. 319-324
which demands the autonomy of the aesthetic fact as its necessary condition. 1

Strangely enough Croce argues that the work of art is a vision or an intuition which does not necessarily call for expression or externalization. But it would be erroneous to maintain that this independence of the vision or intuition or internal expression of the artist should be simply extended to the practical activity of externalization and communication which may or may not follow the aesthetic fact. If by art be understood the externalization of art, then utility and morality have a perfect right to enter into it; that is to say the right to be master in one's own house. 2

This sceptical and sardonic approach to morality was seized upon in Scrutiny by James Smith when he says "he seems, we should normally say, to be emptying works of art of their significance." 3 Furthermore Croce differs from Collingwood in holding form to be the focus of interest in the aesthetic activity; and form in Croce smacks of the formalistic school of criticism; of art for art's sake; but in Collingwood it is coupled with moral suggestions. This may account for Leavis's preference of Collingwood to Croce. "Poetical material" - says Croce - "permeates the souls of all; the expression alone, that is to say, the form makes the poet - and here appears the truth of the view which denies all content to art". 4 Collingwood's refutation of this view comes as a pertinent corrective:


2. ibid, p. 116


4. Croce, op.cit, p. 25
these formalistic theories of art, popular though they have been and are, have no relevance to art proper. The distinction between form and content on which they are based is a distinction belonging to the philosophy of craft, and not applicable to the philosophy of art.  

It should be readily indicated that in Collingwood technique and craftsmanship are identified; and craft in this context can be equated with the term 'technique', which Leavis condemns as inappropriate to the realm of achieved art in almost all his critical writings and more particularly in his essay on Blake.

In the same essay Leavis describes Collingwood as "very intelligent, conscientious, and well-informed". To account for such a description one must recapitulate the context in which it occurs - a context that recalls Leavis's determined attempt to vindicate Blake's genius against the background of Eliot's depreciatory, or rather inadequate, appraisal. In the first place Leavis expresses his dissatisfaction with Eliot's infelicitous term 'technique' as an indicator of Blake's achievement as a poet, since it only comprises the formal components of the work of art without taking into account its more significant semantic or intellectual connotations. To apply "technique" to Blake is to slight the essentially human values he is trying to secure. This leads logically to the second point in Leavis's criticism of Eliot. Concluding his essay on Blake Eliot had said:


2. F.R. Leavis, "Justifying one's Valuation of Blake", The Human World, no. 7, p. 63
Blake was endowed with a capacity for considerable understanding of human nature; with a remarkable and original sense of language and the music of language and a gift of a hallucinated vision. Had these been controlled by a respect for impersonal reason, for common sense, and for the objectivity of science, it would have been better for him.

It is against the last sentence in this quotation that Leavis takes up arms. Leavis believes that it is Blake's reaction against the whole background of eighteenth century rationalism that constitutes his right to originality and distinction. To adhere to that background means to abide by the empiricist philosophy of both Newton and Locke and the rigid rationalism of Descartes, both of which are utterly uncongenial to human creativity and mental originality. If Eliot's comment is intended to draw attention to his concept of tradition, then tradition here, as Leavis points out would be a constraining and bridling one. It is against this positive logic and rational Augustan civilization that Blake is protesting. Thus when Eliot says that 'He (Blake) is very like Collins, he is very eighteenth century', he is associating him with a poet to whom he cannot be linked, because he is engaged in what Leavis regards as an exploratory, creative use of language.

It is on a basis of this misrepresentation that Eliot designates Blake's poetry as 'abstract and formless', Leavis's vindication of Blake rests on principles largely derived from Collingwood and Polanyi; but a closer scrutiny

2. ibid, p. 318
3. ibid, p. 320
of the central issues will shed more light on Leavis's intentions. To illustrate this point I would quote a rather lengthy passage from Leavis:

His (Blake's) habitual use of the names of Newton and Locke was not the expression of une marie; it was an insistence on human creativity - the creativity of life; a necessary insistence that is not less in place today. He insisted in an age of Lockean commonsense that perception was not passive, and that there was a continuity from the inherent creativity of perception to the creativity, trained and conscious, of the artist. 'Jesus was an artist' he says. That remark implies, of course, a conception of art different from either Pater's or T.S. Eliot's - a conception that seems to me sound; at any rate, I share it. It implies a conception of human responsibility; and one aspect of Blake's living importance is that he compels us to realize fully and clearly what human responsibility means. 1

It is in connection with this sense of the activity of perception and commitment to humanity that the significance of both Collingwood and Polanyi for Leavis is brought out. That the artist or the knower should play an active role in what is being created or known - a point of focal interest in Leavis's criticism of Blake - is central in both Collingwood and Polanyi; and the view that the artist, the critic and the historian have to participate personally in interpreting works of art and historical incidents is a ruling principle in Collingwood. But I will elaborate on this point later.

When Leavis quotes Collingwood's statement that 'the world of nature or physical world, must depend for its existence on something other than itself,' 2 we are conscious of the principle operating at the back of his mind; namely the refutation of Eliot's impersonal view and the objectivity of

1. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 59
2. F.R. Leavis, "Justifying One's Valuation of Blake", The Human World, no.7, May 1972, p. 63
science. But the point has more far-reaching effects. It impinges on the so-called self-sufficient world of science, the belief in the absolute validity of scientific criteria, and in the polite rational world of common sense. Leavis's drive in the whole argument is to establish a principle of relativity — endorsed by both Collingwood and Polanyi, — through which the agency of the human mind and the potency of the human spirit can be shown and recognized. This gesture implies in the first place a rejection of the mechanical conception of nature. Here it should be indicated that Leavis's use of the term 'nisus'¹ in the same essay on Blake probably derives from Collingwood. The term is recurrently and consistently used in connection with the creative drive in Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature*.² Leavis also uses it in D.H. Lawrence's *Novelist*, and Dickens's *The Novelist*. The term has its immediate bearing on the point at issue as it emphasizes the operative and vital energy exerted by the human mind in comprehending nature or the material world. But this is not the only term which Leavis derives from Collingwood. His comparatively recent phrase 'the third realm' seems to have been derived from Collingwood: "'matter' says Collingwood, 'is no longer contrasted with mind and life as a realm in which being is independent of acting and logically prior to it; it resembles them as a third realm in which being is at bottom simply acting."³

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1. ibid, p. 63


3. ibid, p. 148
Of course the phrase here occurs in a philosophical context indicating that the new concept of matter treated it as dynamic and active, not static, as used to be the case. This dynamic nature of matter entitles it to consideration as a 'third realm', after mind and life, to both of which it is now likened. Yet it seems that the phrase had some appeal for Leavis in consequence of which he transferred it to a critical framework. ¹

The view of art as a craft solicits a joint attack made by both Collingwood and Leavis on the psychological theory of value expounded by Richards in The Principles of Literary Criticism. To put the point in a clearer perspective one must go back to Leavis's allusions to Richards. Richards's views figure prominently in Leavis's early writings. In New Bearings, Leavis quotes from and draws upon Richards's views for the illumination of his own ideas. ² In Culture and Environment, Richards is referred to with approval, four times, ³ and in the bibliography his works are recommended as guiding text-books for a training in critical sensibility. ⁴ Richards was also contributing to Scrutiny. He reviewed C.K. Ogden's edition of Bentham's Theory of Fictions. ⁵ Ogden being his collaborator in The Meaning of Meaning is

¹ cf the use of the phrase in the chapter on Santayana.
² F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry, pp. 19-49-53-81
³ F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, Culture and Environment, London, Chatto and Windus 1933, pp. 3-7-16-61
⁴ ibid, p. 1:8
⁵ Scrutiny, Vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 406-410
defended together with Bentham against what Richards takes as an adverse criticism made by Oakeshott in *Scrutiny*. ¹

That Bentham (says Richards) contrary to the ordinary opinion of him (conveniently displayed by Mr. Oakeshott in a recent number of *Scrutiny*) was a highly persistent, penetrating and careful thinker as remarkable for his linguistic investigations as even for his political, social, and legal reforms. Mr. Ogden in this selection and exposition of his methodical writings makes out. ²

In defending both Bentham and Ogden Richards seems to be defending his own personal views. With Ogden he is associated by reason of their fragmentation of language into arbitrary semantic units; and with Bentham he is connected on a basis of their common utilitarian view of art. Leavis discredits both the pedantic segmentation of language into units and the utilitarian calculus. In disavowing these two approaches he seems to have been influenced by Collingwood.

Commenting on Richards's utilitarian theory Collingwood says:

> If art is art only so far as it stimulates certain reactions; the artist as such is simply a purveyor of drugs, noxious or wholesome; what we call works of art are nothing but a section of the pharmacopoeia. If we ask on what principle that branch can be distinguished from others, there can be no answer. This is not a theory of art. It is not an aesthetic, but an anti-aesthetic. ³

Leavis adopts Collingwood's attitude when he brands Richards's procedure as Neo-Benthamite—a term which he defines in the same context as equivalent to the utilitarian calculus. ⁴

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³ R.G. Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p. 35
⁴ *Scrutiny*, Vol. XII, no. 4, Autumn 1944, p. 260
Rejecting the whole corpus of psychological studies as irrelevant to proper artistic appreciation Collingwood says:

... psychological science has in fact done nothing towards explaining the nature of art, however much it has done towards explaining the nature of certain elements of human experience with which it may from time to time be associated or confused. The contribution of psychology to pseudo-aesthetic is enormous, to aesthetic proper it is nil. 1

Enunciating a similar view Leavis says:

The scientifc-psychological ambition entails his (Richards's) taking his diagrams of 'poised' and organized 'impulses' or 'appetencies' too seriously: he couldn't go on supposing he took his science seriously if he even began to recognize the remoteness of their relevance to concrete experiences. 2

Closely linked to this point is their condemnation of subjugating language to scientific and statable categories, notably represented by Richards's division of language into scientific and emotive. Collingwood's definition of the function of the grammarian will help to shed light on this topic as he draws an analogy between the grammarian and the logician in respect to their approach to language.

A grammarian is not a kind of scientist studying the actual structure of language he is a kind of butcher converting it from organic tissue into marketable and edible joints. Language as it lives and grows no more consists of verbs, nouns, and so forth than animals as they live and grow consist of foreheads, gammons, rump steaks, and other joints. The grammarian's real function is not to understand language, but to alter it, to convert it from a state (its original and native state) in which it expresses emotion into a secondary state in which it can express thought. 3

1. R.G. Collingwood, op.cit, p. 36
2. F.R. Leavis, Scrutiny, Vol.XII, no.4, 1944, p.260
3. R.G. Collingwood, op.cit, p. 257
In the same context he indicates that language is inherently expressive and that it can maintain this expressiveness only by withstanding the divisive tendency of the grammarian. This notion is echoed in Leavis's critical writings and largely makes for his assault on formal linguistics. In both Collingwood and Leavis there is a preoccupation with preserving the vital, lively and human nature of language. Denouncing Richards's reductive concept of language as a mere tool Collingwood says:

Dr Richards assumes apparently without realizing that anyone could do otherwise, that language is not an activity, but something which is 'used' and can be used in quite different ways while remaining the same 'thing' like a chisel that is used either for cutting wood or for lifting tacks. 1

This identification of language with inanimate objects finds its parallelism in Leavis's strictures on Richards's equating the tragic experience with the experience derived from a 'pot' or a 'carpet', 2 and Leavis attributes this misconception to Richards's Benthamite and scientific apparatus. That is why Leavis expresses reservations about recommending Richards's Principles of Literary Criticism as a critical approach to criticism. In a footnote he insists that the 'quasi-scientific suggestions of that book should be discounted' and in the immediately following footnote he repeats the same remark saying "I.A. Richards's Principles will be found helpfully suggestive; if again the scientific-psychology is discounted". 3

When Leavis takes up the same topic again in English Literature In our Time and The University, he draws a balanced

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1. R.G. Collingwood, op.cit, p.261
2. F.R. Leavis, op.cit, p. 260
3. F.R. Leavis, Education and The University, London, Chatto and Windus, 1968, p. 132
picture of Richards's status as a critic. He does not fail to pay a handsome tribute to Richards's contribution to literary criticism, namely his ability to free criticism from the 'spell' of form. Meanwhile he points to his notorious relation with C.K. Ogden and Neo-Benthamism - a relation that has resulted in his imperfect understanding of the nature of language and its significance.

In counteracting Richards's rigid and arbitrary splitting of language into scientific and emotive, Collingwood brings into focus a significant dictum that bears directly on Leavis's criticism. Collingwood argues that the drift underlying Richards's division of language is to

intellectualize it, but language, being by definition a form of human intercourse tends to frustrate this endeavour, because it always retains personal attributes. Even in a scientific discourse which is supposed to be factual and dispassionate, we can discern the shifts of tone and the points of emphasis that mark the personality of the scientist. (On this basis Collingwood concludes that Richards's distinction is not a distinction separating scientific discourse from artistic it is a distinction within artistic discourse as such and artistic discourse subserving the purposes of intellect). 2

Impressing the point upon the reader in compelling terms,

Collingwood says:

When Dr Richards wants to say that a certain view of Tolstoy's about art is mistaken he says this is 'plainly untrue' scientific use of language, but how delicately emotive. One hears the lecturing voice and sees the shape of the lecturer's fastidious Cambridge mouth as he speaks the words. 3

1. F.R. Leavis, English Literature in our Time and the University, London, Chatto and Windus, 1957, p.17
2. R.G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art, p. 262
3. Ibid, p. 264
The implications of these views are great. Firstly, the fact that any statement or judgment passed by a critic is inevitably coloured by his own personal tone is a major feature of Leavis's criticism. "A judgment is personal or it is nothing,"¹ and it is the basis of culture as an assembly of values, hence "It is obviously absurd to 'posit a culture' that the scientist has qua scientist."² In point of fact Leavis seems to reiterate Collingwood's viewpoint when he says:

... science is obviously of great importance to mankind; it is of great cultural importance. But to say that is to make a value - judgment - a human judgment of value. The criteria of judgments of value and importance are determined by a sense of human nature and human need and can't be a product of scientific method or anything like it.³

Secondly, Collingwood's marked emphasis on language as a mode of popular intercourse is bound to afford it a comprehensiveness transcending all narrow specialisms and technical uses enabling it to become, as Leavis says, "a mode of intercourse among people, (Collingwood invests the word intercourse with popular and communicative functions), to become a public world"⁴, or, to vary the illustration, to become 'the third realm'.⁵ Most important of all, one notices that underlying Collingwood's rejection of Richards's division of language into emotive and scientific and his setting up of the principle that there is only one language defined as artistic and occasionally harnessed to serve scientific purposes there is the nucleus of Leavis's attack.

1. F.R. Leavis, The Two Cultures, London, Chatto and Windus 1962, p.23
3. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sford, p.140
4. ibid, p.110
5. ibid,
on Snow's *The Two Cultures*. Both Collingwood and Leavis are against the dualism represented by Snow and favour an organic, integral view of both language and culture. This point is worth making; as it puts Leavis's argument in its proper context, that is as a defence of a principle, in his view, soundly established rather than a matter of personal animosity entertained against Snow. This can be clarified in the light of Collingwood's statement that science in itself is inadequate to explain or account for physical and natural phenomena

... since modern science is now committed to a view of the physical universe as finite, certainly in space and probably in time, the activity which this same science identifies with matter cannot be a self-created or ultimately self-dependent activity. ¹

Identifying this activity Collingwood again says:

... if nature bears on its face the marks of depending for its existence on something else, that something is the human mind. ²

Leavis almost reiterates this view saying

... there is a prior human achievement of collaborative creation, a more basic work of the mind of man (and more than the mind) one without which the triumphant edifice would not have been possible, that is the creation of the human world; including language. ³

Even Leavis's parenthetical phrase 'and more than the mind' which recalls 'the nusus', the 'ahnung' (a word which Leavis associates with intuitive and divine qualities)⁴ the intuition

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2. ibid, p.156


4. F.R. Leavis, "Justifying one's Valuation of Blake", *The Human World*, no.7, May 1972, pp.60-63, *English Literature in Our Time and The University*, p.31, and *Nor Shall My Sword*, p.27
of God has its counterpart in Collingwood's elaboration of the same idea. Speaking about the evolutionary nature of the mind in terms of the innate impulse or drive to reach something higher Collingwood says:

This next higher order of quality, as yet unrealized, is deity, and thus God is the being towards whose emergence the evolutionary nisus of mind is directed. 1

Collingwood's definition of language serves to enhance Leavis's high claims for it.

It is an imaginative activity (says Collingwood) whose function is to express emotion. Intellectual language is this same language intellectualized or modified so as to express thought. I shall try to show that the expression of any given thought is effected through the expression of the emotion accompanying it. 2

And since human language is essentially tinged with this nisus or intuition, it follows that the theory of art for art's sake is a fallacy, rather, a contradiction in terms. On this point both Collingwood and Leavis are in full agreement.

Since pure imagination (says Collingwood) nowhere exists, since all imagination builds on fact, and as question, returns to fact, there is no such thing as autonomous and self-contained life of art, art for art's sake, aesthetic experience in which every trace of fact is absent. Empirically we all know that art for art's sake is an illusion, that the self-contained life of art is a mockery. 3

To clarify Collingwood's understanding of imagination one must add that in Collingwood one's awareness of the outside world

1. R.G. Collingwood, op.cit, p. 161
first takes the form of impressions. These impressions are transformed through consciousness into the imagination. Thus in Collingwood's view imagination occupies an intermediate position between the 'sensum' and the 'intellect'. 1 Leavis's rejection of the theory of art for art's sake is consistently expressed in most of his works. 2

Countering the view of the self-contained nature of art Collingwood says:

Imagination is not thought and unless thought is present there can be no imagination; yet imagination is the focus, the luminous centre of all thought. The attempt at a self-contained life of art is therefore of necessity futile. An art which hugs itself in the conviction of its own self-sufficiency and pretends to exist for its own sake is an illusion and can only end by becoming invertebrate and unproductive. But as art actually exists not in this isolation, but in the closest union with thought, what has by thought been grasped becomes expressive. 3

Pursuing the same line of thought Leavis in a memorable statement describes Lawrence's genius as:

the impulse and the power to transcend the merely personal predicament by the intelligence that is imagination - or the imagination that is intelligence. 4

Leavis has already shown how inseparable from such creativeness as Lawrence's, how essentially of so un-Flaubertian an art, is the un-Flaubertian attitude towards life; the reverence that, in its responsiveness, is courage and vitality". 5

1. R.G. Collingwood, op. cit, p.215
4. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 132
5. ibid, p.228-229
For Collingwood as well as for Leavis aesthetic values are closely intertwined with moral significances.

To set the work of art off, Collingwood argues that the artist must have a capacity for expression; and in Collingwood expression is the exact antithesis of statement. It has the vital function of transmuting the material of art into a beautiful form. Thus Collingwood distinguishes between expression and description. To describe is to state, to express is to render. For Collingwood description generalizes, but expression particularizes. "To describe a thing is to call it a thing of such and such a kind, to bring it under a conception, to classify it. Expression on the contrary individualizes."¹

I think that it is with this sense of individualization in mind that Leavis attacks Eliot's denial of the artist's right to 'express himself'. He says in a once 'influential' dictum which can't have influenced anything but quasi-intellectual fashion:

> the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates. The relevant truth, the clear essential is stated when one reverses the dictum and says that between the man who suffers and the mind which creates there can never be a separation. ²

And showing this truth in practice in Eliot's own poetry Leavis describes Eliot's attitude in *The Waste Land* as follows:

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¹ R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, p.112

² F.R. Leavis, *Lectures in America*, p.33
The distinctive attitude towards, the feeling about, the relations between men and women that predominates in the poem is the highly personal one we know so well from the earlier poems; the symbolic Waste Land makes itself felt too much as Thomas Stearns Eliot's. 1

(In his critical practice Eliot tardily came to realize that the poet can express his personal life in art in his essay on Yeats. 2

Collingwood defines art as 'the immediacy of experience', 3 and he imbues the word 'immediacy' with connotations that combine the beauty of form with truth to life or experience.

Leavis uses 'immediacy' in a similar fashion, perhaps, in the course of his commentary on Affray's life in Little Dorrit.

At the heart of it his (Clennam's) mother presided, inflexible of face, indomitable of will, and susterely opposing herself to the great final secret of all life, - is associated with the disturbing monitions coming to us in the force of Dickens's prose with the immediacy of actual sensations; and having in terms of the symbolic - significance, a charging effect (the symbolism works as immediately as metaphor ) that there is no need to enlarge upon. 4

For both Collingwood and Leavis the aesthetic and the moral are identified (a view that had already been brought home by Santayana). Defining this relationship Collingwood says:

Now religion is art asserting! its object. The object of art is the beautiful, and therefore the holy is the beautiful asserted as real. 5

1. ibid, p.x1


3. R.G. Collingwood, Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, p.97


5. R.G. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, p.120
In another context he says:

> For religion God is not one cause, but the supreme cause of causes, so for art, beauty is not one concept, but the very soul and secret of the world.

Soliciting Keats's famous epithet in support of this view he goes on:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty. ¹

It is again in line with Collingwood's central theme that both expression and intuition are co-efficient and simultaneous (a concept that he originally derives from Croce). Drawing on the same principle, Leavis, in the course of his commentary on Collingwood's view, which he quotes in his essay on Blake, says:

> That would seem to be closely related to the intuition, unmistakably and inevitably asking to be called religious, as the great writer conveys it, expressed in Blake's insistence that he does not belong to himself. ²

In Collingwood's idea that 'beauty is the guise under which ideas in general appear', ³ we find a hint of what Leavis's use of the word 'constatation' is to convey - the presentation of ideas in a convincing literary form. Talking about Anna Karenina, Leavis says "... the book gives the compelling constatation of a truth about human life." ⁴

Both Collingwood and Leavis are in accord as to the function of the critic. "The critic's business" says Collingwood,

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¹ R.G. Collingwood, Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, p.67
² The Human World, May 1972, p. 63
³ R.G. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, p.66
⁴ F.R. Leavis, Anna Karenina and Other Essays, p.23
is to establish a consistent usage of terms, to settle the nomenclature of various things which come before him competing for a given name, saying this is art, that is not art, and being an expert in this business, performing it with authority. A person qualified so to perform it is called a judge; and judgment means verdict.  

In another context Collingwood defines this function in more articulate fashion:

What is usually called criticism is the mere expression of opinion upon the aesthetic qualities of works of art. It is in fact what has been called appreciation. The true function of the art-critic is not simply to say that he likes this and dislikes that, but to explain works of art, that is to say, to put people including himself in possession of information which will enable them to appreciate intelligently.

Leavis holds similar views saying:

The analysis and judgment of works of literary art belong to the literary critic, who is one in so far as he observes a disciplined relevance in response, comment and determination of significance.

The apprehension of the work of art envisaged by the critic takes the form of an assimilative activity designated by Leavis as a process of recreation and by Collingwood as an imaginative construction or re-enactment (the reader is not far away from Leavis's major term 'enactment'). Here we come to grips with a major theme that binds Leavis to a host of philosophers including Whitehead, Collingwood, Polanyi, Marjorie Grene and Maurice Natanson; but it is with Collingwood that the present discussion concerns itself. The point is that the critic, the historian or the knower must positively and personally participate.

2. R.G. Collingwood, Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, p.100
3. F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit, p. 224
in the assessment or judgment of a given material or work of art. In a lecture entitled 'The Historical Imagination' a title at once suggestive and explanatory of the part played by the historian in shaping his authorities and data in terms of personal logic Collingwood says:

The historian who tries to work on the common-sense theory, and accurately reproduce what he finds in his authorities resembles a landscape-painter who tries to work that theory of art which bids the artist copy nature. He may fancy that he is reproducing in his own medium the actual shapes and colours of natural things, but however hard he tries to do this, he is always selecting, simplifying, schematizing, leaving out what he thinks unimportant and putting in what he regards as essential. It is the artist and not nature that is responsible for what goes on into the picture. In the same way, no historian, not even the worst, merely copies out his authorities, even if he puts in nothing of his own (which is never really possible), he is leaving out things, which for one reason or another, he decides that his work does not need or cannot use. It is he, therefore, and not his authority, that is responsible for what goes in. On that question he is his own master. 1

Historical judgment is thus tinged with the imaginative perception of the historian, who questions his material, reasons it out and orders it along newly personal lines. This procedure involves a great deal of critical effort largely exerted by imagination. "The A Priori imagination which does the work of historical construction supplies the means of historical criticism as well", 2

To the historian - Collingwood says in another context - the activities whose history he is studying are not spectacles to be watched, but experiences to be lived through in his own mind; they are objective or known to him only because they are also subjective or activities of his own. 3

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2. ibid, p.17
This view is consistently maintained in almost all Collingwood's writings. Speaking about the reader's partaking of the apprehension of the work of art he says:

The imaginary experience which we get from the picture is not merely the kind of experience the picture is capable of arousing, it is the kind of experience we are capable of having. 1

In a similar way Leavis says: "what we perceive depends on what we bring to the perceiving." 2 In point of fact this view has already received full expression in Santayana as he says:

What will decide us to like or not to like the type of our apperception will be not so much what this type is, as its fitness to the context of our mind. 3

Anticipating Polanyi's view on personal knowledge and Marjorie Grene's The Knower and The Known, Collingwood in another context says "The knower and the known are interdependent." 4 Furthermore the participation in the apprehension of the given material means that the critic or historian aligns himself temporarily with this material or achieves a kind of 'interiorization' or 'indwelling' to use the words of Polanyi who pursues the same line of thought. This personal contribution made by the historian or critic to the understanding and judgment of an incident or a work of art implies the principle of historical relativity:

1. R.G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art, p.150
2. F.R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, p.54
3. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty, p.115
... in history, as in all serious matters, (says Collingwood) no achievement is final. The evidence available for solving any given problem changes with every change of historical method and with every variation in the competence of historians. The principles by which this evidence is interpreted change too, since the interpreting of evidence is a task to which a man must bring everything he knows; historical knowledge, knowledge of nature and man, mathematical knowledge, philosophical knowledge, and not knowledge only, but mental habits and possessions of every kind, and none of these is unchanging. 1

This principle is seen at work in Leavis's writing. It manifests itself in his criticism of Dickens. Speaking about his preference for Forster's Life of Dickens, Leavis says that it "gives us the sense, as no other biographer does or now can, of being in the same room as Dickens, and even more important of being really inward with Dickens's personality and character." 2 And again he says:

I won't offer to elaborate the parallel between Shakespeare's development as the great popular playwright of our dramatic efflorescence and Dickens's as the marvellously fertile, supremely successful and profoundly creative exploiter of the Victorian market for fiction. 3

His particular interest in Hard Times and Little Dorrit largely emanates from their immediate impingement on our technologico-Benthamite age. In D.H. Lawrence: Novelist he says: "The point I am making is that Lawrence is incomparably the greatest creative writer in English of our time." 4

Clarifying his singling out of the University as a temporary

1. R.G. Collingwood, Historical Imagination, p. 20
2. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, Dickens The Novelist, p. I
3. ibid, p. 214
4. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence Novelist, p. 18
resolution of our contemporary cultural crisis Leavis speaks in terms of historical relativity saying:

The University as I contend for it is not an ultimate human goal; it is an answer to a present extremely urgent need of civilization. 1

Illuminating Blake’s significance he says: "I am postulating that Blake is a major value; and one of peculiar importance for our time." 2 Elaborating on this importance he says in another context:

... what he did achieve justifies us in imputing to him astonishing genius. It puts us in a position to see and say what, as achievement, it was—which is to realize its bearing on the sickness of our world. 2

It is with Leavis’s recently most acute sense of the maladies of our own age, however, that we may pass most conveniently from consideration of the significance of Collingwood to that of Polanyi. Leavis’s allusions to the significant ideas of Polanyi have already been partly referred to, but as Leavis has become very much interested in him recently it may be worth while to consider some of Leavis’s quotations from him in the light of his general philosophy. However, it is pertinent to clarify one or two points related to Polanyi’s significance for Leavis. First Polanyi was originally a scientist, a professor of physical chemistry at the University of Manchester and this fact supports Leavis in his struggle to establish a basically human culture from a non-specialist standpoint and helps to exonerate him from the charge of

1. F.R. Leavis “on Justifying one’s Valuation of Blake” The Human World, no. 7, May 1972, p. 42
2. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 14
'literarism'. Furthermore, Polanyi's radical theory is that the discoveries and advances of science and technology, however great and substantial they may be, are in themselves lifeless and inanimate; they can be breathed life into only by the operative and evaluative activities of man. This theory strikes the dominant note in Leavis's recent criticism of modern industrial and mechanical civilization. It asserts man's inalienable sovereignty over the machinery of modern industrial civilization. If Collingwood asserts that the world of nature—in itself is not self-sufficient and makes no sense without the intervention of the centrally illuminating human perception, Polanyi argues that the tools or the machinery of modern life are in themselves insignificant unless they are indwelt or co-habited by a human being, unless a human touch is infused into them. But this seems to be an oversimplification. The subject requires a more elaborate treatment.

The main argument in Polanyi's Personal Knowledge, is that our understanding of the outside world depends basically on our perception. What we perceive is bilateral in the sense that it may take the form either of 'focal' or 'subsidiary' awareness (Polanyi varies the terms and sometimes uses 'distal' and 'proximal' as equivalents.) To perceive an outside object we must shift our attention from subsidiary to focal awareness of that object. This shift marks the diversion of our attention from the object as an entity to the significance or the meaning of that object. This process is termed by Polanyi 'tacit

1. Leavis says "The term 'literarism' was in fact coined by the late Aldous Huxley for use against me". Nor Shall My Sword, p. 139
inference' or alternatively the shift from the explicit
to the 'tacit' awareness of that object. To perform
this process we must interiorize the object or dwell in it.
It is through this indwelling that the object is rendered
meaningful and significant. Similarly it is by alienating
the object from us that it becomes devoid of any significance.
Hence arises the radical conception that knowledge is
integrated through a personal participation or endowment on
the part of the knower - "All tacit knowing" - says Polanyi -
"requires the continued participation of the knower, and a
measure of personal participation is intrinsic therefore to
all knowledge". 1 This conception logically implies belief
that absolute objectivity or utter depersonalization is a
fallacy, if not an absurdity.

An attempt to depersonalize our knowledge of
living beings would result, if strictly pursued,
in an alienation that would render all observations
on living things meaningless. Taken to its
theoretical limits, it would dissolve the very
conception of life and make it impossible to
identify living beings. 2

Corollary to this conception and logically conducive to
its reinforcement is Polanyi's insistence on the difference
between inanimate nature and living mechanisms. His argument
in this connection is based on a hierarchical system to which
the various ingredients that build up the machines are subject.
The functioning of any particle in a machine is conditioned by
the operation of lower particles; and in turn contributes to
the functioning of higher ones. This is what Polanyi calls

1. Michael Polanyi, Knowing and Being, (ed) Marjorie Grene,
   Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p.152
2. Ibid,
'boundary conditions'. These structural levels are graded by human efforts and are bound to serve human ends. The laws of physics and chemistry may help in constructing the machine, but they fail to explain the kind of service it can render us. It is the human factor that determines or rather dictates this particular service or significance. The interaction of certain chemical compounds within the framework of a given machine or the functioning of physical organs in a living being is in itself immaterial. What actually counts is the existence of an essential human being that constructs the machine and interprets the value of its operation. In view of this fact Polanyi says:

If all men were exterminated, this would not affect the laws of inanimate nature, but the production of machines would stop, and not until men arose again, could machines be formed once more. Some animals can produce tools, but only men can construct machines; machines are human artifacts, made of inanimate material. 1

The same principle holds with regard to living organisms. If the particles that build up the machine are in themselves inadequate to account for the operation and value of the machine, the organs of a living being that harmoniously function in such a way as to preserve the life of this being are equally insufficient to explain the value of any of these organs in sustaining the life of this being. This value is primarily defined by human criteria and not in pathological or physiological terms. In the light of this view Polanyi comes to the conclusion that 'the morphology of living things transcends the laws of physics and chemistry'. 2

1. ibid, p.225
2. ibid, p. 227
Polanyi, like Collingwood, believes that it is only through a metaphysical or transcendental apprehension of the natural and material world that we can comprehend its function and interpret its purpose — a view that is fully endorsed and applied by Leavis in his critiques. This comprehension takes the form of consciousness or what Polanyi calls 'imagination' or 'intuition'; it is obvious that both Collingwood and Polanyi are driving at the same end, using more or less the same vocabulary, and Leavis is following suit. The same procedure applies to mathematical knowledge. Symbols and numbers are in themselves nonsensical, unless they are interpreted by a thinking mind. The discovery and solution of a problem is ultimately suggested by man. Hence Polanyi repudiates explicit knowledge and positive logic.

An exact mathematical theory means nothing unless we recognize an inexact non-mathematical knowledge on which it bears and a person whose judgment upholds this bearing.

This is the major theme underlying Leavis's life-long campaign for 'the human World' for the indispensability of the human element even in this technologico-Benthamite Civilization. Such a civilization would be meaningless without the existence of a human mind that could give it value and significance. This gives rise to Snow's erroneous view expressed in his 'Two Cultures' — a lecture that has been the subject of attack by both Polanyi and Leavis. To discuss Polanyi's reaction to Snow's 'Two Cultures' is to become again conscious of certain ideas shared by Polanyi and Leavis.

1. ibid, p. 210
2. ibid, p. 195
In 1959 Polanyi published an article in *Encounter* called 'The Two Cultures' in reply to C.P. Snow's own *The Two Cultures*.

In Snow's lecture the human cultural tradition is split up into scientific and literary.

I believe the intellectual life of the whole of Western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. Two polar groups, at one pole we have the literary intellectuals, who incidentally while no one was looking took to referring to themselves as though there were no others. 1

At the other pole he places the scientists. In the course of the lecture he stigmatizes the men of letters who advocate traditional humane culture in the face of a growing scientific revolution as 'natural luddites'. 2 He maintains that such men are completely indifferent to the glorious achievements of science and the rosy prospects it opens up for the poor. To him, men like Ruskin, William Morris, Thoreau, Emerson and Lawrence are trying hard, but in vain to stem the tide of an engulfing scientific and industrial civilization. Their endeavours amount to no more than 'screams of horror'. 3 They speak 'as though the scientific edifice of the physical world was not in its intellectual depth, complexity and articulation, the most beautiful and wonderful collective work of the mind of man'. 4 The traditional culture they foster is on the decline whereas that of the scientists is on the rise. The scientists 'have the future in their bones'. 5 Every new scientist is assured of a rewarding job and a handsome income

2. ibid, p.21
3. ibid, p.24
4. ibid, p.14
5. ibid, p.11
whereas the sense of discontent voiced by the men of letters is due to under-employment and material insecurity. It is the scientists that provide 'jam' today and secure it for tomorrow. The complacent, self-assured and blatantly material tone of Snow is obvious. This complacency is countered by Polanyi's astute commendary:

... it would be easy to show that the principles of scientific rationalism are strictly speaking nonsensical. No human mind can function without accepting authority, custom, and tradition; it must rely on them for the mere use of language. Empirical induction, strictly applied, can yield no knowledge at all, and the mechanistic explanation of the universe is a meaningless ideal. Not because of the much invoked principle of Indeterminacy, which is irrelevant, but because the prediction of all atomic positions in the universe would not answer any question of interest to anybody, and as to the naturalistic explanation of morality, it must ignore, and so by implication deny the very existence of human responsibility. It too is absurd. 1

In this quotation Polanyi seems to be foreshadowing, or rather forecasting, what in its general outlines, constitutes Leavis's leading idea in his retort to Snow's Two Cultures. The fact that Polanyi's essay was published in the same year as Snow's, that is in 1959 and that Leavis's Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow was published in The Spectator in 1962, that is three years later may confirm the view that Leavis was familiar with, and dependent on it, in his reply. What Leavis adds to Polanyi's argument is a demonstration of the egotistic and arrogant tone of Snow. In this connection it should be emphasized that Polanyi's assault on positive logic and imperfect scientific criteria permeates all his writings. "Scientific obscurantism" says Polanyi, "has pervaded our

1. Michael Polanyi, op.cit, pp. 41-42
culture and distorts even science itself by imposing on it false ideals of exactitude.\(^1\) Again he says: "the disregard of truth in favour of hard-boiled scientific ideals has spread confusion and led eventually to sinister results."\(^2\) In another context Polanyi says:

... if we decided to examine the universe objectively in the sense of paying equal attention to portions of equal mass, this would result in a life-long preoccupation with interstellar dust, relieved only at brief intervals by a survey of incandescent masses of hydrogen - not in a thousand million lifetimes would the turn come to give man a second's notice. It goes without saying that no one - scientists included - looks at the universe that way, whatever lip-service is given to 'objectivity'. Nor should this surprise us. For as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt rigorously to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity.\(^3\)

These pronouncements show Polanyi suggesting a principle of relativity favoured by both Collingwood and Leavis. Polanyi's repudiation of scientific rationalism forms the cornerstone in Leavis's criticism of Shaw; largely accounts for his recognition of Dickens's achievement and is seen to be operating at its highest in his essay on Blake. Polanyi's disavowal of the ruthless mechanistic view of the universe is a favourite procedure in Leavis's criticism. His stress on the significance of authority, custom and tradition sets us on the right track and ensures the continuity of the human tradition and by implication indicates that there is only one tradition, and so one culture;

1. ibid, p.42
2. ibid, p.43
3. *Personal Knowledge*, p.3.
and this is Leavis's principal object in his rebuke of Snow.

This continuity manifests itself in a common language that
binds people to each other. The fact that Polanyi singles
out language as a manifestation of human community induces
Leavis to underscore the vitality of language as a 'collaborative
activity', whenever he takes up the topic of Culture and
Education in his recent critical writings. Leavis's definition
of language as 'the third realm' has become a commonplace in his
writings. His rendering absurd of naturalistic morality (not
the Rousseauistic spontaneous morality which Leavis favours as
he explicitly maintains in his Introduction to The Image of
Childhood, but the mechanistic Benthamite one) is a radical
principle effectively at work in both Leavis and Collingwood.
The sense of human responsibility that this morality loses
sight of is drawn upon in Leavis's criticism of Dickens and
Blake. The phrase 'human responsibility' looms significantly
large in his Introduction to Nor Shall My Sword. The phrase is
repeated nine times in this introduction; and Leavis acknowledges
indebtedness to Polanyi when he refers it back to the
philosopher as a word he uses and emphasizes. 1 It may be
parenthetically observed that both Polanyi and Leavis openly
indict 'the positive logic of enlightenment' using almost the
same terms 2 to indicate its failure to cope with vital human issues.
Unlike Snow, Polanyi believes that scientists and intellectuals have
a supreme mission superior to that of ensuring material well-being
- a mission that can be conceived in human and moral terms

1. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, London, Chatto and Windus,
   1972, p.23

2. In Polanyi's Personal Knowledge, p.43 and Leavis, Nor Shall
   My Sword, pp. 12-13
"For we scientists are pledged to values more precious than material welfare and to service more urgent than that of material welfare."  

It is this concern with human and moral values that forms the guiding principle in Leavis's literary criticism. Commenting on Snow's imperfect understanding that ideal life can be created in an atmosphere of material prosperity and technological advance Leavis says:

The upshot is that if you insist on the need for any other kind of concern, entailing forethought, action and provision, about the human future — any other kind of misgiving — than that which talks in terms of productivity, material standards of living, hygienic and technological progress, you are a Luddite.  

To Leavis's mind Snow's apotheosis of science prepares the way for a computerized age in which mental creativity will be cancelled and human and moral values will be out of place. But Leavis's condemnation of mechanical life, of positive logic and the mathematical calculus has a literary significance added to it as an indispensable moral and human need, for it pertains immediately to the function of the artist. Creativity for the artist is originality, not repetition, newness and not conformity to types; and to maintain this creativity the artist has to resist all kinds of codification and rationalization.

To be spontaneous; and in its spontaneity creative, is of the essence of life which manifests itself in newness, that can't be exhaustively reduced to the determined whatever some biologists may hope.

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2. F.R. Leavis, The Two Cultures, p.19
3. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p. 115
Leavis interprets this life in Laurentian terms; that is, in its hidden, so far unexplored depths and not in its superficial and shallow manifestations. To Leavis the artist is a refined psychologist exploring the workings of the human psyche. This penetration into the life of individuals has a human and therefore a moral value. Thus in vindicating a human and a spiritual life against the background of a material, rational and mechanical civilization, Leavis is simultaneously vindicating the undeniable claims of the artist. The artist, as Leavis shows in his interpretation of Blake, is the apostle of human and moral values.

When Leavis explicates Blake's insight into human nature he seems to be recasting the original philosophical principles of Polanyi, which he moulds into a poetic context:

... We see that the education of his powers of expression that went with his addiction to Shakespeare was inseparably an education of his power to perceive, to recognize and to imagine - and 'imagine' lays the stress on the heuristic aspect of creative expression; that is, on the perception; that is, or that becomes, discovery.

Imagination and discovery are Polanyi's central clues to human perception. It is worthwhile noticing that the notion of discovery, of intuition is the dominant theme in Leavis's justification of Blake's poetic achievement. Meanwhile Polanyi's insistence on personal intuition as a key to all knowledge provides Leavis with a solid base on which to build his justification of the supreme delineation of Blake's poetry. The recognition of individual entities as intrinsically valuable in their concrete existence is bound to shatter the aggregating rational logic and the objective method of science.

1. F.R. Leavis, 'Justifying one's Valuation of Blake', The Human World, no.7, May 1972, p.54
To generalize is to be an idiot. Blake insists on the truth that life is 'there' only in the individual, and that lives can't be aggregated, generalized, or dealt with qualitatively in any way. It is a disastrous illusion that we can attain to the real by an abstracting process or that perception is a matter of passive exposure to an objective world of which science gives a true report. The eye is part of the brain, and the brain is a representative of the living whole, an agent of the psyche. Perception is creative.

It is this perception that induces Leavis to assign a high value to the Romantic movement saying that it has added something positive to 'the human heritage', the phrase is near in formulation to Polanyi's 'cultural heritage'. It again prompts him to associate Blake with Dickens. Relating Dickens to the Romantic tradition he describes him as 'having confirmed the intuitions and affirmations that, present organically in the structure and significance of Hard Times and Little Dorrit, make one think of Blake.' He identifies Blake's vision with Dickens's Gradgrind in Hard Times. This affinity is argued in more detail in the lengthy chapter on Dickens and Blake wherein Leavis says

The value of Dickens's vindication of the spirit lies in its being a great artist's, as Blake's is; and that kind of vindication has a peculiar importance for us today.

This vindication can be taken as embodied in Dickens's indictment of the rigidly rationalized and scientifically


2. F.R. Leavis, *Dickens The Novelist*, p. 276 and Peter Coveney's *Image of Childhood*, p. 19


5. F.R. & Q.D. Leavis, *Dickens The Novelist*, p. 270
organized society that for Snow is an ultimate ideal, and for
Leavis a thwarting and spiritually depraving phenomenon.

To those troubled by the vanishing of what humanity
more and more desperately needs, if it is not to be
deprived of all that makes it human, the society of
organization, social science, 'welfare', equality
and statistics is as empty a nothing as the society
of manners and exclusiveness. 1

The quotation is extracted from one of Leavis's commentaries on
the inadequacies of the falsely conceived, self-sufficient life
of the Gowan-Barnacle world in Little Dorrit.

In his 'English, unrest and Continuity', 2 Leavis recommends
Marjorie Grene's The Knower and The Known, as a worthwhile text
for students interested in humanities, and in his essay on Blake 3
he quotes from this book an extract supporting a 'revolution of
life against dead nature and of understanding against the calculi
of logical machines'. 4 Marjorie Grene is a student of Michael
Polanyi and she dedicates The Knower and The Known to him. Moreover
the substance of the book is an elaboration of Polanyi's Personal
Knowledge as she says in her introduction:

My own starting point is the theory of Knowledge
developed by Michael Polanyi in Personal Knowledge
and other writings, or better in my interpretation
of that theory. 5

Amplifying on Polanyi's view of 'problem-solving' she points out
that whenever there is a problem requiring solution we are focally

1. ibid, p.273
2. F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall My Sword, p.123
3. F.R. Leavis, The Human World, p.62
4. ibid, p.62
5. Marjorie Grene, The Knower and The Known, London, Faber and
   Faber, 1966, p.14
aware of that problem; that is, we are wrestling with it in a bid
to find a solution. The clues through which we seek the solution are
related not only to the solution but to ourselves also.

So we live in the tension between what we are and what
we seek; between the world whose facticity we share and
ourselves whose shaping makes the world a world - our
explicit awareness, the focal core of consciousness is always
founded in and carried by the tacit acceptance of something
not explicit which binds heavily and concretely ourselves to
and within our world. This means that knowledge is always
personal. The impersonal aspect of knowledge arises from
and returns to personal participation in the search for and
acceptance of the object to be known. For only the
explicit, formulable core of knowledge, can be transferred,
neutrally from person to person. Its implicit base
(since it is not verbalized and cannot be formulated and
so impersonalized) must be the groping, the orientation,
and re-orientation of someone.

In another context she says:

The transition from particulars to general laws, still
more from general laws to explanatory theories necessarily
entails a leap, an interpretation of clues not inherent in
the clues themselves. It is an achievement as much of
imagination as of intellect. The mark of scientific
originality is to find significant pattern where others
could not see it.

Marjorie Grene argues that Kant's empirical method, taken on
its own terms, is inadequate and even unintelligible. It is rendered
meaningful only through the interpretation, rather the mediation of
Bertrand Russell; and in the field of pragmatic thought we are not
simply concerned with mathematical associations, but are making
appraisals.

Thus empirical procedures, whether interpreted
intellectually or pragmatically, are philosophically
inadequate in the sense that they cannot, on their
own principles account for themselves.

This means that the human mind has to contribute something to the
clarification and interpretation of the given object.

1. ibid, pp. 24-25
2. ibid, p. 44
3. ibid, p. 118
There is always involved in the content of the mind from perception all the way to mathematical knowledge something more than the items which we could count up if we really went back to the history of our thought as the progressive filling in of a tabula: rasa. And it is this something more which makes ideas meaningful, which makes experience experience and not just a blooming-buzz sensation. 1

From this it follows that absolute objectivity is almost a myth since the evaluative activity, the appraisal is relative to the person who carries it on. To evaluate an object, in linguistic terms we must not only use symbols but dwell in the language that sets forth that object. To dwell in that language means to add something personal to it, and in so doing to enrich it. Thus language is "itself a growing world of meanings within meanings, which we not only use for practical ends, but dwell in as the very fabric of our being, while at the same time changing it by our participation in it, enacting the history of language in our history." 2 One may indicate in this context that the style of Grene in this quotation is the kind of style that appeals to Leavis. 'Interiorization' and 'enactment' are favourite tools in his criticism. What is more significant here is that the underlying identification of language with the individuals who use it, develop and change it on a basis of personal participation will account for Leavis's insistence that the Romantic movement has enriched the 'human heritage'. To have a reciprocal intercourse between the personal feeling of an individual and the language embodying that

1. ibid, p. 153
2. ibid, p. 174
feeling, that is, a sense of spontaneous expression, is of the essence of Romanticism. In that personal mode the Romantics were spontaneously engaged in language and simultaneously enriching it. For Leavis language or literature is a major manifestation of human tradition.

In her introduction to The Knower and The Known, Marjorie Grene deplores the fact that she was not able to have access to Maurice Natanson's Literature, Philosophy and The Social Sciences, as it had not yet been published. Natanson's drift in that book is phenomenological and impinges directly on the views of both Folanyi and Grene. The positive contributory part played by the knower in what is sought to be known is emphasized all through. What is more interesting is that Natanson speaks of this activity in the sphere of literature and within a framework that reminds us of both Leavis and Santayana. The point is that in composing a work of art the artist is driving at a certain intention, but his readers or audiences may interpret that work in a way different from the original intention of the artist as they reconstruct for themselves the significance of that work.

The intended unity which the artist constitutes originally in his art-work is taken up by the audience, they too must reconstruct for themselves the meaning complex at hand, the art-object. Thus art commences with the act of intention on the part of the artist and depends for its existence upon the audience which experiences it.

To Natanson perception is possible only through a process of reduction and reconstruction; that is to say that the reader or spectator has to assimilate knowledge, to reduce it to reasonable and intelligible limits. This is what Natanson calls 'bracketing',

1. ibid, p.16
in doing which the reader has personally to shape his knowledge or experience. The object underlying this 'bracketing' or compression is to bring the material to a sort of unity or order. The theory smacks of existentialism but what interests us in it is its relevance to the topic under review; namely the participation of the individual in any kind of knowledge he is bound to set forth or in the appreciation of any work of art he sets out to criticize.

The reduction and reconstruction which are the grounds for such unity may be understood as aspects of a generalized phenomenology of consciousness in which are located the roots of art-creation, art-appreciation and the fundamental relationship of the artist to his product. 1

In dealing with Collingwood, I did not trace or take into account his development as a philosopher because what pertains to this study is only some of the leading ideas in his philosophy as a whole - ideas that appealed to Leavis and were consequently utilized in the body of his criticism. In connection with Polanyi Leavis's interest in the social, rather human aspects of literature becomes much more articulate. Both Collingwood and Polanyi assert the supremacy of the illuminatingly human imagination and intuition over the computerized elements of modern mechanical civilization - and this is a principle of the utmost importance to the essentially 'humane' criticism of Leavis. Both affirm the organic, indivisible nature of the human tradition, the oneness of the 'human heritage' and this is diametrically opposed to the dualism of C.P. Snow. In other words they discredit

1. ibid, p. 85
the idea of bifurcation and in so doing affirm a principle dear to Leavis and also to be found in the philosophy of A.N. Whitehead.

Finally, in the extension of Polanyi's thinking in the works of Grene and Natanson, the congruence of those ideas in Leavis's work with which I have been most concerned in this thesis with phenomenological philosophy becomes overt, revealing the modern aspect of Leavis's Romanticism most clearly and explaining the relation between his work and that of his former pupil David Holbrook, whose own concern has been largely with phenomenological and existential analysis of literature.

1. cf the chapter on Whitehead.
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