THE CRITICAL IDEAS OF T. S. ELIOT

BY

ANTS ORAS

TARTU 1932

Printed by K. Mattiesen, Ltd., Tartu, 1932.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE

No student of present-day criticism in England can well afford to overlook the activity of T. S. Eliot. His figure has come to be regarded as symbolic of the constructive endeavours in contemporary English literature and of the reaction from that trend toward disintegration and chaotic individualism which, though of much earlier origin, has become so prevalent after the great crisis of our civilization during the War. E. M. Forster calls him the most important author of "those men and women between the ages of eighteen and thirty whose opinions one most respects, and whose reactions one most admires"[1]). He considers his influence on these representative young people to be enormous: "They are inside his idiom as the young of 1900 were inside George Meredith"[2]). Mr. Bonamy Dobrée goes even further than this, maintaining definitely that Mr. Eliot's criticism "with its depth, its wide grasp, its beautiful distinctions, its enthusiasms, and its justice, is the most important in English since Coleridge wrote his *Biographia Literaria*"[3]). One of the most distinguished American workers for a new literary synthesis of all creative and analytical forces of the mind, Professor Norman Foerster, explicitly identifies his own views on a future collaboration of the vital elements of the past and present with those of Mr. Eliot, basing the final summary of his remarkable book on *American Criticism* largely on certain well-known passages from *The Sacred Wood*. In a series of essays on "Harvard's present great" published by one of the most enlightened American reviews, *The Hound & Horn*, Mr. Eliot forms the subject of the first paper, being given precedence over such men as George Santayana, Henry James and Irving Babbitt. And nearly a fourth of that notable survey of the younger generation of English writers, the second volume of *Scrutinies*, is taken up by an examina-

1) *Life and Letters*, June 1919. 2) *ib.* 3) *The Lamp and the Lute*, p. 129.

tion of Eliot's poetic and critical work. His influence and reputation appear unique, in spite of the meagreness of his literary output, and even his opponents are unable to deny the dominant position he occupies.

Under these circumstances, the present attempt at examining the foundations of Mr. Eliot's criticism should be more than justified, at any rate in its intention. Mr. Eliot's prose writings deal far more often than not with the works of individual writers, even though his aim is obviously the elucidation of general problems. His most important statements on critical principles are frequently embodied in essays which are formally reviews of recent publications, and though his general point of view may be shown, I think, to reveal a high degree of consistency, he has never attempted a complete summary of his ideas as a coherent structure. Many of his most illuminating papers have never been disengaged from the pages of journals that have stopped after trying in vain to convince the buying public of their *raison d'être*. *The Tyro*, *The Enemy*, *The Egoist* are cases in point. Much valuable matter is contained in prefaces to books by other writers. For these reasons, the material for the present paper had to be pieced together mosaic-fashion from all available sources, the object being to find clues to the abstract substructure of Mr. Eliot's critical activity. One of the difficulties that had to be faced was the fact that he so often indulges not merely in understatement but also in over-emphatic assertion — something which he himself describes as "an assumption of pontifical solemnity", and which may contribute to the vividness of presentation but not to logical transparency. This is why his dicta at times appear inconsistent with other pronouncements of his where the matter dealt with is the same but some special aspect of it is over-emphasized. These difficulties are, however, generally capable of being solved by a careful scrutiny of the context.

The aim of the following pages is to give a systematic outline and discussion of the most essential of Mr. Eliot's critical ideas, which, as he is a poet, amounts in effect primarily to studying his views respecting the conditions of the poet's creative activity and of the poetic methods he wishes to be adopted. This involves, of course, an inquiry into his ideal of perfect poetry — of the aim to which the poet's methods have to be adjusted. Being, on the whole, a highly cautious thinker, despite the frequent

aphoristic pointedness of his style, Mr. Eliot has preferred to refrain from formulating any explicit theory of poetic beauty, but his notions may be gradually gathered by inference, particularly from his views on what he desires the poet to do. He seems to be aiming first and foremost at influencing contemporary poetry by the elucidation of individual examples of literary practice, instead of presenting us with an abstract scheme of values and expecting the reader to draw the practical conclusions: he is himself too much of a practitioner for doing that.

I have, of course, endeavoured to trace the links connecting Mr. Eliot's literary theories with his general attitude towards life — the two are inseparable; but a detailed analysis of the latter is not my object, particularly since Mr. Eliot's general philosophy of life seems still in a period of formation, or has not yet been fully expressed. My survey is based principally on his critical output up to 1928, the year *For Lancelot Andrewes* was published, as I consider that this work marks a turning-point in Mr. Eliot's interests. Since 1928, the literary problem appears to occupy him less, and matters more strictly philosophical — and theological — absorb most of his attention. His latest writings have therefore been drawn upon only where they relate to problems broached at an earlier date.

The subject-matter is divided into three parts. The first is an account of Mr. Eliot's literary ideas, the second a discussion of these views as a logical structure and of the chief tendencies discoverable in that structure, in connection with Mr. Eliot's general attitude; the third and last is an inquiry into the relations of the ideas discussed to certain currents of contemporary thought. Any prolonged dwelling on purely technical problems has been avoided, my main object being to uncover the fundamental scheme.

The quotations from *The Sacred Wood* are based on the second edition, the text of which is the same as that of 1920, except for the addition of a preface; the pagination, however, is different. The titles of the following books and pamphlets will be quoted in the abbreviated form indicated in each case in square brackets:

The Sacred Wood. Essays on Poetry and Criticism by T. S. Eliot. Methuen & Co. Ltd. London (Second edition 1928; the first appeared in 1920) [= SW]

Homage to John Dryden. Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century by T. S. Eliot. Published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, London 1924 [= HJD]

Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca (An Address read before the Shakespeare Association 18th March, 1927) by T. S. Eliot. Published for the Shakespeare Association by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press 1924 [= SSS]

For Lancelot Andrewes. Essays on Style and Order by T. S. Eliot. London Faber & Gwyer (1928) [= LA]

Dante by T. S. Eliot. London, Faber & Faber, 24 Russell Square (1929) [= D]

Le Serpent par Paul Valéry. With a Translation into English by Mark Wardle and an Introduction by T. S. Eliot. Published for the Criterion by R. Cobden-Sanderson, London (1924) [= Serp.]

Of Dramatick Poesie. An essay, 1668, by John Dryden, preceded by a Dialogue on Poetic Drama by T. S. Eliot. London, Frederic Etchells & Hugh Macdonald 1928 [= DrP]

In conclusion, I beg to acknowledge my gratitude to Professor H. Mutschmann for his kindness in assisting me with his valuable advice as well as for his reading the proofs of the present essay.

The author

Part I.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CRITICAL IDEAS OF T. S. ELIOT.

1. The Integrity of Poetry.

The abstract system underlying Eliot's literary criticism consists largely of the outlines of a theory of poetry. Before dealing with the details of that theory we have to examine some of the notions associated by Eliot with the term "poetry" — a term of which innumerable definitions have been attempted, so that before our using it certain preliminary distinctions have to be pointed out.

It might be difficult to discover any full definition of that word in Eliot's writings, but some of his pronouncements afford a chance of circumscribing more definitely the meaning it conveys to him. Though he may occasionally employ the term as a synonym for "verse", this is not the sense he attaches to it when aiming at precise formulation. An article, or rather a collection of notes, on *Prose and Verse*, published in *The Chapbook* for April 1921, draws a definite line between "poetic" verse and "prosaic" verse [1]). Poetry is there regarded as characterized by a specific effect rather than as a purely formal term such as "verse". "Good poetry is obviously something else besides good verse; and good verse may be very indifferent poetry." The "poetic", as Eliot understands it, may be expressed almost indifferently in the forms of verse or prose.

What precisely Eliot assumes to be the nature of poetry, may be gathered more distinctly after studying the account we are going to give in the subsequent chapters. In the meantime, we wish to settle another preliminary point essential for the understanding of the present essay, namely that poetry is regarded

1) pp. 3—4.

by Eliot as something of independent value, something to be known by an ever-recurring effect and to be appreciated for that effect. Consequently he considers it the business of the critic to take that effect for the centre and starting-point of his inquiries, even though he admits the difficulty of defining it. Emphasizing "the full surprise and elevation of a new experience of poetry", he maintains that the problem of the "integrity of poetry" is the common denominator of his first collection of essays [1]). But he despairs of finding a brief formula for the quality of that experience: "When we try to isolate the essentially poetic, we bring our pursuit in the end to something insignificant" [2]). Nevertheless, the opinion of those who see the essence of poetry in the practical uses to which it is put, or in the information it contains regarding its creator, or in anything except the intrinsic value of the "poetic", meets with his firm refusal to agree: "... Certainly poetry is not the inculcation of morals, or the direction of politics; and no more is it religion or an equivalent of religion, except by some monstrous abuse of words. And certainly poetry is something over and above, and something quite different from, a collection of psychological data about the minds of poets, or about the history of an epoch; for we could not take it even as that unless we had already assigned to it value merely as poetry" [3]). The final conclusion is somewhat unconvincing, but the negative parts of the passage show definitely what Eliot refuses to believe. His conviction of the independent value of the impression produced by poetry is shown by the applause with which he quotes the following paragraph by Othenin d'Haussonville:

"Il y a une beauté littéraire, impersonelle en quelque sorte, parfaitement distincte de l'auteur lui-même et de son organisation, beauté qui a sa raison d'être et ses lois, dont la critique est tenue de rendre compte. Et si la critique considère cette tâche comme au-dessous d'elle, si c'est affaire à la rhétorique et à ce que Sainte-Beuve appelle dédaigneusement les Quinctilien, alors la rhétorique a du bon et les Quinctilien ne sont pas à dédaigner" [4]).

His own practice shows that poetry, the product of the poet's mind, as a means of causing a certain kind of experience in the reader, and the conditions for bringing forth that product form the centre of his critical interest. Where he deals with the rela-

1) SW, pp. VIII—IX (preface to ed. of 1928). 2) HJD, p. 16. 3) SW, p. IX. 4) SW, p. 42.

tions of these things to something else, he always tries to keep the distinctions clear. For though he acknowledges the difficulty of considering poetry in isolation from other aspects of human life, he requires that the critic should always remember that he is dealing with something which has its own nature and function: "You start with the literary problem, and however rigorous an aesthete you may be, you are over the frontier into something else sooner or later. The best you can do is to accept these conditions and know what you are doing when you do it. And, on the other hand, you must know how and when to retrace your steps" [1]). In his article on *Experiment in Criticism* written for the symposium *Tradition and Experiment*, the matter is put in a very similar way. While insisting that the relations of imaginative literature, including poetry, to religion, philosophy, history, sociology and kindred subjects should be traced, Eliot maintains that "so long as literature is literature, so long will there be a place for criticism of it, for criticism, that is, on the same basis as that on which the literature itself is made. For so long as poetry and fiction and such things are written, its first purpose must always be what it has been — to give a peculiar pleasure which has something constant in it throughout the ages, however difficult and various our explanations of that pleasure may be" [2]). Criticism "on the same basis as that on which the literature itself is made" is a somewhat vague definition, but taking into account Eliot's own critical practice, we have some justification in taking it to mean criticism which, at least among other things, considers the character of the writer's creative activity and studies the ways and conditions of producing that pleasurable — and, according to a passage already quoted, surprising and elevating — impression which Eliot here calls the principal object of the literrary art.

2. *The Experiences Forming the Material of Poetry.*

In his essay on *The Metaphysical Poets*, Eliot objects to those critics who regard the "heart" as the sole legitimate source of

1) DrP, p. XXIII.

2) Tradition and Experiment in Present-Day Literature. Addresses Delivered at the City Literary Institute. Second impression 1929. Oxford University Press, London: Humphrey Milford: pp. 216 [First impression also in 1929].

Cf. p. 213.

experience on which the poet may draw. He refuses to accept that formula which advises us to "look into our hearts and write", for, as he finds, "that is not looking deep enough; Racine or Donne looked into a great deal more than the heart" [1]). His demand is that the poet should look also "into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts" [2]). The "heart", which is evidently, in accordance with common usage, taken to mean our emotional life, is regarded as merely one of the departments of our experience which supply the material for poetry: emotion is expected to be supplemented by intellectual experience and sensory perceptions. A somewhat later passage found in Eliot's preface to the *Selected Poems* of Ezra Pound (1928) gives a similar definition of the materials which the poet is required to transmute into art, assuming them to include "the results of reading and reflection, varied interests of all sorts, contacts and acquaintances, as well as passion and adventure", in other words, the impressions stored up in the poet's mind as the result of everything he has done and perceived [3]). These pronouncements, however, say nothing of the relative importance assigned to each kind of experience. On this problem, we find definite statements in the paper on *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca* read before the Shakespeare Association in 1927. In this address, Eliot insists that the essential function of poetry is "not intellectual but emotional", and that the great poet's business is "to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time" [4]). As to the rôle to be reserved in poetry for intellectual experience, the paper indicates that Eliot regards the latter as a subordinate, though important, factor, and that the genuine poet in his capacity as creator of poetry is not concerned with thought so much as with finding "the emotional equivalent of thought", that is to say, that intellectual experience should be merely a preliminary stage for the expression of a certain kind of emotion [5]). That a similar function is assigned to the other domains of the poet's life, is shown by a passage in *Homage to John Dryden*: "The possible interests of the poet are unlimited; the more intelligent he is the better; the more intelligent he is the more likely that he will have interests: our only condition is that he turn them

1) HJD, p. 33. 2) ib. 3) London Faber & Gwyer (1928). Cf. p. XX. 4) p. 15. 5) p. 12.

into poetry" [1]). Since the essential function of poetry is taken to be emotional, we have to conclude that here, too, all other kinds of experience are supposed to be subservient to emotion.

A conclusion forcing itself on the reader of Eliot's statement that the business of the great poet is "to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time", is that great poetry is stated to be concerned with much more than the transitory, fleeting impressions of the moment: it is deemed to be representative of the most intense experiences of large bodies of people. This impression is confirmed by a passage in Eliot's essay on Blake where even more is maintained, namely that great poetry deals only with those things "which, by some extraordinary labour of simplification, exhibit the essential sickness or strength of the human soul" as opposed to the things which "can be called morbid, or abnormal or perverse" or "exemplify the sickness of an epoch or fashion" [2]). Here, the ideal of poetry is seen not in the expression of the ephemeral or eccentric, or even of the profoundest emotions of a period, but in that of the typical and central experiences of the whole of mankind as concentrated in the soul of a poet of genius.

3. The Creative Process in Poetry.

Eliot's principal expositions of his ideas regarding the poet's creative activity we consider to be found in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* and in the preface to the poems of Pound, to which have to be added the passages on Metaphysical Wit in *Homage to John Dryden.*

Tradition and the Individual Talent develops a theory of poetic creation, the principal points of which appear to be, first, the spontaneous nature attributed to the creative process, and secondly, the importance ascribed to the intensity of this process compared with that of the experiences, impressions and perceptions made use of by the poet. The "numberless feelings, phrases, images" which, as Eliot says, remain stored in the poet's mind until "all the particles which can unite to form a new compound, are present together" [3]), are considered indispensable. Nevertheless,

1) p. 31. 2) SW, p. 151. 3) SW, p. 55.

the maturity of the poetic work of art is found to depend less on the "sublimity", the "greatness" or intensity of the components, than on "the intensity of the artistic process", the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion of the different elements in the literary artist's mind takes place; less on the value of the poet's ordinary personality than on the capacity of his mind for transforming the experiences of that personality into art [1]). "The mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of "personality", not being necessarily more interesting or having "more to say", but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations" [2]). The experiences which the creative activity utilizes may, as Eliot thinks, be such that "the practical and active person" [3]) would hardly recognize their significance: "Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality" [4]). The creative mind is required by the critic to use all these experiences not for their own sake but as mere material for the purpose of making poetry: "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 the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material" [5]). This distinction between experience as an element of the poet's private existence and as material for the creation of poetry seems to explain the sense in which Eliot maintains that "the emotion of art is impersonal", and that "the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done" [6]). "Impersonal emotion" appears to mean emotion, whatever its source, as far as it belongs not to the poet's private life but to a work of art, and the implication seems to be that the "impersonality" referred to cannot be reached by the poet unless he disregards his emotions as part of his personal experience and thinks of them only as something to be made use of by his creative activity. That such an attitude is demanded by Eliot, is confirmed by a considerably later dictum of his, a passage in his

1) SW, p. 55. 2) SW, pp. 53—54. 3) SW, p. 58. 4) SW, p. 56. 5) SW, p. 54. 6) SW, p. 59.

preface to Valéry's *Serpent* to the effect that "not our feelings, but the pattern which we may make of our feelings, is the centre of value".

The emphasis that Eliot places on the importance of the creative process ought not to mislead us into supposing him to misjudge the part which the character of the material plays in the result, the poem. What we have seen him maintain is that the *maturity* of the poet is determined not primarily by the character of the content of his mind but by his manner of utilizing that content, in other words, by the perfection of his poetic technique. It is obvious that the most excellent material may be presented in an inadequate way, and that poetry of a mature, though perhaps not a great, type may be based on comparatively slight experiences. Eliot insists on the need for a perfect creative mechanism, which is by no means equivalent to maintaining that, given better material, the same mechanism would not be able to produce better poetry. The capacity for weaving feelings into a pattern is found to be the first requirement, but the value of that pattern is not denied to be influenced by the quality of the feelings entering into it. The difference between Eliot's attitude and that of a certain movement in modern literature which he opposes is, however, that Eliot values the poet's experience only for the share it may have in the excellence of the poetry, whereas many moderns deem it valuable because it belongs to the poet's biography. Such, at any rate, is Eliot's own conception of the matter. In his small book on Dante, he expresses his disapproval of the tendency to make literature into a collection of spiritual autobiographies, with the emphasis on the author's personality, not on the perfection of the result. He objects to the type of writing inaugurated by Rousseau's *Confessions* — that type where the aim is to give a "literal account of oneself, varying only in degree of sincerity and self-understanding" [1]). "Nowadays 'confessions', of an insignificant sort, pour from the press; everyone *met son cœur à nu*, or pretends to; 'personalities' succeed one another in interest" [2]). With this practice, that of Dante is favourably contrasted: "Now Dante, I believe, had experiences which seemed to him of some importance; not of importance because they had happened to him and because he, Dante Alighieri, was an import-

1) D, p. 62. 2) D, p. 62—63.

ant person who kept press-cutting bureaux busy; but important in themselves"[1]). Such experiences — experiences of intrinsic value — are manifestly likely to retain that value when separated from the person to whom they have happened, and embodied in a work of art. What Eliot expects the poet to do is in accordance with this consideration: he expects him *qua* poet to be concerned first and foremost with the value of the poetic result, transmuting into literature those of the elements of his mind which combine into the best art, and prizes him according to the degree of perfection with which the task of transmutation is performed. Each experience is regarded by him as significant from the artistic point of view only in so far as it "has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet"[2]).

As to the notion of the spontaneity, the trance-like incalculability of the creative process which we encounter throughout *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot himself expects us to take it *cum grano salis*: "Of course, this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate"[3]). What these conscious and deliberate features are, is expounded more explicitly in the preface to Pound's poems.

This preface distinguishes definitely between three aspects of the creative activity of the poet. Two of these belong to the preliminary stage. The first is the gradual accumulation of experience which is "largely unconscious, subterranean, so that we cannot gauge its progress except once in every five or ten years", when all the amassed material is ready "to form a new whole" and "finds its appropriate expression"[4]). This corresponds with the preparatory phase as described above according to *Tradition and the Individual Talent.* The second aspect of the preliminary period is, however, stated to consist of deliberate, painstaking work: "in the meantime", that is, until the moment for complete expression arrives, "the poet must be working; he must be experimenting and trying his technique so that it will be ready like a well-oiled fire-engine, when the moment comes to strain it to its utmost"[5]). "The poet who wishes to continue to write poetry, must keep in training; and must do this, not by

1) D, p. 63. 2) SW, p. 59. 3) SW, p. 58. 4) p. XVIII. 5) ib.

forcing his inspiration, but by good workmanship on a level possible for some hours' work every week of his life" [1]).

Eliot's conception of the third aspect, the process of supreme poetic creation, those moments when the poet's mind is doing its very best, is essentially the same as in the earlier essay. The notion of spontaneity is obvious. Those felicitous moments are described as "unpredictable crystallizations" [2]) of experience, but whereas *Tradition and the Individual Talent* emphasized that such "concentrations" of experience are connected with "a passive attending upon the event" [3]), the preface to Pound points out that if the poet "insisted on waiting" for those incalculable happenings without any poetic activity whatever, "he would not be ready for them when they came" [4]). According to the later description, "experience accumulates to form a new whole and finds its appropriate expression", *provided* the deliberate preparatory labour has been done in a satisfactory manner [5]). There is no contradiction between this view and that expressed in the earlier essay. Each supplements the other.

A significant point showing Eliot's fundamental consistency as to his demand that poetry should be expressive of much more than momentary moods is the contention that the poet's best work welds into one whole the experiences of a number of years.

In *The Function of Criticism* (cf. *The Criterion*, October 1923, pp. 31—42), there is a passage which shows that the creative work of inspiration is expected to be followed up by further deliberate exertions — by "the labour of sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing", a "frightful toil" which "is as much critical as creative" (p. 38). We are informed that "some creative writers are superior to others solely because their critical faculty is superior", and that this faculty is evinced in "the criticism employed by the trained and skilled writer on his own work". Thus we find that though Eliot sees the culmination of creative work in spontaneous inspiration, he requires much deliberate application before and after that climax.

Much valuable light on Eliot's views regarding the nature of the ideal creative process is thrown by his discussion of "Metaphysical Wit". This quality, which Eliot believes to be one of the principal causes of the superiority of early seventeenth century

1) op. cit. p. XVIII. 2) ib. 3) SW, p. 58. 4) p. XVIII. 5) ib.

poetry to that of the two subsequent centuries, is found by him to suggest, on the part of the poets whose work exhibits it, a peculiar tactfulness helping them to unite into harmonious wholes elements otherwise discordant, such as levity and seriousness, fancy and intense imagination [1]). Metaphysical wit implies, as Eliot thinks, a sense of appropriateness which prevents the poet from treating any subject in the wrong way, either "too seriously or too lightly", for which reason there is, for example, in the verse of Marvell "an equipoise, a balance and proportion of tones" not often to be found in Milton or Dryden who, as the critic supposes, initiate a new period [2]). This "wit", and the resulting equipoise, Eliot associates with a gift of discrimination, "a constant inspection and criticism of experience", "a recognition, implicit in the expression of every experience, of other kinds of experience which are possible" [3]), that is, he considers each experience expressed in poetry of this kind to have been seen by the author in relation to other experiences which might be included in the work of art. This idea reminds one of the notion that the poet should view his feelings with regard to the pattern which he may make of them. It suggests the possibility of creating poetry in a state of mind very different from blind, merely ecstatic, inspiration. Eliot assumes the metaphysicals to have been capable of something like a total view of the content of their mind while writing inspired verse. Insight, a precise view of relations, i. e. the act of comparison, is regarded by him as compatible with poetic inspiration. We know from other sources as well that he admires those writers whose poetry shows the gift of combining experiences with a precise feeling for their relations to one another. Thus, in *The Sacred Wood* he praises Dante for his method of presenting each emotion so as to exhibit its exact position in a general scheme of emotions, in such a way that all of them "are limited, and also extended in significance by their place in the scheme" [4]). Or, as he puts it in 1929, also with reference to Dante: "It is the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts; it is the utmost power of the poet" [5]). The spontaneity ascribed by Eliot to the moulding, shaping activity of inspiration leads us

1) HJD, pp. 38, 42, 45. 2) HJD, pp. 44, 45. 3) HJD, p. 45. 4) SW, p. 168. 5) D, p. 55.

to the conclusion that the poet's weighing and comparing of his experiences before including them in his poetry is conceived as an "intuitive" process, the word "intuitive" being here used in contradistinction to deliberate intellectual activity. It is, at any rate, clear that *discrimination* is associated by Eliot with the highest and most unpredictable moments of creative activity in poetry.

4. *The Expression of the Poet's Emotions.*

In *Hamlet and his Problems*, Eliot proposes a formula for the correct, the artistic presentation of the poet's emotional experience which is of extreme importance for the understanding of his critical thought. It is in keeping with an earlier statement of his, *viz.*, the observation that "it is universally human to attach the strongest emotion to definite tokens" [1]). He expects the "token", that is, each fact or situation dealt with in the poetic work, to be presented in such a way as to communicate to the reader the emotion to be evoked, without much further comment on the part of the author. The much-discussed passage in the essay on *Hamlet* is as follows [2]):

"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 which shall be the formula for that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. If you examine any of Shakespeare's more successful tragedies, you will find this exact equivalence; you will find that the state of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep has been communicated to you by a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions; the words of Macbeth on hearing of his wife's death strike us, as if, given the sequence of events, these words were automatically released by the last event in the series. The 'artistic' inevitability lies in this complete adequacy to the emotion."

If the "set of objects", or situation, or chain of events impresses the reader as too slight for the emotion which the author appears to have been desirous of conveying to him, the result is a feeling of incongruity. Such is the substance of Eliot's analysis of *Hamlet*

1) *The Egoist*, Sept. 1917, p. 118. 2) SW, p. 100.

where the central theme as Eliot sees it in the essay we have quoted from — "the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son" [1]) — is found to suffer from the fault just described. Hamlet's, and the author's, feelings are considered to be out of proportion to the situation: "Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible because it is in excess of the facts as they appear" [2]). This is the reason why, according to Eliot, the emotion that has not been "objectified" in the manner indicated "remains to poison life and obstruct action" — here, too, the emotions of the poet and those of his hero being identified by the critic [3]). If we take into account both the view that the "objectification" is incomplete and Eliot's theory that the "objective correlative" is "the only [which evidently means the only *right*] way of expressing emotion in the form of art", we are led to suspect that he has found in *Hamlet* other indications which show him the kind of emotion meant to be conveyed but strike him as unsatisfactory. There seem to exist some further clues for the critic — clues which are not closely connected with the situation and which, though suggesting emotion of some sort, are not regarded as completely adequate from an artistic point of view. What such additional, and, in Eliot's opinion, illegitimate, vehicles of feeling might be like, is indicated in a review in *The Egoist* [4]) where the poetic methods of Harold Monro and Jean de Bosschère are compared. Monro is censured there for failing to focus his attention on his concrete subject — in that particular case, the utensils in a room — and for providing his nouns with adjectives intended to express the emotion not immediately communicated by the presentation of the objects themselves: "the gentle Bed", "the old impetuous Gas", "the independent Pencil", "you my well-trampled Boots". The poet, as Eliot suggests, is not primarily occupied with the images presented, he uses them to "reflect on a general situation". De Bosschère, on the contrary, "concentrates on a single instance", he is "directly in front of his object", presenting a situation around which our feelings are allowed "to form as they will" — with the implication that these feelings will spontaneously respond according to the author's intentions, since the objectification is adequate. No emotions for which a concrete equivalent has not been supplied are expressed: emotion "however intense — in

1) SW, p. 98. 2) SW, p. 101. 3) ib. 4) Oct. 1917, p. 133.

the crude living state" has been eliminated. A definite individual situation has been made to convey all the poet wishes to express [1]).

Eliot points out another fault, a fault opposed to the incomplete objectification denounced in *Hamlet, viz.*, the excessive dwelling on the objective, concrete material, to the extent of preventing the emotional element from coming into its own. The reader may be made to receive mere "imagined sensory impressions" without experiencing the emotion produced by poetry of the type Eliot approves. The reaction against the generalizing manner — "the rhetorical, the abstract, the moralizing" — may go too far. This is what Eliot deprecates in some modern American poetry (which he does not specify), where the result is a concentration "upon trivial or accidental or commonplace objects", an "arrest at the object in view", an "ingenious if sometimes perverse visual imagination in complete detachment from any other faculty". In the Russian novel again, the emotion which ought to have given the facts their importance and which originally stirred the writer's imagination, at times "dissolves in a mass of sensational detail". Both methods are contrasted by the critic with the ideal way, which, as he finds, is to present something definite, but so as to make it expressive of an emotion, "the feeling and the material symbol preserving exactly their proper proportions" [2]).

A further pronouncement which has much bearing on the above is that "the poet does not aim to excite — that is not even a test of his success — but to set something down; the state of the reader is merely that reader's particular mode of perceiving what the poet has caught in words" [3]). If we allow for the "pontifical" style, the somewhat peremptory manner, of which Eliot has been accused and which he himself admits [4]), and take into account that a certain measure of emotion, and consequently of excitement, on the reader's part has been postulated in the dicta just discussed, we may arrive at the grain of truth these words are meant to convey. The actual meaning of this denial of excitement as an aim of the poet appears to be that *mere* excitement, excitement not produced by means of an "objective

1) *The Egoist*, Oct. 1917, p. 133, summarized.
2) Condensed from *The Egoist*, Sept. 1917, p. 118.
3) SW, p. 170. 4) op. cit., p. VII.

correlative", is not his object. This would accord with the deprecation of emotion "however intense — in the crude living state".

5. *Poetic Language.*

Eliot's formula of the "objective correlative" and the other pronouncements on the expression of emotional experience we have just dealt with make it natural for him to expect language, as the chief instrument of poetry, to satisfy two requirements: first, to be inspired by genuine emotion as well as to reflect, in each individual case, some particular shade of feeling, and, secondly, to contain the definite statement of something concrete. This is expressed as follows: "Every vital development in language is a development of feeling as well" [1]), and: "Language in a healthy state presents the object, is so close to the object that the two are identified" [2]).

These two tests are applied in a number of analyses covering many of the most important phases of English poetry. The two extremes dealt with are Swinburne and Dryden [3]). Swinburne as a poet is classed with a type which takes no keen interest in human emotions and troubles little about definite statement. The sole aim of the author of *Poems and Ballads* is found to be the cultivation of language for its own sake — a language by which no sharp visual images, no important intellectual meanings are conveyed, the expressions being general, the associations vague. Hence the effect is diffuse — but the critic describes this diffuseness as one of Swinburne's glories: "That so little material as appears to be employed in *The Triumph of Time* should release such an amazing number of words, requires what there is no reason to call anything but genius". No one stanza seems essential, but the suppression of any would destroy the poem: "It is, in fact, he word that gives him the thrill, not the object". His work cannot be shown to be a sham, for it does not depend on simulated experience. It has been called morbid, but this adjective can have been intended to apply only to "the material, the human feelings, which" — as Eliot maintains with his customary and avowed

1) SW, p. 129. 2) ib., p. 149.

3) The rest of the paragraph condensed from *Swinburne as Poet*, SW, pp. 144—150.

peremptoriness — "in Swinburne's case do not exist". The matter and the language do not conflict, as in the verse of bad poets, solely "because the object has ceased to exist, because the meaning is merely the hallucination of meaning".

The opposite type, Dryden, is described as principally concerned with precise statement. If Swinburne's words "suggest nothing, it is because they suggest too much" [1]). Dryden's words "are precise, they state immensely, but their suggestiveness is almost nothing" [1]). He lacks profundity, as Eliot says, his subjects are trivial, though his magnificence and preciseness of diction are capable of making "the small into the great", of creating an atmosphere of grandeur even while dealing with trite matters [2]). In spite of his brilliancy, Dryden neglects those profound experiences that refuse to be definitely formulated: he triumphs "with a dazzling disregard of the soul" [3]). Thus, Dryden's principal defect is considered to be one he shares with Swinburne; the poetry of neither expresses deep emotional experience. But according to Eliot's analysis, there is this notable difference between the poetry of the two, that if Swinburne's verse lacks both profundity of emotion and definiteness of formulation, Dryden's suffers only from the former fault. In this respect, Dryden is deemed to be superior to Swinburne, his language being not, like that of the latter, "weakening and demoralizing", inasmuch as it splendidly performs one of the normal functions of human utterance, that of conveying some definitely realizable content: "The lack of nebula is compensated by the satisfying completeness of the statement" [4]).

We conclude from the above views of Eliot that if a generation of writers is rich in varied, intense experience and capable of expressing the essentials of this experience in what he regards as adequate poetic language, that is to say, in a language closely reflecting the whole scale of feelings and at the same time communicating definite objects and images, he is bound to expect it to produce poetry of an unusually high order. All the features enumerated Eliot finds combined in early seventeenth century English verse. The poets of that period, according to him, "possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of ex-

1) HJD, p. 22. 2) HJD, pp. 18, 21. 3) HJD, pp. 22, 32. 4) HJD, pp. 22—23.

perience"[1]). Their words "have often a network of tentacular roots reaching down to the deepest terrors and desires"[2]). The impressions of their senses are vividly rendered by their language, which is by no means devoid of intellectual content: "The intellect was immediately at the tips of the senses. Sensation became word and word was sensation"[3]). A "tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace" supplied the element of thought which in the poetry of the Swinburne type is found to have degenerated into vagueness[4]).

An analysis of this kind of verse is given in Eliot's essay on Andrew Marvell. A comparison with William Morris brings home how trivial the indefinite suggestiveness of the poetry of Swinburne's contemporary may appear if juxtaposed with the vital emotion and "bright, hard" precision of Marvell. "The emotion of Morris is not more refined or more spiritual; it is merely more vague"[5]). Marvell, whose subjects may seem slighter, is, in fact, taken to be "the more serious" of the two, for in his verse "the suggestiveness is the aura around a bright clear centre"[6]). Even when he describes a seemingly unimportant affair, such as a girl's feeling for her pet, he "gives it a connexion with that inexhaustible and terrible nebula of emotion which surrounds all our exact and practical passions and mingles with them", that is to say, he presents something definite and makes it evoke our most intense emotions, instead of indulging in haziness[7]).

Where the emotional life of the poet is one-sided or undeveloped, Eliot denies the possibility of that high type of poetry which he finds in Marvell and many of his predecessors and contemporaries. He refuses homage to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom he suspects of imitating the effects of style they had observed in the poetry of their time without having had the corresponding experience: the evocative quality of their verse is held to be imitated, depending "upon a clever appeal to emotions and associations which they have not themselves grasped; it is hollow"[8]). Massinger's language, though not so deliberately imitative, is considered to have lost the emotional force of the Elizabethans; the comparative polish, clarity and complexity of his diction possess features of distinctive novelty; but this novelty

1) HJD, p. 30. 2) SW, p. 115. 3) SW, p. 129. 4) HJD, p. 35. 5) HJD, p. 41. 6) HJD, pp. 41—42. 7) HJD, p. 42. 8) SW, pp. 115—116.

"is not a development based on, or resulting from, a new way of feeling" [1]). Massinger's feeling, as Eliot thinks, "is simple and overlaid with received ideas" [2]). He is found to represent "the highest degree of verbal excellence compatible with the most rudimentary development of the senses" [3]). And in an analysis of his dramatic technique the same discrepancy between form and emotional content is shown to prevail throughout [4]).

A similar lack of varied, rich emotional experience combined with an independent refinement of language is ascribed by Eliot to Milton whose manner he defines as "magniloquence" — a brilliant, artificial style not adapting itself to its subject, and out of touch with the "soul" like Dryden's poetic language [5]). Milton's somewhat one-sided grandeur of diction is regarded as "a perch from which he cannot afford to fall and from which he is in danger of slipping" [6]). To him and Dryden that "dissociation of sensibility" is attributed, the prevalence of which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Eliot regrets [7]). Both poets were so eminent in their own individual fashion — Dryden with his "wit", his intellectual precision, in spite of his lack of profound emotion, and Milton with his "magniloquence" — that the subsequent course of English poetry is taken to have been caused by them to diverge in two directions. Their respective qualities were imitated, but no synthesis of the two manners was achieved [7]). The eighteenth century poets lost that ability to combine extremes of style which distinguished the Elizabethans and their immediate successors, even though the language proceeded to develop in a one-sided refinement and finish. Gray and Collins, "with all their accredited purity, are comparatively poor in shades of feeling to contrast and unite" [8]). "While the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude" [9]). "The ratiocinative, the descriptive" predominated, until these qualities were revolted against, and feeling came once more into its own in the domain of poetry. But if in the poetic language of the Elizabethans feeling and precise statement co-existed, the poetry of the revolt was different; the new poets, as Eliot points out, "thought and felt by fits, unbalanced", and the balance has never been restored [10]).

1) SW, pp. 129—131. 2) SW, p. 131. 3) SW, pp. 134—135. 4) SW, pp. 131 ff. 5) HJD, pp. 19, 30, 32, 35. 6) HJD, p. 19. 7) HJD, pp. 30—31, 32. 8) HJD, p. 44. 9) HJD, p. 30. 10) HJD, pp. 30—31.

Such are, roughly, the outlines of the evolution of English poetic language since the Elizabethan period, as seen by Eliot. The application of the principles implied in the two fundamental formulae quoted at the beginning of the present chapter is surprisingly consistent, considering that we can find it throughout Eliot's critical work. What we are given is a suggestive historical sketch which professional scholars, such as Dr. George Williamson in *The Donne Tradition*, have admittedly elaborated, filling in the details.

6. *Poetry and Abstract Thought.*

Emotion, as we have shown, is not by any means the only element of human life Eliot expects to be transformed into poetry. "The cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts" are also to be drawn upon. It is particularly the first of these he desires to be utilized, developing his ideas on the matter repeatedly and at considerable length. The connection of his views on the correct rôle of abstract thought in poetry with the notion that the poet's essential task is the expression of emotion by means of an "objective correlative" is manifest. His fundamental ideas on the present theme seem to be capable of being summarized in the following way: the legitimate function of intellectual experience in the process of poetic creation is to cause emotion in the poet's mind, the ideal result of that process being the production in the reader of some set of imagined concrete, sensory impressions behind which the idea (or ideas) which originally stimulated the poet may be divined. But together with these concrete impressions an emotion is to be evoked, the quality of which depends on the quality of the poet's emotion, which, in turn, is determined by the nature of the original intellectual experience. What is ultimately to be aimed at is an "objective correlative" conveying both a particular emotion and the suggestion of an intellectual content, though the latter is only to be more or less vaguely gathered by means of the concrete data presented. Accordingly, there is a radical difference between the presentation of ideas in a poetic work and in a theoretical treatise. In the latter, the perfect writer's aim is, according to Eliot, to express ideas as such, directly, which endeavour manifestly differs

totally from the indirect utilization of ideas in the manner just described. Eliot draws the dividing line between theoretical and imaginative writing very definitely in the following passage: "Permanent literature is always a presentation: either a presentation of thought or a presentation of feeling by a statement of events in human action or of objects in the external world . . . Aristotle presents thought, stripped to the essential structure, and he is a great *writer*. The *Agamemnon* or *Macbeth* is equally a statement, but of events" [1]). The definition of the function of imaginative literature here given is in its essence a brief formulation of the theory of the "objective correlative".

Eliot's attempts at expressing his attitude towards the rôle of abstract ideas in the creative activity of the poet as well as towards the manner of presenting such ideas in the form of poetry are numerous, and his point of view can be shown to have remained essentially the same almost throughout. Deviations from the above scheme are rare. Certain indications of the notion that the poet's abstract thought has to stimulate his emotions and impulses and of the demand for a close contact between the two are found fairly early. The latter requirement, for example, appears already in *The Egoist* of July 1917 [2]) where Eliot insists that "only old ideas, 'part and parcel of the personality', are of use to the poet" — a view which is repeated, in a modified form, in the earlier paper on Dante: "Poetry can be penetrated by a philosophical idea, it can deal with this idea when it [*i. e.*, the idea] has reached the point of immediate acceptance, when it has become almost a physical modification" [3]). In the same context the mythology and theology used by Dante in his *Comedy* are preferred to those dealt with in *De Rerum Natura* because the former "had undergone a more complete absorption into life than those of Lucretius" [4]). It is evident that in the above cases ideas that are to be used in poetry are expected to have become an integral part of daily life, a part whose justification is no longer questioned, with the implication that such ideas are intimately connected with the whole being of the person accepting them, including, of course, his emotions. In *Homage to John Dryden* a similarly intimate contact between ideas and emotions is dealt with. Admiration is expressed for Chapman and Jonson whose

1) SW, p. 65. 2) p. 89. 3) SW, pp. 162—3. 4) SW, p. 163.

emotional life is found to have been profoundly stirred by abstract thought. These two poets, as Eliot says, were "notably erudite, and were notably men who incorporated their erudition in their sensibility: their mode of feeling was directly and freshly affected by their reading and thought. In Chapman especially there is a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne" [1]). A definite formulation of the idea that abstract thought, instead of being the principal thing in poetic creation, is to be regarded merely as a starting-point, and that what the poet has to do is to be moved by the thought and express his emotion, is found in *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca* [2]). Eliot maintains there that when we say, "in a vague way, that Shakespeare, or Dante, or Lucretius, is a poet who 'thinks', and that Swinburne is a poet who does not think, even that Tennyson is a poet who does not think", what is actually meant is "not a difference in quality of thought, but a difference in quality of emotion. The poet who 'thinks' is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought". When a poet successfully utilizes a theory for his poetic purposes, Eliot holds that this does not happen primarily because of any particular interest in the intellectual value of that theory but merely in order to write poetry. The incorporation of the thought into the poetry is considered to occur instinctively, as it were, not in a deliberate, ratiocinative manner. Thus, if Dante makes use of Thomism, "a fusion" is found to take place "between his initial impulses and a theory for the purpose of making poetry" [3]).

The general tendency in the quotations adduced, which cover a period of ten years, is manifestly to make the value of abstract thought for poetry dependent on the extent to which the thought stirs the poet's emotional and creative impulses. It is assumed that the thought determines the quality of the emotion, and the expression of such emotions is considered to be the proper task of the poet, as far as he makes use of abstract thought at all.

The above matters are closely connected with Eliot's views on "poetic belief", that is to say, on the problem how far the poet may be required to believe, and really does believe, in the intellectual propositions he utilizes. If a writer of poetry is

1) HJD, pp. 28—29. 2) SSS, p. 12. 3) SSS, p. 15.

expected, not to state an abstract truth, but to express emotion, as he is in the present case, the problem of his belief or disbelief in an idea, a philosophy, a theory, is relevant only in so far as it has some bearing on the artistic value of the result. And such, as we shall see, is the view Eliot holds. He distinguishes sharply between "philosophical belief", on the one hand, and "poetic assent" or "suspension of disbelief", on the other, regarding only the latter as indispensable to the poet [1]). Dante and Lucretius impress him as fully justified in "using other men's philosophies cheerfully without bothering too much about verifying them for themselves" [2]). It would, however, be wrong to take this to mean that poetry can be effective if it is written to profess a creed one actually disbelieves. The ascription of value to poetry of such a type would appear to disagree with Eliot's expectation of a fusion of a theory with the poet's "initial impulses", for it seems questionable whether such a fusion could take place if the poet holds the theory to be definitely wrong. Eliot owns that the effect, *e. g.*, of *De Rerum Natura* would be seriously impaired if the poem should be found to have been composed by Dante for mere relaxation, as a Latin exercise [3]). But he draws a definite distinction between "what Dante believes as a poet and what he believes as a man" [4]). For further information regarding the problem one has to consult certain chapters in I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* to which Eliot refers [5]). The Cambridge psychologist admits the existence of two kinds of belief. One of these is "intellectual belief", that is, belief granted to an idea when the latter is found to fit without contradiction into the whole of our logical system, this variety of belief involving deliberate intellectual verification. The other kind is "emotional belief", the prerequisites of which are that the idea in question should gratify our emotions, and, further, that it should not be *felt* to interfere with our system of ideas. Verification is not regarded as essential in this case, since not our intellect but our emotions are expected to be satisfied by the idea. This accords exactly with Eliot's view that for the purpose of producing poetry, the ideas, the philosophical or theological propositions used by the poet have to be responded to by his emotional impulses and

1) D, p. 42. 2) *Le Serpent*, preface. 3) D, p. 58. 4) D, p. 43.
5) D, p. 57, refers to I. A. Richards's book, pp. 179 ff. and pp. 271 ff.

that no verification on the poet's part is needed. Eliot even goes to the length of assuming that the intrusion into poetry of what we too distinctly feel to be presented as the author's personal belief may damage our capacity for aesthetic contemplation. This happens to him in reading Goethe. "With him", he says, "I often feel too acutely 'this is what Goethe the man believes' instead of merely entering into a world which Goethe has created" [1]). The result, as he maintains, is that Goethe causes a strong feeling of disbelief in what he believes [2]) — apparently, as we may infer, because the poet's over-insistence on the validity of his ideas destroys in the reader the merely emotional and imaginative surrender to the poetry, urging him to take sides, and consequently rousing an impulse of intellectual criticism. In Dante's case, on the contrary, the poet's proper function — i. e., in accordance with Eliot's theory, apparently that of communicating emotion — is considered to be performed more consistently, for which reason the critic's impulses of protest or doubt remain dormant. No feeling of disbelief is roused in Eliot: "I believe this is because Dante is the purer poet, not because I have more sympathy with Dante the man than Goethe the man" [3]).

The demand that abstract thought should lead the poet to the presentation of vision, or imagined sensory experience, is manifest in a number of pronouncements. In *The Possibility of a Poetic Drama* this idea is one of the leading themes. Eliot objects, however, to using the vision as a mere means of popularizing ideas: he wants the artistic presentation of concrete things (in a manner calculated to communicate emotion) to remain the principal aim [4]). This is why he deprecates Goethe's way of treating his Mephisto: "He [*i. e.*, Mephisto] embodies a Philosophy. A creation of art should not do that: he should *replace* the philosophy. Goethe has not, that is to say, sacrificed or consecrated his thought to make the drama; the drama is still a means" [5]). All attempts at using poetry for the purpose of making ideas "comprehensible to the inferior intelligence" are condemned by Eliot and stigmatized as inartistic in intention [6]). Similarly, all abstract comment on the concrete data presented — as, for example, in the Guitry farces — meets with censure [7]). The only

1) D, p. 43. 2) D, pp. 43—44. 3) D, p. 44. 4) SW, pp. 64, 65, 66. 5) SW, p. 66. 6) SW, p. 68. 7) SW, p. 67.

methods of utilizing ideas which Eliot considers permissible are their "being stated simply in the form of general truth" and their "being transmuted, as the attitude of Flaubert toward the small bourgeois is transformed in *Education Sentimentale*" [1]). The distinction is as between theoretical and imaginative prose — the latter being a genre bearing a close resemblance to poetry. The transformation required in the latter case is evidently into "vision", as is proved by the very next sentence: "It [Flaubert's attitude towards the small bourgeois in *Education Sentimentale*] has there become so identified with the reality" — that is, the imagined facts — "that you can no longer say what the idea is". This does not, however, seem to indicate that the underlying idea should be so completely disguised that it cannot even be vaguely felt. A few lines further, in a passage connected with the sentences just discussed, there is a reference to drama to the effect that if it is to become poetry, "the essential is to get upon the stage this precise statement of life which is at the same time a point of view". But though the demand is implied that in poetry the "point of view", the idea, should still be present in the concrete facts, that the two should become one thing, the emphasis is definitely on the objectification in a concrete form. This is even more clearly the case in Eliot's earlier essay on Dante. There the definite postulate that the aim of the poet is "to create a vision" is brought to bear on the writer's praise for Lucretius's endeavour to find the "concrete equivalent in vision" for the system of thought he is expounding, Eliot's only regret being that the system "was incapable of expansion into pure vision" [2]). The opposite procedure, the lack of concrete objectification, is attacked, *e.g.*, even as late as in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, where Shelley is taken to task because when he "has some definite statement to make he simply says it; keeps his images on one side and his meanings on the other" [3]).

Thus, to summarize our exposition, we find, on the one hand, the demand that abstract thought should stimulate the poet's emotions and that the poet should find the "emotional equivalent" of thought, and, on the other, the requirement that the thought underlying a piece of poetry (or more generally, of imaginative literature) should no longer appear in an abstract form, but that

1) SW, p. 68. 2) SW, pp. 161—2. 3) p. 124.

it should be seen, even though indefinitely, through some "vision", some situation, some "concrete equivalent". Since *The Possibility of a Poetic Drama*, where the latter demand is distinctly expressed, contains the definition of imaginative writing as the presentation of "feeling by a statement of events in human action or of objects in the external world" which we have quoted, we may infer that the "emotional equivalent" and the "concrete equivalent" indicate the same thing, and that the concrete facts are expected to objectify the feeling which, according to Eliot's theory, is caused by the intellectual experience.

It may, of course, be questioned whether thought cannot be presented in all its integrity and purity and yet cause emotion in the reader. Professor Herbert Read deals with the matter in an article on *The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry* published in 1923 in Eliot's own review, *The Criterion* [1]), and later in *Reason and Romanticism*. Read calls attention to the emotion experienced by all those "who enjoy an abstract argument", and quotes Dante to prove that abstract ideas may be stated with objective clarity and yet affect us with feeling. In Eliot's book on Dante we see him adopt this view. He owns that "from the *Purgatorio* one learns that a straightforward philosophical statement can be great poetry" [2]), and points out that the aim is the communication of emotional experience: "The insistence throughout is upon states of feeling; the reasoning takes only its proper place as a means of reaching these states" [3]). In other words, he acknowledges in 1929 that concrete objectification is not the only right way of expressing emotion in the form of art, but his conception of the evocation of emotion as the ultimate object of poetic expression remains the same. What is more, his greatest admiration is still reserved for those passages where Dante manifests his power "of making the spiritual visible" [4]).

In *For Lancelot Andrewes* — published a year before *Dante* — Eliot has analysed a case of explicating abstract ideas and thus producing an effect equivalent to that of poetry. It is the case of Bishop Andrewes himself. He is described as so absorbed in the ideas he is treating of that all his energies, including his power of emotion, are engrossed: "When Andrewes begins a sermon, from beginning to end you are sure that he is wholly in

1) April 1923, pp. 258—259. 2) D, p. 36. 3) D, p. 52. 4) D, p. 54.

his subject, unaware of anything else, that his emotion grows as he penetrates more deeply into his subject, that he is finally 'alone with the Alone', with the mystery which he is seeking to grasp more and more firmly" [1]). "Andrewes is wholly absorbed in the object and therefore responds with the adequate emotion" [2]). This is found to result in the "relevant intensity" [3]) of his prose, which affects those of his readers who are able to follow his thought. In the present case, the objective content is not regarded as a means of expressing an emotion which existed previous to it. The emotion is found to be stirred in the writer by his abstract subject, and to be enhanced in the reader not by way of concrete imagery, but by the purely formal elements of the language, by the rhythm of an abstract prose, an "extraordinary prose which appears to repeat, to stand still, but is nevertheless proceeding in the most deliberate and orderly manner" [4]). There is, however, one important aspect which this method of evoking emotion has in common with the method of finding a concrete equivalent. It is this that in both cases the writer as well as the reader are required to concentrate on some definite, objective subject-matter, which does not depend for its value on any obvious connection with the author's private life. The writer has something "external" on which to focus his attention.

The views expressed by Eliot as to the *character* of the ideas he finds suitable for poetic utilization depend largely on his assumption that the value of the thought consists in the emotion with which it animates the creative mind. In the statements already quoted by us which suggested that old ideas, ideas which have penetrated into daily life, forming "part and parcel" of the poet's personality and affecting his whole being, are preferable for poetic purposes, the reference appeared to be to the ease and intimacy with which such ideas influence the poet's emotional life. But there is also another reason, likewise connected with the effect on the resulting emotion, why Eliot prefers those theories which have become a part of the general atmosphere of the surrounding life. We remember that his valuation of poetry increased according as the latter represented more than merely a fleeting mood, an ephemeral, personal state of mind. He wished it to be representative of the emotions of a period or, if possible,

1) LA, p. 29. 2) LA, p. 30. 3) LA, p. 28. 4) LA, pp. 26—27.

of the whole of mankind. Accordingly, he expects the great poet to express "the greatest emotional intensity of his time, based on whatever his time happens to think", maintaining that no other thought, even if it should be better in itself, would do instead [1]). The reason is that not the intellectual value of the thought but the emotions associated with it are found to be important in poetry. By accepting the philosophy of his contemporaries together with all the feelings connected with it, the master poet is deemed to "unify all the tendencies of his time" and to become its mouthpiece [2]).

If we examine the above considerations inducing Eliot to advocate the employment of familiar, commonly accepted thought, we get the impression that the critic has precisely calculated the conditions likely to enable the poet to reach the highest point of efficiency. The thought he is advised to use is of a kind to ensure as spontaneous a response as possible on the part of his emotional impulses, as well as to put him in possession of the most poignant emotions of his time. But the tendency towards efficiency goes even further than that: Eliot's great poet is required to refrain from indulging in original speculation because this might distract him from his proper task, that of composing ideal poetry. He is definitely recommended not to labour for a system of his own, since this might tempt him into attaching too much importance to ideas as such instead of transmuting them into poetic vision [3]). Blake is found to have failed to satisfy this requirement. Struggling in two directions, he — such is Eliot's opinion — missed perfection both in poetry and philosophy. He "did not see enough, became too preoccupied with ideas" [4]). "What his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention on the problems of the poet" [5]). The principle brought to bear on the matter is that of economy: the poet has to specialize in his own particular department, in order to avoid dissipating his energies. He is expected to be highly susceptible, to have interests [6]), to assimilate ideas — but not to be very active outside his own field: "A poet who is also a

1) SSS, p. 15. 2) ib. 3) SW, pp. 155 ff. 4) SW, p. 156. 5) SW, p. 158. 6) Cf. above, p. 8.

metaphysician and unites the two activities, is conceivable as a unicorn, or a wyvern is conceivable: he is possible like some of Meinong's *Annahmen*; but such a poet would be a monster . . . Such a poet would be two men. It is more convenient to use, if necessary, the philosophy of other men, than to burden oneself with the philosophy of a monstrous brother in one's own bosom" [1]).

This might seem to contradict Eliot's high opinion of the poetic value of Lancelot Andrewes's method. Yet there is a considerable difference. Andrewes was not primarily a writer who aimed at poetic effects. His aim, as Eliot sees it, was the presentation of thought, and if he communicates emotion, he does so by virtue of the fervour with which he surrendered himself to his immediate task. Emotional effects thus achieved as an unintentional by-product do not interfere with the economy of effort and definiteness of direction Eliot inculcates. What Eliot objects to is those authors who adopt neither the method of imaginative writing nor that of theoretical exposition, preferring a hybrid combination of both. This is one of the reasons for his dislike of Bergson, Claudel and Maeterlinck, in whose works he sees a tendency to present thought that is expounded partly for its own sake and partly with a view to giving imaginative and emotional stimulus, without, however, either clear ratiocination or concrete vision being actually achieved [2]): "As a mixture of thought and of vision provides more stimulus, by suggesting both, both clear thinking and clear statement of particular objects must disappear" [3]). The objection, as we see, is to the uneconomical nature of such a confusion of two methods, involving the failure to achieve the results which might be reasonably expected from the consistent application of either. This lack of consistency is regarded by Eliot as a common fault of the present age which, as he finds, delights in the "mixture of genres" [4]). What Blake, the poet of genius, did because of his interest in ideas of his own, is held by his critic to have become a modern malady infecting a whole age — both its philosophy and its imaginative writers. "Every work of imagination must have a philosophy; and every philosophy must be a work of art", — such is Eliot's summary of that contemporary tendency which he considers to prevent both imaginative writing and philosophy from reaching genuine perfection [5]).

1) *Le Serpent*, preface. 2) SW, p. 66. 3) SW, p. 67. 4) SW, p. 66. 5) ib.

7. *Catholicity and Tradition.*

A poet is not merely an isolated individual, a hermit living in seclusion or a Robinson Crusoe working in separation from all civilization. He has his relations to his human environment, to his literary predecessors and contemporaries. This is an aspect of the problem of poetry we have barely touched upon. It is one of those that rank foremost in Eliot's thought.

Our excursions into the world of Eliot's ideas on poetry have already more than once revealed a definite tendency in him to emphasize the need for comprehensiveness of insight, experience and expression. The kind of poetry he desires to be aimed at is to be based on the whole development of the poet, and the poet is taken to attain greatness only if he somehow manages to become an epitome of the inner life of a period or even of the whole of humanity. The Elizabethans are admired both for the scope of their experience and for the completeness with which that experience is reflected in their works. Metaphysical Wit is raised on a pedestal for the imperturbable tact with which it amalgamates the most disparate elements of the mind. Dante is praised above any other poet because of his unmatched power of welding into one coherent poem nearly the whole range of human feelings: "Dante's is the most comprehensive, and the most *ordered* presentation of emotions that has ever been made" [1]).

It has to be recalled, in the present connection, that this faculty of fusing different experiences into harmonious wholes was found to be combined with a gift of comparing and collating the various constituents of one's mind, tracing their relations to one another. Such was Eliot's notion of the nature of Metaphysical Wit. What we have not yet mentioned is that Wit is ascribed by him only to "educated" minds, minds "rich in generations of experience" [2]). The precise insight into the content of one's mind and the corresponding power of arranging that content seem consequently to be regarded as closely associated with the possession of a variety of experience accumulated in the course of generations. It is evident that such experiences are more likely to have become artistically tractable, having been subjected to the moulding influence of many creative minds. The poet who

1) SW, p. 168. 2) HJD, p. 45.

has studied the experiences of the past as embodied in literature has the benefit of acquiring a stock of impressions that have already been combined into definite patterns instead of being confronted merely with a chaos of experience "in the crude living state". Literature becomes an invaluable supplementary source of material for poetry.

Thus, it appears that the efficiency of the creative process in poetry is made dependent by Eliot on the help of past generations. This is the gist of his views on the rôle of "tradition", which is one of the ever-recurring problems of his criticism. By the possession of tradition Eliot understands the knowledge and assimilation of everything important and vital in the whole literary world to which a writer belongs, and he expects this knowledge to be utilized in the latter's own creative work, which is to be a logical continuation of the valuable labours of the past. The really competent writer is required to see everything in relation to the whole course of the past, as far as the latter is of intrinsic value, and thus to realize his own position inside that whole as well as the function which he is best qualified to perform with a view to promoting the development of the intellectual and spiritual universe a part of which he forms. Here the demand for a general view of the material at one's disposal reappears, only in a broader and bolder application, with reference to the entire range of the literature of a civilization, and even to that civilization in its totality. The individual poet is desired to acquire a comprehensiveness of outlook far exceeding the scope of his limited personal experience.

Eliot maintains that hardly any poet who has attained the age of twenty-five can continue his work without the acquisition of tradition, or, as he also puts it, of the "historical sense", even though this should involve arduous labour [1]). "The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" [2]). Of course, Eliot regards it as essential to distinguish between the important and the unimportant, to be "very conscious of the main current" [3]) — a task which, as he

1) SW, p. 49. 2) ib. 3) SW, p. 51.

appears to imply, could not have been performed by the people of the past themselves, at any rate not with the same assurance: "The conscious present" — as the context indicates, those of our contemporaries who have cultivated the "historical sense" — "is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show"[1]). "Some one said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did'. Precisely, and they are that which we know"[2]). In other words, our superiority to the past is found to consist in our ability to see it from a distance and thus to obtain that total view of it which the authors of those times could not be expected to have. This knowledge "makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity"[3]), that is to say, that bird's-eye view of literature as a whole enables the author to realize his own position inside it.

What is here required of the writer is, evidently, not a passive yielding to the past but a critical, conscious inspection of it. But this is expected to be the end of a long process, which is to begin with a surrender to the influence of important dead authors capable of moving his mind to the quick and of rousing his dormant faculties, his vital impulses, his originality. This point of view is expressed in an article in *The Egoist*[4]) where the young writer's first real spiritual contact with a great author is likened to "a feeling of profound kinship, or rather of a peculiar personal intimacy", a kind of passionate affair which teaches him genuine emotion instead of mere "second-hand sentiments". Such a relationship is found to become "a cause of development, like personal relations in life". Moreover, the interest in the dead writer is supposed to lead us to studying "the society in which our friend moved", *i. e.*, the works of other important masters of the past: "We learn its [that society's] origin and its endings; we are broadened. We do not imitate, we are changed; and our work is the work of the changed man; we have not borrowed, we have been quickened, and we become bearers of a tradition". Here the possession of tradition is definitely pictured in the way already suggested, that is to say, as the intimate knowledge and assimilation of the valuable achievements of the past, which are to stimulate us to further achievements without any break in the

1) SW, p. 52. 2) ib. 3) SW, p. 49. 4) July 1919, p. 39.

course of development. In the same connection the idea reappears that by examining the masterpieces of the past we are taught to find our own rôle, to realize our task more definitely: "Admiration for the great is only a sort of discipline to keep us in order, a necessary snobbism to make us mind our places".

How Eliot imagines the utilization of "tradition" to take place, is illustrated by a remark concerning the correct way of employing language. We learn that words should be used not merely in their current sense but as far as possible in accordance with the whole net of associations woven about them by time, and that the most adequate way of achieving new effects is by continuing the tendencies already found in the language: "Whatever words a writer employs, he benefits by knowing as much as possible of the history of those words, of the uses to which they have already been applied. Such knowledge facilitates his task of giving to the word a new life and to the language a new idiom. The essential of tradition is this; in getting as much as possible of the whole weight of the history of the language behind his word" [1]). Thus, the full possession of tradition is to enable the writer to transcend it by creating something which, though new, draws on the useful elements of the past and is consistent with them.

We find this attitude stated, in a broader application, in several of Eliot's other writings. The preface to the *Selected Poems* of Ezra Pound repudiates that "originality" which depends for its effect on "illogical innovation" [2]). In order to be legitimate, innovation is expected to be compatible with the valid work of earlier generations: "The poem which is absolutely original is absolutely bad; it is, in the bad sense, 'subjective' with no relation to the world to which it appeals" [3]). "True originality is merely development" — development which, if inspected more closely, may appear so inevitable that we almost come to deny "all original virtue to the poet. He simply did the next thing" [4]). But it is considered difficult to distinguish between "genuine" and "spurious" originality, since both "may hit the public with the same shock" [5]). The passages concerning the identical problem

1) *The Three Provincialities* in *The Tyro* nr. 2, 1922, p. 13.
2) p. XI. 3) p. X. 4) p. XI. 5) ib.

in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* seem to amount to the same, but the formulation is not so clear and definite [1]).

One of the pronouncements we have already quoted suggests that it is not merely the literature of the writer's own country but that of the whole of a civilization — "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the literature of his own country" — with which he is required to make himself thoroughly familiar. In *The Function of Criticism* Eliot goes even further than this, stating that he thinks "of the whole of the literature of the world", and, only as parts of the latter, also "of the literature of Europe, of the literature of a single country, not as collections of the writings of individuals, but as 'organic wholes', as systems in relation to which, and only in relation to which individual works of literary art, and the works of individual artists, have their significance" [2]). If these views, and those previously expounded, are accepted, the natural conclusion to draw is that one has to know more or less all about those "organic wholes", that is, that one has to be acquainted, beside English letters, at least with the main currents of continental literature in order to obtain an adequate notion of one's proper place and function: "A poet, like a scientist, is contributing towards the organic development of culture: it is just as absurd for him not to know the work of his predecessors or of a man writing in other languages as it would be for a biologist to be ignorant of Mendel or De Vries" [3]). Blake, for instance, is censured by Eliot for inexcusably failing to avail himself of the help of continental culture [4]).

The centre of the spiritual and intellectual life of Europe is found by Eliot to be situated in the civilization of the Latin peoples, some knowledge of which he accordingly holds to be urgently needed by English writers. His admiration for Medi-

1) Cf. SW, pp. 50—51 on "conformity between the old and new": "To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value — a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say: it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other".

2) *The Criterion*, October 1923, pp. 31—32.

3) *The Egoist*, June-July 1918, p. 84. 4) SW, p. 156.

terranean culture is largely caused by the great continuity, the almost unbroken flow of development ever since the efflorescence of Rome which distinguishes the Latin nations, in particular their modern leader, France [1]). His regret for the absence from the mental life of England of a similar organic integrity of evolution has repeatedly found definite formulation. English literature, English culture, English religion are for him matters that have proceeded by fits and starts, in a whimsical fashion, leading from one extreme to another and lacking fullness and balance. He does not deplore the Saxon trolls and pixies as of great value in themselves, but he suspects that they, as well as "the major Saxon deities", "left an empty place; and perhaps our mythology was further impoverished by the divorce from Rome" [2]). The "historical thinness" of the Puritan "mythology"; the "insufficiently furnished" bleakness of Milton's celestial and infernal regions, "filled by heavy conversation", in default of traditional imagery; the "meanness of culture" deemed characteristic both of Blake's "supernatural territories" and of "the supposed ideas that dwell there", are all regarded by him as typical results of that lack of historical continuity, with which he associates "the crankiness, the eccentricity, which frequently affects writers outside of the Latin tradition" [3]). The objection of crankiness, of working in isolation, each in his own direction, disregarding the instructive achievements of other authors, is one which Eliot often makes to English writers, feeling that English criticism confirms them in this propensity. Thus, he writes of "our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else" [4]). The result of this trend he sees in a one-sideness, an over-development of the traits peculiar to the author, and the atrophy of others that might be equally important for the success of his work as a whole: "The great danger, as well as the great interest and excitement, of English prose and verse, compared with French, is that it permits and justifies an exaggeration of particular qualities to the exclusion of others" [5]). That untractable individualism, so radically different from Eliot's ideal of a catholic utilization of all the useful material available, is connected by him with what he regards as the

1) *The Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 36; SW, p. 156 ff. 2) SW, pp. 156—157. 3) SW, p. 157. 4) SW, p. 48. 5) HJD, p. 43.

British cult of the "inner voice". In *The Function of Criticism* we find him attacking the following passage by John Middleton Murry: "The English writer, the English divine, the English statesman, inherit no rules from their forbears; they inherit only this: a sense that in the last resort they must depend upon the inner voice" [1]). Eliot maintains that this principle is liable to lead to mere arbitrariness: "My belief is that those who possess this inner voice are ready enough to hearken to it, and will hear no other. The inner voice, in fact, sounds remarkably like an old principle which has been formulated by an elder critic in the now familiar phrase of 'doing as one likes' " [2]).

This refusal to listen to the lessons of the past or to anything beside one's own impulses Eliot finds to be approved by British critics as the natural outcome of the English temperament, and even exalted to the status of a national virtue [3]). Yet he objects to adopting or rejecting any method because of the ease or difficulty with which it can be handled [4]): "The question is, the first question, *not* what comes natural or what comes easy to us, but what is right? Either one attitude is better than the other, or else it is indifferent . . . Surely the reference to racial origins, or the mere statement that the English are thus, and the French otherwise, is not expected to settle the question: which, of two antithetical views, is *right*?" He is primarily concerned with the perfection of the literary results. And since he considers that the French with their traditional discipline and their less personal and shifting standards — standards derived from a more co-ordinated literary development than the British — have achieved relatively greater results, he advises England to learn from them [5]). To those who insist on the naturalness of "romanticism" and individualism to the English, and of "classicism" to their southern neighbours, he retorts: "Were the French in the year 1600 classical and the English in the same year romantic? A more important difference, to my mind, is that the French in the year 1600 *had already a more mature prose*" [6]).

The two opposite qualities sharply contrasted in the statements just discussed are: subjective, whimsical self-indulgence, the complacent yielding to one's impulses, on the one hand, and, on

1) *Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 35. 2) ib. 3) op. cit. p. 36. 4) ib. 5) op. cit. p. 36. 6) ib.

the other, the determination to attain perfection under the guidance of a clear comprehension of what is right, even if that struggle for perfection should involve the severe curtailing of one's habitual inclinations.

Eliot's persistent endeavour to invent a critical scheme ensuring perfect artistic results has been manifest throughout the present chapter. The poet's stock of valuable artistic experience is expected to be increased as far as possible by supplies derived from the past of his own, as well as of foreign, countries. The extensive total view of literature obtained by the study of dead writers is required to enlighten him as to the place and task befitting him as a part of a large literary organism to the development of which he has to contribute. The key-note of it all is evidently Eliot's demand for a conscious general adjustment of effort, or — to quote his definition of civilization — for "a spiritual and intellectual co-ordination on a high level" [1]).

8. *Literary Conventions.*

The desire for co-ordination of effort on a super-individual scale for the purpose of reaching the highest possible degree of perfection determines Eliot's attitude toward literary conventions, the essentials of which are expressed in his essay on *The Possibility of a Poetic Drama* in *The Sacred Wood*, as well as in *Four Elizabethan Dramatists*, an article in the second volume of *The Criterion*.

Literary conventions mean to Eliot, first and foremost, definite prescribed forms, patterns, methods helping the writer to mould and organize his material. His definition of convention in drama expresses his fundamental idea: "It [*i. e.*, the convention] may be some quite new selection or structure or distortion in subject matter or technique; any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action" [2]). For "world of action" we may substitute "the poet's material" to get a formula which Eliot practically applies to poetry in general. But for the success of such a "convention" more is needed, according to Eliot, than merely inventing it: there must also be "a precise way of thinking and feeling" to which it corresponds [3]). In order that such a form might be profitable to more people than its inventor, that it

1) LA, p. 140. 2) *Criterion*, February 1924, p. 118. 3) SW, p. 63.

might develop into a framework to be used by a whole period, Eliot postulates that the public has to be taught to respond to it spontaneously in the correct way, so that the writer might be able to know beforehand its precise effect. Once the necessary "*half-formed ὕλη, the 'temper of the age'*", that is, in the present context, "a preparedness, a habit on the part of the public, to respond to particular stimuli", is in existence, such a convention is found to have become an integral part of the literary atmosphere. Subsequent poets are regarded as justified in relying on the convention to affect the public in the habitual manner, confining themselves to modifying it and adding to it only what is needed to produce the particular effects of their own which they are aiming at[1]). The economy of effort thus attained is supposed to enable even minor poets to make valuable individual contributions to literature[2]). Such Eliot considers to have been the state of affairs during the periods of greatest literary achievement, *e. g.*, in Ancient Greece and, up to a point, in Elizabethan England: "The great ages did not perhaps produce much more talent than ours; but less talent was wasted"[3]). In the nineteenth century, on the contrary, the scarcity of such accepted, living "conventions" strikes Eliot as one of the reasons why the individual poet had to do more than he was able to perform in a satisfactory manner: "Two men, Wordsworth and Browning, hammered out forms for themselves — personal forms, *The Excursion, Sordello, The Ring and the Book, Dramatic Monologues*; but no man can invent a form, create a taste for it, and perfect it too"[4]). These and other poets "were certainly obliged to consume vast energy in this pursuit of form, which could never lead to a wholly satisfying result"[5]).

If each convention is expected to correspond to a specific way of thinking and feeling, conventions that lack such a vital basis have evidently to be regarded as beside the point. This is what is done by Eliot in his essay on Massinger in *The Sacred Wood*. Massinger is charged with the fault of having employed Elizabethan conventions after the mentality which gave rise to them had disappeared: "He is killed by conventions which were suitable for the previous generation, not for his"[6]). But provided this kind of incongruity is avoided, Eliot finds in such conventional

1) SW, p. 64. 2) ib. 3) ib. 4) SW, p. 62. 5) SW, p. 63. 6) SW, p. 142.

forms this further advantage that they make it easier for the artist to concentrate entirely on his work instead of indulging in chaotic emotionalism and "self-expression", since a whole code of artistic laws inherent in the very nature of the conventions in question pre-determines, to a certain extent, the direction of his labours: "No artist produces great art by a deliberate attempt to express his personality. He expresses his personality indirectly through concentrating upon a task which is a task in the same sense as the making of an efficient engine or the turning of a jug or a table-leg" [1]).

The advantages of such concentration by the aid of a definitely prescribed scheme — and at the same time, as we are to understand, taking into account the above, a scheme agreeing with the spirit of the artist and his public — are illustrated by a reference to the ballet where the general movements are set for the dancer, the scheme having no longer to be invented but merely to be informed with the artist's vitalizing energy: "There are only limited movements that he can make, only a limited degree of emotion that he can express" [2]). "The difference between a great dancer and a merely competent dancer is in the vital flame, the impersonal and, if you like, inhuman force which transpires through each of the great dancer's movements" [3]). One sees, what Eliot here admires is the direction of all available emotional energy into the channel of a circumscribed task, the avoidance of all chaotic diffusion of vitality. But in spite of his stipulation that the code of laws, the system of conventions should be in keeping with the feeling, the mind which it is to express, he admits by implication that there may be certain purely individual sources of energy in the artist which might be checked by the accepted conventional forms. This admission is intelligible, since a code developed by a period as a whole need not always correspond with *all* the vital idiosyncrasies of each individual of that period. The conventional scheme, though suitable generally, may fail to satisfy completely in certain instances. This is admitted by Eliot's confession that the great actor in a contemporary realistic drama, where the conventional prescriptions are not so strict and where the performer can put more of his ordinary personality into the play, can be more

1) *Criterion*, Febr. 1924, p. 120. 2) op. cit., pp. 119—120. 3) ib.

"real", that is, judging from the context, more vital, more forcible [1]). But this, as Eliot indicates, happens only if the actor is really great. The course of the argument suggests that the "merely competent" performer, lacking a powerful personality and being deprived of the guiding conventions he needs, is supposed to be less satisfactory in the realistic than in the conventional play [2]). The analogy to the poet's case as described by Eliot is close: in both cases "conventions" are regarded as a means of co-ordinating the artist's energy and preventing him from all groping waste of effort. The main objection to the lack of conventions was, with regard to the poet, that it compelled him to attempt more than he could be reasonably expected to do perfectly. In the present matter, too, Eliot's tendency is to contrive a scheme by means of which the individual artist might be enabled to employ the achievements of his predecessors in such a way as to apply all his energies to profitable work instead of spending them on independent but precarious experimentation.

9. Criticism.

In his views on criticism, Eliot's love of neat distinctions and his demand for definiteness of purpose assert themselves quite as emphatically as in his notions regarding creative writing. He assigns to the critic a definite part in the literary world, wishing him to become a useful collaborator in his general scheme of co-ordinated work, and for that very reason desiring him to refrain from all intrusion into the domain reserved for the creative writer. Criticism, as he insists, is not autonomous; it is, "by definition, *about* something other than itself" [3]). The justification of a critic's work is, according to him, primarily in the light he throws on the literary problems of his contemporaries. His labours are to be supplementary to creative literature. The past may and should be studied, but with reference to the present: "The important critic is the person who is absorbed in the present problems of art, and who wishes to bring the forces of the past to bear upon the solution of these problems" [4]).

The postulate that criticism is "about something other than itself" and that it is valuable in direct proportion as it helps to elucidate the nature and problems of its object leads inevitably

1) Op. cit., p. 121. 2) ib. 3) *Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 39. 4) SW, pp. 37—8.

to the demand that the critic should first of all aim at the precise realization of his subject-matter, that is to say, of the works of art he is dealing with. Eliot would like to prevent all subjective, distorting emotion, all arbitrary "interpretation" from obscuring the critic's view of the literary work. "The end of the enjoyment of poetry is a pure contemplation from which all the accidents of personal emotion are removed; thus we aim to see the object as it really is" [1]). He distinguishes sharply between the ordinary reader and the competent critic. The former, as he seems to think, is untrained in the art of discriminating between all sorts of accidental emotional impulses associated with the impression of a piece of imaginative writing, and those emotions which are caused more directly by the data presented in the literary work: "The reader in the ignorance which we postulate is unable to distinguish the poetry from an emotional state aroused in himself by the poetry, a state which may be merely an indulgence of his own emotions. The poetry may be an emotional stimulus" [2]). This excessive subjectivity and absence of concentration on the object is a fault which Eliot holds to be very common in contemporary criticism. He regrets to find a type of critic who "reacts in excess of the stimulus, making something new of the impressions" and thus producing something which resembles creative art, without, however, managing to carry the moulding and transforming process quite to the point where art commences [3]).

Such he considers to be the fundamental trouble with Pater as well as with Coleridge's and Goethe's criticisms of *Hamlet*. These writers represent for him "the critic with a mind which is naturally of the creative order, but which through some weakness in creative power exercises itself in criticism instead" [4]). His objections to "impressionistic criticism" rest essentially on the same basis. He defines the practice of this critical school as the attempt to exhibit "the faithful record of impressions, more numerous or more refined than our own, upon a mind more sensitive than our own" [5]). He notes, however, that such a record is prone to become "an interpretation, a translation; for it must itself impose impressions upon us, and these impressions are as much created as transmitted by the criticism" [6]). Eliot prefers each reader's

1) SW, p. 14. 2) ib. 3) SW, p. 6. 4) SW, p. 95. 5) SW, p. 3. 6) ib.

forming his own direct impressions to his taking on trust those of a critic, particularly if that critic is apt to present them in a falsified form, instead of helping the reader to find his way about the work of art as it actually is.

The latter aim is apparently to be attained with less difficulty by way of the methods Eliot proposes. He desires the critic not to produce a substitute for literature but to *explain* literature after having secured as full and adequate an intuitive view as possible of the work of art that is being dealt with. The critic is to clarify his own conception of his subject-matter by transferring it from the plane of intuitive contemplation to that of intellectual comprehension. After "looking solely and steadfastly at the object" he, *i. e.*, his intellect, is expected swiftly to operate "the analysis of sensation to the point of principle and definition" [1]). "Ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c'est le grand effort d'un homme s'il est sincère" is the motto (from Rémy de Gourmont) which Eliot prefixes to his essay on *The Perfect Critic* [2]). The tools by means of which he expects this task of clarification to be performed are "comparison and analysis" [3]).

The two activities of carefully collecting literary impressions and of forming intellectual conclusions and generalizations on the basis of the material thus accumulated are, as we see, regarded by Eliot as closely and organically connected. The transition from mere observation to intellection and analysis is to be swift. This accords with his notion that the "superior sensibility" [4]) he postulates for the competent critic must collect its perceptions not as a chaotic mass but as a system: "The new impressions modify the impressions received from the objects already known. An impression needs to be constantly refreshed in order that it may persist at all; it needs to take its place in a system of impressions. And this system tends to become articulate in a generalized statement of literary beauty" [5]).

That is to say, if we make the obvious inferences, there can be no final "generalized statement of literary beauty". The "generalized statement", the theory, is bound to be influenced by the modifications which take place in the system of impressions. The richer and more varied and more subtle the material, the more adequate and comprehensive is the theory, if the generali-

1) SW, p. 11. 2) SW, p. 1. 3) *The Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 41. 4) SW, p. 14. 5) ib.

zations are made by a competent mind. The theoretical view is described as dependent on the perceptions out of which it has grown. This amounts, on the one hand, to the implicit admission that no critical assessment can be reliable unless it is based on a knowledge of all the valuable literary impressions that are possible, and on the other, to the rejection of theories which do not pay the most scrupulous attention to the actual aesthetic perceptions of the critic.

An examination of Eliot's writings shows that both conclusions have been drawn by him. He deprecates that kind of "intellectual" criticism which is merely "something superposed upon an accumulation of perceptions" instead of being organically connected with the critic's impressions: "The perceptions do not, in a really appreciative mind, accumulate as a mass, but form themselves as a structure; and criticism is the statement in language of this structure; it is a development of sensibility" [1]). This is tantamount to considering critical dogmatism to be futile, since it does not lend itself to the guidance of experience. Dogma, however, is not rejected but, on the contrary, recommended, yet as something based on intimate observation, not postulated *a priori*. The second inference, that no full critical understanding — even of an isolated literary work — is possible unless the critic knows the whole range of literature, seems to be implied in the following statement: "No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the 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. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of

1) SW, p. 15.

art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new" [1]). This passage becomes intelligible if we assume that what is altered by each new, original work of art is the system of impressions in the critic's mind, and consequently, in accordance with what has been quoted a little earlier, his "generalized statement of literary beauty", his criteria of aesthetic value, which changes influence, in their turn, his judgment of individual works as well as of the system these works form. The new qualities perceived modify the critic's point of view.

The passage just quoted illustrates strikingly the importance Eliot attributes to the "historical sense" in the domain of criticism, precisely as he did with regard to creative writing. He considers it part of the critic's business "to see literature steadily and to see it whole; and this is eminently to see it not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time; to see the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes" [2]). Both dead and living writers have to be judged from the same elevated seat which enables the critic to grasp at one glance the whole range of letters. Such a critic should obviously be able, as Eliot desires, to separate literature "from the accidents of environment" as well as to isolate the essential and point out "the most intense in various kinds", with an understanding unclouded by narrow-mindedness [3]). His system of deeply experienced artistic values, his knowledge of all kinds and degrees of literary perfection should make it possible for him to attain that "austerity of passion which can detect unerringly the transition from work of eternal intensity to work that is merely beautiful and from work that is beautiful to work that is merely charming" [4]).

Such are the qualities and such is the equipment which Eliot demands from that perfect critic whose ultimate importance he gauges by the extent to which he applies his knowledge and insight to the solution of present-day problems of literary art. This ideal is equally opposed to the impressionist whose reaction to works of art is chiefly emotional and imaginative, and to the extreme theorist who is out of touch with vital literary perceptions. It dethrones the critical specialist in individual periods who

1) SW, pp. 49—50. 2) SW, p. XV. 3) SW, p. 34. 4) SW, p. 37

understands and enjoys their atmosphere without being able to elevate himself to a more comprehensive point of view, and deposes the one-sided hunter for a purely personal dream of beauty not founded on any careful, catholic scholarship. It differs radically from critical relativism which is chiefly bent on investigating relations and affinities, conceiving things as in a flux and neglecting to develop universal standards of value. And yet it contrives to combine the best features of all these types of criticism: an intense susceptibility to literary impressions with an intellectual awareness of the rank and place of each perception, logical order and definite criteria with fullness of experience, a comprehension of individual works and periods with the ability to compare and contrast them with all others, a grasp of relations with the possession of positive ideals. A maximum of vital feeling is intended to unite with a maximum of intelligent judgment. And the person possessed of these qualifications is expected to work in strict subordination to the supreme task of promoting literature as a whole: "Criticism . . . must always profess an end in view, which, roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste" [1]). Instead of revolting and trying to become an independent artist, the critic is to accept his proper rôle inside the system, helping the creative writer in his attempts at intellectual and aesthetic orientation, and educating the public. This is obviously a very practical ideal.

The practical nature of Eliot's ideas appears very distinctly in his views as to the co-operation of various types of critics. What we have just described is his notion of the perfect critic, but exactly as he leaves a place for the minor poet, so he desires to utilize the minor worker in the field of criticism. Recognizing the need for a general atmosphere favourable to artistic experiment and enterprise, he lays much emphasis on the necessity of critical minds of the second order capable of disseminating ideas and of stimulating the sensibility of the general public. In this matter he is, or thinks he is, opposed to the traditional tendency of English culture, which, as he says, is more favourably disposed to the man of genius than to the average intellectual worker: "It is a perpetual heresy of English culture to believe that only the first-order mind, the Genius, the Great Man, matters; that he

1) *The Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 32.

is solitary, and produced best in the least favourable environment, perhaps the Public School; and that it is most likely a sign of inferiority that Paris can show so many minds of the second order" [1]). The danger of this attitude is, as he finds, that it prevents the English from raising their general standards, from "educating the poetasters" [2]). In this desire for an intelligent environment he is admittedly at one with Matthew Arnold, to whose demand for a "current of ideas", a "society permeated by fresh thought" he refers [3]).

Another type of the minor critic whose value he recognizes is the painstaking scholar intent on finding or checking facts, on condition that his hunt for facts does not degenerate into stupidity. Even the humblest researcher with some sense of values strikes Eliot as preferable to the supplier of fancy or opinion, however inspired the latter may be, for fancy and opinion run counter to his conception of the task of criticism, which, as we have seen, is to see the facts about literature and to turn this knowledge to account [4]).

It was shown in the very beginning of the present paper that Eliot values imaginative literature principally as an art and not as mere material for studying other aspects of human life. At the same time it was pointed out that he is alive to the need for seeing literature *in connection* with those other aspects. This agrees with his demand for a total view — with the conviction, which he shares with Francis Herbert Bradley, "that no one 'fact' of experience in isolation is real or is evidence of anything" [5]). In the same way as he expects the critic to be aware of the position of each individual literary phenomenon in literature as a whole, he also desires him to consider literature as a specific province inside the larger domain of human life, which has much to do with other provinces but remains autonomous. While recognizing the necessity of continually transgressing the boundaries of the literary field, he warns the student of letters not to forget what he is doing, and reminds him that literature has its own function unlike that of anything else [6]). Eliot's own recent preoccupation with "the relation of poetry to

1) SW, p. XIV. 2) SW, p. XV. 3) SW, p. XIV.
4) *Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 41.
5) LA, p. 82.
6) DPDr, p. XXIII; cf. also *Tradition and Experiment*, pp. 212—213.

the spiritual and social ife of its time and of other times" does not delude him into regarding it as primarily anything but an art [1]). He admits the justification of historical and philosophical criticism but is "inclined to believe that the 'historical' and the 'philosophical' critics had better be called historians and philosophers quite simply" [2]). Without denying the value of biographical studies of writers or of inquiries into the variety of facts connected with literature, he sees the supreme kind of criticism, the only kind that really deserves the name, in the examination of literature as one of the modes of art. At the same time he owns that since literature has in the course of the nineteenth century come to deal with so many problems that are not strictly artistic, no complete understanding of it can be arrived at without these problems being taken into account: "If we should exclude from literary criticism all but purely literary considerations, there would not only be very little to talk about, but actually we should be left without even literary appreciation" [3]). The critic, as he maintains, must be capable of quite as wide a range of interests as the author he investigates [4]). He objects, however, to allowing criticism "to be absorbed gently into exacter sciences", for no other science would approach literature as what it primarily is, *viz.*, a source of a peculiar aesthetic delight [5]). The solution of the problem lies, as he thinks, in the collaboration of all sciences, each dealing with its own special department of reality and, among other things, investigating literature from its own point of view, whereas the critic proper should persist in his study of literature as such.

Special attention is given by Eliot to the "logical and dialectical" study of critical terms [6]). *The Sacred Wood* already refers to the trouble of "verbalism", *i. e.*, of the tendency to manipulate words without a sufficient awareness of their exact signification [7]). Abstract, impressive-sounding words are found to be used in a vague, emotional manner, instead of being assigned their due place in the logical context. In *Experiment in Criticism* the same problem is restated with equal emphasis [8]). Such terms as "Classicism" and "Romanticism" are considered to "mean something a little different for each observer", though everyone writing

1) SW, p. VIII. 2) SW, p. 16.
3) *Tradition and Experiment*, p. 212. 4) ib. 5) op. cit. p. 213.
6) *Tradition and Experiment*, p. 214. 7) SW, p. 8 ff.
8) *Tradition and Experiment*, p. 214.

about them believes they indicate something definite. Eliot's examination of the actual meaning of "Metaphysical Wit" in *Homage to John Dryden* illustrates his endeavour to collaborate in this clarification of the central terms of criticism.

Taken as a whole, Eliot's view of the function of criticism agrees with his general ideas on literature. The critic is to be a collaborator in the general task of raising the level and promoting the development of literature, his specific business being the intellectual elucidation of the problems with which the creative writer of to-day is confronted. He has to aim at seeing very clearly the position of literature in human life in its totality as well as to acquire an intimate knowledge of all the essential achievements of the literary art. Each individual literary work is to be examined by him in its relation to literature as a living organism and to be judged from the point of view of a general theory of literary values which is a direct outgrowth of his perceptions of vital literature. His study of the past has to intensify his sense of contemporary problems. He should avoid introducing the methods of creative writing into his work, seeing that these might distract him from his real business and impair the clarity of his apprehension of the subject-matter of criticism. His tools — comparison and analysis — should be used carefully and circumspectly, his terminology should be adequate and precise. The minor critic should be assigned functions which he is able to perform and which at the same time are likely to promote the realization of the ultimate aim of criticism, which is the "elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste".

Part II.

T. S. ELIOT'S CRITICAL IDEAS AS A SYSTEM.

We have tried to present those of Eliot's ideas on literature which struck us as essential for understanding the scheme underlying his criticism. In the present section of our paper we propose to trace in a connected way the logical interdependence of these views, which task is facilitated by the fact that the individual points have been examined one by one. At the same time we intend to inquire more thoroughly into the fundamental tendencies of his thought as well as to assess their validity. We shall have to restate in some measure matters that have already been discussed, but this can scarcely be avoided if a neat, coherent total view is aimed at. One of our present advantages is that we are free to refer, as need may be, to all parts of the previous exposition. In addition we are going to treat of the connection of Eliot's critical system with certain important views of his which seem to belong to the very core of his attitude to life.

We have seen that one of his leading ideas is that of the "integrity of poetry", that is to say, the idea that the value of poetry consists in a certain kind of elevating pleasure which appears to be dependent on the emotion it embodies. We have found him demanding that this specific function should never be forgotten, even when dealing with the relation of poetry to other departments of human life and activity. It is true that Eliot apparently despairs of defining the precise nature of that pleasurable effect and says hardly anything as to any further consequences it may have. He is in this respect essentially an "aesthete", but not of the kind exemplified by a Walter Pater or an Oscar Wilde. The difference is in the fact that the *l'art pour l'art* people regard literature and the fine arts, in Eliot's words, as nothing less than "a substitute for everything else, and as a purveyor of emotions and sensations which belong to life rather

than to art" [1]), whereas Eliot himself prefers to look upon them as forming only one of the various domains of existence, somewhat like the eighteenth century, which he applauds for taking these things merely as "special and limited adornments of life" [2]). For him, however, there is something very serious and vital and elevating in artistic experience, and he requires poetry to contain much more than the early classicists did, though deprecating all attempts at erecting it into a religion, or a substitute for it.

His demands as to the content of poetry are much more like those of the nineteenth than of the eighteenth century, and more like those of the age of the Metaphysicals than the requirements of either. He wants poetry to become an epitome of all essential human experience, which, however, should not be confused with a desire for its becoming a substitute for independent fields of intellectual activity, such as philosophy or psychology — a fault with which he charges the nineteenth century [3]). On the contrary, poetry, as he understands it, is to confine itself to producing that elevating delight which he regards as its specific aim; but he desires this effect to be based on the entire human development of the poet, including all its contrasts, yet each time amalgamating them into a harmonious whole, as Metaphysical Poetry did at its best. Intellectual life is assigned a part in that effect, but so as to remain in the background, adding to the richness and subtlety of the emotional impression, but never abandoning its subordinate position as far as its rôle in the effect is concerned, however important and autonomous it may be outside of poetry. The essential difference of the ideal just described from the poetry, say, of Pope or Gray is obvious. Their verse, which Eliot finds comparatively destitute of variety because it fails to employ some of the essential qualities of the fully developed human mind, provides, of course, nothing like the subtle and intense delight Eliot takes in those passages of Dante where he discovers "the utmost power of the poet", "the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts" [4]). Eliot's aim, as we see, is a superior harmony of a strictly aesthetic kind, more complex than any poetry the eighteenth century ever dreamed of, but self-sufficient

1) *Tradition and Experiment*, ed. cit., p. 201. 2) ib. 3) *Tradition and Experiment*, pp. 200 ff. 4) D, p. 55.

like Augustan "elegance", and exempt from that "inculcation of morals" or "direction of politics" which have often been imposed upon imaginative writing [1]).

These views seem to have a close bearing on Eliot's conception of what the creative process should be like in order to produce perfect poetry. Over and above his demand for the conscious cultivation of technique, which he regards as an important preparatory stage but by no means as the climax of poetic creation, he expects the writer's mind to be capable of unpredictable, spontaneous impulses serving to work up into organic wholes all the essential experiences of a long, largely subconscious period of development. He sees the material value of this process in its bringing to convergence on some definite point a large amount of impressions and feelings, in conscious opposition to "the romantic tradition which insists that a poet should be continuosly inspired, which allows the poet to present bad verse as poetry", even when he has nothing essential to express [2]). In contradistinction to a certain type of "romantic" poet who writes perpetually in an ecstatic style, forcing his inspiration and perhaps occasionally succeeding in striking flashes out of his mind, but also producing a great deal of what is merely an attempt at being inspired, Eliot wishes the poetic practitioner to abandon all endeavours to say something profound and intense, until the moment arrives for him to put the riches of a material stage of his human development into a poem. It is obvious that the latter method makes more definitely for "unity in variety", by which familiar formula much of the essence of Eliot's ideal as described above might be defined.

The adoption of the principle that poetry is valuable for the satisfying aesthetic impression it produces involves as a corollary the view that the experiences embodied in a poetic work are relevant only in so far as they conduce to such an impression. This leads quite naturally to the conclusion that the tendency to bring experiences in solely because of their importance for the poet's private life is condemnable. We have already discussed these ideas in detail. Here again Eliot's ideal — in the present case that type of artist who is willing and able to keep his eye on the pattern he may make of the content of his mind instead of

1) SW, p. IX. 2) Preface to Pound's *Selected Poems*, p. XX.

emphasizing the value of that content as part of his personal experience — is contrasted with the so called "romantic" writers (Rousseau and his disciples), the authors of autobiographical confessions.

Eliot's insistence on spontaneous inspiration as the highest stage of creative activity impresses one as consistent with his wish that the creative act should draw to the surface a large number of subconscious impressions. The profound emotional disturbance with which the records of many poets associate their happiest moments of creation is likely to accomplish this. Yet this laying bare of hidden treasure is not the whole story: the material, however valuable in itself, has to be amalgamated into a coherent whole, as we have seen Eliot demand. At this point a peculiar faculty of discrimination was expected to come in, apparently of an intuitive order: the faculty of perceiving each element intended to be utilized in relation to very many others, which was assumed to help the poet to mould his material into a co-ordinated, organic work of art. The acquisition of this quality of insight seems to be made more easy by the preparatory technical training Eliot demands. We know that his conception of a perfect poetic technique involves precise statement, which, in turn, suggests that the poet is to make deliberate efforts at realizing the precise content of his mind before expressing it. This is equivalent to a continual self-analysis *previous* to the moments of supreme creative activity, so that during these moments the mind of the poet who has submitted to such a discipline may be supposed to have its task of composition, selection and combination considerably facilitated by those former labours.

The medium of expressing emotion which Eliot prescribes, the "objective correlative" as he conceives it, that it, as something individual and concrete serving as a focus for the writer's, and later the reader's, attention, a careful scrutiny of which is to evoke in the reader all the feeling the author wishes to communicate, seems likewise to be closely connected with Eliot's demand that the work of art should form a whole. It is manifestly less difficult to concentrate one's energies and emotions on a definite object than to bring them to convergence on something vague and general. Moreover, the very fact of the writer's mind being focused on a set of imagined facts, a concrete situation, is bound to make him relatively forgetful of his experiences as part of his personal

life: nearly all his vitality is likely to be directed towards the production of something of independent value which is not himself. Furthermore, if the "objective correlative" proves adequate, in Eliot's sense, and the writer has employed his method with sufficient strictness, none of the experiences objectified in it should be capable of being apprehended apart from the "vision", the "facts" presented. It is, of course, obvious that the element of language — its formal structure, its sounds, etc. — cannot help playing a part in the final impression. But if the language is strictly subordinated to the principal purpose of presenting a concrete equivalent of feeling, and if it receives its specific colouring from that purpose, no emotion being allowed to be expressed in words irrelevant to the central aim, the only way in which the reader may hope to recreate in himself the state of mind embodied in the poetry is manifestly, by concentrating on the concrete data, the vision. Since in such a case nothing is given which distracts from the "objective correlative", but since the latter, on the contrary, becomes the centre where all threads converge, the reader, too, is enabled to obtain *all* the enjoyment available by fixing his attention on one definite point. Everything besides a careful presentation of the "objective correlative" — exactly that particular kind and amount of vision which is equivalent to the emotion, neither more nor less of it — such as, *e. g.*, emotional adjectives conveying nothing concrete, has to be deprecated from this point of view, for it deflects the writer's — and, as we may add, the reader's — mind from the essential object. We see that Eliot's method seems to favour economy of effort by means of co-ordination and concentration.

The advantages of this method of complete objectification appear with particular distinctness if compared with the practice of a great many of Eliot's predecessors and contemporaries. We have seen him spotting as a typical example the poetry of Harold Monro, to which he takes exception because of its vagueness, its "charming flirtation with obscure, semi-philosophic sentiments", its "reflecting on a general situation" rather than presenting something individual [1]). Similarly, we have seen Swinburne and Morris being accused of diffuseness, and Marvell and others

1) *Egoist*, Oct. 1917, p. 133.

praised for the opposite quality. The essential distinction in the cases enumerated is that between an indefinite groping and a concentration on something distinctly realizable and concrete, *i. e.*, between waste and economy of effort.

Eliot's requirements concerning poetic language, *viz.*, that there should be a close correspondence between the language and the poet's feelings, and that the language should contain the statement of definite objects, are implied in the principle of the "objective correlative" and may be regarded as its application to the most important and indispensable vehicle of poetic expression. If the essential problem consists in the precise communication of a particular emotion, it is inevitable to expect the vehicle of feeling to harmonize with the emotional experience. The demand for some kind of definite objective content is likewise unavoidable, for the very essence of Eliot's "objective correlative" consists in its being both definite and objective.

We have already shown in detail how Eliot's general views on poetry and poetic expression determined his notions regarding the legitimate rôle of abstract thought in poetry: intellectual experience was looked upon as a mere stimulus for emotions that had to be conveyed to the reader, usually in the way already described, that is, by means of a complete, concrete objectification. All direct statement of abstract ideas by way of comment on the concrete data was considered to be illicit. This is in full accord with the trend towards concentration and unity of effect, for abstract comment is obviously apt to distract one's attention from the imagined concrete vision, preventing the vision from taking hold of the imagination and inducing one to indulge in reflection. In certain cases, particularly with regard to Dante and Lancelot Andrewes, the exclusive insistence on the necessity of a concrete equivalent was abandoned, and the presentation of abstract ideas was found to result at times in effects of a poetic nature. The case of Andrewes showed, however, that here as elsewhere the writer producing poetic effects was expected to pour all his feelings into the channel of some distinctly circumscribed subject-matter, so that the very act of following carefully and intelligently what he had to say was bound to lead the reader to share his emotions, without having to look for any direct, unobjectified expression of feeling. Co-ordination and definite direction of effort on the part of the author as well as

of the reader remained an outstanding result of the method recommended, conducing to considerable economy of energy.

The same tendency can be observed in the desire that the philosophy, the system of ideas used by the poet should be old and familiar, "part and parcel of the personality". We have found reasons for ascribing this desire, on the one hand, to the ease with which emotions seem to be stirred by such a philosophy, and on the other, to the economy of effort and the possibility of concentrating on the specific tasks of the art of poetry, as Eliot understands them, which were found to result from the avoidance of over-indulging in new, original speculation. And if those intellectual systems were preferred that are representative of the most numerous and most intense emotions of a period, the connection of this preference with Eliot's valuation of typical, fundamental feelings as well as with his demand for the utilization of, as far as possible, all extremes of human feeling struck us as highly probable. In the present case, a further consideration typical of Eliot which seems to come in is, that, since such systems are more or less coherent wholes embodying a maximum of emotional experience with which the poet is in intimate contact, by concentrating on the expression of such systems in terms of poetry, an unusual amount of poetic effect may be produced with a minimum waste of energy. Here, again, the method proposed by Eliot seems to be calculated to result in co-ordination, concentration, and, in connection with these, economy, of energy.

The tendencies underlying Eliot's notions regarding the poet's need for a full possession of "tradition", *i. e.*, of the vital elements of the literature of the past, are similar. The ideal "traditional" poet is pictured as part of a co-ordinated whole, that is to say, of the literature of the civilization to which he belongs — a part which is to find its exact function inside that whole. For this purpose the poet is expected to have acquired a full, intimate knowledge of the constituents, trends and structure of the "organism", the literature of which he forms an element, until he, by virtue of gradual adjustment, qualifies for that particular task by the performance of which he is most likely to contribute to the development of the whole. Eliot apparently wishes the poet to avoid the risks, blunders and waste of energy that ignorance involves. The highest degree of efficiency on the part of each individual member is desired to bring about the ideal

functioning of the whole literary body. No single constituent is suffered to work in isolation, and even brilliant individual performances are objected to in so far as they damage the harmony and order of the general mechanism. Similarly, literary conventions are expected to raise even minor poets to the status of useful members of the literary community by saving them much ineffectual experimentation and showing them the most economical method of utilizing their talent.

Our chapter on Eliot's notions regarding criticism will have suggested that the critic is dealt with as a factor in the same general scheme. While doing his own work disinterestedly, he is desired to serve the common cause. He, too, is to be aware of what he can do to be useful, avoiding all indulgence of inappropriate impulses. Eliot demands, as we know, a "criticism... on the same basis as that on which the literature itself is made". Though this leads him to expect the critic to possess the same breadth and comprehensiveness of outlook and the same intimacy and keenness of perception as the poet, he would like all this to be utilized in a different manner from that suitable for creative work. An important though subordinate agent, the critic is to relieve the poet of part of those intellectual worries that might distract him from his real business.

Thus, Eliot's conception of literature is throughout that of an organism, if we accept the definition of the latter term proposed by the German philosopher Rickert: "An organism is a whole whose parts are its prerequisites, and hence it possesses a kind of conditional unity, namely in so far as only the co-operation of its various parts in a definite direction enables it to 'live' and makes it into an 'organism'"[1]). This definition agrees perfectly with the formula used by Eliot to express his ideal of civilization: "A spiritual and intellectual co-ordination on a high level"[2]). Literature, being a part of civilization, is expected to be guided by the same principle as the larger whole. It seems necessary to emphasize in this connection the consistency with which

1) Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens*, Tübingen 1920, p. 120: "Jeder Organismus nämlich ist ein Ganzes, dessen Teile Bedingungen dieses Ganzen sind, und er besitzt insofern eine konditionale Einheit: nur durch das Zusammenwirken seiner verschiedenen Teile in einer bestimmten Richtung ‚lebt' er, und ist er überhaupt ein ‚Organismus'."

2) LA, p. 140.

Eliot tries to keep the function of each agent distinct from that of all others, requiring each to confine itself to its appropriate task and to perform this task with a complete comprehension of its particular purpose. His demand for integrity of conception and effect, his deprecation of hybrid art, that is, art which works in no definite direction, or in more than one direction at once, trying to combine the advantages of various incompatible genres, seem all to follow from his conviction of the need for purposeful co-ordination. His condemnation of the confusion of such different aims as the exposition of theoretical thought and the creation of poetic vision or as the elucidation and the composition of works of art are examples of these tendencies which have already been analysed. His fundamental objection to Elizabethan drama is of a very similar kind. In his essay on *Four Elizabethan Dramatists* he points out the lack of logic involved in the Elizabethan practice of aiming simultaneously at a conventional style and at realism. This fault of the playwrights of those times is explained by "their artistic greediness, their desire for every sort of effect together, their unwillingness to accept any limitation and abide by it" — in other words, by their inability to practise consistent, economical concentration as far as their stage-craft was concerned [1]). In connection with such views, we find a frequent use, in a tone of approval, of such expressions as: "each was what it was and not another thing" [2]), "it is what it is; it does not pretend to be another thing" [3]), and a corresponding tone of censure in Eliot's references to "something which was aiming at something else" [4]), or to "something that it pretends to be and is not" [5]). What is required in each case, is the subordination of literary practice to some definite artistic or theoretical purpose and the absolute adjustment of the method employed to the aim.

* * *

The two fundamental elements which Eliot wishes to conciliate and for which he tries to devise a scheme of profitable collaboration are the individual with his spontaneous, frequently undisciplined impulses, and civilization as a whole, or, more specifically, the writer and literature, especially poetry, as a co-ordinated system of valuable achievements. The ideal of such a

1) *The Criterion*, Feb. 1924, pp. 122—123. 2) SW, p. 27. 3) SW, p. 116. 4) *Criterion*, Vol. II, p. 118. 5) SW, p. 149.

scheme manifestly is that no individual inspiration or vitality should be suppressed and that the whole should at the same time prosper in a state of perfect, unimpeded development. For this purpose, Eliot expects the individual to undergo a long, exacting, and strenuous discipline, so as to enrich, and be enriched by, the system. The problem is whether the individual is not likely to suffer unduly from this discipline as Eliot imagines it.

This has been maintained repeatedly [1]). Mr. F. L. Lucas, one of Eliot's severest critics, attacks him for his "impersonal theory of poetry", as it is called in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, where Eliot asserts that the progress of the artist is "a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" [2]). Mr. Lucas tries to refute this statement by way of sarcasms, taking it in its literal sense: "The artists and writers I have known have been persons whose personality was anything but extinct; however, perhaps they were false brethren, wolves in sheep's clothing" [3]). That Eliot's dictum does not refer to any real *destruction* of personality, should, however, be evident from the very sentence preceding the offensive passage — the utterance ascribing to the poet "a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable". Our opinion, which is that this does not mean self-destruction but merely a vital union with something of superior value, is confirmed by the preface to *Le Serpent*. Eliot observes with regard to this poem that "like all of Valéry's poetry, it is impersonal in the sense that personal emotion, personal experience is extended and completed in something impersonal — not in the sense of something divorced from personal experience and passion". He adds that no good poetry can be the latter: "Indeed, the virtue, the

1) Ramon Fernandez, otherwise a sincere admirer of Eliot's criticism, notes the excessive rigour of his insistence on his theoretical ideals: "Mais où nous ne sommes plus guidés par un plaisir immédiat et impérieux (j'entends le plaisir d'un juge cultivé et qui prétend à la compétence), nous risquons de l'être uniquement par une représentation idéale; nous risquons de substituer cette représentation à la réalité esthétique: d'où confusion nouvelle, pour le moins aussi grave que l'autre, car nous inclinerons à mettre une œuvre médiocre qui présentera les caractères que nous avons définis, au-dessus d'une œuvre éminente d'où ces caractères seront absents." Cf. *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, Tome XXIV, p. 249.

2) SW, p. 53. 3) *Life and Letters*, Nov. 1929, cf. F. L. Lucas's essay on *Criticism*, pp. 448 ff.

marvel of Lucretius is the passionate act by which he annihilates himself in a system and unites himself with it, gaining something greater than himself". What is objected to is solely that insistence on one's personal peculiarities and idiosyncrasies which Eliot, as we have seen, regards as one of the most dangerous obstacles to artistic perfection and real civilization: "But to those who like to preserve themselves in their limited 'personalities', and to have the emotions and notions of these petty personalities flattered by constant repetition rather than extended and transformed by the poet's superior organization, neither Lucretius nor Valéry, nor any other excellent poet, can ever be really acceptable and comprehensible". We see, the poet is desired to put all his passion into the surrender "to something which is more valuable" — that is, more valuable than "he is at the moment": apparently, judging from those of Eliot's views already expounded, to some objective piece of work, to the task by which he is to add his contribution to civilization, to the presentation of something which is to perpetuate his own most valuable experiences, to the transmutation into poetry of some philosophical or theological system, but never to the aim of merely venting his feelings because he just happens to be experiencing them and because they are expressive of his "personality". The poet's legitimate aim, according to Eliot, as has been seen in the course of our inquiry, is to strain all his energies to their utmost in order to perfect himself and to produce something of intrinsic value, not for the sake of reflecting himself as in a mirror or of merely unburdening his mind. As Bonamy Dobrée puts it: "One cannot repeat it too often, it is not the business of art just to express the intense emotions; a dog does that when he bays the moon" [1]). Eliot's formula of the "objective correlative" as quoted by us refers advisedly to the expression of emotion "in the form of art". He does not plead for the renunciation of personality but for the best possible use to be made of it. To lead the way towards this goal appears to be the object of his criticism. It remains to be made sure whether his theoretical structure is in its essentials compatible with this desire.

* * *

1) Bonamy Dobrée, *The Lamp and the Lute*, Clarendon Press 1929, cf. essay on *T. S. Eliot*.

In Eliot's conception of the creative process both elements, spontaneity and discipline, are intended to get their due share: the preparatory labour, which is to facilitate the work of inspiration, and the critical sifting and checking after the event — both of them conscious and deliberate processes — are found to be indispensable; but the impression we are given is that alone they are of no avail, if the poet's mind is to create something permanent and first-rate. The question is whether inspiration, which is held to be the culmination of creative activity, is likely to be influenced by these preliminary efforts — at any rate, whether it is sufficiently susceptible to their influence to take the course Eliot prescribes. Is the poet's inspiration willing to concentrate on an "objective correlative" or to identify itself with a definite task, dispensing with "self-expression" and Rousseauistic "confession"? Is it not justified to assume that inspiration is just "fine frenzy", and that any attempts at checking and controlling it are futile? It is, however, evident that Eliot does not dream of suppressing spontaneity. What he desires is a gradual, strenuous, but not pedantic, course of self-education. Thus, the poet's acquiring the "historical sense" is expected to happen in such a way as not to "encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness": "Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum". We have already shown how Eliot wishes this educational process to take place as a series of passionate affairs, of love adventures with the great minds of the past. Yet "some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it"[1]), and discipline and deliberate effort are expected to support and stimulate spontaneity. If the whole being of a poet is saturated with an intimate, vital knowledge of great literature, if he knows his own mental resources and the most profitable direction to take, it seems probable that even inspiration will be influenced by the general state of his mind. Assiduous but cautious preparatory efforts may help to modify the character of his spontaneous impulses. The difficulty seems to be in the *degree* of self-compulsion possible in each individual instance without harming the writer's vital force. This question will have to be resumed later. The normal author of intelligence and will-power, at any rate, may be

1) SW, p. 52.

assumed to profit by a deliberate study of great writers. Eliot's theory regarding the concrete objectification of emotion seems equally plausible. We have already tried to show how the device of the "objective correlative" makes for discipline by enabling the author to concentrate all his attention on some definite point instead of struggling in the void. It may be remembered that this concrete situation, these definitely realizable imaginary facts were to be selected so as to be adequate to the author's emotions. If the writer happens to come across such a "correlative", a promising concrete subject corresponding to his own frame of mind, the odds are that his creative impulse will be stimulated by the subject. He may have to seek and wait for the latter, but once he has found it, according to all likelihood it will impose itself on his imagination and make it work spontaneously (even though some deliberate effort might have to be put in). This is approximately how Eliot seems to understand the matter in *The Sacred Wood.* The rough outlines of the situation, the objective symbol found by the writer provide what he calls the "structural emotion" — a stimulus releasing in the author "a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident". A whole complex of kindred feelings is supposed to be aroused by the subject and to combine with it — a spontaneous mode of concentration greatly facilitating the writer's task: while eliminating chaotic indefiniteness, it does not seem to damage his emotional vitality [1]).

In his treatment of the problem of abstract thought in poetry, Eliot pays much attention to the need for spontaneous emotion. Particulary the preference of old, generally accepted logical systems can be observed to be associated with the desire that the union of the author's emotional life with the thought should be as spontaneous as possible, apparently in connection with the consideration that such systems are less apt to lead to an interference of logical speculation with the emotional process. What does not seem to have been allowed for sufficiently, is, however, that original theoretical speculation, even though it should in some measure distract the poet from reacting to ideas in purely emotional terms, may, by dint of its exciting novelty and of the poet's consciousness of doing something of his

1) SW, p. 57.

own, strike emotional and imaginative sparks from his mind that may occasionally prove more intense and forcible than the emotion and vision caused by old, accepted thought. This point of view, though not with reference to Eliot, has been suggested by Prof. Herbert Read in *The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry* [1]). By refraining in his artistic activity from original thought, the poet may perhaps devote himself more exclusively to moulding his experiences in a poetic form, and this may be the course advisable for most literary artists, yet there may still be cases where the intellectual and the poetical impulses are equally developed and cannot be kept separate. It is highly probable that this impairs the homogeneity of the artistic result, but there still remains the likelihood that the excitement of the intellectual process may contribute valuable vigour which otherwise would remain dormant and might eventually be condemned to atrophy. Hence, we do not feel quite convinced by Eliot's assumption that "a framework of accepted and traditional ideas" [2]) would have been beneficial to Blake. Although Blake's work contains "confusion of thought, emotion and vision" in plenty [3]), the emotion conveyed to the reader is often of an exceptional intensity and the vision of a compelling evocativeness and force of outline which seem to be largely due to Blake's "impure" combination of intellectual impulse with an extraordinary emotional interest in the thought. If Blake could have been induced to "annihilate himself" in a system already in existence, and to do so with a passionate vigour equal to that with which he seems to have devoted himself to the elaboration of a system of his own, the aesthetic result might have been greater than it actually is. The question is solely whether by abandoning independent speculation and embracing some traditional philosophy he would not have suffered his most abundant sources of feeling and vision to dry up, which would in its own way have been contrary to Eliot's desire for economy of energy.

The problem, if put in a more general form, is largely whether an uncongenial discipline is not liable to damage the artist's vitality — a matter we have already touched upon. We

1) *The Criterion*, April 1923, p. 258. The possibility of producing successful poetry while seriously aiming at the formulation of abstract ideas has been maintained by Edmund Wilson in *Axel's Castle*, Scribner's Sons, N. Y. & London, 1931, p. 119.

2) SW, p. 158. 3) ib.

have adduced conclusive evidence to the effect that Eliot is aware of the difficulty. At the same time, we get the impression that now and then his desire for conscious co-ordination tends to become unreasonable, at all events as far as certain exceptionally impulsive types of poets are concerned. The ordinary poet, and many geniuses, may do well to impose on themselves the rigour of definite laws, being able to conform to the requirements involved without sacrificing much vital power. All depends on their ability to readjust themselves. If they are congenitally incapable of much readjustment but possessed of great innate gifts of a high order, it is better to leave them to their fate than to insist on their adopting methods which may be good for people of a normally malleable mental constitution. One may whole-heartedly agree with Eliot's assertion that "the question is, the first question, *not* what comes natural or what comes easy to us, but what is right?", without overlooking the fact that sometimes things that are usually right, may be wrong, being impossible without serious harm being inflicted on the *first* prerequisite of artistic creation — vital power. If the best of all imaginable types of poetry is unattainable, the second-best is perhaps not to be despised. In *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*, Eliot points out that the philosophy of life Shakespeare employed was less coherent than the one used by Dante, which, considering Eliot's own ideas, should be a disadvantage even from a purely poetic point of view, since such a system is less helpful to the poet in his effort to find a definite angle of vision enabling him to co-ordinate his emotional impulses [1]). Yet even though Eliot admits that a more profitable philosophy might be imaginable theoretically, he denies the feasibility of any but the one used under the circumstances actually given, for the reason that no other system would have been that of Shakespeare's own time, and that consequently no other system would have inspired him with the same emotional intensity [2]). Here the compromise with the second-best — which is at the same time the best actually possible without damaging the poet's vitality — is obvious. In the present case, Eliot is willing enough to make allowances for considerations of constitutional fitness, refraining from expecting the poet to do something contrary to his nature and training: Shake-

1) SSS, p. 12. 2) SSS, p. 14.

speare could not have adopted Dante's system or any philosophy other than that of his time, because it was not the one to which he had become inured to the point of its becoming an integral part of his being. Eliot's fault seems to be his forgetting that original speculation may similarly become "part and parcel of the personality", and that by abandoning it the personality may in certain cases forgo even its emotional and artistic powers.

Similar difficulties arise with regard to Eliot's demand for that catholicity and comprehensiveness, that all-round development of the mind he expects to be promoted by the acquisition of the "historical sense". It does not seem unlikely that individualistic exaggeration and one-sidedness may be indispensable to certain types of mind. Eliot owns in a passage quoted in another context, that that "exaggeration of particular qualities" to the exclusion of others observed by him in English prose and verse is not merely "the great danger" but also "the great interest and excitement" of the latter. Nevertheless, his ideal is the "traditional" poet, who is not carried away by any predominant impulse "to the exclusion of others", but makes a conscious use of everything calculated to make him into a highly efficient part of the literary organism. Circumspection (of a subtle sort) is the quality Eliot requires. Now, there may be writers whose success depends almost entirely on their exploitation of certain innate modes of experience and who would profit comparatively little by trying to develop other modes — writers who might be called specialists, very limited indeed but extraordinarily forcible and competent to translate their experiences into terms of artistic vision. They may almost entirely disregard the culture, the refinement, the manifold excellent qualities developed by their literary predecessors. Such a one-sided type is, or seems to be, D. H. Lawrence. There is no convincing evidence that he might have produced anything of equal intensity by giving up his specialization in the treatment of sexual reactions, although it is obvious that the effects he produces lack that broadness which distinguishes Shakespeare or Dante. There is no doubt that he possesses vitality, though he may not incorporate tradition to the extent aimed at by Eliot. The impression one gets is that his specific way of reacting to life amounts to an obsession with sexual aspects. One may call this morbid if one likes. It is certainly exaggeration from the point of view of the average person, but it seems

to be due to an irrepressible impulse. Even if by checking this impulse and devoting more attention to other matters he might not have paralysed his creative power, and might have been led to more catholic artistic results, it seems questionable if the self-compulsion involved would not have resulted in a dangerous waste of energy, and if he would have been able to apply himself to anything else with the same absorbing interest.

In an article written for *La Nouvelle Revue Française*[1]), Eliot characterizes Lawrence as "un démoniaque, un démoniaque simple et naturel muni d'un évangile", whose characters, in making love, "perdent toutes les aménités, raffinements et grâces que plusieurs siècles ont élaborés afin de rendre l'amour supportable". He describes those characters as "rétrogradant au-delà du singe et du poisson jusqu'à quelque hideux accouplement du protoplasme". The problem is whether a demoniac is not apt to lose his abnormal energy by accepting the amenities of civilization. Eliot's final pronouncement on Lawrence in the article in question is: "Ceci n'est pas mon monde, tel qu'il est, ou tel que je souhaiterais qu'il fût". Granting the undesirability of an actual universe resembling Lawrence's, we have yet to admit the possibility that by forcing himself to accept a better one, Lawrence might have sapped his creative vigour.

It is in the very nature of a convention, in the sense generally attached to the term, to be meant as a common form of intercourse and communication. The "conventions" advocated by Eliot are to serve a similar purpose, besides facilitating the writer's search for a form embodying his experience. The fact that they are to bridge the gulf between the author and his public makes it understandable that they cannot possibly be designed for eccentrics. The latter may be expected to find them useful only in so far as their own mentality agrees with that of the majority for whom these conventions are intended, but seeing that there are always likely to be certain points of contact between people of the same generation, even the eccentric will probably find something to profit by in the conventions of his age, provided these are still alive and not merely a dead heritage of the past. He may have to recast some conventions, adapting

1) La Nouvelle Revue Française, Tome XXVIII, 1927, pp. 669 ff.: *Le Roman Anglais Contemporain* par T. S. Eliot.

them to his own purposes, but it is more likely than not that he will find some profitable elements. Yet a serious difficulty comes in when a person of pronounced tastes, gifts and inclinations is to be compelled to submit to conventions that are contrary to his nature. Eliot desires this to happen to the great actor, or, at any rate, he prefers the risk that the latter might waste some valuable vigour under the yoke of some minutely prescribed stage-convention to the danger that the minor actor should have to create his own rôles. This compromise in favour of the average actor is not unnatural, since great actors are exceptions and stage-craft depends quite particularly on collaboration, but it reminds one of the instances previously discussed where Eliot tended to neglect a possible loss of creative vitality in the hope of gaining concentration and discipline instead.

Eliot's critical structure taken in its totality impresses one as a kind of extremely subtle National Economy of the Artistic Mind. It does not favour eccentric genius, however forceful the latter may be in itself, inclining to overlook exceptions and treating them as disturbances of the general scheme. The capacity for discipline, subordination and self-adjustment comes to be regarded as one of the most highly prized possessions of the imaginative writer, somewhat to the detriment of powerful but untractable personality. All waste of effort is apparently intended to be eliminated, the minor poet is assigned his useful part in the general co-operative task, each agent is to know his function and to perform it to perfection, all disorder and insubordination, even though brilliant, is stigmatized as unlawful owing to its dangerous effect on the whole. The ideal poet is imagined as a focus for all the essential qualities of the human mind, as a perfectly co-ordinated organism comprizing all extremes, endowed with a perfect command of the artistic riches of the past, and projecting all this wealth of matter into works of art that are "rich and strange", "universal and impersonal" [1]).

It is for the sake of this ideal, the most perfect embodiment of which in existence Eliot sees in Dante, that he seems to be ready to sacrifice the eccentric. But the intensity and severity of his opposition to subversive individualism may also be explained, at least in part, as a reaction against a wide-spread

1) SSS, p. 14.

historical movement, a modern tendency towards excess in that direction, the current generally called Romanticism. He is a declared enemy of the qualities he associates with this word, he himself siding with what he names Classicism. The preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* announces the latter fact with dignified precision, defining the author's point of view as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics and anglo-catholic in religion" [1]). We have to show why the Romantic movement was bound to rouse his protest, by examining more accurately what meaning he attaches to the terms "romantic" and "classic".

In his essay on *A Romantic Aristocrat* in *The Sacred Wood*, devoted to an analysis of George Wyndham, Eliot supplies a definition and illustration of Romanticism. His definition is contained in the following passage [2]):

"What is permanent and good in Romanticism is curiosity —

. . . l'ardore
Ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
E degli vizii umani e del valore —

a curiosity which recognizes that any life, if accurately and profoundly penetrated, is interesting and always strange. Romanticism is a short cut to the strangeness without the reality, and it leads its disciples only back on themselves. George Wyndham had curiosity, but he employed it romantically, not to penetrate the real world, but to complete the various features of the world he made for himself."

Though Eliot here admits that the romantic feels the interest of any life, "if accurately and profoundly penetrated", he sees his essence in neglecting reality as a whole and in looking merely for that strangeness which, as he says, leads the disciples of Romanticism "only back on themselves". The romantic is held to be seeking a strangeness in life, an idea of which he has already formed for himself, trying only to confirm and diversify the latter by hunting for supplementary material in the actual world. The rest of the essay illustrates this view, for example this passage on Wyndham [3]):

"He was chivalrous, the world was an adventure of himself. It is characteristic that on embarking as a subaltern for Egypt he wrote enthusiastically:

1) LA, p. IX. 2) SW. pp. 31—32. 3) SW, p, 27.

I do not suppose that any expedition since the days of Roman governors of provinces has started with such magnificence; we might have been Antony going to Egypt in a purple-sailed galley."

This is obviously a one-sided way of looking at reality — if it is the essential truth about Wyndham's attitude, as Eliot apparently takes it to be. Wyndham notes those aspects of the expedition that fit in with his "chivalrous" taste, his desire for magnificent adventure. Eliot quotes as correct criticism a remark of Charles Whibley's[1]: "George Wyndham was by character and training a romantic. He looked with wonder upon the world as upon a fairyland." He contrasts Wyndham with Leonardo da Vinci, who, as he says, "lived in no fairyland, but his mind went out and became a part of things"[2]. The idea is now obvious: Wyndham, the romantic, had a preconceived notion of the world as a magnificent dreamland full of chivalrous, gorgeous adventure, and chose to note only those aspects of actuality that accorded with this notion. His aim was the excitement of attractive strangeness and splendour, not the apprehension of the world in its totality, which would have included those features that did not appeal to his taste. In this sense, the romantic type as represented by Wyndham is akin to those eccentrics who are driven to that "exaggeration of certain qualities to the exclusion of others" which Eliot deprecates in English literature. Wyndham, as described in Eliot's essay, is urged onwards by an impulse which he aims to gratify, neglecting to develop himself into a catholic, all-round mind. He is pictured as actually failing to notice those things in life that do not agree with his preconceived preferences. This is clearly contrary to Eliot's demand for that self-discipline which aims to attain some definite goal fixed not *a priori* but on the basis of a satisfactory, comprehensive knowledge of the world and of one's proper function as an organic part of the latter. This is one sense in which Romanticism was bound to rouse Eliot's opposition and protest.

The attitude to Romanticism set forth in *A Romantic Aristocrat* is consistent with Eliot's later observations on the matter, the most typical of which are found in *The Function of Criticism*. There Eliot defines Classicism and Romanticism as re-

1) SW, p. 27. 2) ib.

spectively "the complete and the fragmentary, the adult and the immature, the orderly and the chaotic" [1]), and a few pages later the romantic is represented as "deficient or undeveloped in his ability to distinguish between fact and fancy" [2]). All the features of Romanticism here enumerated — "the fragmentary", "the immature", "the chaotic", as well as the inability "to distinguish between fact and fancy" — are already implied in the earlier description of the romantic mind. The romantic as there described was manifestly "fragmentary" in the sense that his view of the world contained only fragments, those particular fragments that agreed with his own appetites; he was immature since he was incapable of viewing life as it actually is, fixing his eyes too often on illusions; he was likely to be chaotic because he failed to curb his inclinations, indulging exclusively in his enthusiasms. Such a type of mind leads easily to the cult of the "inner voice" and to the kindred doctrine of "doing as one likes".

All these are tendencies that Eliot, given his convictions, was bound to oppose. His attitude to most of them has already been dealt with in some detail. Given his ideal of a general "spiritual and intellectual co-ordination on a high level", Eliot could not help declaring war against Romanticism, and some of his more extremely anti-individualistic impulses may thus be explained as reactions from the English romantic tradition as he encountered it in the literature of the last hundred and fifty years or so.

The definitions of Classicism supplied by Eliot are but few, and none of them seems complete, but they may help us to clarify our conception of his general tendency. In *The Function of Criticism* we found several adjectives attached to that word: "the complete", "the adult", "the orderly" [3]), and in a further passage of the same article we read that "the classicist, or adult mind, is thoroughly realist — without illusions, without day-dreams, without hope, without bitterness, and with an abundant resignation" [4]). The latter definition pictures a type diametrically opposed to George Wyndham and his like. All indulgence in pleasant illusions, all unfounded optimism are denied to the classicist. Being "thoroughly realist", as opposed to the romantic who is unable to distinguish between "fact and fancy" (the latter idea appears in the identical sentence), the classicist seems to be

1) *The Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 34. 2) op. cit. p. 39. 3) p. 34. 4) p. 39.

imagined as acknowledging only the actual world as a valid foundation for anything. This is in accord with Eliot's scheme of fruitful co-ordination, inasmuch as this latter was found to be attainable only by means of an accurate assessment of the nature of reality with its supplies of utilizable values. "Realism", if interpreted in the sense of "a tendency to examine the world as it is", is consistent with "the complete", if we venture to explain the latter as denoting the fully developed mind with a complete view of the world — which, as we know, is precisely the type the need for which Eliot urgently inculcates — particularly since an accurate total view can be obtained solely by seeing facts as they are, and by seeing them in their right relations to other facts. The "orderly" type of mind is apparently likewise the mind with a correct sense of relations and proportions. The "adult" nature of the classicist is emphasized in contradistinction to the "immaturity" of the romantic incapable of distinguishing between illusion and fact, and the adjective seems to imply primarily an assertion of the superiority of the classical type.

An article announcing the programme of *The New Criterion, The Idea of a Literary Review* (Jan. 1926, p. 5), contains a hesitating definition of Classicism as "a tendency — discernible even in art — toward a higher and higher conception of Reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by Reason". The fact that Classicism is identified with a rational control of emotion, agrees with the previous definition of the classicist as the "realist" mind, the mind opposed to illusion and fancy, which sees things as they actually are, dispensing with the intervention of all fond hopes and dreams. Reason, discrimination, the faculty we found to form such an important element of Eliot's theories, and discipline, which was seen to be held equally important, are here emphasized as the cardinal features of the classicist creed he professes, in opposition to emotion, in various respects the disintegrating element of his system. They are his antidotes to the enthusiastic, individualistic insubordination of Romanticism.

* * *

There is much reason for assuming that the austerity of Eliot's views is to a considerable extent due to certain subtle inner causes of an emotional character. His endeavour to secure stability and self-discipline, his comprehensive designs calculated

to prevent all danger of futile struggle, strike one at times as prompted by an awareness of profound personal difficulties.

There is an unmistakable note of pessimistic feeling in one of the references to Classicism we have quoted — the description of the classical mind as "thoroughly realist — without illusions, without day-dreams, without hope, without bitterness, and with an abundant resignation". The same distinct touch of disillusionment reappears in several of Eliot's dicta regarding the poet's function in life. Dante and Shakespeare — both mentioned as representative types of the great poet — are held to have attempted "to metamorphose private failures and disappointments" [1]). The poet's destiny is considered to be one of pain, and his poetry to serve him as a means of escape into a domain far beyond the accidents and torments of the actual world: "Shakespeare, too, was occupied with the struggle — which alone constitutes life for the poet — to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal" [2]). A similar key-note is heard in the familiar passage from *The Sacred Wood* concerning the poet's desire to relieve himself of the burden of his personality: "But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things" [3]). Since these remarks are not casual but appear in references to matters occupying a central position in the essays where they occur, there is some justification for taking them to express a firm personal conviction of the painfulness of life for the genuine poet.

Poetic creation is here regarded as a means of relief from anguish, as the transmutation of subjective disappointment into something soothing and impersonal. This view bears a close resemblance to the psycho-analytical notion of the sublimation of inhibited impulses. The analogy becomes even closer on inspecting certain passages in Eliot's essay on *Hamlet* dealing with the consequences of unobjectified, unrelieved emotion. Eliot speaks of Hamlet's feeling of horror which he is unable to understand — a feeling which is assumed to correspond to a similar experience of the poet himself: "He cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action" [4]). A little later in the same essay Eliot describes this emotion as the com-

1) SSS, p. 14. 2) ib. 3) SW, p. 58. 4) SW, p. 101.

mon experience of all sensitive persons: "The intense feeling, ecstatic or terrible, without an object or exceeding its object, is something which every person of sensibility has known; it is doubtless a study to pathologists"[1]). The "objective correlative", the absence of which causes this experience, is deemed necessary as a means of venting one's mind and of externalizing and absorbing the poet's inarticulate, troublesome inner stirrings. The preface to Valéry's *Serpent* shows that Eliot desires the creative process to introduce order into these incoherent impulses, enabling the poet to master his inner chaos: "To reduce one's disorderly and mostly silly personality to the gravity of a *jeu de quilles* would be an excellent thing". Mental torment and confusion are to be objectified into something external, powerless to inflict further pain.

The last quotation suggests a notion of the inferiority of the human personality and a desire to transform its experiences into something better. We know this idea. It is contained in a statement already discussed regarding the poet's "continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable". This idea finds frequent expression in those of Eliot's writings which have appeared since *The Sacred Wood* and the article on *Hamlet*. The acuteness with which Eliot has come to be conscious of man's impotence and failings helps us to understand the intensity of his struggle for a sound, coherent system of norms supporting the individual in his labour for self-improvement, but it carries Eliot much further than that, *viz.*, to doubting the power even of "a severe spiritual askesis and the discipline and development of the soul"[2]) to lead man anywhere near an acceptable degree of perfection. He has arrived at the stage of despairing even of the ability of his own circumspect scheme to give valid guidance without the aid of some supreme agent, some authority beyond human control. The intensity of Eliot's desire for stability is seen with extraordinary distinctness when he renounces all hope of human initiative, applying to religion for help.

Eliot's classicist, "realist" mind holds our soul to be feeble and contaminated, but he wants these faults to be definitely recognized. He sees Machiavelli's utility in his "perpetual summons to examination of the weakness and impurity of the soul"[3]). His

1) SW, p. 102. 2) *The Monthly Criterion*, July 1927, p. 73. 3) LA, p. 66.

ideal is not oblivion, let alone illusion; he considers these unwise: "Wisdom consists largely of scepticism and uncynical disillusion"[1]). His ridicule chastises those who admire Baudelaire as a morbid, hysterical idolater of sin who knew how to surround it with the gorgeousness of a ritualistic atmosphere[2]). Eliot values Baudelaire for exactly the opposite qualities: for his determination to face the truth about man's corruptness and for the resulting humbleness of mind (both qualities that are radically opposed to the egotistic valuation of the "inner voice" as well as to Wyndham's "looking upon the world as upon a fairyland"): "Was any one ever less hysterical, more lucid, than Baudelaire? There is a difference between hysteria and looking into the Shadow"[3]); "...to Baudelaire, alone, these things [*i. e.*, evil and vice and sin turned by Swinburne and Wilde into objects of histrionic display] were real"[4]). "And Baudelaire came to attain the greatest, the most difficult, of the Christian virtues, the virtue of humility"[5]).

If humility arises from a precise knowledge of one's failings, it is likely to be of a Socratic quality as an indispensable step towards the labour of self-improvement. In this sense it is necessary for the realization of Eliot's plan of progress by way of discipline. But his conviction of man's fundamental inferiority, which was only to be vaguely felt in *The Sacred Wood*, has become so pronounced in his later writings, particulary in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, that he sees no way for the better except in appealing to some higher power. He accepts Original Sin, denying "the myth of human goodness which for liberal thought replaces the belief in Divine Grace"[6]). Humanity impresses him as so corrupt that the truth about it would appear unbearable, were it not for the support of religion. His view of the common aversion from Machiavelli is that he exposed the real nature of man, which terrified those who lacked the consolation of a religious creed, putting their trust in man's own power to improve: "The world of human motives he depicts is true — that is to say, it is humanity without the addition of superhuman Grace. It is therefore tolerable only to persons who have also a definite religious belief; to the effort of the last three centuries to supply religious belief by belief in Humanity the creed of Machiavelli is

1) LA, p. 76. 2) LA, pp. 88 ff. 3) LA, p. 90. 4) LA, p. 92. 5) LA, p. 99. 6) LA, p. 64.

insupportable"[1]). It is with deep sympathy that Eliot, the former Unitarian and present convert to Anglo-Catholicism, describes the discovery of the doctrine of Original Sin by Baudelaire: "He had to discover Christanity for himself. In this pursuit he was alone in the solitude which is only known to saints. To him the notion of Original Sin came spontaneously, and the need for prayer"[2]).

The essay on *The Humanism of Irving Babbitt*, which appeared first in *The Forum* and then in *For Lancelot Andrewes*[3]), contains a definite formulation of Eliot's attitude towards self-discipline without religion. It shows his refusal to believe in man's ability to find a sufficiently strong driving power within himself, which leads him to the conclusion that the only way of salvation is through religion. The "inner check" which Professor Babbitt recommends strikes him as unlikely to last without some definite aim, some concrete enthusiasm other than "the enthusiasm for being lifted out of one's merely rational self by some enthusiasm"[4]). The enthusiasm for life as such impresses him as silly. He demands some ultimate goal that can be definitely viewed — a trait we have seen continually in his purely literary criticism: "What is the higher will to *will*, if there is nothing either 'anterior, exterior, or superior' to the individual?"[5]). He admits that civilization depends on self-control — this is an essential of his creed, as we know well enough by now —, and is aware that Babbitt manifestly wills civilization. But civilization, as he says, is nothing concrete. What civilized people have in common is "rather a habit in the same direction than a will to civilization"[6]); or, to quote from a review of Clive Bell he has published[7]), "civilization, like pleasure, cannot be aimed at directly". "I do not believe that I can sit down for three minutes to will civilization without my mind's wandering to something else"[8]). He is unable to discover anything besides religion that could give impetus, direction and discipline to the higher endeavours of man: "And unless by civilization you mean material progress, cleanliness, etc. — which is not what Mr. Babbitt means; if you mean a spiritual and intellectual co-ordination on a high level, then it is

1) LA, p. 63. 2) LA, p. 98. 3) pp. 126 ff. 4) LA, p. 137. 5) LA, p. 138. 6) LA, pp. 139—140. 7) *The Criterion*, Sept. 1928, p. 164. 8) LA, p. 139.

doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion, and religion without a church"[1]).

This desire for something superhuman to stimulate man receives further illustration in *A Note on Poetry and Belief*, a brief article written for *The Enemy*[2]), which exemplifies with particular distinctness Eliot's conviction of the dangerous nature of that emotional and intellectual chaos in which he feels himself and our time almost inextricably involved. As we have already seen, even though he draws a definite line between the specific activity of the poet and his purely intellectual creed, he takes for granted the possibility of "poetic assent", which has been shown to bear a close resemblance to I. A. Richards's "emotional belief". This *unreasoned*, or only partly reasoned, but vitalizing variety of belief, which supports so many people incapable of verifying the doctrines they implicitly accept, is evidently what is deemed so indispensable in that article, one of the most poignant expressions of Eliot's struggle for some Absolute to cling to: "I cannot see that poetry can ever be separated from something which I should call belief, and to which I cannot see any reason for refusing the name of belief, unless we are to reshuffle names altogether. It should hardly be needful to say that it will not inevitably be orthodox Christian belief, although that possibility can be entertained, since Christianity will probably continue to modify itself, as in the past, into something that can be believed in . . . It takes application, and a kind of genius, to believe anything, and to believe *anything* (I do not mean merely to believe in some 'religion') will probably become more and more difficult as time goes on . . . We await, in fact (as Mr. Richards is awaiting the future poet), the great genius who shall triumphantly succeed in believing *something*. For those of us who are higher than the mob, and lower than the man of inspiration, there is always *doubt*; and in doubt we are living parasitically (which is better than not living at all) on the minds of men of genius of the past who have believed something."

The above shows not merely Eliot's insistence on the need for some definite creed to aid and guide the individual, but likewise a feeling of inability to lay hold on any belief. This is apparently a temporary state with him, for we know that Eliot has since adopted

1) LA, p. 140. 2) *The Enemy*, Jan. 1927, pp. 15—17.

Anglo-Catholicism, but it is obvious that at that stage he was troubled by an acute consciousness of damaging insecurity. This passionate wish to believe combined with the incapacity for doing so is akin to the state of Baudelaire defined by Charles Du Bos, in a passage quoted by Eliot with evident sympathy, as "cet incoercible besoin de prière au sein même de l'incrédulité, — signe majeur d'une âme marquée de christianisme, qui jamais ne lui échappera tout à fait" [1]).

The desire for the firm foundation of a definite faith becomes particularly understandable if we read carefully the portrait Eliot has drawn of Lancelot Andrewes [2]), that seventeenth century divine in whom he sees the very embodiment of the type of man that is destined to find complete peace of mind and power of concentration within the pale of a co-ordinated system of religious tradition. Andrewes's mind, as depicted by Eliot, differs radically from that contemporary rootlessness of temper described in *A Note on Poetry and Belief.* The reliable foothold he has found is held to enable him to concentrate entirely on positive work instead of spending his vitality on struggling for firm ground. His portrait shows him to have attained that spiritual co-ordination towards which Eliot is labouring. He is pictured as a person to whom the "goût pour la vie spirituelle" [3]) comes spontaneously, his intellect being "satisfied by theology and his sensibility by prayer and liturgy" [4]), and no inner conflicts preventing him from entering into a close bond "with the Church, with tradition" [5]). His voice "is the voice of a man who has a formed visible Church behind him, who speaks with the old authority and the new culture" [6]). " . . . Bishop Andrewes is one of the community of the born spiritual, one

che in questo mondo,
contemplando, gustò di quella pace.

Intellect and sensibility were in harmony" [7]). His whole being is considered to be absorbed by his work. We have already quoted Eliot's description of how, the more Andrewes is engrossed by his intellectual task, the greater grows the intensity of his feeling, drawing inspiration solely from the theme in hand. No waste of effort, no illegitimate employment of the wrong method

1) LA, p. 98. 2) LA, pp. 13 ff. 3) LA, p. 30. 4) LA, p. 31. 5) ib. 6) LA, p. 18. 7) LA, p. 20.

for the sake of a surreptitious "indulgence of his sensibility" is supposed to impede the successful progress of his work[1]). By adjusting his method to a perfectly congenial task he is found to focus all his emotional and intellectual energies on a definite point.

Eliot's attribution of this inner confidence and harmony to Andrewes's peaceful acceptance of a rich, firmly established religious tradition makes intelligible his demand for a similar union with religion. Yet one sees the point of those critics who regard this demand as a mere sign of weariness, accusing him of renouncing that eternal alertness of mind which they consider alone to prevent man from accepting dogmas that do not agree with the sum of his knowledge — a charge which is equivalent to asserting that Eliot has given up intellectual verification for the sake of emotional belief. Such an attitude, however, is entirely in accord with what he himself expects a poet to do. It is more questionable if the method is justifiable for a critic and thinker. Such, at any rate, is the opinion of John Middleton Murry, who, by the way, does not believe in the full success of Eliot's conversion to religious orthodoxy. In an article published on the occasion of *For Lancelot Andrewes*, where Eliot's orthodox point of view was first publicly declared, Mr. Murry describes his taking sanctuary in Anglo-Catholicism as "The Return of the Mayflower" [2]): "He is not one of those enviable souls who can take Orthodoxy with a frolic welcome. To regain a tradition, he has condemned himself to incessant mental suicide. It is the supreme, and in its way not inglorious, self-torture of New-England. Its latest son rejoins that very Church from which his fathers fled. Three centuries are abolished. The *Mayflower* comes home again!"

We are not competent to judge of the completeness or incompleteness of Eliot's religious belief. Our aim was only, in so far as this seems to be warranted by his writings, to indicate his progress towards religion in order to illustrate the intensity and personal force of his desire for stability. That there is a definite personal note in this desire has been suggested for example by Mr. E. M. Forster, who sees its explanation in some obscure, overpowering private experience [3]). E. M. Forster divides men into

1) LA, p. 32. 2) *The New Adelphi*, March-May, 1929, *Notes and Comments*. 3) Cf. E. M. Forster, *T. S. Eliot and his Difficulties*, in *Life and Letters*. June 1929, pp. 417 ff.

three classes "in respect to the horror they find in life": "In the first class are those who have not suffered often or acutely; in the second, those who have escaped through horror into a further vision; in the third, those who continue to suffer". The mystics, Dostoyevski and Blake are placed in the second class: "Mr. Eliot, their equal in sensitiveness, distinct from them in fate, belongs to the third". The conclusions Forster draws are probably far too sweeping. They certainly do not completely agree with what we have said about Eliot's awareness of the importance of personality, at least in poetry, but though one-sided, they emphasize what appears an essential point: "What he seeks is not revelation but stability. Hence his approval of institutions deeply rooted in the State, such as the Anglican Church . . . 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins.' Hence the attempted impersonality and (if one can use the word here) the inhospitality of his writing." The precautions, the infinite foresight displayed in Eliot's system betray not merely an intelligence of a very high order and the determination to find the right way in everything, but also an acute distrust of man, that being afflicted with Original Sin. While aiming to preclude all risks, Eliot's norms run close to eliminating much of that initial vitality of the artist which he so emphatically demands, the source of that "great interest and excitement" of English prose and verse which often results in exaggeration and in so far detracts from perfection, but which at the same time suggests the presence of that indispensable energy without which all literature would be mere "etiolated creation" [1]). On the other hand, Eliot's analysis of the dangers of excessive subjectivity and of the lack of distinctions, as well as his insistence on the need for consciousness, catholicity, self-control, concentration and for a large, coherent framework created by the labours of generations to uphold and guide the individual writer, ought to contribute towards that co-ordination of effort which the present world needs.

1) *A Brief Treatise on the Criticism of Poetry* by T. S. Eliot in *The Chapbook*, No. 9, 1920, cf. p. 1.

Part III.

REMARKS ON THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

It would be sheer presumption to aim at giving a full account of the precise sources by which Eliot's thought has been nourished. His knowledge of languages and his wide and careful learning have enabled him to form a general view of the development of contemporary literary and philosophical theory which seems to be based on most of the important intellectual movements both in Europe and America. His erudition is too extensive to be assessed and analysed within the limits of the present paper. What we therefore intend to do is merely to bring out some of the most essential analogies to his thought to be found in certain important writers whose works he may be assumed to have studied, judging from explicit references in his own writings or from equivalent evidence. We confine ourselves to the examination of works whose dates of publication make it probable that they may have influenced Eliot while his principal views were still in a period of formation, that is to say, to writings published before the appearance of *The Sacred Wood.*

Eliot does not seem to have ever admitted being indebted to George Santayana, though be does refer to him occasionally. As one of the most distinguished minds Harvard has brought to prominence, this Spanish-American is nevertheless likely to have been read by Eliot with some care, particularly since some of Eliot's fundamental ideas have much in common with the views of Santayana.

Santayana objects to much the same features in modern life as Eliot. He concedes some merit to romanticism: "The great merit of the romantic attitude in poetry, and of the transcendental method in philosophy, is that they put us back at the beginning of our experience. They disintegrate convention, which is often cumbrous and confused, and restore us to

immediate perception and primordial will"[1]). Eliot very similarly values the curiosity of romanticism, "a curiosity which recognizes that any life, if accurately and profoundly penetrated, is interesting and always strange". But exactly as Eliot immediately adds that though George Wyndham had curiosity, he "employed it romantically, not to penetrate the real world, but to complete the varied features of the world he made for himself", Santayana reprehends romanticism for its "taking what you know is an independent and ancient world as if it were material for your private emotions"[2]). He sees a fundamental fault in that attitude which values experience merely for its own sake, not as a step towards a higher co-ordination with some definite aim in view: "The barbarian is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being; who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause or by conceiving their ideal goal ... His delight is in abundance and vehemence; his art, like his life, shows an exclusive respect for quantity and splendour of materials"[3]). Compare this with Eliot: "Not our feelings, but the pattern which we may make of our feelings, is the centre of value"[4]). In a similar connection, Santayana says: "To frame solid ideas, which would, in fact, be better than actual things, is not granted to the merely irritable poet; it is granted only to the master-workman, to the modeller of some given substance to some given use — things which define his aspiration, and separate what is relevant and glorious in his dreams from that large part of them which is merely ignorant and peevish. In romantic drama, accidents make the meaningless happiness or unhappiness of a supersensitive adventurer"[5]). Here we have that insistence on a distinctly realized, valuable aim which is one of the essential ideas of Eliot. It has for its corollary Santayana's demand for self-limitation and concentration. Eliot's deprecation of that Elizabethan greediness which insisted on doing more than one thing at a time, leading to the failure to do anything properly, accords perfectly with the views of Santayana as expressed in the following pas-

1) G. Santayana, *Little Essays*, p. 194 (originally in *Three Philosophical Poets*, Ld. 1910). 2) op. cit. p. 193.
3) *Little Essays*, p. 191 (from *Egotism in German Philosophy*, Ld. 1916).
4) Preface to P. Valéry, *Le Serpent*. 5) *Little Essays*, p. 191.

sage: "Immaturity could go no further than to acknowledge no limits defining will and happiness. When such limits, however, are gradually discovered and an authoritative ideal is born of the marriage of human nature with experience, happiness becomes at once definite and attainable; for adjustment is possible for a world that has a fruitful and intelligible structure" [1]). Thus, Santayana urges a combination of insight and discipline, precisely as Eliot does. He concurs with Eliot in desiring that insight to be deepened by a study of the past with all the valuable instruction to be derived from the latter, and accuses the modern world of failing to see this important point. Alluding to the simultaneous adoption by earlier generations of the two disciplines taught by Classical Antiquity and Christianity respectively, he analyses as follows the people of the present, who, as he thinks along with Eliot, believe in their own power to live the good life without any definite standards whatever: "In these latter times, with the prodigious growth of material life in elaboration and of mental life in diffusion, there has supervened upon this old dualism a new faith in man's absolute power, a kind of return to the inexperience and self-assurance of youth. This new inspiration has made many minds indifferent to the two traditional disciplines; neither is seriously accepted by them, for the reason, excellent from their own point of view [*i. e.*, the view that everyone ought to experience the world independently], that no discipline whatever is needed. The memory of ancient disillusion has faded with time. Ignorance of the past has bred contempt for the lessons which the past might teach. Men prefer to repeat the old experiment without knowing that they repeat it" [2]). A world without traditional wisdom, a world preferring the incalculable adventure of life and the liberty to indulge in one's own impulses to all attempts at rational comprehension, reasonable choice and deliberate, purposeful adjustment — such is the picture Santayana draws of the present. He calls it imbecility to hail this state of affairs "as essentially glorious and successful" [3]), seeing the result of it all in an inability to gain a total view and consequently a comprehensive,

1) ib., p. 193 (from *The Life of Reason* I, N.Y. & Ld. 1905).

2) ib., p. 184 (from *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion,* N.Y. & Ld. 1900).

3) *Little Essays,* p. 183 (quoted from *Interpret. of Poetry and Religion).*

wholesome plan of life or art — again a trait which we recognized as typical of Eliot: "Our poets are things of shreds and patches; they give us episodes and studies, a sketch of this curiosity, a glimpse of that romance; they have no total vision, no grasp of the whole reality, and consequently no capacity for a sane and steady idealization. This age of material elaboration has no sense for perfection. Its fancy is retrospective, whimsical, and flickering; its ideals, when it has any, are negative and partial; its moral strength is a blind and miscellaneous vehemence. Its poetry, in a word, is a poetry of barbarism" [1]). With these poets he contrasts Dante, who for him, as for Eliot, is the master-poet of all departments of human experience: "Dante gives a successful example of the *highest species* of poetry. His poetry covers the whole field from which poetry may be fetched, and to which poetry may be applied, from the inmost recesses of the heart to the uttermost bounds of nature and of destiny. If to give imaginative value to something is the minimum task of a poet, to give value to all things, and to the system which things compose, is evidently his greatest task" [2]).

This proves that Santayana's views on life and poetry are in many important respects identical with those of Eliot. Man, according to Santayana, ought to be much more than a mere emotional being taking things as they come and delighting in the turmoil of existence with a firm belief in the value of his personality and of the experiences of this personality. He ought to be a rational creature endowed with a distinct comprehension of the nature of things as well as of his own function — a function determined by his insight into life and by his sense of ultimate values. The greatest poets are not the poets "of shreds and patches", but those who present an ordered vision of the whole of human existence. All these views belong to the very substance of Eliot's creed.

The name of another of "Harvard's present great", of a thinker of similar fame, Irving Babbitt, appears much more frequently in Eliot's writings. Eliot prizes his desire and ability "to perceive Europe as a whole", his "cosmopolitan mind" and his "tendency to seek the centre" [3]), recognizing in Babbitt a further

1) ib., p. 183 (quoted from the same work). 2) ib., p. 187 (from *Three Philosophical Poets).* 3) SW, p. 42.

attitude he shares with him: the aversion from "diagnosing a disease without prescribing a remedy". Some of Eliot's objections to Irving Babbitt's Humanism have already heen dealt with. Apart from the problem of religion, however, there is a great deal that connects the views of the two.

The critical thought of Irving Babbitt deals even more persistently than that of Eliot with the eternal contrast between individual arbitrariness, on the one hand, and a self-imposed discipline for the sake of some definite, valuable ideal, on the other. He is as antagonistic to romanticism as are Eliot and Santayana, defining it as the primary cause of the contemporary confusion of the human mind. Rousseau is, according to him, the root of most of the romantic evil that afflicts modern letters. If the Neo-Classicism of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, particularly on the European continent, insisted on fixed rules and conventional imitation, Rousseau is to Irving Babbitt's mind the chief initiator of that powerful European movement which attached pre-eminent value to individual spontaneity: "For the neo-classical indolence of mechanical imitation, the romanticist substituted the indolence of revery — of a spontaneity that has only to let itself go"[1]). Romanticism and. Rousseauism are in Babbitt's opinion closely connected with a tendency called by him "eleutheromania" — "the instinct to throw off not simply outer and artificial limitations, but all limitations whatsoever"[2]), the abandoning of all discipline, of all intellectual distinctions, of all definiteness of purpose, as mere shackles imposed on the free play of impulses. The romanticist is depicted as "inspired above all by the desire to escape from the conventional", with the result that "in dealing with the arts and literature especially he would discard all the old formal distinctions, and then instead of seeking for a higher discipline would rest in the delightful sense of having got rid of all boundaries and limitations whatsoever"[3]). Like Santayana and Eliot, Babbitt compares the romantic attitude with that of an adventurer, recognizing the attraction of the ease implied in such a philosophy: "For human nature, impatient at best of the discipline of a definite

1) Irving Babbitt, *The New Laokoon*, 8th impression, p. 188 (published 1910, Boston & N. Y.).

2) ib., p. 196. 3) ib., p. 83.

purpose, is ever eager to be off on its 'adventure brave and new'" [1]). The romantic quest of irrational excitement has nothing to do with calculation and forethought: "A man's temper grows romantic in proportion as he is interested in the marvellous, in adventure and surprise, rather than in tracing cause and effect" [2]). Far from distinguishing between right and wrong, the romanticist of Babbitt's description adopts any course of conduct that happens to please him, retiring into a world of dreams when the actual world chances to be contrary to his taste. Rousseau, the chief originator of this attitude in modern letters, is found to have used the creative imagination as "a means of escape into a land of heart's desire, a world of sheer unreality" [3]). "This type of art may be defined as illusion for the sake of illusion, a mere Nepenthe of the spirit, a means not of becoming reconciled to reality but of escaping from it" [4]). Since only individual emotion and personal pleasure, hardly ever standards of a less subjective kind, are the criteria by which Babbitt's typical romanticist judges the world, the latter feels no aversion even from vice, provided it is capable of inspiring him with delight. Even if there should linger in him some vestige of moral feeling, he suppresses it lest his enjoyment should be spoilt: "Rousseau indeed perfected the Epicureanism that consists in intensifying and prolonging enjoyment by revery. If he can thus fuse soul and sense he is careless of the 'future and sum of time'. Rousseau himself speaks of 'covering with a delicious veil the aberrations of the senses'" [5]). This is that very illusion which Eliot contrasts with the sage disillusion and asceticism of the classicist mind.

The views of Irving Babbitt coincide with those of Eliot with regard to the claim of "temperamental taste" to figure as the highest court of appeal. Like Eliot, who identifies the "inner voice" with the creed of "doing as one likes", maintaining that its possessors "ride ten in a compartment to a football match at Swansea, listening to the inner voice, which breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear, and lust" [6]), Babbitt uses sarcastic language regarding those who rely on the promptings of their instincts: "Every one, to be sure, has an initial or temperamental taste, but it is hard to say how far this taste may be trans-

1) ib., p. 76. 2) ib., p. 110. 3) ib., p. 79. 4) ib., p. 85. 5) ib., p. 104. 6) *The Criterion*, Oct. 1923, p. 35.

formed by subordinating it to the higher claims of our nature Dr. Johnson says that if he had no duties and no reference to futurity he should spend his life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman. Here then is the temperamental taste of Dr. Johnson, and if he had been a disciple of M. France, he might have accepted it as final"[1]).

One of the most dangerous effects ascribed by Irving Babbitt to the creed of temperamental taste is the modern tendency towards eccentricity: "The examples are only too numerous of persons who in exclusive reliance on the inner oracle have thought themselves inspired when they were only peculiar"[2]). The type of mind here described is identical with that of those writers who work in isolation, unmindful of the examples of their predecessors and contemporaries, and whose inability to attain perfection Eliot depicts. Babbitt contrasts this class of writers with that other type whose aim it is " to disengage what is normal and representative from the welter of the actual"[3]). "To look to a centre according to the romanticist is at the best to display 'reason', at the worst to be smug and philistine. To look to a true centre is, on the contrary, according to the classicist, to grasp the abiding human element through all the change in which it is implicated, and this calls for the highest use of the imagination"[4]). This search for the essential and permanent is one of the principal characteristics Eliot attributes to the great poet, as we have been at some pains to show.

A tendency of the modern world reprehended by Babbitt as closely analogous to the futile pursuit of emotion for the sake of emotion is the similarly insatiable appetite for knowledge and power over the world of matter. The thirst for intellectual inquiry merely for its own sake, the impulse to subjugate external nature without the justification of any higher purpose, which characterize modern civilization, particularly since Bacon promoted the cause of experimental science, impress Babbitt as quite as vain as the over-indulgence in emotional adventure brought into vogue by Rousseau. Babbitt conceives the modern mind as vacillating between these two extremes without succeeding in find-

1) Irving Babbitt, *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, Boston & N. Y., 7th impression, p. 348 (first published 1912). 2) ib., p. 360.

3) Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, Boston & N. Y., 4th impression, p. 102 (first published in 1919). 4) ib., p. 391.

ing the equipoise it is longing for. Renan is adduced as exemplifying in a typical way that "intellectual unrestraint" in order to temper which the nineteenth century person resorts to "an unrestrained emotionalism": "The 'debauches of dialectic' that produce 'moments of dryness, hours of aridity' are to be offset by the 'kisses of the naive being in whom nature lives and smiles'. This is the dream of a nineteenth century Titan who hopes to scale heaven by piling the emotional Ossa on the intellectual Pelion; who will do anything rather than recognize a law that imposes measure on all things — even the *libido sciendi*"[1]).

This trend towards blind activity or purposeless, undisciplined emotionalism is associated by Babbitt with the modern denial of Original Sin — with the belief, reproved by Eliot and Santayana, in the existence in the human mind of an innate, infallible tendency towards perfection. He regards even Emerson, who recognizes a higher purpose and demands self-control, or, as he calls it, the "inner check", as contaminated by the mentality of those who believe in the divinity of human nature as it is, and is at a loss to understand why Emerson under these circumstances should recommend self-control at all. "One wonders at times why a human nature whose expansive instincts are so divine needs any inner check, why a God thus defined might not safely be reduced to the role of the gods of Epicurus . . . Emerson is thus at one with Rousseau in denying intrinsic evil in human nature. His main weakness, as it seems to me, from which all his other weaknesses derive, is that, like Wordsworth and so many other Rousseauists, he thus 'averts his ken from half of human fate'"[2]). Babbitt pleads, like Eliot, for a humble admission of one's shortcomings — for a humility which urges the individual to subordinate himself to some higher cause. This is the same attitude as that of Eliot when he writes of the poet's "surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable"[3]). Even the way Babbitt formulates this idea, his very style and manner, are closely similar to Eliot's: "If the perception gains ground that man's knowledge of human nature is destined always to remain a mere glimpse and infinitesimal fragment, there may be hope of reaction against what we may call scien-

1) *The New Laokoon*, p. 208. 2) *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, p. 357. 3) SW, p. 52.

tific Titanism. There might even be some recovery of that true humility — the inner obeisance of the spirit to something higher than itself — that has almost become one of the lost virtues"[1]).

But Irving Babbitt does not rest satisfied with the demand for "something higher" to be aimed at. We have shown how Eliot ridicules the tendency to aim direct at civilization, seeing the only right way of working for it in the conscious collaboration of innumerable individuals, each occupied with his own concrete business, yet all of them keeping the ultimate aim in view. This is very much like the method Irving Babbitt inculcates: "Men do not fail, Goethe insisted, so much from lack of light on ultimate problems as from neglect of the very obvious and often very humble duty which is immediately before them"[2]). The highest goal must not be forgotten, but its attainment is not a matter of one desperate leap: "The purpose that is imposed on the lower self and by which it is disciplined is linked by a series of intermediary purposes to the supreme and perfect End itself; in other words, it rests ultimately on an intuition of what Emerson calls the highest unity"[3]). A similar combination of idealism and practical insight is manifest throughout Eliot's thought.

The positive measures recommended by Babbitt might be summed up roughly as follows: 1) acquisition of knowledge, clear distinctions, orientation; 2) definite standards based on the recognition of some ultimate purpose as well as on a sense of values; 3) the distinct realization of some immediate, even though humble, task by performing which one contributes towards the attainment of the highest end, and 4) a strict self-discipline in accordance with one's chosen task. "The chief use of any widening out of knowledge and sympathy must be to prepare man more fully for the supreme moment of concentration and selection, the moment when he exercises his own special faculties. Now, to select rightly a man must have right standards, and to have right standards means in practice that he must constantly set bounds to his own impulses. Man grows in the perfection proper to his own nature in almost direct ratio to his growth in restraint and self-control"[4]). Everyone has to take into account

1) *The New Laokoon*, p. 211.
2) *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, p. 370. 3) ib., p. 372.
4) *The New Laokoon*, pp. 201—2.

his special talents and to make use of them not indiscriminately but intelligently, giving them direction and purpose. This is humility in Eliot's sense, though without the painfully acute feeling of man's inferiority typical of the latter. According to Babbitt, one ought not to overrate one's capacities but to examine carefully one's weak and strong points and do the work one is best qualified to perform.

The recognition of the need for insight and knowledge leads both Eliot and Santayana to the demand for an accurate inspection of the past with its instructive experience. The same applies to Babbitt. He, too, exactly like Eliot, expects one to use one's knowledge of history not for imitating dead geniuses but for doing one's own work in the proper way: "What we are seeking is a critic who rests his discipline and selection upon the past without being a mere traditionalist; whose holding of tradition involves a constant process of hard and clear thinking, a constant adjustment, in other words, of the experience of the past to the changing needs of the present" [1]). This might have been written by Eliot. "The past should be regarded primarily neither as a laboratory for research nor as a bower of dreams, but as a school of experience" [2]). The ideal traditionalist as Babbitt sees him is the person who has succeeded in making all the valuable things of the past his own as well as in using them as a basis for new, creative work. This is the lofty conception of the traditional writer we know from Eliot's writings. Babbitt sees this ideal realized in the figure of Goethe: "He has, as Sainte-Beuve puts it, assimilated not merely tradition, but all traditions, and that without ceasing to be a modern of moderns; he keeps watch for every new sail on the horizon, but from the height of a Sunium. He would use the larger background and perspective to round out and support his individual insight and so make the present what it should be — not the servile imitation, nor again the blank denial of the past, but its creative continuation" [3]). This is in exact accord with Eliot's pronouncements on conformity to the past and on logical innovation.

Babbitt's insistence on clarity of purpose and on self-limitation with a view to attaining some definite aim leads to his pre-

1) *The Masters of M. Fr. Crit.*, p. 362.
2) ib., p. 363. 3) ib., p. 364.

ferring the *genre tranché*, the distinctly circumscribed type, to a mixture of genres. He holds that each genre has its specific aim, and he objects to that oscillation between various literary types which is so often caused by a lack of purpose and by the exclusive desire to follow one's emotional impulses. "Whenever the love of adventure is keen, and the analytical and logical faculties are either dormant or occupied elsewhere, art may very well come to be looked on as a pleasant vagabondage, rather than as working toward a definite goal 'in accordance', as Aristotle would say, 'with probability or necessity'. And in direct proportion as men look on art in this way, they are likely to be indifferent to the clearly defined type; in the drama, for example, they are likely to be tolerant of more mixtures than those enumerated by Polonius — 'tragedy-comedy, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral', etc. Now the English have always been imaginative rather than formal or logical in their art and literature, and this is no doubt one reason why the English, as compared with the Greek or French, have been careless of the *genre tranché*" [1]). A further reason for avoiding definite distinctions of type is, according to Babbitt, to be found in the "fear of the meddling intellect as being fatal to spontaneity" [2]), which motive he sees at work in Rousseau, Wordsworth and Wagner. He himself, on the contrary, holds that the clear-cut type of person who expects everything to perform its own function properly, "will desire each art and every genre to be itself primarily and to give, as Aristotle says of tragedy, its own special pleasure . . . A unified impression cannot be obtained without some degree of concentration, relevancy, purpose . . . Right design is the first requirement, but there should also be color and movement and illusion, and, in general, expressiveness — the more the better. Each art and *genre* may be as suggestive as it can of other arts and *genres*, while remaining true to its own form and proportion" [3]). The resemblance to Eliot's views is close. Eliot, as we have seen, points out in a very similar way that an indiscriminate combination of incompatible literary methods, such as the methods of theoretical exposition and of imaginative

1) *The New Laokoon*, p. 110.
2) ib. p. 107.
3) ib. pp. 247—249.

literature, is bound to lead to an imperfect realization of the purpose of each. The tendency he sees at work behind this trait is the desire to suggest various effects simultaneously. There are passages in Babbitt which show that he finds a similar trend in contemporary art: "We are living in an age that has gone mad on the powers of suggestion in everything from its art to its therapeutics. Even the art of dancing has caught the contagion, and it is not content to count simply as dancing but must needs be a symbol and suggestion of something else, of a Greek vase, for example, or a Beethoven symphony" [1]).

The gist of the views of both critics regarding this topic is that they desire each genre to do its business correctly and completely. Their principle is the principle of intelligent selection and definite direction — of the imposition of a distinct, adequate form on the artist's chaotic material. Both desire the omission of whatever impairs the forcible, distinctive effect of each genre. Babbitt refers in this connection to Lessing: "It is the privilege of the ancients, says Lessing, never in any matter to do too much or too little" [2]).

The same sense of the need for selecting the adequate thing, the thing that answers its purpose, in contradistinction to a haphazard acceptance of anything that happens to gratify our momentary impulses, appears in Babbitt's views regarding the character of the concrete subject-matter to be used by the poet as a vehicle for his feelings. He is aware that the writer is not only to vent his mind but also to produce a definite kind of effect. For this reason he regards it as insufficient that the poet should feel intensely about his subject: he also desires him to select the right subject that symbolizes his emotions, so as to communicate these to the reader without causing any feeling of incongruity. Pointing out that Wordsworth was content if his mind was stimulated by his theme [3]), Babbitt shows that this sometimes led to a positively comic discrepancy between the immensity and solemnity of the emotion expressed and the triteness of the object presented. "If the emotional reaction is right, we shall, as

1) *The New Laokoon*, p. 184.

2) ib., p. 186.

3) He writes with special reference to Wordsworth: "According to the romanticist almost any outer incident will do if we only feel strongly enough about it" *(The New Laokoon*, p. 246).

Wordsworth admonishes us, 'find a tale in everything' ... Wordsworth's paradox, like many other paradoxes, has its own truth and usefulness, but the man who holds it is prone to fall into what M. Lasserre calls *l'emphase romantique*, romantic fustian; which may be defined as the enormous disproportion between emotion and the outer object or incident on which it expends itself. Victor Hugo abounds in fustian of this kind" [1]). Babbitt seems here to be driving at something that has a close affinity to Eliot's "objective correlative", and the objection made to Wordsworth and Hugo is the same as Eliot makes to *Hamlet*.

These are some of the principal points of Irving Babbitt's creed, and their similarity to the fundamental tendencies of Eliot's thought is unmistakable. The definite conception of some higher end, the adoption of some appropriate task, likely to lead slowly but safely to that end, the intelligent, disciplined co-ordination of all effort in subservience to something more valuable than individual idiosyncrasies — such is the method Babbitt recommends, like Eliot, and, as we have seen, like Santayana. Where he differs from Eliot is in the rôle he attributes to religion — at any rate in our time. He does not despair of man's ability to approach perfection by way of the method just described, which however, does not mean that he denies the value of religious inspiration or of the sense of divine grace. Quite on the contrary, he sees part of Goethe's greatness in the sense he had "of man's helplessness in the hands of a higher power" [2]): "He was capable of the obeisance of the spirit before this power, and knew that if a man is not to remain a mere Titan his works must receive its blessing" [3]). Yet if Eliot is driven to the conclusion that the only effectual way of salvation leads through an old, authoritative Church, Babbitt finds it impracticable to accept such an authority and expects the guiding light to be born anew in the breast of each individual. It is true that he fails to indicate anything sufficiently fixed and definite to serve as an infallible guide. "What principle can set bounds to all this intellectual and emotional expansiveness? In the words of Cardinal Newman, 'What must be the face-to-face antagonist by which to withstand and baffle the fierce energy of passion and the all-corroding, all-dissolving energy

1) ib.
2) *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, p. 368.
3) ib.

of the intellect' — what he calls elsewhere 'the wild living intellect of man'? The reply would seem to be that this face-to-face antagonist will be found, if at all, not in a form of authority which has become impossible for many moderns, but in the intuition of something at least as living as the intellect, which, in exact proportion as it is perceived, imposes not merely on the intellect, but on man's whole being a controlling purpose" [1]).

The tasks and methods of criticism advocated by Irving Babbitt correspond largely with those for which Eliot pleads. While seeing the indispensableness of "fresh and vivid and personal impressions" [2]), Babbitt is conscious of the need for sound judgment. He demands that we should "awaken our senses that we may the better judge" and not simply "that we may the better enjoy" [3]). He is quite as keenly aware as Eliot that criticism should not be converted into history, biography or psychology, for, as he says, "the very prosaic facts" the historical or social critic is looking for "would be at least as visible in the work of some mediocrity as in a work of the first order" [4]). Both the "impressionistic" and the "scientific" criticism impress him as deviations from the golden mean, since neither of these aims at definite standards: "If the impressionist is asked to rise above his sensibility and judge by a more impersonal standard, he answers that there is no such impersonal element in art, but only 'suggestiveness', and is almost ready to define art with a recent French writer as an 'attenuated hypnosis'. If the scientific critic in turn is urged to get behind the phenomena and rate a book with reference to a scale of absolute values he absconds into his theory of the 'unknowable'" [5]). This tallies with Eliot's objections to those critics who fail to arrive at any "generalized statement of literary beauty", either because they are principally concerned with interposing their temperamental reactions between the work of art and its public, or because they busy themselves with inquiries into all sorts of things connected with literature except with its artistic value. Nevertheless, Babbitt condemns standards that are "entirely outside the individual", seeing the "right mean" in "a standard that is in the individual and yet is felt by him to transcend his personal self and lay hold of that

1) ib., p. 388. 2) ib., p. 349. 3) ib., pp. 349-350. 4) ib., p. 343. 5) ib., p. 341.

part of his nature that he possesses in common with other men"[1]). One recognizes the resemblance to Eliot's views: both writers desire critical judgment to be based on genuine personal impressions of literary art, acknowledging at the same time that the lasting elements of literature are universal and representative of the experiences of the whole of mankind.

It might be noted in addition to the above parallelisms that Eliot's ideas on abstract thought in poetry are partly prefigured in *The New Laokoon.* Babbitt maintains there that "the imagination must be really free and spontaneous, and the truth itself must not be too precisely formulated, if we are to arrive at that vital fusion of illusion and insight with the accompanying sense of infinitude that is found in the true symbol"[2]). This passage, which admittedly echoes Joubert, clearly anticipates Eliot's demand for imaginative presentation instead of intellectual formulation.

American Humanism as expounded by Irving Babbitt, its most eminent representative and, judging from Eliot's references to him, the one modern American critic whose opinions he most respects, has a great deal in common with the French anti-romantic movement. Such writers as Erneste Seillère, Pierre Lasserre and Charles Maurras are radically opposed to the contemporary emotionalism and lack of discipline. Of these critics, particularly the leader of the *Action Française* seems to have impressed Eliot, who recommends his work *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence* as one of the standard expositions of the classicist standpoint[3]). E. R. Curtius finds Eliot's criticism saturated with elements derived from Maurras[4]). Eliot has himself translated for *The Criterion* one of the most significant statements of Maurras's literary creed, his *Prologue d'un Essai sur la Critique*[5]). The parallelisms to Eliot's ideas found in these two works are sufficiently close to deserve careful examination. Though it might be difficult to decide how far Eliot has been stimulated by this particular critic and how far other writers of a similiar cast of mind have influ-

1) ib., p. 350. 2) *The New Laokoon,* p. 100.

3) *The Idea of a Literary Review* in *The New Criterion,* Jan. 1926, p. 5.

4) *Die Literatur,* vol. XXXII, pp. 11 ff.

5) *The Monthly Criterion,* Jan. & March 1928. Our quotations are from this translation. The French original appeared in 1896.

enced his thought, the general affinity of Eliot's attitude to that of Maurras is unmistakable.

The earlier of the works in question, the *Prologue*, that "admirable exposition of the best" in Maurras's thought [1]), draws the portrait of an ideal "man of taste" whose essential characteristic is the perfect equipoise of the animal and rational aspects of his nature, with reason as his ruler and guide: "Reason . . . must develop to the fullness of its energies in the exact measure in which that can work no ill to the perfect expansion of a flourishing body; reason pushed to the point of parching the animal would exhaust its own sources of being; as for the exclusive culture of the body, that would coarsen the soul and deprive it of reason" [2]). The man of taste as depicted by Maurras resembles Eliot's great poet in so far as both are characterized by the full development and co-ordination of all their powers. In the former, the instincts, the impressions, the feelings, the passions, "when brought to the highest point, are guided and ruled by an instinct more powerful, itself fortified, sustained and nourished by the abundance of nature" [3]). "Animal ardours", "judgment and reason" are to be inseparably combined in him, no vain imaginations are to delude him, no flaccidity is to affect him [4]). "All human warmth" is to be his, but he is to be able to withstand it if necessary [5]). His philosophy and metaphysics are to be strict [6]). The ascendancy of "the sensitive animal" is to Maurras's mind the very principle of barbarism. Strong, disorderly impressions asserting "their right to realise themselves as such, in all their crudity, in works of art" are in his opinion the most indubitable symptom of a barbarous mind [7]). It is in the same spirit that Eliot objects to "feeling — however intense — in the crude living state" [8]).

Maurras's views on style agree with his conception of the accomplished man of taste. For him, as for Buffon, "the style is the man himself", that is to say, it depends on the whole of a man's being, not merely on one or two isolated faculties [9]). The

1) P. Mansell Jones, *Tradition and Barbarism*, Ld. 1930, p. 42.
2) *The Monthly Criterion*, March 1928, p. 205.
3) ib., pp. 205—206.
4) ib., p. 206. 5) ib. 6) ib. 7) ib., p. 216.
8) *The Egoist*, Oct. 1917, p. 183.
9) *The Monthly Criterion*, March 1928, p. 208.

style is not to be regarded as something superadded to the contents of a piece of writing, *viz.*, to the ideas, the sentiments, the narration and the characters found in the latter [1]). It is to grow out of the matter, the thought, the feelings, which have to be arranged in a manner inherent in their nature: "Style consists in the order and the movement which we introduce into our thought [2]). Buffon, who said this, should have said it again and again. Style represents the mode in which each thought has been conceived, inasmuch as thought, like a molecule, is already a universe of impressions, sensations and feelings" [3]). This notion resembles Eliot's idea of an organic connection between a writer's intellectual and emotional experience and the expression of this experience. The value of a style is found by both writers to depend on the vigour of the moulding process: "We see that the force of the style makes one with the force of the thought. One is worth the other. Or rather, they are the same thing, since, in thought, everything that is not style, that is to say, order and movement, is not thought — but simple fuel or ashes of thought. When the force of style is pronounced in the course of a book, that is evidence that the thought, that is to say its free and human character, is soaring on the same flight" [4]).

If style is essentially the organized, orderly, individual presentation of the matter to be expressed, it clearly follows that whatever does not grow out of that matter, being merely a decorative flourish, vitiates the style. This is what Maurras actually says: "The more we separate our thought from unessential ornament the clearer it appears, and the less it loses of its effect. Grand or small, exalted or temperate, it has everything to gain by this. Besides, mediocre thoughts have seldom the strength to expose themselves naked and alone; they arrive accompanied by a rabble, to make the better impression" [5]). The principle

1) ib., p. 207.

2) "Thought" is here used in the eighteenth-century sense of the word which sometimes includes much more than mere intellectual activity. Maurras continues this tradition in regarding thought as "a universe of impressions, sensations and feelings". See also J. Middleton Murry, *The Problem of Style* (3d impr., Ld. 1930, p. 79).

3) *The Monthly Criterion*, March 1928, p. 207.

4) ib., p. 209.

5) ib., pp. 211—12.

here implied is that of concentration for the sake of economy, the same that has been shown to be so typical of Eliot: nothing should be expressed except what is precisely to the point. The same idea of economy reappears as Maurras's principal reason for objecting to mixtures of genres — here, too, in a manner prefiguring that of Eliot: "No doubt it is ingenious to show in literature the gifts of a good colourist, or to compose a kind of opera with high-sounding phrases of feeble sense. Some persons value their transpositions on account of the difficulties overcome. That is what degrades them from the point of view of better judgment. The true poet tries to fix the fine thought that torments him, by direct means which will express it entire. He would not think of using the technique of another art. Only the little 'prentices play with the brushes, because they do not know how to use them. All this issues from a principle of economy, the same which confounds both those who wish to make illuminations or symphonies in verse, and those who wish to display in French the graces of the Teutonic or the type of sensibility which is proper to the Slav. All of these effects are wasted; when they succeed in forming a fashion, they are criminal" [1]).

There is in this attitude one very considerable difference from that of Eliot. Both critics hold that each genre has its special purpose and that by mixing up incompatible methods no purpose at all is served. For each content its proper artistic method should be used. Yet Maurras draws the inference that no language should violate itself by aiming at effects peculiar to another language. This is particularly clear from the following passage: "Whatever be the tradition of a literature or a language, that which tries to conform to its own genius has a better chance of success than that which strives in the direction opposite to the habits of a thousand years. This is self-evident. In that tradition, everything counsels, aids, supports the poet. He meets only a generous emulation" [2]). This is not at all like Eliot. However highly the latter may value tradition, he is unwilling to adopt any unless it comes up to his standards. He demands "what is right", not what comes natural or easy, and we have seen that he does not shirk foreign methods if they suit

1) ib., p. 213.
2) *The M. Crit.*, March 1928, p. 213.

him. The reason is evidently to be found in Eliot's profound dissatisfaction with Anglo-Saxon standards: he looks to France for guidance because he regards the French mind as in many respects superior to the English mentality. There is nothing of this feeling of self-depreciation in Maurras's consciousness of being a Frenchman. He glories in the sense of being heir to that very tradition which Eliot envies. He, the champion of the French spirit, evidently desires his compatriots to preserve that which Eliot urges the English to acquire.

The views on criticism expressed in the *Prologue* have many points of contact with Eliot's ideas. Maurras opposes the substitution of history, biography or psychology for the study of aesthetic values, finding that criticism altogether beside the point which concerns itself with a poet's person instead of dealing with works of art and with the question whether these works are "beautiful or ugly" [1]). There is even a close verbal similarity between Eliot's statement that "the 'historical' and the 'philosophical' critics had better be called historians and philosophers quite simply" [2]), and Maurras's pronouncement that "the views of Taine and Hennequin can even be organized into a body of science, but on the condition that they emigrate from criticism and return to history and politics and economics. These sciences, if they are sciences, will supplement our art [*i. e.*, criticism] most usefully; but they will remain distinct from it" [3]). The criticism Maurras is aiming at is to inquire into "the type of beauty" of each work of art and to measure "the good and the bad in the works of the mind" [4]). This is equivalent to Eliot's critical ideal of "detecting unerringly the transition from work of eternal intensity to work that is merely beautiful, and from work that is beautiful to work that is merely charming" [5]). In order to ascertain these types and shades of beauty, Maurras, like Eliot, expects the critic to possess an adequate sensibility: "Fine, rich, strong and swift impressions form the nourishment and the motive force, in a crude state, of critical vitality" [6]). Yet since the shades to be perceived are innumerable, the critic "must at the same time

1) Cf. *SW*, p. 53: "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but the poetry". 2) SW, p. 16.

3) *The M. Crit.*, Jan. 1928, p. 10.

4) *The M. Crit.*, Jan. 1928, p. 9. 5) SW, p. 37. 6) *The M. Crit.*, Jan. 1928, p. 13.

preserve the precise sense of general differences", otherwise his sensibility "becomes incapable of decision" [1]: "In selection resides the essence not only of the arts, but of life itself" [2]. This principle, which reminds us of Babbitt, leads Maurras to the demand that one should choose between Racine and Hugo. He regards it, however, as wrong to base such a choice on merely dogmatic standards. Thus, he remarks that Levèque who believes "that we have in us an exact unchanging type fallen from heaven which represents Beauty, with which we compare works of art in order to tell whether they are beautiful or ugly . . . does not seem to perceive that the aesthetic judgment is at the same time more delicate and more simple: a fact of sensibility" [3]. The same point of view is shared by Eliot: criticism is desired to determine the rank and order of the beauty found in works of art, yet not in a spirit of dogmatism. It is to rest on the firm foundation of a rich stock of aesthetic impressions organized into a system. In fine, both Eliot and Maurras see, one of the most important tasks of criticism in the education of public taste. "If taste is corrupt", says Maurras, "then criticism can only restore it to purity and sanity" [4].

L'Avenir de l'Intelligence attacks with singular force a trait which Maurras regards as the central characteristic of romanticism, *viz.*, the fascination exerted on man by the emotional and sensuous part of his nature. According to Maurras, romanticism begins at the point where the individual sensibility usurps the function of imparting its own direction to man, instead of merely providing the human soul with the warmth it needs [5]. The romanticist as Maurras sees him is identical with Santayana's or Babbitt's romanticist, in so far as he, too, believes in the existence, in each private sensibility, of an infallible principle of perfection, which leads him to erect his private traits into a "model of philosophy". His moral is identified by Maurras with that of Rousseau, who does not care about good or evil, provided he is allowed to be absolutely and exclusively himself: "La personnalité sincère, tout est là!" [6] This resembles to a nicety the doctrine of the "Inner Voice" or of "doing as one likes". Sin

1) ib. 2) ib., p. 14. 3) ib., p. 11. 4) *The M. Crit.*, March 1928, p. 206.
5) *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence*, ed. 1927, p. 215. 6) ib.

and virtue are regarded as equally sacred in so far as they are emanations of the individual ego.

According to Maurras, the emphasis of the romanticist is placed on his personal uniqueness and on his right to be whatever he happens to be, without any reference to rational standards. Maurras quotes as typical the words of Rousseau: "Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus" [1]). This attitude is supposed to result in the deliberate pursuit of originality and eccentricity — in the stressing of the features peculiar to the individual, merely because they are peculiar to him, not because they possess value from any impersonal point of view. Hence the modern neglect of impersonal standards of beauty as well as the loss of all catholic, profound, universal humanity. Such is Maurras's explanation of the matter, which coincides with Eliot's opinion regarding the results of the contemporary trend towards undisciplined arbitrariness and eccentricity [2]).

Eliot shows how romantic curiosity leads always back to one's personality, one's private enthusiasms, and how the importance of reality for the romanticist depends principally on the opportunity it affords him of indulging in the feelings in which he delights. Babbitt, as has been shown, holds a similar opinion of the romantic mind. The identical attitude is found by Maurras in Madame de Noailles, one of the "romantic" ladies whose minds he dissects: "Ce que l'auteur demande désormais aux arbres, aux buissons, à la nature entière, c'est d'exciter ses nerfs, d'extasier son rêve, de lui apporter l'occasion du mouvement passionné" [3]). This is evidently the only logical conclusion for the romanticist to draw if the intensity of his personal sensations and feelings constitutes his centre of value. From this standpoint even love appears in an entirely new light, as Maurras points out. The object of love loses its pre-eminent value, and the emotional intensity of the amorous experience becomes all-important: "Aimer l'amour, c'est aimer soi" [4]). It is therefore not

1) ib. 2) Cf. Maurras on Mlle Delarue: "On veut étonner le bourgeois car il faut que le bourgeois soit saisi d'horreur. Il le faut si l'on tient au véritable objet de la poésie, qui est l'exposition de l'âme de cette jeune demoiselle dans ses différences et ses particularités. Il ne s'agit pas d'être le plus humain possible, mais d'être jusqu'au bout Lucie Delarue: et non parce qu'elle est charmante, mais parce qu'elle est elle. Il s'agit donc d'être Elle, dans son elle au superlatif" (ib., p. 185). 3) ib., p. 200. 4) ib., p. 206.

really surprising if the romantic lover, once his state of self-centred exaltation is seriously endangered, feels compelled to resort to suicide, for fear that any other state might lead to his being less intensely himself. Such is the extreme of romantic love as Maurras finds it described by Madame de Noailles: "A force de l'aimer [*i. e.*, love], à force d'accorder à chaque fragment, à chaque minute de soi l'indulgence absolue, et l'adoration infinie, il arrive qu'un de ces fragments, éphémère, hypertrophié, devient le meurtrier des autres: il ne peut même plus supporter la pensée des instants à vivre, s'ils ne sont identiques à lui, s'ils sont autre chose que son propre prolongement, et l'être à ce degré de despotisme n'aspire plus qu'à s'anéantir: il s'anéantit et se dissout, en effet, par amour *absolu de soi*" [1]). Romantic love as here depicted by Maurras is not quite dissimilar to "the romantic tradition which insists that a poet should be continuously inspired" [2]). Feeling at the highest point of intensity — a morbid intensity, not the intensity of natural, spontaneous emotion — is in both cases made a *sine qua non*. No value is conceded to any intermediary stages — even though the romantic poet as Eliot sees him does not go to the length of committing suicide for lack of poetic emotion, but prefers the more convenient method of simulating ecstatic inspiration.

What Maurras inculcates is an emotion focused on some external object and thus saved from solipsistic limitation and self-combustion: " . . . la sensibilité obsédée d'elle-même, accablée de l'écho de ses propres échos qu'elle répète à l'infini, pourra s'en croire agrandie et multipliée; en réalité elle négligera peu à peu sa fonction normale et profonde puisqu'elle ne sait plus *s'oublier pour sympathiser* et, sans l'oubli de soi, la sympathie vraie n'est qu'un rêve; la dureté et la rigueur naissent alors sur la plaque qui a trop vibré" [3]). The ideal here implied is all but identical with Bishop Andrewes's beatific absorption in his subject-matter and with his unawareness of himself as described in Eliot's essay. It is the same escape from an excess of emotion and "personality" which Eliot deals with in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* [4]). "S'oublier pour sympathiser" is, in a sense, essential also to that salutary, complete objectification of feeling expected of the poet

1) *L'Av. de l'Int.*, p. 206. 2) Preface to the *Selected Poems of Pound*, p. XX.
3) *L'Av. de l'Int.*, p. 233. 4) *SW*, p. 58.

in Eliot's essay on *Hamlet and his Problems.* The danger and artistic futility of feeling without an outer object are recognized by both critics.

Emotional vagueness, the absence of accurate statement, the excessive cultivation of indeterminate associations and meaningless music (all devices of evoking aimless, wandering feeling) are the principal defects with which Maurras reproaches the style of the romanticists — the very faults, in fact, which Eliot regards as typical of Morris and his like. To these traits an ideal of definiteness, of intellectual and visual precision is opposed — "la vie des choses" as distinct from "la sonorité des mots", "des idées plutôt que des songes, des mots et des phrases plutôt que des airs de musique"[1]). Like Eliot, Maurras demands order and coherence rather than the beauty of *membra disjecta*, however attractive these latter may be in themselves: "Sans l'ordre qui donne figure, un livre, un poème, une strophe n'ont rien que des semences et des éléments de beauté"[2]). His aim, like that of Eliot, is not the part but the organic, proportionate whole: "Le sens outré de la beauté des mots fait négliger la beauté supérieure de leurs rapports et de leur signification"[3])

It is not a very long way from Maurras to Julien Benda. The latter includes the violence of the leading member of *L'Action Française* in his condemnation of that "desire for the excessive" against which many of his severest attacks are directed. Nevertheless, the points of view of the two are akin. Both are "classicists", even though Benda charges Maurras with a "Romanticism of Reason". The author of *Belphégor* in his capacity as "the ideal scavenger of the rubbish of our time"[4]) is held by Eliot in high esteem, and the attitude of the book just mentioned, which appeared in 1918, *i. e.*, two years before *The Sacred Wood*, is in many ways extremely close to that of the latter work. *Belphégor*, that relentless onslaught on the prevalence of emotional and sensualist exaltation in contemporary life and letters (that is to say, on very much the same features as those Maurras combats) upholds the ideals of sanity and intellectual self-control with a dialectical force and skill that meet with Eliot's wholehearted applause. Benda sees the great humiliation of the contemporary mind in its wholesale surrender to the flux of things,

1) *L'Av. de l'Int.*, p. 177. 2) ib., p. 199. 3) ib., p. 233. 4) SW, p. 44.

to instincts, impulses and emotions. Contemporary France is accused by him of having forgotten its former craving for intellectual pleasure, of thirsting for mere sensations and feelings and of having substituted the pursuit of a kind of mystical union with things for the endeavour to understand the world [1]). He describes the ideal of the present-day French writers as a pure emotional state — "un état affectif pur" — without any admixture of intellectual comprehension, a state which, instead of being regarded as a preparatory stage, is deemed the Alpha and Omega of all artistic creation and aesthetic enjoyment: "L'artiste ne doit pas devenir l'âme des choses *pour ensuite la mieux dire*, il doit la devenir *et s'en tenir là*; cela lui suffit à mériter son nom" [2]). This leads, according to Benda, to the denial of all form on the part of many contemporaries, for form is something interposed between the artist and his material [3]). "Direct perception" is held to have deteriorated into something which is no vision at all but a suppression of vision, a coincidence with the subject-matter [4]). The artist of to-day is found to be characterized by "la volonté ... de saisir l'objet dans sa 'vie', dans le sentiment qu'il a de son être — chose en effet indivisible — et non dans les aspects — divers et analysables, — qu'il prend aux yeux de qui l'observe du dehors" [5]). A hatred of all precise distinctions, caused partly by the fact that the latter prevent things from being seen in a state of "fluidity", of interpenetration, and partly by the intellectual nature of distinctions, strikes Benda as one of the fundamental maladies of the contemporary mind [6]). Indefiniteness, as he finds, is regarded as a positive value, and the tendency of words to denote something individual and precise is therefore counteracted as far as possible by the accumulation of expressions of all sorts so as to neutralize the definiteness of each [7]). Individual images and ideas are thus kept from usurping the place of that vague intuition which, in Benda's opinion, constitutes the principal aim of contemporary letters [8]). The result of this general acceptance of the principle of confusion is described by him as "un pataugeage général où l'on s'aperçoit bientôt qu'ils [*i. e.*, contemporary French society] n'ont pas la moindre idée de la différence qu'il y a, par exemple, entre le pouvoir émouvant d'une œuvre d'art et sa valeur

1) *Belphégor*, ed. 1924, p. 3. 2) ib., p. 11. 3) ib., p. 15. 4) ib., p. 16. 5) ib., p. 21. 6) ib., p. 23. 7) ib., pp. 24—25. 8) ib.

esthétique, entre le sentiment religieux et une croyance formelle, entre l'amour et la tendresse" [1]). The absence of standards, of distinctions, of the desire and power to curb emotional and imaginative anarchy and excess by means of the intellect and the will is subjected by Benda to a pitiless scrutiny. The results he arrives at do not differ essentially from the conclusions drawn by Babbitt, Maurras and Eliot. All three concur in contrasting the contemporary chaos with the ideal of a co-ordinated, organic type of mind governed by the intellect.

The difference between the day-dreamy style of romanticism and the " precise statement" of Dryden brought out in such vivid relief by Eliot is analogous to the distinction Benda draws between "la sensibilité musicale" and "la sensibilité plasticienne" [2]). Of these two types of sensibility, the former leads to neatness and firmness of outline, whereas the latter results in suggestion rather than formulation, in "une sensation diffuse et épandue, source éminente d'ivresse et de vertige", that is to say, in that very vagueness and aimless excitement which Eliot considers so hostile to art [3]). The thirst for excitement is found to have conduced to a corresponding hunger for novelty and surprise, which has nearly ousted the ancient French tradition of seeing the gist of originality in the use the writer makes of his material rather than in the nature of that material itself [4]). All organization of the matter to be expressed is stated to be purposely avoided because of the present-day dogma that "en ordonnant son émotion, on la perd": "as if", says Benda, "the whole problem of art did not consist in organizing emotion without losing it" [5]). In tracing these censures of the contemporary mind we are moving on familiar ground, for they agree with what has already been shown to be Eliot's views.

The contemporary desire for an emotional fusion with one's subject-matter is associated by Benda with the inclination to treat of oneself [6]), for "à qui se fondrait-on mieux qu'à soi-même?" The self thus selected for the principal theme of literature is, however, not one's complete personality but a mysterious ego within the ego, a pure sensibility devoid of all ideas and perspective — a primitive domain of feelings and instincts [7]). And since

1) ib., p. 32. 2) ib., p. 40. 3) ib., p. 41. 4) ib., pp. 65 ff. 5) ib., p. 89. 6) ib., p. 102. 7) ib., pp. 102—3.

pure instinct is most easily to be found in the souls of women and children, these, according to Benda, occupy such a prominent place in contemporary letters [1]). His sarcasms regarding this primitivism resemble those of Eliot concerning D. H. Lawrence's antediluvian world.

Benda's contention that "à très peu d'exceptions . . . les auteurs goûtés du public depuis vingt ans . . . sont des auteurs *vibrants*, la plupart au ton extrêmement monté, constamment sous pression" [2]), might be profitably compared with Eliot's pronouncements respecting the romantic habit of forcing inspiration whenever it fails to appear spontaneously.

Precisely as Eliot charges our contemporaries with the fault of treating philosophy and criticism as if they were imaginative literature, Benda writes of the "desire that criticism, history, science and philosophy should move the soul" [3]), which tendency he calls "le Panlyrisme" [4]). It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that he denies the value of emotion and empathy in criticism. He is quite aware of the importance of the critic's personal sensibility as an indispensable means of penetrating into the emotional content of literature. What he objects to is merely the inclination to make that sensibility into the beginning and end of criticism [5]). His opposition to this tendency is quite as resolute as the objections Eliot raises to the impressionistic school of critics. There is positive scorn in Benda's references to those "pure mystical unions with the 'souls' of Villon, Pascal, Beethoven, Tolstoy, Dostoyevski and St. Augustine", those "simple states of the heart, simple acts of love" which, according to him, have for their purely emotional character been hailed as "the true, the only kind of criticism" [6]). Eliot's essay on *The Function of Criticism* deals in the same pungent tone with the "members of the Browning Study Circle" whose reactions to poetry are confined to a voluptuous thrill [7]). A further reason why Benda attacks these mystical marriages with the souls of authors is that they lead to a study of "mental states rather than of literary phenomena, of souls rather than works". That his attitude in this matter may have confirmed Eliot in his demand for

1) ib., p. 110. 2) ib., p. 121. 3) ib., p. 133. 4) ib. 5) ib., pp. 135 ff.
6) ib., p. 134. 7) *The Criterion*, vol. II, p. 40.

aesthetic criticism, appears from several quotations in *The Sacred Wood*[1]).

Benda sees the essence of literature in its aesthetic value, and the critic is consequently expected to look in a literary work not for the ordinary emotions of life but for "aesthetic emotion", which Benda defines as "l'émotion causée par l'idée que l'on prend des qualités *proprement artistiques* d'une œuvre d'art: par exemple, de la *vie* de cette œuvre (la vie d'une œuvre d'art est toute autre chose que la vie des personnages qu'elle présente), de son unité de signification, de l'ajustement de la forme au fond, du bonheur des proportions, de la gradation des effets, etc."[2]) Eliot, as we have seen, draws the same distinction between ordinary experiences and experiences derived from art, and what is more, even the technical terms he uses are surprisingly similar to those employed in *Belphégor*. Such expressions as "art emotions" would impress one as modelled on Benda, were it not for the fact that Eliot is found using them before *Belphégor* had appeared. An article in *The Egoist* for October 1917 contrasts "ordinary human emotions" with "emotions of art", with the implication that only the latter are to be aimed at by the poet.

One of the examples of "aesthetic emotion" given by Benda — Madame de Sévigné's enjoyment of "la perfection des rapports" in Racine's *Esther*[3]) — illustrates a further aspect of literature insisted on by Eliot: the importance of the beauty of relations, the fact that a perfect work of art is a skilful, organic structure.

Eliot's praise of *Belphégor* and the vivid way in which the book prefigures much of the essence of *The Sacred Wood* make it highly probable that Benda belongs to those thinkers who intensified Eliot's austerely anti-anarchic classicism.

---

1) Cf. SW, p. 40, quoted from *Belphégor*, p. 138, on Sainte-Beuve: "On sait — et c'est certainement un des grands éléments de son succès — combien d'études l'illustre critique consacre à des auteurs dont l'importance littéraire est quasi nulle (femmes, magistrats, courtisans, militaires), mais dont les écrits lui sont une occasion de portraiturer une âme; combien volontiers, pour les maîtres, il s'attache à leurs productions secondaires, notes, brouillons, lettres intimes, plutôt qu'à leurs grandes œuvres, souvent beaucoup moins expressives, en effet, de leur psychologie".

2) *Belphégor*, p. 56.

3) *Belphégor*, p. 57.

Rémy de Gourmont, the leading critic of the French Symbolists, does not belong to that anti-romantic group whose views are voiced by Maurras and Benda. The Symbolist movement with its high valuation of individualism is closely akin to romanticism as understood by the French. Its insistence on the importance of an individual way of feeling and expression was echoed by those young English and American poets who published the first Imagist anthologies. The preface to *Some Imagist Poets* (1916) quotes with full approval certain fragments from de Gourmont's *Livre des Masques* where the Symbolist programme is described as amounting to "individualism in literature, liberty of art, abandonment of existing forms ". "The sole excuse which a man can have for writing is to write down himself, to unveil for others the sort of world which mirrors itself in his individual glass . . . He should create his own aesthetics — and we should admit as many aesthetics as there are original minds, and judge them for what they are and not for what they are not". "In this sense", adds the writer of the preface, "the Imagists are descendants of the *Symbolistes* ; they are Individualists" [1]).

Yet the demand for something individual to express and for an individual way of expressing it does not at all run counter to Eliot's views. Far from conflicting with the substance of his ideas, it is one of the essential points of his creed, even though he may have lost sight of it in some of his remarks. What he really objects to, is not individuality but eccentricity. Moreover, the passion of the Symbolists for precision in rendering the unique qualities of the experiences of the individual and their corresponding cultivation of artistic discipline were features calculated to be acclaimed by Eliot. A comparison of his views with those of Rémy de Gourmont shows that it is this aspect of Symbolism that seems to have left the deepest impress on his critical thought. The lyrical vagueness of many Symbolist poets does not appear to have interested him: it is the definiteness with which the Symbolists realized that all poetry is to be based on individual experience, and that the essence of this experience is to be reflected in all its uniqueness, which apparently impressed and stimulated his intellect. He agreed with their opposition to routine and dead conventions. He was also

1) *Some Imagist Poets.* Ld. & N. Y., 1916.

at one with them in their attack on the subordination of poetry to all sorts of non-artistic aims [1]).

Eliot has repeatedly acknowledged his obligations to Rémy de Gourmont, for example in his preface to the 1928 edition of *The Sacred Wood.* Deep admiration for the critical leader of the Symbolist School is expressed in *The Perfect Critic,* in which essay we read that "of all modern critics, perhaps Rémy de Gourmont had most of the general intelligence of Aristotle. An amateur, though an excessively able amateur, in physiology, he combined to a remarkable degree sensitiveness, erudition, sense of fact and sense of history, and generalizing power" [2]).

The preface to the second edition of *The Sacred Wood* makes it fairly clear that de Gourmont confirmed Eliot in his conviction of "the integrity of poetry" and of the need to consider poetry "primarily as poetry and not another thing" [3]). He is resolute in defending the aesthetic point of view: "Il y a un art pur qui se soucie uniquement de se réaliser soi-même" [4]). "The idea of morality, the idea of utility, the idea of instruction", so often associated with art, are dismissed by de Gourmont to some non-poetic limbo [5]). Eliot found in him that persistent emphasis on the need for a close connection between a writer's sensibility and his style which forms the key-note of *Le Problème du Style* and of *Du Style ou de l'Écriture* [6]). Maurras sometimes preaches the same gospel, but de Gourmont is more insistent. We find something like the very

1) M. René Taupin has dealt with the influence of de Gourmont on the Imagists and Eliot in his thesis *L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poésie Américaine (de 1910 à 1920),* Paris 1929 (cf. esp. pp. 211 ff.) and in *The Example of Rémy de Gourmont* (*The Criterion,* July 1931, p. 614). He emphasizes in particular the part de Gourmont's books *Le Problème du Style* and *La Culture des Idées* played in the development of the Imagist generation. It need hardly be mentioned that the present account is based on an independent comparison of de Gourmont with Eliot. Some of the views which M. Taupin finds to have influenced the latter may have been suggested to Eliot by other writers. Thus, when Taupin points out (*The Criterion,* July 1931, p. 622) de Gourmont's censure of those critics who are "resolutely determined to find the man in the work" or his assertion that a genius "is to be known only by his results", we do not feel convinced by the conjecture that the similar attitude of Eliot must be due to de Gourmont. We have found identical ideas in Maurras and Benda, and have seen that Eliot quotes the latter critic to illustrate his point of view.

2) SW, p. 13. 3) SW, p. VIII.

4) *La Culture des Idées,* 1900, p. 105.

5) ib., p. 106. 6) ib., pp. 7 ff.

basis of Eliot's theory of poetic diction in the following dictum from the last-mentioned essay: "S'il y avait un art d'écrire, ce serait l'art même de sentir, l'art de voir, l'art d'entendre, l'art d'user de tous les sens, soit réellement, soit imaginativement; et la poétique grave et neuve d'une théorie de style serait celle où l'on essaierait de montrer comment se pénètrent ces deux mondes séparés, le monde des sensations et le monde des mots" [1]). The principal difference from Eliot's ideas is that de Gourmont dwells mainly on the significance of sensations, half neglecting the importance of the emotional element which looms so large in Eliot's theories. But the insistence on genuine experience and concrete presentation is the same. "Tout mot, tout grand style correspond d'abord à une vision" [2]). De Gourmont is opposed to all "mystical" vagueness. According to him, even, and particularly, the mystic is endowed with a power of vision: "Les mystiques sont presque toujours dotés d'une puissante imagination visuelle" [3]) — by which assertion he anticipates the essence of Eliot's statement that "the true mystic is not satisfied merely by feeling, he must pretend at least that he *sees* . . ." [4]). Style, according to Rémy de Gourmont, depends on the writer's power of seeing and feeling, and is not to be acquired by any other, artificial means, such as, for example, by that systematic imitation of great authors Albalat prescribes [5]). Any beauty of language apart from the thought, the vision which should be at its bottom, is precarious and ephemeral, as he thinks. We found this idea in Maurras. De Gourmont formulates it as follows: "Une belle phrase est belle et une belle fleur est belle; mais leur durée est à peu près pareille, une journée, un siécle. Rien ne meurt plus vite que le style qui ne s'appuie pas sur la solidité d'une forte pensée" [6]). Eliot makes the vitality of a style in a similar manner dependent on its expressing something definite — either ideas or images. The Frenchman points out a tendency words have to lose their original concrete distinctness of content and to develop into abstract terms associated with vague sentiments and often of obscure meaning: "La sensation se transforme en mots-images; ceux-ci en mots-idées; ceux-ci en mots-sentiments" [7]). There is

1) ib., p. 20. 2) Cf. Taupin, *L'Influence du Symbolisme*, p. 213. 3) *Le Problème du Style*, ed. 1924, p. 121.

4) SW, p. 170. 5) Cf. *Le Problème du Style*, *passim*. 6) ib., p. 151 7) ib., p. 81.

in *The Perfect Critic* a similar passage on that "verbalism", that "tendency of words to become indefinite emotions", which makes accurate statement so difficult [1]). De Gourmont regards such abstract expressions as facile means of evoking in oneself and in others feelings that may be intense but lack individual distinctiveness. He states them to be favoured by persons fond of an emotional style but unable to transmute their feelings into genuine literary art. This is the idea underlying the words of de Gourmont prefixed as a motto to Eliot's discussion of ambiguous, abstract language: "L'écrivain de style abstrait est presque toujours un sentimental, du moins un sensitif. L'écrivain artiste n'est presque jamais un sentimental et très rarement un sensitif" [2]). A generalized style working by suggestion rather than statement and employed as a substitute for individual emotion and perception is met by the Symbolist critic with the same hostility as by Eliot, who expresses a similar point of view when pronouncing judgment on Walter Pater's "meretricious suggestiveness" [3]), or on Sir Thomas Browne's "commonplace sententiousness . . . decorated by reverberating language" [4]).

De Gourmont's contention that all art should be animated by first-hand experience does not depend on any excessive valuation of that experience for its own sake. He is at one with Eliot and Maurras in demanding the subordination of the initial experience to the aim of producing a work of art [5]): "Nous avons besoin de beaux vers et non de beaux sentiments. Assez de mauvais poètes nous ennuient avec leur petits bobos de l'âme!" If the artist takes his business seriously, he (such is de Gourmont's opinion) will have little time or energy left for ordinary life. His impressions, his passions, the best part of his personality will exist as mere material for his work. A passage quoted in *The Sacred Wood* refers to Flaubert in order to illustrate this idea: "Flaubert incorporait toute sa sensibilité à ses œuvres . . . Hors de ses livres, où il se transvasait goutte à goutte, jusqu'à la lie, Flaubert est fort peu intéressant" [6]). A close parallel to this is found in the well-known pronouncement from *Tradition*

1) SW, pp. 8 ff. 2) SW, p. 8, from *Le Problème du Style*, p. 40.
3) *The Chapbook*, April 1921, p. 8. 4) ib., p. 7.
5) *Le Problème du Style*, p. 164.
6) SW, p. 139.

and the Individual Talent": "The progress of the artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" [1]).

The same valuation of a disinterested, absorbed devotion to art appears in Rémy de Gourmont's ideas on aesthetic enjoyment. The reader, as he considers, should concentrate on the work itself, endeavouring to see its real nature instead of primarily appreciating it for the bearing it has on his own private experience: "Au lecteur qui tire son émotion de la substance même de sa lecture s'oppose le lecteur qui ne sent sa lecture qu'autant qu'il peut en faire une application à sa propre vie, à ses chagrins, à ses espérances" [2]). Eliot writes in a similiar spirit [3]): "The end of the enjoyment of poetry is a pure contemplation from which all the accidents of personal emotion are removed; thus we aim to see the object as it really is . . ." The importance of individual perceptions of art for the critic is realized by de Gourmont with the same definiteness as by Eliot or Maurras. All three regard it as the critic's duty to base his judgments on intimate, distinct impressions. Aesthetic judgment viewed as "a fact of sensibility" [4]), as Maurras calls it, or as "a development of sensibility" [5]), as it is termed with greater precision by Eliot, is of the same order as the type of criticism de Gourmont inculcates. Eliot owns this affinity by using as motto for the first essay of *The Sacred Wood* these words from *Lettres à l'Amazone* [6]): "Ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c'est le grand effort d'un homme s'il est sincère". Both de Gourmont and Eliot are aware that generalizations are valuable only in so far as they derive from actual perceptions. The latter's rejection of all abstract theorizing unwarranted by personal aesthetic experience indicates the same point of view as the following passage from *Le Problème du Style* [7]): "Les généralités et les généralisations sont utiles, mais à la condition qu'on en connaisse bien la fausseté fondamentale et que l'on sache que ce qui est exact dans l'ensemble est inexact en particulier".

Most of the above quotations from Rémy de Gourmont are informed with that "sense of fact" which Eliot prizes as one of his most enviable qualities. It seems justified to assume that

1) SW, p. 53. 2) *Le Problème du Style*, p. 40.
3) SW, pp. 14—15. 4) *The Monthly Criterion*, Jan. 1928, p. 11.
5) SW, p. 15. 6) SW, p. 1. 7) *Le Problème du Style*, p. 66.

the French writer has something to do with Eliot's persistence in cultivating and propagating the same trait in his own critical writings, deliberately using it as an antidote to Romantic fancy and illusion. The tools by means of which Eliot hopes to substitute order and intellectual precision for the chaos of impressionistic criticism, *viz.*, analysis and comparison, have similarly been borrowed from de Gourmont's workshop, if we are to believe Eliot's own hints [1]).

Some of the views on abstract thought in poetry expressed by Eliot are anticipated in *La Culture des Idées* and *Le Problème du Style*. In the former work, the simultaneous pursuit of new ideas and of an individual, artistic style is considered to exceed the powers of most writers; the man of letters is advised to restrict himself either to the one or to the other [2]). In *Le Problème du Style* the undisguised expression of ideas in poetry is objected to because it is "dangerous for a poet to be too clear and show too distinctly the foundations of his thought, which are usually rather poor" [3]). An article in *The Egoist* contains Eliot's assertion that "the abstract thought of all poets is mediocre enough and often second-hand" [4]).

M. René Taupin assumes the connection of Eliot's views on tradition with an article by Rémy de Gourmont published in *Poetry* for July 1914 in Richard Aldington's translation [5]). The recognition of the urgent need for a European, instead of a merely national, tradition expressed in that paper may have precipitated the growth of Eliot's cosmopolitan tendencies. Much in these latter, however, may probably be explained more satisfactorily by the influence of such writers as Santayana or Babbitt with their regard for Latin culture. Eliot's denial of the possibility of absolute originality, which is closely related to his attitude towards tradition, is matched by a very similar point of view stated in *Le Problème du Style*: "L'imagination est plus riche que la mémoire, mais elle n'est riche que des combinaisons nouvelles qu'elle impose aux éléments que lui fournit la mémoire. Imaginer, c'est associer des images et des fragments d'images; cela n'est jamais créer. L'homme ne peut créer ni un atome de matière ni un atome d'idée" [6]). Eliot similarly maintains: " 'Invention' is wrong only

1) *The Criterion*, vol. II, p. 41. 2) p. 76. 3) p. 162. 4) July 1917, p. 89.
5) Cf. *L'Influence du Symbolisme*, p. 214. 6) pp. 124—5.

because it is impossible . . . True originality is merely development" [1]).

It is hardly possible to escape the impression that T. S. Eliot's criticism is a much more complicated phenomenon than that of de Gourmont. Whatever Eliot may have borrowed from the latter, he has incorporated it in an intellectual structure that is at once more delicate and more ample. This has been intimated by M. Taupin, who also shows what is probably the most essential difference between the two. De Gourmont, though saturated with the classical tradition of France, or rather because of his excessive familiarity with it, aimed at breaking away from the traditional ways of his country, seeking for a change of air, without, however, losing the graces of classicism: "Au contraire Eliot, venant après une époque de vague sentimentalisme, et ne jouissant pas de la tradition étroite qu'impose l'éducation en France, a eu très tôt le besoin de se fixer une tradition littéraire" [2]). Rémy de Gourmont seems to have helped him to avoid the barren extremes of traditionalism without tempting him too far in the opposite direction.

Among the most essential elements in Eliot's critical system are those he has in common with the Imagist movement. The influence of Rémy de Gourmont on the Imagists, which has already been mentioned, makes it sometimes doubtful whether the coincidences of Eliot's notions with theirs are due to his contact with this literary school or to the impression Gourmont produced on both. This puzzle, which requires careful examination, cannot be dealt with in the present paper. The vigour, however, with which the Imagists propagated their ideal of a new concrete, disciplined style, and the close analogy of their ideas on this point to Eliot's views make it probable that the formulation of these latter was in certain cases influenced by Imagist writings. It has to be taken into account that Eliot collaborated in various ways with several of the leading members of the new group (Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, etc.), and that he became Assistant Editor of *The Egoist*, that English journal which most resolutely upheld the Imagist cause.

The central doctrines of Imagism relate to problems of diction and literary technique. They have been summed up repeat-

1) Preface to the *Selected Poems of Pound*, p. X. 2) *L'Influence du Symbolisme*, pp. 214—5.

edly by members of the school. We intend to analyse two or three of the most typical statements of the Imagist case in so far as they seem to have any bearing on Eliot's thought. It will be seen at once that the fundamental attitude of the Imagists is identical with that of Eliot, although they never elaborated their critical thought to the point of subtlety and comprehensiveness reached in *The Sacred Wood*, not to mention Eliot's later writings.

Richard Aldington's essay on *Modern Poetry and the Imagists* [1]) contains scarcely a point with which Eliot does not seem to agree. When Aldington proclaims "direct treatment of the subject" as the foremost requirement of the Imagist group, his manner of approaching the problem reminds one of Eliot: "We convey our emotions by presenting the object and circumstance of that emotion without comment. For example, we do not say, 'O how I admire that exquisite, beautiful — 25 more adjectives — woman' . . . but we present that woman, we make an 'Image' of her, we make the same convey the emotion". Eliot's objections to Monro and his praise of de Bosschère rest on similar considerations [2]). Again, when Eliot defends the Belgian's "intense frigidity", which he finds "altogether admirable", against those who would saturate poetry with hazy sentiments, or when he writes of that "terrifying austerity" [3]) which prevents de Bosschère from presenting anything but the concrete object that is to embody his feelings, he is thinking of an ideal very similar to the one stated in the following extract from Aldington's list of the Imagist articles of faith: "A hardness, as of cut stone. No slop, no sentimentality. When people say that Imagist poems are 'too hard', 'like a white marble monument', we chuckle; we know that we have done something good." An item of special importance in the same list is the requirement of precise statement: "The exact word. We make quite a heavy stress on that. It is most important. All great poetry is exact. All the dreariness of nineteenth century poets comes from their not quite knowing what they wanted to say and filling up the gaps with portentous adjectives and idiotic similes." This might have been written by Eliot, except for the last adjective. How vividly the significance of these points was felt by the Imagists, appears from

1) *The Egoist*, June 1914. 2) ib., Oct. 1917, p. 123. 3) ib.

the fact that they are repeated in the same terms by other writers of the group. Thus, reading F. S. Flint's *History of Imagism* [1]) we find the first two principles of Imagism to have been: "1) Direct treatment of the 'thing', whether subjective or objective. 2) To use no word that did not contribute to the presentation." These ideas were not novel. Flaubert had held very similar tenets, and the views of de Gourmont as above recorded evince the same predilection for concrete, definite presentation. What is new, is, however, the stubborn, almost fanatical, insistence on these matters found in the critical pronouncements of the Imagists. It must have accelerated the crystallization of Eliot's ideas on these questions.

May Sinclair's rebuttal of Harold Monro's attacks on Imagism in her *Two Notes* [2]) says much that sounds Eliotesque before Eliot had said it. She demands the integrity of the "Image": "The Image is not a substitute. It does not stand for anything but itself. Presentation, not Representation is the watchword of the school. The Image . . . is form and substance." Her urging of "the naked presentation of a thing, with nothing, not so much as a temperament or a mood between you and it" recalls Eliot's description of de Bosschère's [3]) "leaving, as if disdainfully, our emotions to form at will around the situation which his brain has selected". Yet although she repudiates all intrusion of sentiments or moods *between* the Image and the reader, she definitely holds that the mood should be *embodied* in the Image. According to her, in Imagism "the passion, the emotion, the mood are never given as an abstraction", they are inseparable from the Image. This is identical with the substance of Eliot's formula of the "objective correlative", and the attitude to abstractions in poetry here expressed is like that of Eliot. Furthermore, both May Sinclair (along with the other Imagists) and Eliot are emphatical about the necessity that the objectification should be in strict correspondence with individual feeling. Eliot, as we know, expects the "set of objects", the situation, the "chain of events" presented in poetry to become the exact formula of a "*particular* emotion" [4]). Miss Sinclair similarly asserts that "for each imagination its image is ultimate and unique. No other Image will

1) *The Egoist*, May 1915, p. 70. 2) ib., June 1915, pp. 88 ff. 3) ib., Oct. 1917, p. 133. 4) SW, p. 100.

serve its turn." There is hardly any difference between the "Image" with a capital *I* and the "objective correlative", except that the latter concept is more comprehensive, for it includes everything that is used in poetry to objectify an emotion in a concrete manner: images as well as dramatic situations, the incidents of a narrative, etc.

* * *

The thinkers we have compared with Eliot fall into two main groups, though there are many connecting links. Santayana, Babbitt, Maurras, Benda are at one in emphasizing with particular force the importance of the intellect and will as contrasted with revolutionary, anarchic emotion. De Gourmont and the Imagists, though by no means opposed to this point of view, lay more stress on concrete presentation and artistic precision. These fundamental attitudes combine in various ways with other standpoints, but they may be regarded as typical of the two groups. Both points of view belong to the essence of Eliot's Classicism. We have pointed out the difficulty of indicating the precise extent to which Eliot has been influenced by each of these critics or groups of critics. In many of the above cases his thought may have developed independently of them. It should, however, be clear that there is some connection between most of, or more probably all, the thinkers dealt with and Eliot, for the similarities we have found are both close and numerous, and there is in nearly all cases sufficient evidence of Eliot's interest in the critics discussed.

The parallels drawn are, of course, insufficient for giving a full idea of the background of Eliot's views. It would have been worth while to study the relation of his treatment of Metaphysical Wit with Coleridge's definition of Imagination, which he quotes [1]). His respect for Matthew Arnold [2]) leads one to assume that a comparison of the latter's ideas with those of Eliot might have yielded interesting results: both critics plead for a European, rather than an insular, civilization. Even Walter Pater, who has never been eulogized by Eliot, but, on the contrary, is usually treated by him with scarcely concealed disdain, has something in common with the younger critic. His essay on *Style* does justice to the need for fundamental brainwork in literary expres-

1) HJD, p. 40. 2) SW, pp. XI, 45, etc.

sion, and his contention that "the chief stimulus of a good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with" recalls Eliot's attitude [1]). Of critics of the present day or of the recent past, Pierre Lasserre, Paul Elmer More, Ezra Pound, T. S. Hulme, I. A. Richards, Herbert Read, the French Neo-Thomists, Ramon Fernandez and others would have deserved special treatment. Our apology is that in order to deal with all of them, we should have had to write a voluminous treatise, and that the connection with contemporary critical theory of the ideas expressed by Eliot since the publication of *The Sacred Wood* is too complicated and recent a matter to admit of satisfactory treatment. As regards T. S. Hulme, the belated publication of his posthumous papers makes it questionable how far Eliot knew his ideas before bringing out his first collection of essays, despite the fact that Hulme's conversations seem to have profoundly influenced the early Imagists [2]).

That so few of the critics analysed are Englishmen is no mere accident. Eliot's essays on criticism in *The Sacred Wood* show that he was looking for help from abroad. He thought he could find in America and France that "devotion to ideas" as well as that "interest in problems of art and life as problems which exist and can be handled apart from their relations to the critic's private temperament", which are among his principal requirements [3]). The contention that "the English critic is a victim of his temperament" [4]) characterizes Eliot's attitude to British criticism at least till 1920. If there is less reason for such a statement to-day, this is to a not inconsiderable extent due to Eliot's own share in the work of introducing a critical method that is at the same time more sensitive and less emotional.

---

1) *Appreciations*, Macmillan 1927, p. 12.

2) The ideas both of Hulme and Ezra Pound, in relation to Eliot, have been touched upon by M. Taupin *(L'Influence du Symbolisme* and *The Example of Rémy de Gourmont).*

3) SW, p. 39. 4) SW, p. 40.