THE LIVING PRINCIPLE

'English' as a Discipline of Thought

The Living Principle

'ENGLISH' AS A DISCIPLINE OF THOUGHT

By

F. R. LEAVIS

NEW YORK
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1975

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 75-10172

Printed in Great Britain by
T. & A. Constable Ltd.
Hopetoun Street
Edinburgh

Contents

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the following for permission to reproduce copyright material:

Faber & Faber Ltd. and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York, for extracts from *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot, from *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. Copyright 1943 by T. S. Eliot; copyright 1971, by Esme Valerie Eliot.

The author, Faber & Faber Ltd. and Basic Books, Inc., New York, for extracts from *The Knower and The Known* by Marjorie Grene. Copyright 1966 by Marjorie Grene.

The Trustees of the Thomas Hardy Estate, Macmillan Co. Ltd. of London and Basingstoke, The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd. and the Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. of New York for 'After A Journey' from *Collected Poems* by Thomas Hardy. Copyright 1925 by Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Estate of A. E. Housman, Jonathan Cape Ltd. and Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. for an extract from 'Reveille' in *A Shropshire Lad* from *The Collected Poems* of A. E. Housman. Copyright 1939, 1940, 1965 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Copyright 1967, 1968 by Robert E. Symons.

The Estate of the late Mrs Frieda Lawrence, Wm. Heinemann Ltd., Laurence Pollinger Ltd. and The Viking Press, Inc., for 'Piano' from *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence* edited by Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts. Copyright 1964, 1971 by Angelo Ravagli and C. M. Weekley, Executors of the Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli.

Give up literary criticism! WITTGENSTEIN.

I knew then, and I know now, it is no use trying to do anything–I speak only for myself–publicly. It is no use trying merely to modify present forms. The whole great form of our era will have to go. And nothing will really send it down but the new shoots of life springing up and slowly bursting the foundations. And one can do nothing, but fight tooth and nail to defend the new shoots of life from being crushed out, and let them grow. We can't make life. We can but fight for the life that grows in us. D. H. LAWRENCE, *Note to 'The Crown'*.

There's no redeeming the democratic mass university. The civilization it represents has, almost overnight, ceased to believe in its own assumptions and recoils nihilistically from itself. If you believe in humanity at all you will know that nothing today is more important than to keep alive the idea of the university-function–the essential university-function and what goes with it: the idea of an educated public. My preoccupation is to ensure that the living seed exists and that the life in it has the full pregnancy. Just how it will strike and take and develop, as it *must* if there is to be a human future, one can't foresee. Change is certainly upon us, menacing and certainly drastic; to meet it, there must be opportunism–the opportunism that answers to a profound realization of the need. *Prelusive remarks before giving 'Thought, Language and Objectivity' in lecture-instalments at the University of York.*

Preface

I AM not intending to say in prefacing this book anything that is not said in the body of it. But it is desirable, if only for the sake of the purpose I do entertain, that no reader shall expect something of a kind that is not offered, or impute to me an expectation that is not mine. In the nature both of what I do offer and of the civilization in which we live I should be foolish to count on a readiness to conceive the purpose, and, where initial sympathy is lacking, misconception might be all too readily allowed to prevail. My point is that what I have in view entails a radical challenge to modern habits of assumption, and even many who are not unsympathetic to my judgments will ask –realistically, they feel–what I hope to effect, implying that the battle I wage is a hopeless one.

Let me say then that I know that it would be mere dream-indulgence to suppose that we might establish a university answering to the ideal implicit in my argument. I see little prospect of there being in any university an English School of which (say) half of the teaching staff were qualified to work in the spirit of my suggestions. Then there is the egalitarian tidal-wave and its consequences; where such student-numbers are to be dealt with, and the belief that standards really matter fights a losing battle against 'democracy' and enlightenment, the notion of the university's human function that I advance is pathetically remote from possible realization. And, actually, in the following pages I disclaim the intention of sketching 'honours' courses, or drawing up syllabuses for institutional endorsement.

Yet, though I know this realism to be necessary, that doesn't mean that I think the realism that depresses says all. The massively ignored human need in such an age as ours achieves self-recognition and voices in the relatively very few; but–as I have said before–the measure of importance in this realm is not quantitative; decisive changes of consciousness are initiated by tiny minorities: our civilization affords much excuse for dwelling on those truths. But actually,

though out of grounded conviction I adhere to them, it was not, as I acquired the experience that constituted the grounds, a sense of the potential community as tiny—the community sympathetic to my concern—that I found myself forming. My view, insistently conveyed, of the way in which we must counter the malady under which mankind wilts has never had to overcome any discouraging lack of responsive students—I mean my view as implicit in my assumptions about the kind of work worth doing and the seriousness of the interest I could count on. And this remains true after the years of rapid expansion have congested the multiplied universities with telly- and pin-table-addicted non-students, thus making possible the pressure for 'participation' and the careers of student-union politicians. And, at nearly all the universities with which I am acquainted (for the most part, inevitably, in a casual and external way) I have encountered at staff-level men intent on taking their vocational responsibilities seriously—as far as academic requirements and expectations and determining conditions allowed. Where there are such men and (as at every place there are) students who know, if in a vague way, what they ought to be getting from a university, there are possibilities of collaborative opportunism—and here and there, perhaps, of more.

To point to such possibilities may seem a poor way of proceeding to justify the kind of book I have written. That may be so; our civilization, outwardly cock-a-hoop and at heart despairing, expresses itself characteristically in unbelieving reactions of that kind. But what is rejected, or at least not shared, is belief in realities that alone justify hope—the hope that means responsible effort. The belief I am thinking of entails the perception that the despair, or vacuous unease, characteristic of the civilized world comes of profound human needs and capacities that the civilization denies and thwarts, seeming—paralysingly—to have eliminated in its triumph all possibility of resurgence.

To such a state the necessary reaction is that with which the politician's maxim should be met. '*We* create possibility': opportunities taken, or made, in the spirit I invoke would elicit manifest proof of the human realities we must count on. This is not lightly asserted; behind the certitude there is a life's experience. But the assertion itself will hardly be dismissed as paradoxical. What does need insisting on is the significance, the imperative authority, of the truth involved. Proof even on a small scale is proof, and the scale of the immediate manifestation tells us nothing about the range and magnitude of its possible effects—effects of influence and suggestive stimulus. This is

justification enough—if justification were needed—of the reasoned and variously enforced case for a given kind of sustained creative effort—one articulately conscious of its nature and necessity—that I have offered to present in this book.

The potential human response is there; the calculated presentment of the elaborated case is necessary. The individual opportunist needs to feel that he is not alone, unsupported and heroically casual. But, though my aim is to present a conception of the university's constitutive function as being to create and maintain an educated public, I mustn't seem to imply that the audience I think of myself as addressing is confined to the university. That conception is not quite so remote from imaginable possibility as it might seem because, as things are, the need is conscious already in a minority of individuals that is substantial enough to be thought of as a nucleus of the influential public we disastrously lack. But they are not a public; they represent only the makings of a public. A real public, one capable of having the least influence of the kind needed, would have some consciousness of itself as one.

The way in which the age discourages such a possibility may be discreetly intimated by a reference to *The Times*, a paper which consciously addresses itself to the educated, has clearly a given kind of concern for civilized standards, and, with a circulation that falls decidedly short of a million, has contrived—or been enabled—to persist. Its letter page is something to be grateful for. But though it prints a few reviews, such literary reviewing as it does can be dismissed as serving no critical function. The very choice of the books to be reviewed looks like mere caprice, though inquiry might reveal some canny motivation. The fact is that in the world of triumphant modernity, the world of power-centres from which the quantity-addicted machinery of civilization is controlled, directed and exploited, literature in the old sense has ceased to matter. I mean that when the public capable of discerning genuinely new creativity disappears the guides in whom the existence of the public is manifest disappear too. Non-quantitative critical standards effectively exist only in a public which, capable of responding to them when they are critically appealed to, is in that sense 'educated', and where there are no standards literature has ceased to matter—has ceased, in effect, to exist. The BBC looks after culture, and the high-brow Programme brings together under its Palladian aegis a reading from St Matthew, a performance of the St Matthew Passion, and Mr Kingsley Amis

advertising, by reading from it (and no doubt being paid for doing so), the latest product of his distinctive gift.

I say nothing about the more expensive Sunday papers, where the élite, or coterie, of the literary world go about their business, nor about that (from the critical point of view) closely related phenomenon, *The Times Literary Supplement*—which, as I write, makes a point of testifying that Mr Amis is modern literature and the late W. H. Auden a major poet and a mind of world importance. There is no need here for a full account of our cultural plight.

I am merely underlining the constatation that such elements as may exist of a potential public representing standards are, by reason of their numerical insignificance, non-existent for advertising-managers and editors—even where the 'intellectual' weeklies are concerned (the literary editors of which have, in any case, no compelling motive for questioning the coterie-established reputations). These are formidable facts; the problem they portend has to be faced realistically, and, if the line of thought I stand for were to tell in any decisive way, there would be, among the convinced, much considering and testing of the prompted dispositions and measures. I myself see as my business in this book to present with all the cogency I can achieve the full necessity of a living creative literature, of the cultural continuity without which there can be no valid criteria of the humanly most important kind, and of the cultural habit now implicitly repudiated both by *The Times* and the intellectual weeklies—the habit that once meant that there was some vital touch and communication between the experience and sensibility represented by a living literary tradition on the one hand, and, on the other, the intellectual and political life of the age. Such communication must depend on the existence of an influential and truly cultivated public—a public in which the continuity has a potent life.

I have expressed these convictions before. But the emphasis in these pages will be found, I think, to be a not altogether familiar one. It entails what I intend (the insistence on it, at any rate, is a development) as a fresh approach to fundamentals; which is not to say that, in this, I am not very much concerned with what, practically, *can* be done: in fact, I don't know how, in such a matter, there could be any separation. The emphasis may be felt in the repetition of the word 'thought'. I have of course in the past spoken habitually of creative writers as being, in major works, unmistakably concerned with heuristic thought, and of university 'English' as needing to justify any claim to import-

ance it may advance by standing, genuinely and consciously, for a distinctive discipline of intelligence. The new insistence was prompted by the Wittgensteinians.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy is known as a 'linguistic' philosophy, and the Wittgensteinians in assuming that the conception of language implicit in the adjective is ordinary—or sufficiently non-specialized to be acceptable to non-philosophers—have (or think they have) pretty obviously the master's authority for the assumption. Whether or not (and it seems to me doubtful) he would have encouraged the idea of arranging seminars on his philosophy for literary students, he was in his sophisticated way comparatively naïve, I think, about language, and that is the aspect of the objection to the idea—for I *am* opposed to it—which it is in place to stress here. The naïvety would hardly be made less uncondonable by most of the expositors whom literary students would have to depend on; it would almost inevitably be more obvious—and one can imagine possible educational profit for *some* literary students in that. But the emphasis in place here is that the naïvety is inadequacy, and the inadequacy falsifying in a way inimical to thought (if, that is, it doesn't precipitate a recoil, which is hardly what the Wittgensteinians anticipate).

Intelligent thought about the nature of thought and the criteria of good thinking is impossible apart from intelligence about the nature of language, and the necessary intelligence about language involves an intimate acquaintance with a subtle language in its fullest use. English is a subtle language; its literature is very rich, and its continuity stretches over centuries, starting long before the great seventeenth-century change; so there is point in saying that for the English-speaking philosopher the fullest use of language ought to be its use by the creative writers of his own time, and he needs to take full cognizance of this truth.

I have intimated something, then, about my reasons for insisting that the critical discipline—the distinctive discipline of university 'English'—is a discipline of intelligence, and for being explicit and repetitive in associating the word 'intelligence' with the word 'thought'. As for 'discipline', I am sure that that is the right word, though the training that justifies it in the given use is a training in delicacy of perception, in supple responsiveness, in the warinesss of conceptual rigidity that goes with a Blakean addiction to the concrete and particular, and in readiness to take unforeseen significances and what is so unprecedented as to be new. By way of emphasizing that 'discipline'

is the right word I will sum up by saying that it is a training in responsibility–'responsibility' having the force I define in the first part of this book by adducing Conrad's 'The Secret Sharer'.

Having said this, I will go on to say further that the discipline is a training in fidelity to–which must be delicate apprehension of–the living principle. It is not an overstatement that misleads to say that the whole of this book (in which I say something about what 'to mean' means) is devoted to defining what I mean by 'the living principle'. There would be no point, then, in my offering to give a summary of the meaning here. As, however, the sentence before the last intimates (in spite of a possible suggestion of the word 'defining'), the 'principle' in question is not abstract, and no context of theory could define it; the word has the force it has when one says: 'this seed has in it the principle of life'. The living principle is a concrete something apprehended but indefinable. Since, then, I am committed to discursive exposition I am faced with a difficult problem of method, one that the book attempts to solve. That explains what will for some readers be its disconcerting oddities of structure, sequence and inclusion. In any case it needs (as of course any sustained argument does–but I am conscious of giving some rude jolts to habits of expectation) a collaborative reader. So the business I see as mine of working into my argument with anticipatory hints cannot begin too early.

Thinking over my problem, I recalled that phrase of Lawrence's, 'the living intuitive faculty'. I must quote the paragraph of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which (with the variant, 'the human intuitive faculty') it comes:

> The car ploughed uphill through the long squalid straggle of Tevershall, the blackened brick dwellings, the black slate roofs glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal-dust, the pavements wet and black. It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty was appalling. The stacks of soap in the grocers' shops, the rhubarb and lemons in the greengrocers'! the awful hats in the milliner's! all went by, ugly, ugly, ugly, ugly, followed by the plaster-and-gilt horror of the cinema with its wet picture announcements, 'A Woman's Love!' and the new Primitive chapel, primitive enough in its stark brick and big panes of greenish and raspberry glass in the windows. . . . Standard Five girls were having a singing lesson, just finishing the la-me-doh-la exercises and beginning a

> 'sweet children's song'. Anything more unlike song, spontaneous song, would be impossible to imagine: a strange bawling yell that followed the outlines of a tune. It was not like savages: savages have subtle rhythms. It was not like animals: animals *mean* something when they yell. It was like nothing on earth and it was called singing. Connie listened with her heart in her boots, as Field was filling petrol. What could possibly become of such a people; a people in whom the living intuitive faculty was dead as nails, and only queer mechanical yells and uncanny will-power remained?

Of course, in the short half-century since Lawrence wrote this, things have changed–civilization has advanced; but I don't think that any reader capable of taking, in relation to Lawrence's preoccupation, the point of that paragraph would say that the changes had at all tended to revive 'the living intuitive faculty'. 'Spontaneous' is an important word in the passage, and one of the consequences of the advance is that it has become more necessary than it was to guard the idea of spontaneity against reductive assumptions that certainly don't enter into the meaning of 'spontaneous' as Lawrence uses the word.

A talented artist, a genuinely creative writer, has to *learn* to be spontaneous; processes of training and education are required before he knows what his spontaneity is and can tell with sureness what it dictates. Blake was emphasizing his spontaneity when, referring to works of his own (at which he had laboured, altering and redrafting), he said: 'Tho' I call them Mine, I know that they are not Mine.' 'The living intuitive faculty' of the passage from Lawrence's novel intuits promptings that, for those who have it, are 'not theirs'–not promptings of 'will, ego and idea',* nor of the telly, the great modern educational agent, transmitting, along with commercially interested pressures, the commercialized technologico-cultural manifestations of North America, where 'the living intuitive faculty' is so dead that the phrase had no meaning there even when Lawrence wrote.

The authority he invokes with the phrase may be said to be life, or the potency at the source of life–for this again is a word of which (a measure of its indispensableness) it is more difficult to define or explain the force than most people, even philosophers, normally recognize: they feel that they know well enough what it means. But I don't by quoting that passage of Lawrence's establish what force 'the living principle', as I use the phrase, must be recognized to have.

* A distinctive and significant triad in Lawrence's discursive writing.

That too is very far from being a matter of straightforward definition; it involves, in fact, what I may call the 'logic' of the whole book.

I bring in the word 'logic' here as part of my insistence on the propriety of my way of using the word 'thought' and on the cogency I aspire to in my mode of argument. The mode is not, it seems to me, philosophical; it would be misrepresented by calling it that. It occurs to me to say this because of the assurance I received from a philosopher who had written to tell me that he and friends of his had been for some time interested in my work as being distinctly relevant to philosophic preoccupations they had in common. In reply I said, not (I insist) in pure modesty, that I wasn't a philosopher, and didn't think of myself as one. This drew from him, in a further very courteous and considerate letter, the following:

> You do yourself less than justice when claiming to be not a philosopher. The problems with which you are dealing when considering such things as the autonomy of the human world and how we should see our relations to it *are* philosophical questions: and I think you would be wrong to heed the views of technical-minded philosophers who wish to claim that philosophy is a subject only for experts who in their wisdom deal with problems too sophisticated for the non-expert, and who have, in consequence, nearly succeeded in making professional philosophy an area with nothing to say to the man faced with real philosophical problems.

This, while I hold to it that I don't deserve the imputation of modesty with which it opens, seems to me admirable, and gives me great pleasure. It gives me pleasure because, coming from a philosopher, it justifies me in positing the co-presence in the university of 'English' with philosophy as, properly, of benefit to both—justifies me by evidencing in so unmistakable a way that the philosophical discipline may issue in concern for a kind of thought such as might stimulate, and might strengthen, thinking in the field of the other discipline.

I am left, then, insisting on the 'other discipline'. What I find it relevant to say immediately is that the mode of argument by which I endeavour to explain and enforce that insistence seems to me decidedly not a philosopher's. Its affinity is rather—and appropriately—with the other-than-philosophical discipline for which I aim at getting recognition. I have to justify my contention about the humanly necessary kind of thought that is hardly recognized at all as that, and, in doing so, to communicate to others my firm belief that something relevant can be done; that is, I am concerned—inseparably—with

practicality and with persuasion to directed energizing. The thought slighted by our civilization cannot have the needed vitality and influence without an educated public and in explaining this I define what 'educated public' means. This entails some reference to the idea and function of the university. Not that I entertain hopes of redeeming in terms of the 'idea' the modern 'democratic' university. Hope lies in opportunism—opportunism combined with a firm conception; and it is reasonable to believe that opportunities will be found—opportunities, quantitatively dismissible, to be snatched on the margins or in the interstices of the institutional going concern. My business is to suggest convincingly how by such opportunism the idea might be kept alive, propagated, and here and there nursed into striking root; in the process strengthening the actual elements of an educated public by fostering new consciousness and so life.

I have had no thought of drawing up a model syllabus, but I couldn't effectively serve the purpose I have tried to define, and develop the entailed argument, which of its nature transcends the dispassionately demonstrative or merely theoretical, without resorting continually to the concrete; hence my use, in the first part, of Andreski's book, Marjorie Grene's and Ian Robinson's, as well as, for the given definitive purpose, of Conrad's short story. My purpose in general may be called responsible exemplification, and 'responsible' implies a pondered finality of judgment. But 'finality' is not an unambiguous word. I do indeed think that 'The Secret Sharer' makes the point at issue with a felicity that is unsurpassable, if not incomparable. But where the books are in question my use of them means: 'This serves my argument well *and* I judge with complete responsibility that the book is one that will in any case repay my students' close attention.' 'Pondered finality' here means that I haven't thought it likely that I should have, as the result of dissentient representations, to abandon my judgment that the book is very suitable for the kind of use I propose—though I know there is nothing final about my list. Yet, as I avow, where Marjorie Grene's *The Knower and the Known* is in question I can't imagine there could be any substitute that served the given need so well.

In saying that, I don't think I can be convicted of misjudgment regarding the use I envisage for *Four Quartets*. I rest my confidence, not only upon the hardly disputable fact that Eliot is our last (and recent) major poet, but upon the judgment—which my third part elaborates—that in his culminating creative work the thought to which

he devotes his genius focuses the student's mind on the basic problem challenging humanity in our present civilization. The 'buts' and limiting judgments to which any serious reader is compelled are far from diminishing the importance of Eliot and his paradoxical creativity: the kind of student I condition for (and count on) will very often have *Four Quartets* in front of him, and my discussion of that work implies that the reader, in order to follow and check, will refer continually to the full poetic text.

I

Thought, Language and Objectivity

THIS is not the book I have been often reproached with having promised a quarter of a century ago, and never having produced. 'Judgment and Analysis' was the heading I put over some of the intended contents when they were printed in *Scrutiny*. I had coined the phrase as a substitute for 'Practical Criticism'. 'Practical Criticism', I used to tell my lecture audiences and the undergraduates who worked with me at my college, 'is criticism in practice, and we are engaged in that when, for instance, we decide that a novel is good, give our grounds for the judgment, and put the case with care, or when we inquire into the justice or otherwise of Eliot's conclusion, *Hamlet* being in question, that "the play is most certainly an artistic failure".' I didn't, that is, like the implication—it had come to inhere in the formula—that 'Practical Criticism' was a specialized kind of gymnastic skill to be cultivated and practised as something apart. The influence of that idea, I thought, was to be seen in Tillyard's odd and ominous tribute to *Seven Types of Ambiguity—Poetry Direct and Oblique*.

In any case, I knew that tests of perception and sensibility and exercises in judgment and analysis should be—and should deserve to be—thought of as fostering the kind of intelligence in the training of which a university English School that deserved to exist and be respected would see the work of its justifying discipline.

Of course, as this last sentence shows, I raised for myself with that conclusion, and recognized that I was raising, problems of thought as well as of practice: 'English' is at the other extreme from Mathematics.

One can more readily talk in a descriptive and definitive way of the kind of intelligence than begin to define the discipline. There can be no equivalent of *Principia Mathematica*. Nevertheless, it is politic to insist on 'discipline', and necessary to be able to justify the insistence—so important is the kind of intelligence in the present phase of human history, when Lord Robbins, surveying the needs of education at the university level, recognizes that the natural sciences must be complemented by the study of human nature and brings out the force of this recognition by pointing to psychology and the social sciences. These are disciplines; his concessive gesture towards Literature and the Arts makes it plain that they are to be regarded as pleasing adjuncts to what really matters—graces and adornments in the margin of life that shouldn't be discouraged: they contribute dignity and amenity.

What we have to get essential recognition for is that major creative writers are concerned with a necessary kind of thought. To such recognition the climate of our age is hostile, the hostility being a measure of the importance that is denied. Where the hostility prevails, thought is disabled for the performance of an indispensable function, the central one. The slighted truths are implicit in my insistence that 'English' should represent, and be recognized to represent, a discipline *sui generis*—a discipline of intelligence. There will be no neat and final account of the distinctive discipline, but the need and the challenge to define and re-define will always be there. For the problems—decidedly in the plural here—that present themselves in so formidable a way and so inexorably as practical ones involve tentativeness, incompleteness and compromise so inescapably that the ends ('the living principle') that, together with the *ahnung* implicit in them, should give the defects their meaning will be lost if practice is not associated with thought that renews and reformulates. By slipping in after 'ends' that brief parenthetic phrase I meant to intimate that what one for this, for that or for the other directing purpose necessarily emphasizes as an end in view gets its full significance from a totality of apprehension and concern, and that the complex totality is a vital unity. It seems to me important to think of this kind of unity as hardly distinguishable from the principle that makes it *one*, 'principle' here implying an energy that, representing a nisus that has maintained a creative continuity from human beginnings and goes back to the source, impels, directs and controls.

The word is both a reminder and a mandate. In this use, then, it

doesn't imply the abstract or the merely theoretic. The thought in question for us, vindicators of 'English', is, as I have said, antithetically remote from mathematics; it involves a consciousness of one's full human responsibility, purpose, and the whole range of human valuations. Thought of that order, if it is to matter in the world of practice, must, one might suppose, be collaborative and continuous in some relevant community–in the first place, the community of those responsible and practically engaged in a university English School. And in any case one needs hope and at least moral support. It was not, however, for nothing that I spoke, a page or so back, of 'having raised problems of thought and practice for myself'.

What we have to get recognition for is that major creative writers are concerned with thought, and such recognition entails the realization that the thought is of an essential kind. In relation to those who, having power in Cambridge 'English', may be called those responsible, I found myself very much alone. In fact, to insist on raising the problems I have pointed to and keeping them, by discussion and exploratory practice, exposed *as* problems was, it had to be recognized, an insufferable offence–one that deserved all the possible not grossly scandalous rigours of discouragement (and scandalousness is a matter of reigning convention). Yet, as I have recorded in the introduction to my published Clark Lectures*, the English Tripos had started very promisingly. I also record there that when the faculty structure was set up in 1927 the natural ward-bosses, who were well prepared to take their opportunities, took them, and had a rapid triumph that was almost complete. I refer again to that history as I know it because of its significance for my theme: the promise of the start was accidental; the hostility that killed the promise gives us the academic ethos we must count on, and the spirit that, miracles aside, will be strong in the use of the institutional machinery, of the influence and of the power. Here we have one of the considerations that determine the attitude that, in the following pages, I assume as the right one: a non-acceptance of defeat that is as far from optimism as a positive attitude *can* be and remain undespairing.

I can now go on to say that not everything in that early history simply and merely lends itself to the case for pessimism, even though to adduce the conditions out of which *Scrutiny* grew–for *Scrutiny* really was, though to say it was once bad form, an achievement of the

* *English Literature in Our Time and the University.*

old Cambridge—is to emphasize the rapid change that eliminated them. It was a vanishing Cambridge that *Scrutiny* stood for, and the twenty-years battle for survival was a battle against a new and triumphant academic institutionalism, the new kind of enemy this bred and empowered, and the whole massive movement of civilization. Yet for twenty years the life persisted, not unknown to the world at large or fruitless, and a decade after the kill the Cambridge University Press put the reprinted offence into world-wide circulation: the unforgivable had become both classical and indispensable.

The elimination of the conditions that had made the twenty years possible certainly doesn't favour buoyant assumptions. I recognize that—though not merely that—when I set myself to explaining why this is not the book I started writing in the *Scrutiny* days. Twenty years ago, the first reason I should probably have given for not having gone on to complete the book would have been that there was so much else to do. I had by then written a good deal of extended criticism—critiques of Shakespeare plays and of works by major novelists. I had even, in *Revaluation*, tried to suggest the kind of continuity of relation there ought to be between the work done under 'Judgment and Analysis' and the student's dealings with literary history. In fact, pressed further by the questioner, I might have followed up the first reason with the confession that the will to carry out the original plan was not as strong as it had once been, and that what had been growing was my sense that the proper continuation of 'Judgment and Analysis'—for the kind of illustrative demonstration printed in *Scrutiny* could hardly be 'completed'—was actually represented by 'extended criticism', of which, in great diversity, there was so much asking to be done.

At this point I have to invoke again the Cambridge context implicit in *Scrutiny*. I am not going to enlarge on it; merely to offer an immediately relevant note regarding my work as supervisor and lecturer for the English Tripos. I did my 'supervising' as a College officer, both responsible and independent in relation to the studies of men 'reading English' at the College. The lectures, including a course of 'Judgment and Analysis', were given to a large university audience in which most of my own undergraduates would be present, being aware of the bearing of the lectures on college 'supervision'. This last term covers frequent meetings with students—meetings varying as to the number of students involved, college autonomy favouring flexible arrangements and the necessary opportunism.

In supervision, the boundary between 'Judgment and Analysis' and extended criticism could disappear; it became obviously a working convention. One might work through (say) *Measure for Measure* or *Antony and Cleopatra*, and, if one couldn't in the same way work through *Little Dorrit* or *Women in Love*, one could, in the discussion of a given great novel that one had the best of reasons for knowing well, foster understanding of the way in which tentative observations and local close criticism develop into a precise critical argument and the careful comprehensiveness of a written critique. 'Practical criticism is criticism in practice'—the significance of that insistence had frequent and varied demonstration.

The Cambridge that made such attempts to preserve and develop the heritage possible (two verbs for the one process—but neither is redundant) has vanished into the past—into oblivion, so far as the English School is concerned. How little this account exaggerates was apparent in a document officially circulated not long ago. In it a prominent member of the Faculty—he has since risen to a professorial chair—proposed the elimination of 'Practical Criticism' from among the papers set for the English Tripos. It is the reasons he gave that, in their naïve explicitness, impress me as peculiarly significant. He insisted that the paper, together with the concern for the kind of work it was designed to promote, was out of date—a now pointless inheritance from the past, so much had things changed. One very relevant aspect of the change he was not explicit about: 'student participation'. The student politicians active in zeal for this are a small minority of the whole student body but have democratic allies in the senior world who know that the concern to enforce serious academic standards is looked on 'politically' as repugnant to democracy. But the significance immediately in point resides, the don in question being a leading intellectual of 'Cambridge English', in his notion of that past which he judged to be irrelevant, and his account of the change that had robbed Practical Criticism of its *raison d'être*.

He seemed to think that, even if I couldn't be properly said to have invented Practical Criticism, I had had a large part in the invention, or at least in the imposition. He certainly wished to impute to me a major responsibility for its persistence as an incubus after the case for it had lapsed. That case, he intimated, with the confidence of one who invokes the obvious, belonged to the decade in which Eliot and Joyce made their impact, and the new in literature presented (as Donne, a period cult, did too) a kind of intellectual difficulty that

challenged close local attention and the ability to demonstrate the adequacy of one's reading in analytic comment on passages. Creative fashions having changed, and students' taste having little in common with the taste of that past era, it had become pointless, and worse, to annoy them with the Practical Criticism kind of exercise.

Actually, the need to cultivate the power of close and sensitive perception and response in the way that became known as Practical Criticism had received decisive recognition in the earliest days of the English Tripos—well before the publication of *The Waste Land* (1922), when Eliot first became a contemporary value (though contempt prevailed for years in the academic world), or the start of the at first clandestine cult of *Ulysses*. Work for the tripos began in 1917, and I have, in the introduction to my published Clark Lectures, put on record what university 'English' owes to the fact that for the opening years the staff of the English School (there was no faculty) consisted of Mansfield D. Forbes, a man of intelligence, disinterestedness and courage such as institutional 'English' at Cambridge has made itself safe against. The emphasis falls, then, not on the historical ignorance as such, but on the utter unawareness revealed by a leading intellectual of the English School of the nature of intelligent literary study—that is, of the nature of literature itself.

But of course the fact of a revelation of that kind made in such a way is itself history—and it is for us usefully symbolic; the academic in question has his representative significance—what he represents being Professor Plumb's 'death of the past'. The changes that have taken place since I coined the phrase, 'Judgment and Analysis', explain sufficiently my neglect to go on with the promised book, and why there can be no question of my doing so. The problem now facing one takes the form of a transmuted world so essentially hostile that one has to be, in one's response to it, always fully conscious of the basic apprehensions that make one resolute in resisting, explicit and insistent about them, and, though unsanguine, unmistakably positive in the mode of one's resistance—the resistance one aims at fostering (where it *can* be fostered). A patent manifestation of major change is the immense, the monstrous, industry of book-manufacture addressed to the vast new student-populace that has been created—irreversibly, it is to be feared—in so short a time. So far as 'English' is concerned, by far the greater part of the annual smother of aids to study is the work of authors or compilers, university teachers themselves, who betray their blank ignorance of what the profitable study

of literature is like, and their indifference to the real problems that face all literary students.

What, when I recall the old project, alone can seem worth while at the moment of history characterized by this industrial avalanche is the clear, challenging and comprehensive manifesto—the most telling presentment one can achieve of a complex totality; a presentment referable to as the 'idea', though 'idea' hardly suggests strongly enough the concreteness of the evocation I have in mind as the necessary kind of argument—the unsettling representation of facts and basic human needs that determines judgment positively.

There is no simple prescription to offer, nothing simple to be said. My note is perhaps more solemn than Professor Andreski's, but not out of resonance with it or more serious—I quote from his *Social Sciences as Sorcery*, a book that bears closely on my own concern:

> I do not envisage that this blast of my trumpet will bring down the walls of pseudo-science, which are manned by too many stout defenders: the slaves of routine who (to use Bertrand Russell's expression) 'would rather die than think', mercenary go-getters, docile educational employees who judge ideas by the status of their propounders, or the woolly minded lost souls yearning for gurus. Nevertheless, despite the advanced stage of cretinization which our civilization has reached under the impact of the mass media, there are still people about who like to use their brains without the lure of material gain; and it is for them that this book is intended. But if they are in a minority, then how can truth prevail? The answer (which gives some ground for hope) is that people interested in ideas, and prepared to think them through and express them regardless of personal disadvantage, have always been few; and if knowledge could not advance without a majority on the right side, there would never have been any progress at all—because it is always easier to get into the limelight, as well as to make money, by charlatanry, doctrinairism, sycophancy and soothing or stirring oratory than by logical and fearless thinking. No, the reason why human understanding has been able to advance in the past, and may do so in the future, is that true insights are cumulative and retain their value regardless of what happens to their discoverers . . . Anyway, let us not despair.

The book is a valuable one for my purpose, and I recommend it to the minority who find, or make, openings for the kind of opportunism on which hope in the university depends. It is a conclusive commentary on Lord Robbins's faith in the Social Sciences and psychology, and it has a close bearing on the concern that explains my emphasis on 'distinctive discipline' and the 'living principle' which

this serves. I think that the evidence he presents is even more alarming than he recognizes, but at least he gives one the opportunity to insist with renewed point on the greater menace which he doesn't consider before committing himself to his exhortation: 'Anyway, let us not despair.'

The process of 'cretinization' is lethal in a way he doesn't suggest: actually the 'mass media', representing our cretinized and cretinizing civilization, are working destructively with a success that, if they are not positively—which would be creatively—countered, and countered with intelligence, devoted pertinacity, and faith, will put an end to the very conditions of what he hopes to preserve, seeming confident, for all his explicit pessimism, that they can in any case *be* preserved. Not only is his conception of 'thought' too restrictive; the assumptions implicit in his reference to 'the reason why human understanding has been able to advance in the past, and may do so in the future' are unrealistic and too easy. The 'clear thinking' that Andreski has in mind when he adduces the minority 'who like to use their brains' is indeed a matter of importance, but it doesn't embrace the whole of thought, the whole humanly essential nature of thought. What it rules out is indispensable, and a sociologist really ought to have a full and pondered awareness of that truth—which in any case needs to be insisted on, and effectively, if there is to be any hope of saving humanity from what threatens it.

I criticize Andreski gratefully; his work within the restrictions of the field of thought proper to his discipline is admirable, and he must be regarded as an ally who repays critical respect. It is those restrictions which make it possible for him to say: 'true insights are cumulative and retain their value regardless of what happens to their discoverers.' One recalls Daniel Doyce's reply to Arthur Clennam, who is urging him to give up his hopeless battle with the Circumlocution Office: 'The thing is as true as ever it was.' It is the spirit of science, and we can hardly think of science as threatened at all immediately by the mass media and the processes of cretinization. So, while science goes on, the ideal of disinterested clear thinking may remain potent in some fields where, as in that which Andreski describes as his own, the rigours of exact science, being impossible, don't apply. Yet we can't help asking in what way true insights can be cumulative unless in a general recognition within a professional community that the truths in question have been definitively established and can be safely built on. Their retaining their value depends on the continuing fact of

such recognition—or does it? 'Value', actually, is a very important word, and therefore, in the nature of the case, insidiously difficult for thought.

It has a close association with the word 'standard', itself very tricky, especially in relation to the assumptions going with a self-commitment to logic, clear thinking and disinterestedness. Andreski himself introduces the word in a brief paragraph coming a few lines before the opening of that which I have quoted:

> Whether exhortation helps much may seriously be doubted, for despite centuries of inveighing against stealing and cheating, these misdemeanours do not appear to be less common now than at the time of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it is difficult to envisage how any standards whatsoever can continue to exist without some people taking upon themselves the task of affirming them and preaching against vice.

The attitude of that last sentence is wholly applaudable; it is the attitude conveyed and made potent by the book. In feeling and judging so one notes that 'exhortation' in the first sentence is, as Andreski uses it, an ambiguous word. It might be commented that 'preaching' in the last is too. But 'preaching' is yoked with 'affirming', and Andreski's way of affirming is what may reasonably be called concrete presentation accompanied by the relevant clear discourse—one judges him to be secure against any charge of unfair selectiveness or improperly biased commentary: what he does is to *expose* the 'vice', having evoked the standard by which it *is* vice. 'Exhortation' hardly of itself implies that method. If we ask why he uses such a word, giving it the emphasis of a supporting sentence, the answer seems to be that it expresses an uneasy sense of there being something like an inconsistency haunting his thought.

There are grounds for such a sense; they lend themselves best to consideration in Andreski's chapter 8: 'Evasion in the Guise of Objectivity'. They don't seriously impair the book for Andreski's avowed purpose, but, in a way that can be profitably taken as a challenge, they entail issues in relation to 'values' and 'standards' about which anyone concerned to enforce the contention that 'English' should stand for a discipline of thought needs to be clear in his mind, articulate and tactically ready. Andreski's chapter opens:

> The distinction between a judgment of fact and a judgment of value has become one of the corner stones of philosophy ever since Hume wrote his famous statement that 'reason is, and must always remain, the

> slave of the passions' . . . Though beset by the difficulties of application, due above all to the shading-off of concepts into one another, this distinction underlies the ideal of objectivity.

Actually the ideal of objectivity cannot be what Andreski represents it as being, and if the distinction as he posits it is one of the corner stones of philosophy, then it is certainly imprudent to commit oneself to living in the edifice. Hume and Russell (a philosopher whom he adduces with avowed sympathy) are not sufficient authorities regarding the nature of objectivity, and the student of 'English' ought to be able to say so with well-founded conviction.

I touch here on the theme of 'English' as a liaison centre, a theme entailing the postulate that the main intellectual disciplines should be co-present in a university, but that a belief in the possible profit of such co-presence is not a belief in mixed courses, or in seminars on Wittgenstein for literary students. The presence of philosophy in the university should be important for 'English'; the profit would accrue in the fields of both disciplines. I had better add at once that I cannot think of it as involving, for 'English', a dependence on authoritative advice from the academic department of philosophy. Before offering to justify this immodest avowal, I will quote another passage from Andreski's chapter, and make the commentary it invites:

> Even to-day, the spontaneous approach of anybody who has made no special effort to accustom himself to viewing his social environment, as it were, from the outside, remains emotional and manipulative, and the overwhelming majority of pronouncements on human affairs are made either for the sake of giving vent to emotions or influencing other people's behaviour. The latter can be achieved either by direct command, or by imbuing people with appropriate sentiments, or by instilling into them beliefs about the existing circumstances and causal relations between them which will induce them to behave in order to satisfy their desires. Normally, when we speak about human conduct, we condemn or praise, persuade or promise, threaten or cajole; and to be willing and able to discuss social behaviour dispassionately, and without an immediate utilitarian aim in view, remains a hall-mark of sophistication uncommon even to-day, and the first glimmerings of which appeared in the writings of Macchiavelli.

The positive criterion, or standard, Andreski appeals to here is represented by 'dispassionately', and the limiting weakness of his thought appears in the way he sets about intimating what he means by the term. He doesn't, as a matter of fact, positively define its force;

he merely adduces, to set over against it, various modes of treatment that we are to see as coming under 'emotional manipulation'. 'Manipulation', of course, is pejorative, and so is 'emotional' here, where it is used very much in the spirit of Professor Plumb's adverb in this sentence from *The Death of the Past*: 'Another refugee in a never-never land of the past is F. R. Leavis, whose picture of nineteenth-century England is totally unrealistic as it must be emotionally satisfying.' But 'imbuing people with appropriate sentiments', and 'instilling into them beliefs about existing circumstances and causal relations between them, in order to influence their behaviour,' don't necessarily answer to Andreski's pejorative intention: everything depends upon the mode, purpose and spirit of the influencing. He is thinking of influence where these are to be condemned. His description, in the passage I quote earlier, of his own expository and critical work as 'exhortation' makes it plain that *he* aims at exerting influence, and that a sense of the need to exert it is a main element in the drive behind his writing: 'it is difficult', he says, 'to envisage how any standards whatsoever can contrive to exist without some people taking upon themselves the task of affirming them and preaching against vice.'

This avowal seems to me a highly valuable testimony, though I doubt whether Andreski himself realizes to the full its value and importance. Are the standards he speaks of ('any standards whatsoever') merely the standards necessary to the achievement of objectivity as he conceives—or misconceives—it? That is not, as a matter of his intention, plain. But the intention itself could have no better than a very partial clarity without a better understanding of the nature of standards than we can credit Andreski with. The issues are fundamental, and, in relation to the status of 'English' as a discipline of thought, of the utmost importance.

Andreski, who rests on his assumptions as not seriously questionable, invokes philosophic authority for them, and finds it in Bertrand Russell. Now Russell's offer to justify the antithesis, statement of fact and statement of value, is what Marjorie Grene, making a major use of it in establishing her own very different position, criticizes in chapter 6, 'Facts and Values', of *The Knower and the Known*. That is a book which I incite literary students to use as a main recourse for the acquiring of that knowledge of the development of philosophic thought from Descartes to Polanyi which is essential to their thinking. Of course, not only in the prescription itself, but in that way of intimating the kind of need it serves, my immodest presumption is

exemplified. It is actually inescapable: there is no reason at all for supposing that, if one consulted professional authority in the proper academic department, there would be a high probability of the offered prescription's being usable; in default of the rare miracle, the kind of need would simply not be understood. This is not to imply that, two real disciplines being co-present, mutual awareness would not be generated, with consequent profit for both and for the university's function as a creative centre of civilization.

Marjorie Grene's chapter, which so clearly bears in a fundamental way on 'English', is sufficiently self-contained, so that, discussion of the issues it raises being in question, one could reasonably send one's students directly to it—it could in fact be read as an opening into the book. It seems to me that no philosopher could seriously disturb my *ad hoc* judgment that the book is a very fine piece of work, wide-ranging, pregnant and closely knit—unsurpassable, in fact, for my purpose. To offer to summarize even the given chapter would be absurd. I shall merely make such use of the book here as may facilitate the argument I am committed to. I discovered it, never having seen or heard it recommended, when poking round the philosophy shelves in the Petty Cury bookshop (now demolished). Impressed, on a sampling glance or two, by the quality of the writing (and by the brief introduction), I read more carefully here and there, and without hesitation bought the book. It should, I think, be recognized to be, by the criteria implicit in my theme, which is the nature of our urgent need of a genuine educated class, an essential stand-by and a classic.

Near the opening of the chapter Marjorie Grene writes:

> Nor is it Kant alone who insists on such a separation [between 'the questions of knowing, doing and believing']. Kant was echoing, in this, one—and one fundamental—consequence of the Cartesian-Newtonian world view. The dualism of matter and mind entails a dualism of the external, 'objective', and the internal, 'subjective'. There is the world spread out through space, independent of my feelings, ideas, or volitions; and there are my secret thoughts, the 'modes' of my consciousness. The purity of science, moreover, is thought to depend on the extrusion of the second from the first. In Kant this dichotomy is represented, for example, by the distinction between an outer and an inner sense. In contemporary philosophy, with its emphasis on language, it becomes the distinction between statements of fact and statements of value. Again, the purity of science is held to depend on keeping the former uncontaminated by the latter.

Perhaps the best known formulation of this dichotomy was that put forward by Ogden and Richards in *The Meaning of Meaning*, where they distinguished between 'cognitive' and 'emotive' meaning; and correspondingly, the statements of science, which purvey information, were distinguished from the 'pseudo-statements'* of poetry or religious discourse. Information, it is alleged, is always *im*personal; where the person, and with him, values, preferences, emotions, enter, information withdraws. Allied to this kind of categorization is the conception of 'value-free science' which has been held to be the norm not only for the natural sciences, but for the social sciences as well. Here too we are often asked to set against the wholly objective statements of science the impassioned utterances of the arts which are not statements at all.

It may be deduced from the tone of this that Marjorie Grene's book differs fundamentally from *The History of Western Philosophy* of Bertrand Russell, whose basic assumptions about the nature of objectivity confirm the confidence so patent in Andreski that his own need no defence. I mention *The History of Western Philosophy* because I have known experienced and energetic students, men of senior status attending my seminars, who, having prescribed for themselves a better acquaintance with that background of philosophic thought which they have realized to be an essential element in 'literary history', had, they confessed, embarked on a perusal of at least immediately relevant stretches of Russell's large volume. The word 'confessed' registers the fact that they came out with this avowal in response to my telling a group that people in their position hadn't time to discover for themselves how little the energy spent on Russell's history could bring them of the insight, understanding and stimulus to thought they needed. Of course, as I told my seminars, *The Knower and the Known*, a much smaller book, gets its coherence, and with this its pregnancy and its effective range, by having for its directing and informing spirit the profound conviction expressed in the Introduction—the conviction that the Cartesian-Newtonian dualism must be exorcized from the Western mind. This, I judge, means that the book will give the literary student the kind of help he needs; Russell's book certainly won't. It is, I have insisted, highly desirable that a department of philosophy should be one of those co-present with 'English', but however beneficial criticism and advice from that department—and the possibility, or probability, of criticism—may be, it seems to me in

* A term made current in 'English' by I. A. Richards's *Science and Poetry*—'That's only a pseudo-statement.'

the highest degree unlikely that philosophic criticism or advice will bring me to see Marjorie Grene as mischievously fallacious or, for my purpose, anything but irreplaceable.

She makes it plain that Russell's attempt to produce statements of fact while avoiding words by which 'substances' rather than direct and particular percepts would be suggested is absurd:

> But can any names, such as the general quality words, red, feline, coloured, etc., of which he is trying to build his firmly factual language, work uniquely for *this* percept? Both the words themselves and the things designated are *instances of universals*. The *same* word, e.g., 'cat', designates the same thing, cat, in the sense that a mark or sound of the same class designates a thing of the same class. But no occasion of 'cat' or cat is identical with any other. It is in each case a *similar* occurrence or object. How do I know that it is similar, and similar enough to be subsumed under the same class? By memory, a Humean empiricist would say. But even granting that, meeting cat 2, I recall cat 1, I must *make* the comparison. I must *liken* cat 2 to cat 1 and find them similar by a standard, a standard which *is* the concept cat . . . I do not mean to suggest that there is an explicit, or even an 'unconscious' inference involved here, every time I recognize a cat as a cat. But as my world is coloured, so too it is cat-inhabited and at the same time *structured through language*: I dwell in a coherent and mutually inter-acting framework of word-classes and thing-classes; only within such a frame do individual sounds or written shapes and individual animals become what they are. The power to generalize which speech demands is the power to sort out according to effective norms both utterances and natural events. (Page 168)

Marjorie Grene makes it plain in respect of the word 'standard' that to use it as one does in literary criticism is natural and proper, and consistent with the use she makes of it in dealing with Russell. She gives an account of the nature of 'standards', and of the way in which, in the act of judging, they enter in, and we see demonstrated in the chapter that there is a continuity from the kind of judgment in terms of which she answers Russell to the literary judgments the nature of which I offered to explain to a critic of a book of mine a good many years ago.* 'Allow me', he had said, 'to sketch your ideal of poetry, your "norm" with which you measure every poet . . .'. My concern was to bring home to him that there was no real reading of a poem that didn't involve a complex process of evaluative response

* See *The Common Pursuit*, 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy'.

that was truly personal, and I replied: 'The critic–the reader of poetry–is indeed concerned with evaluation, but to figure him as measuring with a norm that he brings up from the outside is to misrepresent the process.' (That, of course, was only a start.) Marjorie Grene, having insisted that value-judgment enters into statement of fact from the beginning, writes:

> To say 'this here red' I must already have abstracted from my immediate relational perceptions, stood back from them and assessed them, so as to be able to place a new occurrent into the class of like-though-differing particulars into which it fits. Only then can I tag it as 'red'. Not that I have in my memory a series of particular colour images such as Hume suggested; what I have is the power of bringing each new particular to the bar of judgment according to a principle, a standard, by which I judge it. That standard is neither verbally formulable, nor present as visual image, or a series of visual images. (Page 163)

One has the power because, in that way which defies 'clear and logical' statement–defies deliberate thought unless in a creative writer's use of language–one belongs to a community. The standard, though personal–apprehended personally as in and of the nature of the real, and applied personally, but not as a matter of decision–is not *merely* personal; it is a product of immemorially collaborative creativity. The kind of value-judgment immediately in question in the paragraph from *The Knower and the Known* which I have just quoted is at the mathematical logician's end of the spectrum, the end tactically selected as representative by Russell for his Cartesian purpose. The discipline that maintains the standards of science has its existence in a specializing community, the intellectual devotion of which is a special and professional morality. But Andreski would do well to ponder this (I quote again from Marjorie Grene)–it seems to me an unquestionable truth:

> No discipline, however 'factual', however 'detached', can come into being or remain in existence except in so far as the fundamental evaluative acts of the individuals belonging to a given culture have legislated into existence and maintain in existence the area of free inquiry and of mutual confirmation or falsification which such inquiry demands. (Page 181)

Marjorie Grene doesn't make in any way the point that, for my purpose, I need now to make, but it is implicit in the sentence I quoted in order to make it. It is there in the phrase, 'the fundamental

evaluative acts of the individuals belonging to a given culture'. A culture is a community in the sense in which I used the word a few sentences back, and the force of the last quoted sentence is that the community constituted by the acceptance and maintenance of the discipline upon which science depends belongs, of its nature, to a more inclusive community which, having produced, encloses it.

I use 'community', I say, in a special sense in order to make my point. To make such a point one *has* to use key-words in special senses which one must rely on the context to define. The thinking that involves that use of 'community' is a kind excluded by the criteria implicit in Andreski's 'logic' and 'clarity', an exclusion compelled by the Cartesian dualism which those criteria impose. It is all in keeping that he should lightly and briefly dismiss Michael Polanyi. Marjorie Grene, in that sentence, exemplifies the necessary responsible and creative 'imprecision' in the use of words of which I speak when she writes: 'have *legislated* into existence'. She has already, in the same paragraph, thrown out intimations that, taken up in 'legislated', which applies aptly enough to the 'laws' of the discipline, make it acceptable as covering also the prior development which made both recognition of the 'laws' and self-subordination to them possible:

> Mother and child, as Buytendijk says, already form a society. The child's discovery, and construction, of the world already takes place with and through others, through question and answer, through social play, through the older child's or the adult's interpretation of pictures, the teaching of language and writing—all the way to the research student's training in the school of a master. All the way we are shaping ourselves on the model of or in criticism of others, and of the standards embodied in the lives of others. All knowledge, even the most abstract, exists only within the fundamental evaluation, first of the total community, which permits and respects such knowledge, and second, within this totality, of the special community whose consensus makes possible the existence of this special discipline. (Page 180.)

My argument makes it necessary to add an insistent explicitness here. 'The child's discovery, and construction, of the world' is possible because the reality he was born into was already the Human World, the world created and renewed in day-by-day human collaboration through the ages. The 'collectivity' to which, when he uses the word 'social', Andreski reduces society may of course be said to have a depth in time in that it has a history which a 'social-scientific' writer might write; but, for such a writer's thought, time is not a dimension in a

community's actual present existence in the way in which it *is* a dimension, an essential constituent presence, in Marjorie Grene's 'community—I refer to the last-quoted passage, where the context gives a complex force to the word, a force that can be done justice to only in a decidedly anti-Cartesian commentary.

Yet I think that Andreski, offered those sentences to consider, might very well pass 'the total community' as inoffensive to his habit of disciplined commonsense, his criteria of logic and clarity—pass it as being, for thought, no more than the logically and clearly analysable collectivity. In the part played by this concept in his thought we may see the extent to which the Cartesian ghost can disable a notably vigorous intelligence.

To the business of exorcism the distinctive discipline of thought that should characterize 'English' may be said to be addressed. But that is only a negative account; its force depends on a realization of what positively the kind of thinking which the discipline fosters is. To the implicitly invited challenge there can, of course, be no answer that is direct and brief. I will move towards providing one by recapitulating the account I have given in various places of the nature of Practical Criticism—or, rather, of what I refuse to call that, but exemplify later in this book under 'Judgment and Analysis'.

Analysis is a process of re-creation in response to the black marks on the pages. It is a more pondered following-through of the process of re-creation in response to the poet's words that any genuine and discussible reading of the poem must be. Such a re-creation entails a diversity of kinds of judgment, and when I emphasize the diversity I am thinking of the different kinds of 'value' that we cover with the one word. A judgment is personal and spontaneous or it is nothing. But to say that it is 'spontaneous' is not to say that it may not have been prompted by a suggestion from another; and to say that it is 'personal' is not to say that it means to be merely that. The form of a judgment is 'This is so, isn't it?', the question asking for confirmation that the thing *is* so, but prepared for an answer in the form, 'Yes, but—', the 'but' standing for corrections, refinements, precisions, amplifications. The judgments may by Andreski's criteria be 'value-judgments' but they are in intention universal.

Though the validity of a total inclusive judgment of a poem cannot be demonstrated, it is always possible in criticism to get beyond the mere assertion. The critical procedure is tactical; the critic, with his finger moving from this to that point in the text, aims at so ordering

his particular judgments ('This is so, isn't it?') that, 'Yes' having in the succession of them almost inevitably come for answer, the rightness of the inclusive main judgment stands clear for the prompted recognition—it makes itself, needing no assertion. The element of 'prompting', of course, is present in the very nature of the critical undertaking, which embodies a positive impulse, and has a creative purpose. This is what 'exhortation'—the word about which Andreski is equivocally apologetic—registers in that passage I quoted from his first chapter (page 27 above).

Analysis, then, in so far as it aims at establishing a favourable judgment, is the process of justifying the assumption that a poem which we take to be a real poem stands between us in what is in some sense a public world. Minds can meet in it, and there is so essential a measure of concurrence as to its nature and constitution that there can be intelligent—that is, profitable—differing about what precisely it is. It is neither merely private, nor public in the sense that it can be brought into a laboratory, quantified, tripped over or even pointed to—the only way of pointing to particulars in it is to put one's finger on given spots in the assemblage of black marks on the page—and that assemblage is not the poem. The poem is a product, and, in any experienced actual existence, a phenomenon, of human creativity, the essentially collaborative nature of which it exemplifies in diverse distinguishable modes. And yet it is real. To use a formulation I threw out years ago in the course of defining the nature of the discipline I am concerned to vindicate, it belongs to the 'Third Realm'—the realm of that which is neither public in the ordinary sense nor merely private.

I point in this explanation of what critical analysis actually is to the peculiar importance for thought of the distinctive discipline of literary study—the discipline that should give university 'English' its title to existence and respect. For an account of how a poem exists is a pregnant hint of the way in which the Human World is created and, in constant renewal, maintained. It is into the Human World that, in Marjorie Grene's sketch of a human being's attainment of full humanity, the child is born—the world in which it more and more fully lives; and she makes it plain that living is both re-creative and creative. Explaining, in her refutation of Russell, the nature of standards, she says:

> But I carry about with me neither a picture of the colour pyramid nor an operating spectroscope. The fact is rather that I live in a coloured

> world, a world that presents sights to me as coloured because, using my eyes and optic nerves and brain and eye muscles, I have acquired the power to subsume my particular experiences, in a particular lighted and superficial aspect, under colour concepts. These concepts, like all concepts, are standards, by which I judge *this* to be such-and-such—in this case red. 'This-here-red' is already a highly structured statement, reflecting a complex achievement of abstraction and appraisal. (Page 164.)

Of the child she says, virtually, that it is able to grow into full humanity because it lives in a fully human world, a world shaped by all kinds of human value-judgments and informed by distinctively human 'values'. The 'total community' to which she refers is, properly considered, both the actual enumerable community which, as the bearer of cultural tradition, is its effective presence, and the wider human community, transcending statistical fact, to which, by participating in a living culture, one belongs, having access to the profit of many centuries of human experience.

I am afraid that I fail to satisfy in all this the criterion of 'logical and clear', though to me my logic seems all right. But the complexities and subtleties of the real and fundamental must sometimes be considered closely and 'in depth', and it turns out then that they tend to defy the rationality of either/or. Some, indeed, of the essential defiant truths—for instance, that regarding the mode of existence in which a poem is 'there'—are not difficult to recognize. Yet there are intellectually energetic persons on whom, in default of the development in them of any strong interest in poetry, the logic that might have made awareness of the 'Third Realm' potent in their thought will hardly have much cogency.

Such persons might be asked to consider the nature and mode of existence of a language—of the language in which they write and think (for not only do they express their thought in it; without a language they would be incapable of thought). Where *is* the English language? You can't point to it, and the perusal of a linguistician's treatise will do nothing to help you towards an answer to such questions. It is concretely 'there' only as I utter the words and phrases chosen by the meaning (*in* me, but outward bound) which they convey and you take them. But that, of course, is only, as it were, a hint at the nature of an intelligently unsatisfactory answer, which is what, at best, one could hope to achieve. I might, at the end of a seminar, say: 'It was there, in the criss-cross of utterance between us.' But that,

too, would be only another hint. Still, we all have an intimate acquaintance with the nature of linguistic communication, and such hints should be enough to elicit from an intelligent but non-literary person the recognition that thought about human affairs is grievously disabled if the thinker feels bound by a logic that takes '*either* public *or* private' to be an exhaustive antithesis–one offering alternatives that are sufficient for the distinctions one needs to make.

A mind as good as Andreski's might be led by these considerations not merely to take the force of the point about the way in which the poem is 'there', but, more generally, to see that full recognition of 'the Third Realm' and its nature is necessary to the kind of thought to which his book commits him. In no other way can he escape the contradictions and inconsistencies his suspicion of which he betrays here and there. But full recognition means training and habituation, and Andreski's training has enabled him to dismiss in this off-hand way the contemporary who had most to teach him: 'Manchester University made an interesting experiment when (at his own request) it converted Michael Polanyi's post in chemistry into a chair of social studies, expecting perhaps that he would replicate his discoveries in a new field . . . which, as you might guess, did not happen'. (Page 199).

I hadn't thought of either of the two essays of Polanyi's to which I send my pupils first as falling under 'social studies', but certainly real attention paid to 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading' along with 'The Logic of Tacit Inference' (both in *Knowing and Being*) might have brought home to Andreski that 'social' in the use of the word he consistently endorses is essentially and insidiously reductive, devitalizing as it does the supremely important concept of 'society'. It might at any rate have induced some uneasiness in him when, in writing (for example) the following, he had to recognize how habitually he had presented the reader with much the same kind of choice–a choice offered as one between real thought on the one hand and undisciplined self-indulgence or emotionality or the other: 'Nonetheless, the great Cartesian tradition of clear and logical thinking has withered and made room for a predilection for mystification'. (Page 208.) But that would have involved his having registered that Polanyi had attacked the Cartesian dualism (on which the ideal of 'logic and clarity' depends) with all the formidableness of a subtle mind that was both profoundly original and rigorously trained–attacked it out of a training very different from that of which I make myself an advocate in this book, and with an approach very different from mine. A basic as-

sumption of Andreski's is that the Cartesian dualism is unassailable, having been established for good.

Polanyi as an epistemologist insists that what for philosophers is 'mind' is 'there' only in individual minds, and that an individual mind is always a person's and a person has a body and a history. His mind is the mind of his body, and his body is the body of his mind. The dualism that has defeated so many epistemologies is eliminated here. For Polanyi enforces this insistence in an account of knowing, thinking and discovering in which he emphasizes the *tacit* element in these and makes it plain that they could not have *been* at all if mind had not been the mind of a body, since on the un-Cartesian actuality this last formulation points to depends the essential part in them played by the *tacit*—depends the process 'by which we acquire knowledge that we cannot tell'* which is essential even to a trained sociologist's thinking. I pay due respect to Andreski when I say that I cannot believe that, if—relaxing his Cartesian certitude—he had really *read* the two essays to which I have referred, he would have been able to dispute with confidence this conclusion:

> *All knowledge falls into one of these two classes: it is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge.*
>
> The ideal of a strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory; deprived of their tacit co-efficients, all spoken words, all formulae, all maps and graphs, are strictly meaningless. An exact mathematical theory means nothing unless we recognize an inexact non-mathematical knowledge on which it bears and a person whose judgment upholds this bearing.†

Here, for the discipline of thought I am contending for—the effective recognition of it as intellectually and culturally necessary—we have something like an extra-literary charter. It is the extra-literary nature of his approach, that of a distinguished scientist whose impelling interest was the nature of scientific discovery, that makes Polanyi so valuable an ally. His realization that mind is always an individual mind, a unique person's and the mind of a body, has an obvious bearing on the problem or crux for thought (it is difficult to decide how it should be referred to) that Andreski raises, but—most significantly—may be said to be hardly aware that he raises, in a passage I shall quote. It is, for explicit thought, the fundamental

* *Knowing and Being*, page 142.
† *Knowing and Being*, page 195.

challenge that cannot escape being recognized as such by those who make the very different approach to it from Polanyi's that is my concern here—the approach by way of what should be the literary student's approach to language. This is Andreski's passage:

> In the old debate about whether the individual is more important than the group, or the other way round, the issues have been obscured by the constant use of the expression 'the individual'; because, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as 'the individual' but only many individuals. An equally careless hypostatization underlies the frequently repeated cliché about man being able to control his future, often phrased as a rhetorical question. For as soon as we ask, 'Who is man?', we see that he does not exist, and there are only men and women with varied and largely incompatible sentiments, dispositions and aims. No doubt they could control many things if they would only agree, but they do not. Therefore, to speak of man deciding or controlling is nonsense. Once we get rid of this linguistic mirage, we can see that the liberal philosophical individualists were true collectivists in the sense of defending the interests of many individuals, as opposed to the prerogative of the powerful few . . . (Page 184.)

This illustrates very usefully the danger inseparable from Andreski's necessary common sense. The strong common sense is necessary to his function of exposing the follies, fatuities and pretensions of 'social science' and 'social studies'. To say this is to grant implicitly that the disciplined robustness of mind and purpose, with the command of knowledge that accompanies it, *has*, in the study of civilized society, our civilization being what it is, a respectable positive function. But the quoted passage demonstrates that when the standards that make it respectable prevail the danger remains and is in fact accentuated. For the common-sense spirit, reinforced by the insidious half-assurance that it has acquired the authority of science in becoming disciplined, tends to be a good deal worse than not enough, and our cultural habit, which knows of no better guide, desperately needs, not confirmation, but the most sharp, disturbing and insistent of challenges. It is revealing how confidently Andreski reduces the issues to the futility of the 'old debate', for his way of exposing the old futility is to present us in his own terms with what is essentially the same thing. What is futile is his offer of logical cogency, but what that offer actually represents is an endorsement of a discouraging actuality—the reign of reductive common sense: 'Once we get rid of this linguistic mirage, we can see that the liberal philosophical individualists were true collectivists in the

sense of defending the interests of many individuals, as opposed to the prerogative of the powerful few; whereas . . . collectivist ideologies . . .'

It won't, I think, be concluded that I opt for 'collectivist ideologies'. The assumption inherent in 'linguistic mirage'—this is the gravamen of my charge against Andreski—amounts to a refusal, or an inability, to recognize an essential truth about the nature of *humanitas* and life. It means that a solution of the problem he poses (or doesn't, he feels, himself need to pose) must necessarily be in some sense 'collectivist'. The 'liberal philosophical individualists' of whom he approves as 'true collectivists' are as such committed to an account of society in basic and reductive terms of 'collectivity'—and where you have collectivist liberal philosophies of society you are likely to have also the 'collectivist ideologies' that he obviously (as I do) hates. But my main point is that he has condemned himself to the inconsistencies his sense of which makes him uneasy. He can't explain why it is that we may still (he contends) entertain hope. He speaks of the need for ethical promptings and impulsions, but seems to think of them as products of the clear and logical thought the possibility of which they are to impel us to preserve—or restore. Though he refers to 'first-rate creative work' achieved in the study of nature and does not 'deny that it is possible to acquire a good knowledge of the other side of the cultural fence (as Bertrand Russell did)', he can't conceive or imagine, his thought at any rate has no recognition for, the kind of human creativity that created the English language.

When one considers one's relation to the language one was born into, and the way in which that language exists, one finds oneself contemplating the unstatable basic truth that Andreski dismisses as 'the linguistic mirage'. Because the relation, or the way, can't be stated, and, eluding discursive treatment, doesn't permit of logical or clear exposition, it is not for Andreski real, or anything but mystification. Yet what is at issue is the pre-condition of language, thought and objectivity—so essentially the pre-condition that disciplined minds like Andreski's have no need to recognize it when they think 'objectively', or before or after. Yet it is an inescapable condition of life (and thought is a living activity); and, though thinkers—even thinkers about social reality—can dismiss it as a linguistic mirage, the further their field of thought is from mathematics, the more damaging is the non-recognition to the quality of their thought.

The dangerousness of Andreski's Cartesian allegiance is seen in the way in which he offers to pass off on the reader a plausible but false and

obfuscating 'either/or'. *I* am far from being tolerant of the cliché about man 'being able to control his future', but I deplore Andreski's common-sense recourse to the word 'hypostatization'. 'For as soon as we ask, "Who is man?", we see that he does not exist, and there are only men and women with varied and largely incompatible sentiments, dispositions and aims'. Such utterances–need I say it?–can in some contexts be 'salutary common sense.' But common sense is not enough; and Andreski here demonstrates this by insisting on its final authority in regard to issues that transcend its powers even to simulate plausible engagement. The tactic–if what is so obviously uncalculating can be called that–by which he seeks to legitimize his common-sense stance by backing the 'liberal philosophical individualists' as 'true collectivists' is naïve: 'For as soon as we ask, "Who is man?", we see that he does not exist'. When, to quote the title of the introductory chapter of my last book, I wrote 'Life *is* a necessary word', I also wrote that life is 'there' only in individual beings, meaning that the only way in which one can point to life as concretely 'there' is to point to an individual being and say, 'There you have an actual manifestation of life'. This last proposition has a meaning, to convey which meaning is a function that transcends mere convenience, and is not to be disposed of by asking, 'Who–or which–is life?'.

The fundamental truth or recognition I have gestured towards, fundamental truth or recognition to which a close interrogation of experience brings us, eludes discursive treatment–a fact that doesn't prove it to be unimportant. It is when, I said, one considers one's relation to the language one was born into, and the way in which that language–in which one has vital relations with other human beings–exists, that the fundamental recognition can least be escaped, but challenges thought insistently. Where language is concerned, 'life' is human life–is man.

The dangerousness of Andreski lies in his assuming that his discursive common-sense use of language *is* the use of language for thought–is, in the distinctive spirit that limits it, essentially, and more or less co-terminously, that; and inducing or confirming in most of his readers the blankness he reveals. But the recognition closed to him matters today as never before. In the past the inevitable routine tacit acquaintance we all have sufficed; but today his assumption about the real–for his confident assumption about the nature of thought *is* that–seems to him so unchallengeable because it is the assumption on which our civilization is built, or by which it is driven. It might

be called the principle that civilization relies on to keep the machinery working. It is a principle that means death: this is the age when a computer can write a poem.

A creative centre of the educated public we need will, then, cultivate a more adequate notion of thought—and that means cultivating the practice. There must be practised thinking that brings in consciously, with pertinacious and delicate resource, the un-Cartesian reality underlying language and implicit in it; what is inexpressible in terms of logic and clarity, the unstatable, must not be excluded from thought as Andreski excludes it when he plumps so naïvely and demonstratively for individualistic collectivism. And this brings us to the importance, in relation to my theme, of creative literature. All major literary creation is concerned with thought—thought that men of Andreski's bent should take seriously. That is a constatation the force of which I have tried to make plain in a discussion of one of the world's great novels, *Little Dorrit*.* In that work, as the challenged critique must aim at bringing out, Dickens, making a characteristically profound, and necessarily creative, inquest into society in his time, tackles in sustained and unmistakably deliberate thought the basic unstatable that eludes the logic of Cartesian clarity—and of philosophic discourse too. Taking it as granted that life is the artist's concern, he develops in full pondering consciousness the un-Cartesian recognition that, while it is 'there' only in individual lives, it *is* there, and *its being* there makes them lives: what the word 'life' represents, and evokes, is not to be disposed of under the rubric of 'hypostatization', or collectivity, or linguistic convenience.

Emphasizing the affinity between Dickens and Blake, I point out how the scheme implicit in the cast of sharply different main *personae* who interact in *Little Dorrit* applies an equivalent of Blake's distinction between the 'selfhood' and the 'identity'. Making and enforcing this point is inseparable from observing how Dickens's art insists on creativity as the characteristic of life. The selfhood asserts its rights, and possesses, from within its egocentric self-enclosure; the identity is the individual being as the focus of life—life as heuristic energy, creativity, and, from the human person's point of view, disinterestedness. It is impossible to doubt that Dickens, like Blake, saw the creativity of the artist as continuous with the general human creativity that, having created the human world we live in, keeps it renewed and

* *Dickens the Novelist*, F. R. and Q. D. Leavis, Chapter V.

real. This day-to-day work of collaborative creation includes the creating of language, without which there couldn't have been a human world. In language, as I have said, the truth I will refer to as 'life and lives', the basic unstatable which, lost to view and left out, disables any attempt to think radically about human life, is most open to recognition and most invites it. In major literary works we have the fullest use of language, and intelligent study of literature brings us inevitably to the recognition from which, in his thinking, Andreski cuts himself off. I have in mind, of course, the importance, and that is, the nature, of the discipline of thought that should be associated with 'English', the university study. One can say with pregnant brevity that the achievement of the aim in vigorous established practice would be a potent emergence from the Cartesian dualism. 'Potent' here means fruitful in positive consequences. A new realization of the nature and the pervasiveness of creativity in life and thought would be fostered; there is nothing that the world in our time more desperately needs.

The nature of livingness in human life is manifest in language—manifest to those whose thought about language *is*, inseparably, thought about literary creation. They can't but realize more than notionally that a language is more than a means of expression; it is the heuristic conquest won out of representative experience, the upshot or precipitate of immemorial human living, and embodies values, distinctions, identifications, conclusions, promptings, cartographical hints and tested potentialities. It exemplifies the truth that life is growth and growth change, and the condition of these is continuity. It takes the individual being, the particularizing actuality of life, back to the dawn of human consciousness, and beyond, and does this in fostering the *ahnung* in him of what is not yet—the as yet unrealized, the achieved discovery of which demands creative effort. Blake was speaking out of the 'identity' when he said*: 'Tho' I call them Mine, I know that they are not Mine'. He was referring to his paintings and designs, but he would have said the same of his poems. One's criterion for calling an artist major is whether his work prompts us to say it, emphatically and with the profoundest conviction, *for* him—to put the words in his mouth and impute to him that rare modesty which makes the claim that is genuinely a disclaimer.

The bearing of this point on my theme comes out in the answer made by Lawrence near his end to the visiting young novelist who

* *To Trusler*, 16 Aug. 1799.

asked him what was the drive behind his creative work (which went on until his death): 'One writes out of one's moral sense—for the race, as it were.' I can imagine an enlightened intellectual pouncing triumphantly, for anti-Laurentian comment, on that 'moral', but Lawrence's use of the word has a significance very remote from that which such a critic, in his routine way, assumes. To make plain what the actual significance is I should, discussing the issue with students, turn to a short story of Conrad's, *The Secret Sharer**. It is brief, but obviously the work of a great writer, one notably unlike Lawrence, and it might have been written in order to help me to enforce my point. I have discussed the tale, and—inevitably, seeing its nature—from my present point of view, in a critique that is very accessible,† and I needn't here attempt to summarize either the tale or the discussion. It will, I think, sufficiently serve my purpose, and with best economy, if I quote a passage from my critique.

This brief exchange takes place between the young ship's master in his first command and the head that, looking over the side as he keeps the first night-watch, he sees at the bottom of the rope-ladder that shouldn't have been left hanging there:

> 'I suppose your captain's turned in?'
> 'I'm sure he isn't,' I said.
> . . . .
> 'Look here, my man. Could you call him out quietly?'
> I thought the time had come to declare myself.
> '*I* am the captain.'

The inquirer explains that he has killed a man, and that he has escaped from confinement on his ship, moored there behind the island, by swimming.

'My father's a parson in Norfolk. Do you see me before a judge and jury on that charge?'

The young captain doesn't. He knows by immediate intuition that this isn't a case of ship's officer *versus* social offender, but of two completely self-reliant and fully human individuals, each the focus of the highest kind of moral responsibility. The irony, not a reductive but an intensifying kind, that enforces this—the fact and the recognition—is that (it comes out incidentally) they are both *Conway* boys.

Some knowing psychological and esoteric subtlety has been written

* To be found in the collection, *'Twixt Land and Sea.*

† Included in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays.*

about the double. The significance, however, is not psychological but moral. I don't mean by that to endorse the modish esoteric suggestiveness you find served up about guilt, or guilt-feelings, in the young captain (and, of course, in us). The young captain *has* no guilt-feelings: that's essential to the significance. But he *would* have had guilt-feelings if he had not recognized his supreme moral–and human–responsibility and acted on it. He sees in the double who has killed a man an *alter ego*. 'It might very well have been myself who had done it'–that is his attitude. He doesn't mean humbly that *he* might have been guilty: there's no question of guilt by the criterion that's invoked in Conrad's art. By which I don't mean that the spirit of it is *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. On the contrary, there is an insistence on the inescapable need for individual moral judgment, and for moral conviction that is strong and courageous enough to forget codes and to defy law and codified morality and justice.

There is, in short, the very opposite of that 'simplification of man's problems in the world', that craving for a moral security to be found in firm sheltering convention and routine discipline, of which [Conrad] has been accused. . . . Faced with the quietly explanatory swimmer, the captain *knows* that it is his own supreme responsibility (he doesn't argue this–he knows it immediately) to trust his judgment about another man in such circumstances as these when its report is so unequivocal. 'It might very well have been myself who had done that; in a sense, it virtually is myself who has.' That is, he knows how little the 'great security of the sea', moral security based on a simple view of human realities, exists for the completely self-reliant, courageous and responsible individual–which is what a *Conway* boy ought to be.

With what sureness Conrad has tackled here in his creative writer's thought, the problem–'lives and life'–that was for Dickens, in *Little Dorrit*, at the centre of his profoundly deliberated undertaking, that being an inquest into contemporary society. The young captain and the fugitive from justice are, as they have to be, two separate centres of sentience, two identities, but the way in which, while 'never ceasing to be conscious of the separateness', we are made to think of the fugitive as the captain's double–'It might very well have been myself who had done that; in a sense, it is myself who has'–makes the young Conrad-Captain for us, in the testing situation, the presence of life ('the race') as human responsibility focused in the individual being, one who so patently knows that he 'does not belong to himself'.

My critical judgment is mine, in the sense that I can't take over anyone else's (if I did, it would cease to be a judgment). But it is not

merely and possessively 'mine'; my implicit assumption being that it is right, 'I know that it is not mine'–and that my responsibility is to mean it as universally valid. Of course, it has a training behind it; one that has entailed a complexity of necessarily collaborative frequentation–a matter, most importantly, of exercising sensibility and responsive thought on the work of creative writers. Such a judgment seems to oneself a judgment of reality, and for arriving at it there are no rules, though there is active informing 'principle'.

The young Captain's instant judgment, or realization, that it is his responsibility to save the young Chief Mate–a *Conway* boy who has committed homicide–from justice also has a training behind it. We may take the *Conway* as representing or evoking it, the training-ship being for us the symbol that emphasizes the significance of the immediacy with which they recognize that they belong to the same spiritual world (a spiritual community) and speak the same language. But for them too there are no rules; the reference to the *Conway* mustn't suggest that their training reduces to discipline and a code.* The common *Conway* background completes the evocative definition of 'responsibility': it emphasizes the significance of the way in which, cowing the almost mutinous crew, he deliberately puts the ship he commands in desperate hazard, and outrages the master mariner's morality, in order to give the *Conway* boy who has killed a man the best possible chance of swimming safely to land and surviving. I think of Blake: 'I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments.'† But Conrad leaves it not for a moment in doubt that the *Conway* code isn't merely something to be broken. That it *isn't* is necessary to the paradox–the 'even' that presents the breaking

* For the convenience of the reader I will quote again here extracts from what I have quoted earlier:

> Not that I have in my memory a series of particular colour images such as Hume suggested: what I have is the power of bringing each new judgment to the bar of judgment according to a principle, a standard, by which I judge it. That standard is neither verbally formulable, nor present as a visual image, or a series of visual images. . . . The fact is rather that I live in a coloured world . . . I have acquired the power. . . .
>
> *The Knower and the Known*, page 164.
>
> All the way we are shaping ourselves on the model of or in criticism of others, and of the standards embodied in the lives of others.
>
> *ibid.* page 180.

† From 'A Memorable Fancy' (at the end of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*): *The Complete Writings of William Blake* (Oxford), page 158.

as having an essential part in the evocation of what 'responsibility', in its uncodifiable nature, is. The *Conway* stands for the community, transcending statistics and 'social studies', that gives responsibility its collaboratively creative background and its quality as essential to the human world. What the young captain pre-eminently, but with him the refugee, demonstrates is the necessity and the nature of 'the living principle' that keeps the enumerable community of any present—the community that is exposed to 'social studies'—alive enough to endure.

This community is figured by the Merchant Service, which cannot—as the young chief mate had testified in that recourse to physical measures of enforcement which turned into homicide—do *without* discipline and a code. It was by no chance freak that both captain and chief mate were graduates of the *Conway*, and the paradox entailed in their vindication of 'human responsibility' belonged to the spiritual culture, the human world, that had formed them—a culture necessary to the *Conway* ethos specialized within it. The two young ship's officers, as the tale makes plain, represent a very small minority, but they are far from being sports: without a nuclear live presence of essential responsibility discipline and code would be no better than mechanical habit, and the mechanical can deal only with the routine and the expected. Men in any case are not machines, and something in them responds to the challenge that what manifestly is a demonstration of essential human responsibility can't but be for them, and to the reminder of what is required of them by the life they focus.* That both the captain and the chief mate each incurs the hostility of the rest of his ship's complement is far from disposing of the point.

Lawrence's 'moral sense', then, is something like the antithesis of what the anti-puritan enlightened think of as 'moral'. It is—what they hate immeasurably more because they fear it—human responsibility; in Lawrence, the human responsibility of genius. They fear it because, whenever they are aware of it, it makes them feel their nothingness, and it too they call, assuring themselves of their superiority, puritanism. So Lawrence is a puritan. Andreski, avowedly without conviction, refers despairingly to a needed 'ethical sense' that might perhaps assert itself among the young, and this, clearly, he thinks of as an authoritative sense of responsibility. With nothing but the assumptions

* I find this, casually, in today's *Times*: 'When did a Conservative minister last make a speech about patriotism: that is to say, about the objective idealism for which most human beings have some yearning as distinct from the rational self-interest which is the language of most political appeals today?'

implicit in his 'logic and clarity' to draw on, he can't suggest where, unless out of the common sense that for him is ultimate, it is to come from, or why it should have an efficacy that, in our civilization, it hasn't shown: invoking common sense for its authority, it is to reinforce common sense.

Human responsibility, as known to Lawrence and Conrad—we *know* they knew because they are great creative writers—is the manifest potency of life. Lawrence wrote in an early letter: 'I can't forgive Conrad for being so sad and for giving in.' And it is true that, in knowing that he didn't belong to himself, Lawrence had, going with his strong sense of belonging, a positive *ahnung* of the nature of what he belonged to. One wouldn't confidently impute a comparable sense to Conrad; but one is sure that Conrad too would have said of such works as 'The Secret Sharer', *The Shadow Line* and the great novels: 'Though I call them mine, I know that they are not mine.'

The thinking of all great writers, the representatively human quality of genius being inseparable from its intense individuality, is distinctive, involving in each case a marked distinctiveness in the report on reality that is conveyed. But, however sharp the differences, the consideration to be stressed by anyone intent on vindicating 'English' as a discipline of thought is that every great writer in the language belongs to the one collaboratively creative continuity. The discipline is not a matter of learning a deduced standard logic or an eclectic true philosophy, but rather of acquiring a delicate readiness of apprehension and a quasi-instinctive flexibility of response, these informed by the intuited 'living principle'—the principle implicit in the interplay between the living language and the creativity of individual genius. My 'interplay', which is manifested *in* the language as the writer uses it, is an intimation that I have in mind my point that a language is more than a 'means of expression': it embodies values, constatations, distinctions, promptings, recognitions of potentiality. This doesn't mean that it is univocal, implicitly dictating an ideal comprehensive conclusion. A product of collaborative creativity, it makes continued and advancing collaborative thought possible—and it will hardly be forgotten that such collaboration entails, vitally and essentially, disagreements. Finality is unattainable.

These considerations have obvious bearings on the study, in the spirit represented by the discipline of thought for which I contend, of literature, the supreme creative art of language. It is perhaps time to say once more that I haven't the sanguine expectation of one who

sees himself as offering a sure prescription, or a prescription at all. The disease that threatens to destroy humanity is truly frightening. One of the most frightening things is that no pointer to the only way in which we could begin the combat against it, no considered account in terms of opportunist tactics and the principles they represent, will be widely recognized as that. Perhaps it is ceasing to be alleged, crudely and confidently, that F. R. Leavis (for instance) thinks that the world can be saved by literary criticism, but this close of a kindly brief notice of my last book is typical of the reception to be expected:

> Apart from his belief that a good university (which of course would have a good English School) would be a creative centre of civilization, however, he has little to offer in the way of dams to hold back the American tide.

No proposed remedy answering to the analogy of a dam could be relevant to the actual disease. America has long been menacing our future, and the complete triumph of Americanization there accelerates the progress of the disease in this country, where it originated and would in any case have made a rapid and menacing advance. British capital and British 'know-how' enabled America to develop a railroad network at great speed, and industrialism, a British invention, made inevitable the victory of the North in the Civil War. There is still, nevertheless, a difference: we have suffered no such abrupt opening of an impassable gap between the present and the past as was entailed in the swift formation of the new immense, and supremely powerful, country. It is not credible that America could save itself; the *ahnung*, the memory, the faith, and the 'living intuitive faculty' that must be appealed to in the initiation of the new kind of sustained creative effort can't be appealed to there.

It isn't easy to complete the discrimination. I find it possible to say only that there are still the makings of an educated public to be rallied into one here, and some ghost, or more, of memory that might be turned into active sympathy with the kind of creative effort in which alone there could be hope. As for the 'good university', it would be misleading if I suggested that I base my belief that such an effort should be made on the expectation of finding *that*, or anything closely approaching the 'good' English School, which is an ideal. The multiplication of universities and numbers in the Robbins era would alone suffice to make belief so conditioned dismissible. Belief must be

both more humble and more bold. What I advocate is opportunism—the taking, and making, of opportunities; opportunism inspired and informed by 'the living principle'. From experience, I know that there are places where opportunities may be counted on, and I am sure that they could be made at many. To say this is to recognize that they will vary immensely in kind. Wherever there is a university 'teacher' with the vocation and the courage that should go with it the possibility exists; his initiatives are likely to enlist collaboration—and 'collaboration' covers a diversity of response and assistance. This is faith, but faith confirmed in experience. It may seem too easily said. I will add, then, that I know that it may, and not without reason; and shift to (what is in any case called for) another mode of intimating the nature of my essentially unsanguine but firm conviction: the human need that our civilization thwarts will be, by some at any university, so strongly felt that initiatives offering practical recognition of what it is and asks for would meet, even in the face of grave difficulties, the co-operative response. This, of course, would be from minorities. But it is in minorities that the living principle takes the creative initiative, and I am assuming in this book that not only are very small minorities worth enlisting, and arming with informed and fully conscious purpose, but that if one doesn't believe that small minorities can initiate decisively there is no hope for mankind.

I don't, then, offer a syllabus, an outlined course of studies, or a plan of campaign. My concern is to make plain the principles that must inform inevitable opportunism. And when I say that these principles have their unity in 'the living principle' I make plain that they can't be, in the ordinary sense of the word, defined. I can only aim at conveying, tactically and evocatively, what their nature is. The 'definition', ideally achieved, would illustrate the 'logical' ethos of the discipline of thought in question. The intellectual importance of the literary-critical study of creative works is intimated there—and not merely of individual works, but of the literature, the creative continuity, that relates them.

I referred to literature a short way back as the supreme creative art of language. Perhaps I ought now to take notice of two points about English that have some bearing on my argument. The first is that English is spoken in North America by many more people than in this country, and that the American ethos has great prestige and, apparently, irresistible influence. The idea that American English has (in 'zest', 'energy', 'inventiveness' and so on) an obvious vital superiority

over British English, and that this superiority calls for mature consideration in its bearing on the cultural future, needn't be discussed as profoundly relevant to the preoccupation of this book: the criteria of 'superiority' that are implied lack interest. And this brings us to the other point: the creative conditions that produced the English language that made Shakespeare possible have vanished on that final triumph of industrialism—even more completely in America than here. Something of those conditions were behind Dickens's work. They have gone utterly—gone for good; and with them the day-to-day creativity of the English-speaking peoples (a creativity that Eliot, in this, at least, distinctively an American, seemed unaware of). It is plain that the quasi-living language represented by the talk of the vast majority of the population couldn't have given the assured take-off and the continuous prompting that Dickens still enjoyed in his time, when speech was still a popular art, belonging to a living culture. And Dickens had Shakespeare behind him, and, of great creative writers, not only Shakespeare.

Here, then, is the significant upshot for us. The situation changes; and to regard change with Professor Plumb as 'the death of the past' would be to contemplate with equanimity the death of the present (which the future so rapidly becomes). The roots of tradition that still has some life in it are not dead. The full range of the English language is there in its incomparable literature, accessible to English-speakers at any rate in this country, and waiting to be proved living. A new conception of the university as society's organ for a new function presses for realization; a conception that develops life's urgent enough *ahnung* of the new kind of effort needed if mankind is to save, for future growth, its full humanity. What, I have argued, the conception entails is the creating of an educated public that, conscious of its responsibility, shall maintain the 'language' of creative thought and keep the full potentiality alive. The notion that the currently applauded American writers prove the vitality of the civilization that produced them is absurd—and significant. What, characteristically, they demonstrate, is a depressing, and often repellent, poverty in the range of experience, satisfaction and human potentiality they seem to know of, and to think all. As for the famed and flattered American critics who write about the 'British-English' classics, they seem, judged by what they say about them, unable to read them. The 'language' of heuristic thought that major literature depends on is too alien; it bears no relation to the human world they know, or to the kinds of

intellectual apparatus they are familiar with and too practised in applying.

The second part of this book is devoted to 'Judgment and Analysis' –and I use that formula here for the purpose for which I coined it: to serve as a substitute for 'Practical Criticism'. That is, it implies, primarily, illustrative critiques of short poems or short passages. I don't, of course, demand agreement with my judgments, though, equally 'of course', I think them sound. To repeat what I have said before: the form of a critical judgment is, 'This is so, isn't it?', the question, which is really one, intimating the essentially collaborative nature of criticism. A judgment can't be enforced, but the critic can take–that is, benefit by–correction and suggestion. *I* realize the poem, but in realizing it I *have* to assume both that it is independent of me and that minds can meet in it. Criticism aims at justifying those assumptions.

My 'illustrations' aim at making plain by selective concrete demonstration the force of what I intend in positing that 'sensibility' has an essential part in the most important kind of thought. The longest one is that in which I compare the passage from *Antony and Cleopatra* that begins, 'The barge she sat in' (Act II, Sc. ii), with what Dryden did with it in *All for Love*. This necessitates a discussion of the great change manifested in the English language between Shakespeare and Dryden, which inevitably involves some reference to the decisive start of modern civilization in the seventeenth century. We are brought so to the need–a need that is a liaison opportunity–for some acquaintance with the development of philosophic thought from Descartes, through what for Blake was the denial of life and the thwarting of human creativity by an oppression he labelled 'Newton and Locke', to what may be called the essential vindication of Blake implicit in the thought of distinguished philosophers of this century. The immodesty that I think of as responsibility asserts itself in that last clause. I avow my lack of proper philosophic qualifications, and I assert, and stand by the assertion, that I am justified in recommending as I do. The contradiction, I contend (it is the argument of this book), is turned into something both other and necessary by the considerations that fall under 'co-presence' and 'liaison'.

I should, then, urge my pupils to get Marjorie Grene's *The Knower and the Known*, her selection–*Knowing and Being*–of Michael Polanyi's essays, and, in the Oxford Paperbacks, Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature*. These are books that require and repay frequentation.

I should assume that those working with me had them, so that references could be taken up and recalls checked, corrected and amplified. Marjorie Grene's book especially I should find myself adducing for her treatment of this, that and the other theme and important challenge to thought. Actually I have already suggested that students might make their start on the book by reading and pondering chapter 6, 'Facts and Values', in connexion with Andreski's *Social Sciences as Sorcery*.

I have, I hope, made plain why I think that this last should be picked on for serious use as, in an unusual and pregnant way, highly valuable in relation to the ends that preoccupy me. Here we have a vigorous mind and a patent disinterestedness applied to the criticism of an academico-intellectual field that Andreski knows from the inside. Equipped with indefatigably acquired knowledge, and out of an extraordinarily wide experience, he contends on behalf of standards in a drastic criticism of the actuality. All who have thought about the justifying function of the university know why as things are the 'Social Sciences' matter. The judgments that Andreski passes on the academic actuality are authoritative, and we owe him gratitude, and know the reasons for doing all we can to promote the circulation of such a book. At the same time, as my commentary aimed at demonstrating, he invites, in a way notably useful to contenders for the discipline he implicitly dismisses, severe criticism of the criteria of valid thought —those generally accepted—that, with explicit emphasis, he endorses in and for his own work. That is, he not only confirms what we can't but have observed in the actuality of Social Science or Social Studies as flourishing 'disciplines' at universities; by prompting us to make conclusion articulate, he strengthens our sense that work under those heads, even when good by his criteria, can only encourage bad thinking about society and human life unless the inescapable limitations and incapacities of such work get clear, firm and general recognition.

These, then, are the reasons for using *Social Sciences as Sorcery* to the full.

I am no more offering a reading-list than a syllabus. Simply, the books I mention seem to me essential books, books that, associated in the given context, belong to my argument and help to define what I have in mind. I will only add, not knowing whether or not it is still true nowadays that everyone capable of critical interest in my theme knows this, that *Phoenix*, the large volume of Lawrence's critical and occasional writings, is an inexhaustible source of fresh

insight, pregnant suggestion, and stimulus to thought. Classical formulations—they strike one as that—will be found there every time one opens the volume.*

The third part of this book is devoted to an examination of *Four Quartets*. There are strong reasons for my choosing to clinch my argument in this way. The work is Eliot's major creative undertaking, and no one will dispute that it is concerned with thought: the concern is not only very apparent, but so insistently manifest in passage after passage that to call it explicit wouldn't be misleading. The theme and procedure are not more a matter of thought than those of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are, novels of which the organization and the significance can't be understood apart from a full recognition by the reader that what he is following is a process of heuristic thought in which sensibility, imagination and a consciously creative use of language are essential. But Eliot is not a novelist; nor has he the gifts of a potential novelist. What he is exploring in *Four Quartets* isn't, of course, more his own basic and urgently personal problem than what Lawrence in his novels is exploring is his. Both Eliot and Lawrence must have had a strongly positive *ahnung* of what the upshot in 'significance' would be—the conveyed total sense of 'the living principle' in control in either case (the problem being the nature of that to which 'we belong'). But Eliot's not having the gifts of a novelist isn't accidental to the thisness of his personal case and his thought; his intense and overwhelming sense of the problem as being first and last a matter of insufferable distress makes him in a limiting way egocentric—a characteristic that refers us to the ironic significance of his addiction to Dante, and of his ability to deplore Blake's not having Dante's advantages†. He can't use dramatic method as it is to be found in major novels. His substitute is what may be called the much subtler version employed in *Four Quartets* of the 'musical' method of *The Waste Land*.

This, of course, doesn't overcome the inherent Eliotic limitation; but it lends itself with great felicity to the enforcement of my anti-Cartesian argument, and not the less because Eliot, paradoxically (his

* Few who are familiar with *Phoenix* are unlikely to be unaware of the discursive prose of Lawrence's that is not included in that volume. I will, however, mention *Twilight in Italy*, which I draw on in *English Literature in Our Time and the University*.

† I have commented on this in 'Justifying One's Valuation of Blake', *The Human World*, No. 7, page 47 ff.

personal case *is* an essentially limiting paradox), has failed to exorcize the ghost. For to call the method of *Four Quartets* 'musical' (as the title itself implicitly does) is to emphasize that the relation between the diverse paragraphs, or otherwise typographically separated parts, is not either discursively sequential or narrative, but that the ordering all the same has an organizing function: it is essential to the thought that dictates or engenders it—and 'essential' here points to a thisness achieved by the poet, in which achievement the achieving of definition for himself and the making communicable are one. In the thought, which demands intellectual attention in the sense that the duly responding reader can't but know that he is thinking, the evoked responses of sensibility, imagination and value-judgment play obviously indispensable parts.

It is not really less obvious that *Women in Love* or *Little Dorrit* is concerned with thought—and thought of a kind that matters supremely to humanity. But the mention of those works should make it plain why I choose for demonstrative exemplification, not a major novel, but Eliot's poetic work, which has the concentration of poetry. One couldn't, in a mere extension of 'Practical Criticism', work through with a seminar—as one can through *Four Quartets*—Lawrence's novel or Dickens's, or any of the great novels.

I have, I hope, justified the judgment that Conrad's 'The Secret Sharer' may be properly described as profound, central and distinguished thought, and shown that it might profitably be examined as such, paragraph by paragraph, in a seminar. But, pregnant and fundamental as the insight it conveys is, 'The Secret Sharer' is a short tale and has a necessarily limited scope: the issue it treats is, though implicitly involving so much, isolated for treatment.

I will just touch on two further points that make *Four Quartets* the right choice for the purposes of illustrative demonstration. Firstly, it expresses a profound diagnostic recoil from the civilization—ours—about which Andreski is, in his own way, so pessimistic. Secondly, while compelling radical thought, along with admiration for the linguistic genius that does this, it challenges questioning criticism and the most important kind of disagreement. 'Importance', here, regards the profit in terms of one's new realization of what one's own statement of position would now be.

Some resuming and insisting seem to me in place before I conclude this part of my presentation. I have, at any rate implicitly, made the

point that the intellectually sophisticated representative of humanity—say the philosopher—ought to realize vividly, and to himself, perhaps, revealingly, that he is (or should be) contemplating the basic condition of the possibility of thought when he turns his mind on the nature of language. I discuss what I mean by saying this more than once in different contexts in these pages, the treatment of the theme by a varied approach with the changing suggestiveness entailed seeming to me necessary: the offer of logic and clarity in straightforwardly sustained development could only be delusive. In fact, a good deal of what may be judged repetition is, I think, desirable.

Here I will seize on the word 'mean' which I used in the sentence before the last. How do words mean?—and, inseparable question, what *is* a word? Linguisticians, finding it too much for them as yet, postpone dealing at all seriously with meaning. But language apart from meaning is not language. Wittgenstein, who didn't favour linguistics, knew that of course, yet if the Wittgensteinians in general are as naïve about language as the distinguished Oxford philosophy tutor whose little book on Wittgenstein I have read seemed to me to be, then it is plain that the study of the 'linguistic philosophy' doesn't in fact promote the insights into the nature of language that are most important (to anyone) and I am confirmed in my conviction that we must protect students of 'English' against the philosophic enthusiasts who prescribe seminars on Wittgenstein for them.

To be intelligent about meaning is central to 'English' as a discipline of thought, and there is incomparably more profit for the literary student in Polanyi's essay, 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading', the sustained close attention demanded by which recommends itself as unquestionably repaying from the beginning all the way through, than in many hours of strained cerebration devoted to linguistic philosophy —even where the Wittgensteinian guide is much less dismissible as just a philosopher than the author of my little book. I won't proceed to develop a commentary on that, and there is no need to do more here than mention Polanyi's essay and the book that contains it. Polanyi shows what essential help in our non-scientific field *can* be given by a scientifically trained mind. The virtues of his contribution, however, are conditioned by necessary limitations, and it is left to me, offering the present kind of approach, to say things and lay emphases that don't belong to the field that he has marked out and made his.

The focal words for me at the moment are 'means' and 'meaning'. The ease with which one shifts from one force of the verb 'mean' to

another is significant. The protest, 'Oh, but that isn't what I mean by the word', might very well have issued as, 'But that isn't what I meant the word to mean', or 'What I meant to mean was . . .'. There is a shift, but the forces aren't sharply separable–there is no break, or hesitation, in the continuity. It seems to me that some presence of the force of 'intend' is necessary to the meaning of 'means'.

The full implication of this truth is sometimes slighted even by linguistic philosophers, the reason being that it is so basic: 'the word means . . .'–the verb does its work satisfactorily because, without thinking, they know what 'means' in the nature of things means. But in a Wittgensteinian enterprise such unconsciousness, intermittent and partial as it may be, is not good enough; it produces gratuitous logic, gymnastic fatuity, unprofitable conclusions and intellectual frustration. Thought about language should entail the full and firm recognition that words 'mean' because individual human beings have meant the meaning, and that there is no meaning unless individual beings can meet in it, the completing of the element of 'intend' being represented by the responding someone's certitude that the last condition obtains. Individual human beings *can* meet in a meaning because language–or let us rather say *a* language, meaning the English language (for there is no such thing as language in general)–is for them in any present a living actuality that is organically one with the 'human world' they, in growing up into it, have naturally taken for granted. There is in the language a central core in which for generations individual speakers have met, so that the meeting takes place as something inevitable and immediate in relation to which it would seem gratuitous to think of 'meeting' as being involved in meaning, or of conventions at all. At the other extreme there is the specialist intellectual's successful attempt–successful in regard to the special community he addresses–to attach a definite and limiting force to a term for its use in the given field. But both this simple kind of convention-fixing and the achieved linguistic originalities entailed in the thinking of profound philosophers depend on the central core–without it they couldn't be achieved.

I am prompted to insist in this way on the hardly disputable truth that language belongs to the humanly created human world, as along with it does thought, by one in especial of the critical reservations urged against me by Ian Robinson, who nevertheless refers to my work in very flattering terms, in his recent book, *The Survival of English.* He says (page 239): 'Leavis is belabouring Eliot with what amounts

to jargon; for all the work done on the words earlier in the essay, *ahnung*, *nisus* and selfhood come out a little pat, and the inverted commas will hardly rescue "identity" for the common language.'

I conclude that Robinson judges *Four Quartets* more favourably than I do. But what I want to question immediately is the judgment to which he commits himself at my expense with 'jargon'. If my use of those words justifies that description, it seems inconsistent in him to find a high valuation of my work at all possible, and be able to feel that he thinks well of its spirit and aims. For the distinction between 'identity' and 'selfhood' is basic to the realization that the 'human world' on which both our sense of reality and our attainment of objectivity depend is a product of collaborative human creativity. Does he, as in consistency he surely should, include the 'human world' (inverted commas used there instead of the initial capitals that would else be needed to advert the reader to the special force) and the 'third realm' under 'jargon'? And do these also in my work, or does either of them, 'come out a little pat'?

As I put them round 'identity' I've been in the habit of calling the inverted commas 'quotation marks', but I've at the same time thought of the insistence on the Blakean derivation, and so on the distinction that Blake makes, as a helpful way of reminding the reader of the special force that needs to be realized. Mr Robinson's suggestion, explicit in 'come out a little pat', is that what I offer as thought is too facile, and that I don't, essential as they are to my purpose, do enough to justify my reliance on the terms he lists.

I assume that there are very few, if any, pieces of thinking for which finality might be claimed, and the charge of inconsistency I bring against Robinson doesn't mean that I claim finality for any work of my own, or dismiss *The Survival of English* as worth little attention. On the contrary, it is one of the books to which I send students as repaying, in relation to my theme and argument, close critical study. 'Inconsistency' points to a twofold profit: it is a recognition of the way in which Robinson, committed as a conscious ally to the same cause, reinforces directly my line of argument, while at the same time evoking the critical response that, taking exception and registering disagreement clearly formulated, ministers to understanding and strengthens one's grasp of the truth. At any rate–for I am taking exception–I see Robinson's hints of fundamental critical censure (they are clearly that, but remain undeveloped) as unintended

confirmation of the need for the emphasis I lay when I insist on 'English' as a distinctive discipline of thought.

I suspect, then, that the paradoxical uneasiness he betrays is a tribute to the influence and prestige of departmental philosophy. I know that I refer back a great deal, invoking the basic reasoning (which is not a philosopher's) only allusively, though I should have thought that I had given it sufficiently in a number of places to be safe against that 'come out a little pat'. Robinson doesn't agree. Yet he has read, I think, the chapter on *Little Dorrit* in the book on Dickens my wife and I produced together. My aim in the chapter was to define and appraise justly the distinctive character of Dickens's great novel, and it was that aim which led to what I intimate in the title, 'Dickens and Blake', I have given the critique–which is an exposition, the best I am capable of writing, of the meaning, bearing and necessity of Blake's antithesis, 'identity' and 'selfhood'.

I am not intending to suggest that I have produced something that should be regarded as final and above criticism; but I shouldn't be honest if I didn't say that the chapter seems to me a piece of serious thinking about the fundamentals in question and one that, judged as such, deserves better than to be lightly dismissed. Robinson's curious ability to ignore it, curious because so much more than merely gratuitous, seems to me explained by the influence on him of inappropriate criteria; criteria of what serious thinking is that go with a philosophic training. However that may be, that there *may* be too docile a modesty in face of the professional assumptions (and that there is point in my insisting as I do) is in any case brought home to me by this on the page preceding (238):

> And yet Leavis himself in the great essay on Blake I had the privilege of publishing can't resist, in a minor way, the attempt to get things neatly and finally tied up, by an enthusiastic endorsement of the campaign of Professor Marjorie Grene. I too have learned things from Professor Grene's work, and especially from some of her associates', and don't wish to sound ungrateful; but the effort to see her group as having successfully initiated a philosophical revolution is not only unconvincing in itself, it is falling into the Blakean trap of thinking that revolutions in philosophy *can* be directed in the service of a *telos*--which could only be a modern variant of a finished Jerusalem.

This is perversity itself–though if it had come from a professional philosopher it would have seemed too natural and expectable for that word to meet the case. What *is* the parallel between Blake's positing

'Jerusalem' as the end of process and change in a reversal of the Fall and the kind of use I want to promote of *The Knower and the Known*? Robinson imputes to me a kind of concern with philosophy that is not mine, and ignores my avowed and wholly consistent motive for starring Marjorie Grene's book. The student I have in mind doesn't belong to a department of philosophy; his central concern is with creative literature. It is my hardly paradoxical contention that his acquaintance—everyone assumes that there should be some—with the movement of philosophic thought as it has affected the cultural climate, especially the movement from Descartes to our own time, should have enough reality to tell in his own thinking. There is a great deal of literature, and anyone who tries to draw a boundary round intelligent literary study discovers how hard it is to limit the field, and what diversities it must include: the problem, philosophy being in question, is to ensure that the time and energy consumed shall result in real intellectual profit—and of the kind required. It is a very formidable problem.

No one put me on to Marjorie Grene's book, and when I found it in Heffer's philosophy corner, and, reading in it here and there, realized that it was what I had long been seeking (without much hope), I wasn't supposing that the author had 'initiated a successful philosophical revolution', and I knew nothing of any group to which she belonged. Simply, I saw she had a good mind, was a cultivated person, and had written the rare book that bore helpfully on my problem—a book that could be used by me and the kind of student I was proposing to work with.

It is true that the virtues of *The Knower and the Known* are conditioned by the fact that the author has a decided point of view, and that it entails her challenging the Cartesian dualism and deploring its persistence in the modern mind. But Robinson will hardly object to my saying that I think her right in this: after all, *he* seems to approve of my attitude towards Blake. I'm not so sure that he doesn't object—or perhaps I should say, that the academic philosophical ambience that he has found stimulating doesn't object—to my coming out in favour of Michael Polanyi. In any case, the extracts I have quoted from *The Survival of English* prompt me to this protestation: the author of a book that has the distinctive purpose of Robinson's is committed to the recognition that a philosopher exceeds his warrant if he judges that, without a departmental philosophic training, a literary critic presumes unjustifiably in arriving at an adverse conclusion about the

Cartesian dualism; for a radically different kind of training from the philosophic—one certainly not less relevant—makes clear arrival at such a conclusion a duty, something intellectually incumbent.

I will repeat in support of this protestation some of the things that a critic (and every intelligent reader of creative literature is that) is obligated to tell himself. 'Mind' is 'there' only in individual minds. Minds meet in a 'word'—a word that has a meaningful context. They meet in whatever, in the context, is considered the unit of thought, as, with more difficulty, and with an elaboration of procedure that makes the business of meeting a critically conscious activity, they meet in a poem. A poem is 'there', a meaning is 'there,' but not in space; the 'there' is a way of saying that, though not in space, it is 'concrete' —that is, not something merely, in a postulating or a theoretical way, thought of. The antithesis, 'public' in the ordinary sense, and merely 'private', isn't exhaustive. The poem we acceptingly discuss—the 'acceptingly' meaning that we agree that there is an impressive created thing (not just the black marks on paper) between us—is neither. I coined the phrase the 'third realm' to designate the order of being—I say naturally, 'the order of reality'—to which the poem belongs. A poem is nothing apart from its meaning, and meanings belong to the 'third realm'.

I think of *The Survival of English* as a book that the envisaged student of 'English' should use—and intelligent use of it will be critical use. It contains literary judgments that I disagree with, and related assumptions that seem to me invalid; these would be opportunities for discussion. I am confining my adverse comments to points regarding issues of principle in such a way that recognition of the virtues of the book entails criticism to the effect that *here* the author seems ready to deny the postulates that legitimize his undertaking. I intend no irony when I say that I am grateful to him for providing so good an occasion for reiterating a needed emphasis—an occasion that involves focusing on the insidious difficulty of escaping from the inappropriate criteria of 'thought'.

Robinson questions, along with Blake's 'identity' and 'selfhood', my 'nisus' and *ahnung*. I have distinguished between these two words typographically because, while 'nisus' is in the now old *New English Dictionary*, *ahnung* is unnaturalized German that must clearly remain unnaturalized. 'Nisus' is irreplaceable. In explaining its necessity one has to invoke something like Blake's distinction. 'Effort' doesn't suffice; it implies conscious, explicitly realized, and deliberate purpose,

and these tend to imply what Lawrence points to diagnostically with the triad, 'ego, will and idea'. The need for a word that eliminates this last suggestion is implicit in Blake's ' "I know that they are not mine".' One can think of him as saying of the effort of creativity, 'Though in a sense it is mine, I know that it is not mine.'

I first found that I needed the word 'nisus' in discussing *Ash-Wednesday*. The problem there is to define the sense in which the poet of 'The Hollow Men' has become religious. He will not affirm because he cannot, not having left sufficiently behind him the complete nihilism of that waste-land poem: affirmation attempted merely because of the desperate intensity of his need would be empty. Will and ego (selfhood) cannot genuinely affirm. But what he discovers or verifies in his major poet's dealings with the English language is that deep in him there is a Christian nisus–that is how I put it in offering to analyse *Ash-Wednesday*, where the paradox so manifest in the second poem–acceptance in profoundly liturgical and biblical idiom and 'music' of death as extinction–is representative of the whole sequence.

Eliot's is a curious case, as I point out in my commentary on *Four Quartets*, and paradox characterizes his whole status as a major poet. He has genius (which is of the 'identity'), and the creative nisus works impressively in him, but something in him too makes him deny human creativity–he recoils from being responsible. The denial, which comes from the selfhood (for Eliot is in the 'placing' sense a 'case'), gravely affects the quality of his affirmation when he offers to affirm–and *Four Quartets* is dedicated to an offer of affirmation. What is offered, it seems to me, is decidedly not satisfying. No major artist, I am apt to say, is a 'case'. Yet one couldn't happily call Eliot minor. So he is in his special limiting way unique.

Ahnung, the other word, is intimately related–if, that is, one uses it. I myself, seeing that I had used it a number of times in writing parts of this book, cast about for an equivalent of the unnaturalizable word. I found no English substitute. Lawrence in the *Study of Thomas Hardy*, I noticed, uses 'inkling'–uses it more than once. But, pondering the kind of argument for which I should want it, I decided that it hadn't enough weight–hadn't a grave enough charge of suggestiveness. 'Inkling' can translate 'Ahnung' as used in some German contexts, but it can hardly suggest anticipatory apprehension that carries the weight implicit in 'foreboding', which is often the right rendering of 'Ahnung'. If Robinson's point had been that I lacked the warrant

for trying to invest the German word with the range of suggestiveness required for my argument I should have conceded that he might be right. In any case, I would prefer not to use an unnaturalizable word.

Nevertheless I need a word to go with 'nisus', and, having used '*ahnung*' before, I will—without the capital—keep it here (remaining ready to take informed criticism seriously). The essential thing is to realize what force and implication 'anticipatory apprehension' has when I say that I need a word for it. The word by itself, of course, couldn't convey them; I should in any case send my students to Collingwood's commentaries on Alexander and Whitehead in *The Idea of Nature* and to chapter 9, 'Time and Teleology', of Marjorie Grene's *The Knower and the Known*. Professor Grene, it will be noted, refers in that chapter to the work of Michael Polanyi and insists on the relevant importance of 'tacit knowing' as he postulates it.

I illustrate here my attitude towards philosophy—my sense of the proper relation between the field of that kind of discipline and what I will call my own field. It is undeniable that philosophy has profoundly affected language and so non-philosophical thought and the 'human world'. My contention in this book is that, dealing very largely with what are the same problems and issues of human life, there is another and decidedly different discipline of thought that it is peculiarly important today to get full recognition for and to foster. Those conscious of responsibility for fostering it must, when it is a question of recommending philosophic reading to their student collaborators, trust to their own judgment. They will very likely have to stand up to insistent professional dissent, but they ought to have convictions of which they know they must have the courage, and they ought to be able to tell themselves that the qualifications for this kind of decision are theirs—with the responsibility.

The criteria of approval to be expected from a department of philosophy will be too much those implicit in the current ideal of what the approvable departmental product should be; they are very unlikely indeed to be those proper to the rival discipline. Who has not heard from a departmental representative that a philosopher with whom the speaker doesn't agree is nevertheless a 'good' philosopher? Such observations may be a valuable challenge to thought, but the criteria implied are not ours.

I am not shaken, then, in my recommendation and use of *The Knower and the Known*. I immodestly know, further, that Polanyi's originality is very impressive, and that its influence, if it had the

influence it deserves, would make it of the greatest importance. I shall without misgiving continue to star *Knowing and Being* for the students I work with. This doesn't mean that I don't continue to hold to the ideal necessity of co-presence. The standards observed in departments of philosophy have some relevance for our discipline, and may promote further definition and understanding and serve the advancement of thought. But the benefit of co-presence, it seems to me, wouldn't be merely, or even (perhaps) mainly, for us.

Whatever term is to be paired with 'nisus', the 'anticipatory apprehension' (to repeat my clumsy phrase) it would stand for involves our belief in human creativity, and therefore our conception of time. I will quote now, from three different authors, three short passages, two of which—elsewhere than in this book—I have quoted before.

The first is from Collingwood (*The Idea of Nature*, page 155):

> This at any rate seems clear; that since modern science is committed to a view of the physical universe as finite, certainly in space and probably in time, the activity which this same science identifies with matter cannot be a self-created or ultimately self-dependent activity. The world of nature or physical world as a whole, on any such view, must ultimately depend for its existence on something other than itself.

The second is from Marjorie Grene (*The Knower and the Known*, page 244):

> Knowing is essentially temporal activity, directed temporal activity, drawn by the future pull of what we wish to understand. Knowing, I have argued earlier, is essentially learning; and learning is a telic phenomenon, in which the end in sight, even only guessed at, draws us toward a solution. In the knowing at least of comprehensive entities, moreover, this pull from the future, reflected in our effort to understand, characterizes likewise the reality we are striving to know. For achievement . . . is a pervasive character of life. . . .

The third is the opening of Polanyi's essay, 'Life's Irreducible Structure' (*Knowing and Being*, page 225):

> If all men were exterminated, this would not affect the laws of inanimate nature. But the production of machines would stop, and not till men arose again could machines be formed once more.

These three quotations taken together suggest—at least, that is my intention—a major kind of profit students of 'English' stand to derive

from their philosophic reading. They would of course ponder these passages in the respective contexts, and the profit would be different from that which students of philosophy are tuned to receive. It would be taken into a distinctive kind of thinking, and enrich it—*theirs*, as students of what creative writers do with language. They would have read them, I say, in their contexts, which they would not have considered the less attentively for being literary students. I might very well have prompted those I worked with to read, or re-read, Marjorie Grene's chapter 6 and Polanyi's essay in the course of some discussion of the Eliotic self-contradiction—the paradoxical will to deny human creativity that plays so large a part in determining the effect of *Four Quartets*.

All three passages in their different ways register the conviction—the impelling principle, for each of the authors, of his thinking—that ' "life" is a necessary word'. The second passage, Marjorie Grene's, is concerned explicitly with the mode of life's asserting itself, developing into humanity, and creating—as it continually recreates—the 'human world'. The 'pull from the future', as the brief passage recognizes, is at the same time 'anticipatory apprehension', for knowing itself is achievement; *ahnung* goes with 'nisus'—terms for which the 'laws of inanimate nature' have no use. Nevertheless anyone who reads the whole of the essay to which the third passage belongs will know that Polanyi no more than Marjorie Grene posits a mere external relation between mind and body, thought and extension, the knower and the reality of which 'inanimate nature' is a constituent. And in the first passage, the context of which is pregnant in suggestion, Collingwood pronounces it to be clear that the activity which physical science 'identifies with matter cannot be a self-created or ultimately self-dependent activity'.

I am not contemplating that the student of 'English' will develop philosophically or theologically such passages. It is as dedicated to his own discipline of thought that he should profit. He should in the first place become more perceptive and intelligent in his response to major works of literature, and more finely and penetratingly articulate in registering the significance, the thought, they communicate.

What my own approach and argument prompt here are certain reflexions about the English language. I have made the point that it represents a long continuity of appraised human experience—or, to resort very relevantly to a word from the second quoted passage, of human 'achievement'. But even this last way of putting it says nothing

specific enough—is too large and loose—to suggest the complex actuality I have in mind. The English of *Times* leaders, daily talk, Mr Heath's speeches and Bertrand Russell's books gives us a modernity, a present, in which the past may be said to live; it does essentially represent a long continuity. Change is inevitable, for living entails change. But, as Ian Robinson's examination of what the modernizers of the Authorized Version have done brings home to us, change is not necessarily for the good. The modernizers, with all their knowledge, their cultivation and their assured earnestness, belong to the modern world. This was their qualification for the undertaking they were charged with: to purge biblical and liturgical language of the unmodern and strange—of all that might strike the 'ordinary' man and woman as unnatural (that is, at odds with the English they naturally speak, or use in their letters, or expect to hear in an enlightened address on education).

Modern English in that sense represents drastic impoverishment; the assumptions implicit in it eliminate from thought, and from the valuations and tested judgments that play so essential a part in thought, very important elements of human experience—elements that linguistic continuity had once made available. Actually, up to the present (let us hope it may still be said) a richer continuity has been maintained than 'modern English' gives us. It has been maintained (and to maintain a language is to develop it) because we have so long and rich a literary tradition. I mean by 'tradition' something living, and there is no living literary tradition without an educated public that reads and responds and so (a public being a community) keeps alive an English full of non-'modern' values, promptings and potentialities.

This brings me back to the point of my quoting the first of the three passages, that from Collingwood, the concluding sentence of which runs: 'The world of nature, or physical world as a whole, on any such view, must depend on something other than itself.' I thought of that passage when (page 44 above) I said of the English language: 'It takes the individual human being, the particularizing actuality of life, back to the dawn of consciousness and beyond, and does this in fostering the *ahnung* of . . . the as yet unrealized, the achieved discovery of which demands creative effort.' The 'individual human being' I was thinking of here was in the first place the creative writer, of whom in especial I am thinking still. It follows that my mind is not on possible theological or philosophical developments of the theme to which Collingwood's sentence points. I am concerned with a different use

of language from Collingwood's, or Andreski's or Russell's or that of any theologian—a use which, I insist, is also thought.

All writers of major creative works are driven by the need to achieve a fuller and more penetrating consciousness of that to which we belong, or of the 'Something other than itself' on which the 'physical world ultimately depends'. It is inseparable from the need to strengthen the human grasp of a significance to be apprehended in life that will inform and guide creativity. The English language in the full sense is alive, or becomes for the creative writer alive, with hints, apprehensions and intuitions. They go back to earlier cultural phases. The writer is alive in his own time, and the character of his response, the selective individual nature of his creative receptivity, will be determined by his sense—intensely individual—of the modern human condition.

He needs all the resources of the language his growing command of his theme can make spontaneous—can recruit towards the achieving of an organic wholeness: his theme itself is (being inescapably a prompting) an effort to develop, in realizing and presenting it, living continuity. The less he has to ignore or play down in achieving his 'heuristic conquest' out of representative human experience, the better —if we judge by the major artist's implicit intention. And here is the occasion to hark back to the paragraph I have quoted from Lawrence—the paragraph ending:

> Anything more unlike song, spontaneous song, would be impossible to imagine: a strange bawling yell that followed the outlines of a tune. It was not like savages: savages have subtle rhythms. It was not like animals: animals *mean* something when they yell. It was like nothing on earth, and it was called singing. . . . What could possibly become of such a people, a people in whom the living intuitive faculty was as dead as nails, and only queer mechanical yells, and uncanny will-power remained?

The 'living intuitive faculty' is not the 'living principle', by which term I mean what the major artist as I have characterized him strives to realize or to become; but, in the nature of his inspiration, he knows the urgency of the meaning conveyed in Lawrence's prose. The 'living intuitive faculty' is at the root of the 'living principle', and is felt to be strongly there in that English language in terms of which the writer lives his creative life. The 'living principle' itself is an apprehended totality of what, as registered in the language, has been won or established in immemorial human living. I say, 'an apprehended

totality', for, in the nature of things, there can be no one total upshot; for every major writer it is different–there are many potentialities and no statistically determinable values. We call a writer major when we judge that his wisdom, more deeply and robustly rooted, represents a more securely poised resultant, one more fully comprehensive and humanly better centred–considerations bearing crucially on future growth–than any that any ordinarily brilliant person could offer us.

Wisdom we may call a higher plausibility, profoundly judicious and responsible. For in this realm of thought there is nothing certain or provable, and no finality.

I will conclude with some resuming emphases. Where there is an educated public the living principle will be a living presence and have some influence. Where it has, it will tell sometimes on writers (say) of *Times* leaders. Statesmen of all parties will, in such a civilization, now and then find themselves recognizing that if they continue to talk and act and bureaucratize on the blank assumption that rescuing Britain from its plight and curing its malady is a matter of ensuring a good percentage growth-rate, fair distribution and industrial peace they will most certainly ensure a major human disaster.

2

Judgment and Analysis

(1)

'THOUGHT' AND EMOTIONAL QUALITY

Notes in the Analysis of Poetry

I TOOK these two poems, which present an obvious contrast, for a 'comparison' that should initiate discussion, from the old *Oxford Book of English Verse*, which, as a large collection that contained bad and indifferent as well as good poems, we—my students having it too—used a great deal up to the outbreak of the last war.

(*a*) They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remember'd how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

(*b*) Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?'
—'When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.'

'Who makes the bridal bed,
  Birdie, say truly?'
–'The grey-headed sexton
  That delves the grave duly.

'The glow-work o'er grave and stone
  Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing
  Welcome, proud lady!'

When we look at *Heraclitus* we see that the directly emotional and personal insistence distinguishing it is associated with an absence of core or substance: the poem seems to be all emotional comment, the alleged justifying situation, the subject of comment, being represented by loosely evocative generalities, about which the poet feels vaguely if 'intensely' (the 'intensity' of this kind of thing is conditioned by vagueness). Again, the emotion seems to be out there on the page, whereas in reading *Proud Maisie* we never seem to be offered emotions as such; the emotion develops and defines itself as we grasp the dramatic elements the poem does offer–the data it presents (that is the effect) with emotional 'disinterestedness'. For 'disinterestedness' we can substitute 'impersonality', with which term we introduce a critical topic of the first importance.

Someone may comment that, on the one hand, for Scott, whose poetic impulse clearly came not from any inescapable pang experienced in his immediately personal life, but from an interest in ballads and in the ballad convention, the impersonality of his poem was an easy achievement, while, on the other hand, absence of impersonality in the handling of poignant emotion needn't be accompanied by the self-cherishing emotionality, the wallowing complaisance, of *Heraclitus*. These matters can be carried further, and the essential distinctions given force, only by close and varied reference to the concrete. Here is a contrast analogous to the last, but a contrast in which the 'impersonal' poem unmistakably derives from a seismic personal experience, while the obviously emotional poem is not suspect, like *Heraclitus*, of being a mere indulgence in the sweets of poignancy:

(*a*)

A slumber did my spirit seal;
  I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
  The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

(*b*)

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

No one can doubt that Wordsworth wrote his poem because of something profoundly and involuntarily suffered—suffered as a personal calamity, but the experience has been so impersonalized that the effect, as much as that of *Proud Maisie*, is one of bare and disinterested presentment. Again, though the working this time doesn't so obviously prompt to a diagrammatic schematization, the emotional power is generated between the two stanzas, or between the states represented by the stanzas: 'she was, she is not'—the statement seems almost as bare and simple as that. But the statement is concrete, and once the reading has been completed the whole poem is seen to be a complex organization, charged with a subtle life. In retrospect the first stanza takes on new significance:

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears

—the full force of that 'human' comes out: the conditions of the human situation are inescapable and there is a certain *hubris* in the security of forgetful bliss. Again, the 'human' enhances the ironic force of 'thing' in the next line:

She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

In the second stanza she *is* a thing—a thing that, along with the rocks and stones and trees with which she is

Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,

cannot in reality feel the touch of earthly years and enjoys a real immunity from death. The 'diurnal', chosen apparently for its scientific nakedness and reinforcing as it does that stating bareness with which the diction and tone express the brutal finality of the fact, has actually, at the same time, a potent evocative force: it puts the fact in an astronomical setting and evokes the vast inexorable regularity of the planetary motions, the effect being analogous to that of the enclosing morning-night contrast of *Proud Maisie.*

In *Break, break, break* we again have the poem that offers emotion directly—the poem in which the emotion seems to be 'out there' on the page. If we read the poem aloud, the emotion, in full force from the opening, asserts itself in the plangency of tone and movement that is compelled upon us. We do not, however, this time feel moved to a dismissing judgment. The poet is clearly one of distinguished gift, we cannot doubt that behind the poem there is a genuinely personal urgency, and we are not ready to accuse him of being moved primarily by the enjoyment of being poignantly moved—though we *can* very readily imagine a rendering of the poem that should betray too much enjoyment of the poignancy.

And here, in this last suggestion, we glimpse a way of getting beyond a neutrally descriptive account of the differences between the two poems. We can say that Wordsworth's poem is a securer kind of achievement. If someone should comment that to make it a point against a poem that it lends itself more readily to abuse is to assume a great deal, it will perhaps be best not to take up the challenge directly but to advance another proposition: an emotional *habit* answering to the mode of *Break, break, break* would need to be regarded critically. The poet, we can say, whose habitual mode—whose emotional habit—was represented by that poem would not only be very limited; we should expect to find him noticeably given to certain weaknesses and vices. Further, the reader who cannot see that Tennyson's poem, with all its distinction and refinement, yields a satisfaction inferior in kind to that represented by Wordsworth, cannot securely appreciate the

highest poetic achievement at its true worth and is not very likely to be at all strong or sure in the kind of judgment that discriminates between *Break, break, break* and *Heraclitus*.

'Inferior in kind'—by what standards? Here we come to the point at which literary criticism, as it must, enters overtly into questions of emotional hygiene and moral value—more generally (there seems no other adequate phrase), of spiritual health. It seems best not to say anything further by way of immediate answer to the challenge. By the time we have closed the discussion of impersonality, a theme that will come up in explicit form again, a great deal more will have been said to elucidate, both directly and indirectly, the nature of the answer. The immediate business is to push on with the method of exploration by concrete analysis—analysis of judiciously assorted instances.

The pairs of poems that we have examined as yet have presented strong and patent contrasts. It is time to pass on to a comparison where the essential distinction is less obvious:

(*a*) Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

(*b*) Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Neither of these poems answers to the description of 'bare presentment'. Both of them look pretty emotional: that is, they make an insistent direct offer of emotion; they incite patently to an immediate 'moved' response. Tackling that most dangerous theme, the irrevocable past, each flows 'from the heart' in swelling and lapsing movements that suggest the poignant luxury of release, the loosing of the reservoirs. At first sight (*a*), with its banal phrases—'vista of years', 'the insidious mastery of song', 'the heart of me weeps', 'the glamour of childish days', its invocation of music, and the explicit 'I weep like a child for the past' with which it concludes—might seem, if either of the poems is to be discriminated against as sentimental, to be the one. But even at a first reading through of the pair it should be plain that there is a difference of movement between them, and that the movement of (*a*) is, by contrast, the subtler. Against the simply plangent flow of (*b*) we feel it as decidedly complex.

When we examine this effect of complexity we find it is associated with the *stating* manner that, in spite of the dangerous emotional swell, distinguishes (*a*) from (*b*). And when we examine this effect of statement we find that it goes with a particularity to which (*b*) offers no counterpart. For the banalities instanced do not represent everything in the poem; the 'vista of years' leads back to something sharply seen—a very specific situation that stands there in its own right; so that we might emend 'stating' into 'constating' in order to describe that effect as of prose statement (we are inclined to call it—but the situation is vividly realized) which marks the manner. The child is 'sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings' and 'pressing the small poised feet' of its mother—we note that 'poised', not only because of its particularity, but because the word seems to be significant in respect of an essential, though unobtrusive, quality of the poem. The main immediate point, however, is that in

all this particularity we have something quite other than banal romantic generality: this is not the common currency of sentimental evocation or anything of the kind. The actuality of the remembered situation is unbeglamouring, becoming more so in the second stanza, with the 'hymns' and the 'tinkling piano'. Something is, we see, held and presented in this poem, and the presenting involves an *attitude towards*, an element of disinterested valuation. For all the swell of emotion the critical mind has its part in the whole; the constatation is at the same time in some measure a placing. That is, sensibility in the poem doesn't work in complete divorce from intelligence; feeling is not divorced from thinking: however the key terms are to be defined, these propositions at any rate have a clear enough meaning in this context.

But to return to the 'tinkling piano': we note that it stands in contrast to the 'great piano appassionato' of the last stanza, and, along with the 'hymns', to the music that started the emotional flood:

> So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
> With the great black piano appassionato.

We note further that in the ordinary sentimental poeticality inspired by the 'insidious mastery of song' it would not be 'vain': the poet would be swept away on the flood of the immediate, represented by the emotional vagueness into which the 'music' would be translated. It is a remarkable poet who, conveying the 'insidious mastery' and the 'flood' so potently, at the same time fixes and presents with such specificity the situation he sharply distinguishes from the immediate. It is unusual, and suggests lines on which we might explain our finding the 'poised' of the first stanza a word to underscore.

But of course we have passed over a phrase in the second stanza corresponding to the 'vain', and marking a correlated though different distinction—one tensely counterpoised with the other: 'In spite of myself'—

> In spite of myself the insidious mastery of song
> Betrays me back . . .

Here we may profit by a comment on this poem made by D. W. Harding in his *Note on Nostalgia.**

> The fact of experiencing the tendency towards regression means nothing. It is the final attitude towards the experience that has to be evaluated,

* *Determinations*, page 70 (ed. F. R. Leavis), Chatto & Windus, 1934.

and in literature this attitude may be suggested only very subtly by means of the total context. In *The Grey Land* and in *Piano* the writer's attitude is clear. Shanks obviously finds a tranquil pleasure in the thought of throwing up the sponge. In Lawrence's poem the impulse seems to have been equally strong and is certainly expressed more forcefully, but the attitude is different. Lawrence is adult, stating the overwhelming strength of the impulse but reporting resistance to it and implying that resistance is better than yielding.

That 'heart of me', we see, is no mere sentimental banality. For the poet his 'heart' is not his; it is an emotional rebellion that he fights against and disowns. *He* is here, and his emotion there. Again, the 'glamour of childish days' is a *placing* phrase; it represents a surrender that his 'manhood' is ashamed of.

No more need be said about the elements of this kind in the poem. It is a complex whole, and its distinction, plainly, is bound up with its complexity. This complexity, to recapitulate, involves the presence of something other than directly offered emotion, or mere emotional flow—the presence of something, a specific situation, concretely grasped. The presentment of this situation involves a disinterested or 'constating' attitude, and also a critical attitude towards the emotion evoked by the situation: here we have our licence for saying that, however strong an emotional effect the poem has, that is essentially conditioned by 'thought': the constating, relating and critical mind has its essential part in the work of sensibility. We can say further that the aspect of disinterested 'presentment' is not confined to the situation seen at the end of the 'vista of years'; the collapse upon the 'flood of remembrance' is itself, while so poignantly and inwardly conveyed, presented at the same time from the outside. It is a kind of object for contemplation, though one that isn't 'there' except in so far as we are also inside it. We are immersed in the flood enough to feel, as immediate experience, its irresistibleness; at the same time it is as much 'out there' as the 'child sitting under the piano'. And in these observations we are making notes that are very relevant to the theme of 'impersonality'.

Complexity, we can see at once when we pass on, is not a marked characteristic of Tennyson's poem, which is what at the first reading its movement seemed to indicate. It moves simply forward with a sweetly plangent flow, without check, cross-tension or any qualifying element. To give it the reading it asks for is to flow with it, acquiescing in a complete and simple immersion: there is no attitude towards the

experience except one of complaisance; we are to be wholly in it and of it. We note, too, the complete absence of anything like the particularity of (*a*): there is nothing that gives the effect of an object, or substantial independent existence. The particularity of 'the happy Autumn-fields', 'the first beam glittering on a sail', and the casement that 'slowly fades a glimmering square', and so on, is only speciously of the kind in question. No new definitions or directions of feeling derive from these suggestions of imagery, which seem to be wholly *of* the current of vague emotion that determines them. We note that the strong effect of particularity produced by (*a*) is conditioned by the complexity—by the play of contrast and tension; but (*b*) seems to offer a uniform emotional fluid (though there are several simple ingredients, represented by 'sad', 'fresh', 'strange', 'sweet' and so on—the insistent explicitness of which is significant).

And the relation between 'thought' and 'feeling' as illustrated by Tennyson's poem?—A note of Yeats's on his own work comes to mind here: 'I tried after the publication of *The Wanderings of Oisin* to write of nothing but emotion, and in the simplest language, and now I have had to go through it all, cutting out or altering passages that are sentimental for lack of thought.'* This has an obvious bearing on *The Lake Isle of Innisfree. Tears, idle tears,* in the main respects dealt with in the last paragraph, may fairly be classed with *Innisfree.* Whether we are to call it 'sentimental' or not, it certainly bears to *Break, break, break* a relation that gives force to the suggestion made in regard to this last poem. The poet who wrote the one wrote the other: they are both highly characteristic; and it is plain that habitual indulgence of the kind represented by *Tears, idle tears*—indulgence not accompanied and virtually disowned by a critical placing—would be, on grounds of emotional and spiritual hygiene, something to deplore. There is nothing gross about the poem; it exhibits its author's highly personal distinction; but it unquestionably offers emotion directly, emotion for its own sake without a justifying situation, and, in the comparison, its inferiority to Lawrence's poem compels a largely disparaging commentary.

The comparison is not gratuitous, a puritanic intrusion of critical righteousness; readiness to make the kind of judgment that the comparison enforces is implicit in any sound response to Tennyson's poem. The grounds for this insistence could, if necessary, be demonstrated pretty conclusively from the case—the clinical suggestion

* *Early Poems and Stories*, page v.

applies—of Shelley. Shelley, whose genius is not in dispute, preaches, in the *Defence of Poetry*, a doctrine that makes the writing of Poetry as much a matter of passive submission to the emotional tides, and as little a matter of active intelligence, as possible. Consistently with this doctrine, a representative expression of his genius such as the *Ode to the West Wind* depends for its success on our being so carried along in the plangent sweep of emotion that we ask no questions. To the questions that propose themselves when we do stop and consider—Can 'loose clouds' really be 'shed' on the 'stream of the wind' 'like earth's decaying leaves'? what are the 'tangled boughs of heaven and ocean'? and so on—there is no better reply than that the questions don't propose themselves when we are responding properly (as it requires an effort *not* to do). The thinking mind is in abeyance, and discrepancies assume an inevitable congruence in the flood of plangency.

There is, then, an obvious sense in which Shelley's poetry offers feeling divorced from thought—offers it as something opposed to thought. Along with this characteristic goes Shelley's notable inability to *grasp* anything—to present any situation, any observed or imagined actuality, or any experience, as an object existing independently in its own nature and in its own right. Correlatively there is the direct offer of emotion—emotion insistently explicit—in itself, for itself, for its own sake: we find our description merging into criticism. For, reading Shelley's poetry, his best, the finest expression of his genius, there is demonstrable force and point in saying that a due acceptance will have in close attendance on it the at any rate implicit qualification: 'But these habits are dangerous.' It is significant that examples of gross sentimentality figure among the collected poems.* Shelley's works, indeed, provide much more serious occasions for criticism;

* That time is dead for ever, child!
Drown'd, frozen, dead for ever.
We look on the past, and stare aghast
At the spectres waiting, pale and ghast,
Of hopes that thou and I beguil'd
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then roll'd by,
Its waves are unreturning.
And yet we stand in a lone land
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears that fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

criticism that is far more damaging because it goes deeper. Here we have the reason for adducing him at this stage of the argument: in the examination of his poetry the literary critic finds himself passing, by inevitable transitions, from describing characteristics to making adverse judgments about emotional quality; and so to a kind of discussion in which, by its proper methods and in pursuit of its proper ends, literary criticism becomes the diagnosis of what, looking for an inclusive term, we can only call spiritual malady.

There would be no point in offering here an abridged critique of Shelley in demonstration. To be satisfactory, the treatment must be fairly full, and I have attempted such a treatment in *Revaluation*. But it may still be worth insisting, by way of developing a discussion opened above, that if one finds it a weakness in Shelley's poetry that feeling, as offered in it, depends for its due effect on a virtual abeyance of the thinking mind, one is not appealing, as at one time seemed so often to be assumed, to a criterion represented by the seventeenth-century Metaphysicals.

The possibilities are not as limited as that; the problem cannot be reduced to that choice of simple alternatives which the Shelley-Donne antithesis suggests. And perhaps there is more to be said about the presence of 'thought' in Metaphysical poetry than those who resort so readily to the antithesis recognize. The obvious presence, we know, is in the ratiocination and the use of intellectual material (philosophical, theological and so on). In following the argument and appreciating the nature and relevance of the ideas invoked one has, reading Metaphysical verse, to make something of the kind of sustained intellectual effort demanded by a closely reasoned prose treatise. That, of course, isn't all: in good Metaphysical poetry the analogies that form so large a part of the argument introduce imagery that is concretely realized and has powerful imaginative effects—effects that depend, though, on our following the argument.

The vices to which the Metaphysical habit inclines are antithetical to those attendant on the habit represented by Shelley and the Tennyson of *Tears, idle tears*: they are a matter, not of the cultivation of emotion for its own sake, but of the cultivation of subtlety of thought for its own sake; we find ingenuities of analogy and logic (or quasi-logic) that are uncontrolled by a total imaginative or emotional purpose. And in a great many successful Metaphysical poems the emotion seems to have a secondary and ancillary status: without some *fulcra* of emotional interest the ingenious system of tensions—the organization

of 'wit'—couldn't have been contrived; and that says pretty much all there is to say about the presence of emotion. But when a poet of Metaphysical habit is personally moved and possessed by something profoundly experienced, as, for instance, Donne in the *Nocturnall*, then we have poetry of very exceptional emotional strength.

The part of 'thought' in this strength deserves more consideration than it usually gets under the head of 'Metaphysical wit': there is more to it than subtle ratiocination—the surprising play of analogy. The activity of the thinking mind, the energy of intelligence, involved in the Metaphysical habit means that, when the poet *has* urgent personal experience to deal with it is attended to and contemplated—which in turn means some kind of separation, or distinction, between experiencer and experience. 'Their attempts were always analytic'—to analyse your experience you must, while keeping it alive and immediately present as experience, treat it in some sense as an object. That is, an essential part of the strength of good Metaphysical poetry turns out to be of the same order as the strength of all the most satisfying poetry: the conceitedness, the Metaphysicality, is the obtrusive accompaniment of an essential presence of 'thought' such as we have in the best work of all great poets. It can be said in favour of the Metaphysical habit that it favours such a presence.

These points may be enforced by considering, in comparison with a representative piece of Victorian verse, a passage of Marvell:

(*a*)

Sombre and rich, the skies,
Great glooms, and starry plains;
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all Kings,
Crown'd, and again discrown'd.

* * *

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars; or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows, or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

* * *

Armour'd he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vex'd in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still,
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

(*b*)

What Field of all the Civil Wars,
Where his were not the deepest Scars?
And Hampton shows what part
He had of wiser Art.

Where, twining subtile fears with hope,
He wove a Net of such a scope,
That Charles himself might chase
To Caresbrooks narrow case.

That thence the Royal Actor born
The Tragick Scaffold might adorn:
While round the armed bands
Did clap their bloody hands.

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable Scene:
  But with his keener Eye
  The Axes edge did try:

Nor call'd the Gods with vulgar spight
To vindicate his helpless Right,
  But bow'd his comely Head,
  Down as upon a Bed.

To forestall the possible comment that the comparison is arbitrary, it had better be said at once that Lionel Johnson's stanzas are offered as a foil to Marvell's. And, actually, *By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross* may fairly be taken as representative of the tradition to which it belongs, the main nineteenth-century tradition, and it is highly characteristic for a poet of that tradition to centre his interest in a hero of the past and to exhibit towards him Johnson's kind of attitude. On the other hand, we can say of Marvell that, had he chosen to deal with a figure from the past, he would have treated him as a contemporary, and that it is highly characteristic of Marvell to express so sympathetic an attitude towards Charles in a poem of which Cromwell is the official hero.

It must be plain at once that such impressiveness as Johnson's poem has is conditioned by an absence of thought. This is poetry from the 'soul', that nineteenth-century region of specialized poetical experience where nothing has sharp definition and where effects of 'profundity' and 'intensity' depend upon a lulling of the mind. The large evocativeness begins in the first stanza, so that we needn't press the question whether 'clings' in the second–

The splendid silence clings
Around me

–is the right word: we know that if we have lapsed properly into the kind of reading the poem claims such questions don't arise, and that, absorbed in the sombre richness, the great glooms, and so on, we merge without any question at all into the sadness of 'the saddest of all kings'. If we are in a mood to ask questions, the process by which all this evocation is made to invest the 'fair and fatal king' hasn't the needful potency, and reading

Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing,

we may perhaps comment adversely on the conditions of vague impressiveness in the poem and alcoholic lack of focus in the reader that make 'thing' an impressive rime. How complete an abeyance of the questioning mind is called for becomes still more obvious when the poem itself asks formal questions:

> Which are more full of fate:
> The stars; or those sad eyes?
> Which are more still and great:
> Those brows, or the dark skies?

Taken as real questions, requiring answers, they are merely ludicrous. Again, the essential absence of thought—the absence that is essential to the emotional effect—is apparent when (as the right reader doesn't) we try to relate what look like key statements, focusing the significance of the poem. We are told that

> The passing of his breath
> Won his defeated ends

and then, in the next stanza but one, that

> He triumphs now, the dead,
> Beholding London's gloom

—nothing more at all seizable is conveyed regarding the nature of his triumph except that he became a legend and a symbol adapted to the purposes of the Lionel Johnsons. And here, of course, we make our critical point: it is his own purpose that Johnson is really concerned with, not Charles, who is merely an excuse, a cover and opportunity. We may note in Marvell's

> He nothing common did or mean

an apt implicit comment on the suggested royal triumph of saintly *Schadenfreude* that gratifies Johnson, but we know that criticism needn't bother itself with a solemn comparison of Johnson's attitude towards Charles with Marvell's. There is no Charles *there* in Johnson, who is not preoccupied with anything in the nature of an object felt or imagined as existing in its own right.

> Our wearier spirit faints,
> Vex'd in the world's employ:
> His soul was of the saints;
> And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

—It is plain that the hunger comes first, the appetite for a certain kind of religiose-emotional indulgence, and that Johnson goes straight for this, uninhibited by any thought of reality—or any thought at all; and that what he loves is his love, his favourite vague and warm emotions and sentiments, which Charles (the thinking and judging mind being in a happy drunken daze) can be taken as justifying. The curious show of thought and logic necessary to Johnson's purpose is well illustrated in the final stanza, with its opening 'Yet'. We can say easily enough what that stanza does, but we cannot say what it means.

It takes no great critical acumen to see all this. The poem is offered for the obviousness of its illustrative significance. It shows in their essential relations vague evocativeness, the absence of anything grasped and presented, the absence of imagery that will bear any closer attention than that given by the rapt and passive mind in its gliding passage, the absence of constating and relating thought, the direct aim at emotion in itself, the grossness of sentimentality. We do not, of course, argue from the poem to Lionel Johnson's personal qualities. It merely shows what an unfortunate tradition can do with a cultivated mind.

Tradition served Marvell very differently. Though the *Horatian Ode* is not one of his Metaphysical poems, the Metaphysical element perceptible in it goes so perfectly with the actual Horatian mode as to reinforce very neatly a point made above—the point that conceitedness and the other distinctively Metaphysical qualities are, in good Metaphysical poetry, obtrusive manifestations of an essential presence of 'thought' such as we have in some non-Metaphysical poetry. The contemplating, relating and appraising mind is unmistakably there in the characteristic urbane poise of the ode. There could hardly have been a directer or more obviously disinterested concern with objects of contemplation: the attitudes seem to be wholly determined by the nature of what is seen and judged, and the expression of feeling to be secondary and merely incidental to just statement and presentment. These qualities, which are exemplified on so impressive a scale and in so developed a way in the ode as a whole—in the cool, appraising poise

of the eulogy of Cromwell, the delicately ironic survey of contemporary history, the grave aplomb of the close, and in the very fact of Charles's appearing to such advantage in such a context—are apparent enough in the passage on Charles as it stands by itself. And it is plain that its strength as feeling and attitude, its unassertive command of our sympathy, depends on them.

It may be well to repeat that there is no question here of solemn comparative appraisal of the two poems—or of weighing Johnson's poem against Marvell's fragment. The point of the juxtaposition is that it gives us an illustrative contrast of modes. An antithesis so extreme, someone may comment, as to leave the bearing of the comparison in doubt: it is in the nature of Marvell's ode not to be a product of strong personal emotion (there is no evidence in it that Marvell had any to control), but to be the poised formal expression of statesmanlike wisdom, surveying judicially the contemporary scene. That is so; nevertheless, no one will contend that feeling has no part in the effect. Much as the ode seems to be a matter of explicit statement, its judgments are conveyed concretely, in terms of feeling and attitude. In fact, if it were a question of choosing the more potent piece of propaganda for the 'fair and fatal king', the more deeply moving evocation, sympathetic and sympathy-winning, wouldn't even the devotee do well to prefer Marvell's lines? And it should be plain that qualities of essentially the same order as those which justify us in talking of the presence in the *Horatian Ode* of the contemplating, relating and appraising mind can co-exist with the evidence, in tone and feeling, of greater personal urgency—a presence that needn't be at the same time, as it is in the ode, one of very definite and conscious tradition in the attitudes and valuations. Indeed, it would be possible to arrange poems in series in such a way as to make the classification of the *Horatian Ode*, *Proud Maisie* and *A Slumber did my spirit seal* together, as against the contrasting poems of Lionel Johnson, Tennyson and Shelley, obviously reasonable.

By way of exploring these matters further let us now consider briefly a poem in which Shelley makes what looks like an insistent offer of thought:

> Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory—
> Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
> Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

The poem has an effect of sharp insistent logic. A series of ostensibly parallel propositions leads up to the 'And so' of the inevitable-sounding conclusion. It is characteristic of the poem that we take the effect without asking whether this 'And so' clinches an analogy or a syllogism. When we do set ourselves resolutely to reading with full and sustained critical attention we find that the effect combines the suggestion of both, and is able to do so only because it is neither, except speciously, by a sleight that depends upon an abeyance of the demand for logic.

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory

—that seems merely to state the simple fact that we remember music when it has ceased. The second couplet—

Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken

—seems merely to translate the proposition of the first into terms of the sense of smell; though we note that the 'live', developed by the equivocal 'quicken' ('make lively'—'impart life to'), reinforces the potential equivocation of 'vibrates'.* But when we consider the third couplet—

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed

—we find that it is only by a kind of bluff that it has the effect of being another equivalent proposition. The implicit assimilation of the 'rose leaves' to the status of remembered sounds and scents throws back on these (already by suggestion something more than memories) a material reality, or, rather, produces in us a vague sense of a status that combines material reality with non-material persistence: so here they are, the petals, physically impressible by the 'beloved', and yet the clinching effect of the final couplet—

* Cf. the opening of *Burnt Norton*.

> And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
> Love itself shall slumber on

–involves something more than a clean one-way passage from mere things to mere 'thoughts', and is a completing of the process of legerdemain (for the working of the poem depends on something closely analogous to optical illusion–'the quickness of the hand deceives the eye'). We have in 'thy thoughts' the clinching equivocation: 'thy thoughts' are ostensibly the petals that remain 'when thou art gone', and this implication of persistence evokes (while we are reading currently) the ghost of a significant force because, without telling ourselves so, or distinguishing between the two senses, we take 'thy thoughts' as being at the same time 'thoughts of thee'.

What kind of status the bed has that 'Love itself' 'slumbers on' there would be no profit in inquiring, or what kind of being 'Love itself' is or has. The proposition has a metaphysical air, but, clearly, any significance it may claim is merely a ghost. The difference between this kind of effect, which depends on an absence of attention and a relaxing of the mind, and, say, Marvell's *Definition of Love*, which demands a sustained intellectual effort in the following-through and following-up of the thought, needn't be laboured. Exploration may be more profitably pursued through another kind of contrast, that provided by this characteristic poem of Blake's:

> O Rose, thou art sick!
> The invisible worm,
> That flies in the night,
> In the howling storm,
>
> Has found out thy bed
> Of crimson joy;
> And his dark secret love
> Does thy life destroy.

It is (or used to be) a commonplace of academic literary commentary that Blake and Shelley are related by peculiar affinities; but what most strikes the reader whose attention is upon the poetry they wrote is their extreme unlikeness. In Blake's best verse there is something corresponding to the 'wiry bounding line' he demanded of visual art. It is not merely that he is strong on the visual side–a truth that lends itself to a misleading overstress. If we are to associate his essential strength with the 'thing seen' it must be in the full consciousness that the phrase here has more than its literal sense. The essential

objects in its preoccupation with which his poetry exhibits such purity of interest—such disinterestedness—are not susceptible of visualization; they belong to inner experience, emotional and instinctive life, the inner life of the psyche. It is Blake's genius that, dealing with material that could be present to him only as the most intimate personal experience—the very substance of his appetites, desires, inner urgencies, fears and temptations—he can write poetry that has virtues analogous to those of the 'wiry bounding line'. Its intensity is not one of emotional insistence; there is none of the Shelleyan 'I feel, I suffer, I yearn'; there is no atmosphere of feeling and no I.

In his essay on Blake (one of his finest) Eliot, discussing the 'peculiar honesty' (or 'unpleasantness') of Blake's poetry, says*: 'none of the things which exemplify the sickness of an epoch or a fashion has this quality; only those things which, by some extraordinary labour of simplification, exhibit the essential sickness or strength of the human soul.' Again: '*The Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, and the poems from the Rossetti manuscript, are the poems of a man with a profound interest in human emotions, and a profound knowledge of them. The emotions are presented in an extremely simplified, abstract form.' I quote these remarks by way of enforcing the point that what distinguishes Blake's poetry from Shelley's may fairly be said to be a presence of 'thought'. The 'seeing' elements of our inner experience as clearly defined objects involves, of itself, something we naturally call 'thought'. And it will be noted by the way how inevitably we slip into the visual analogy, the type and model of objectivity being the thing seen (there are bearings here on the visualist fallacy in criticism); and, further, that there is the significant linguistic usage by which to 'see' is to understand ('I see!'). In any case, the 'extraordinary labour of simplification' behind Blake's best things is a labour of analysis—analysis that he can present in direct statement, as well as implicitly in the resulting 'simplified form'. Again it is convenient to resort to Eliot's essay (I question, in the following, the second sentence)†:

> His philosophy, like his visions, like his insight, like his technique, was his own. And accordingly he was inclined to attach more importance to it than an artist should; this is what makes him eccentric, and makes him inclined to formlessness.

* *Selected Essays*, page 303.

† See my essay, 'Justifying one's Valuation of Blake' in *William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes*. Edited by Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips.

> But most through midnight streets I hear
> How the youthful harlot's curse
> Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
> And blights with plagues the marriage hearse,

is the naked vision;

> Love seeketh only self to please,
> To bind another to its delight,
> Joys in another's loss of ease,
> And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite,

is the naked observation; and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is naked philosophy, presented. But Blake's occasional marriages of poetry and philosophy are not so felicitous.

By 'direct statement' I mean the kind of thing that Eliot calls 'the naked observation', and it should be plain that there can be cases where the 'observation' is pretty manifestly present in the 'naked vision'. *The Sick Rose* is surely such a case.

The aspect of 'vision', of course, is the more obvious. We hesitate to call the Rose a symbol, because 'symbol' is apt to imply something very different from the immediacy with which Blake sees, feels and states in terms of his image—the inevitableness with which the Rose presents itself to him as the focus of his 'observation'. We have here a radical habit of Blake's; a habit on which the remark made above regarding objectivity and the thing seen has obvious bearings—and a habit, it might be added, that shows the strength it was to Blake as a poet to be also a visual artist. Yet, after all, how much of Blake's Rose do we cover with 'visual' and 'thing seen'? The vocative establishes the Rose 'out there' before us, so that it belongs to the order of visible things and we don't question that we see it; but does its visual presence amount to much more than that?

'Crimson', of course, makes an undoubted visual impact, but of the total work that it does, in its context, that visual impact is only one element. What 'crimson' does is to heighten and complete the clash of association set up by the first line:

> O Rose, thou art sick.

To call a rose 'sick' is to make it at once something more than a thing seen. 'Rose' as developed by 'thy bed of crimson joy' evokes rich passion, sensuality at once glowing, delicate and fragrant, and

exquisite health. 'Bed of crimson joy' is voluptuously tactual in suggestion, and, in ways we needn't try to analyse, more than tactual —we feel ourselves 'bedding down' in the Rose, and there is also a suggestion of a secret heart ('found out'), the focus of life, down there at the core of the closely clustered and enclosing petals.

> The invisible worm,
> That flies in the night,
> In the howling storm,

offering its shock of contrast to the warm security of love ('She's all States, and all Princes, I, Nothing else is'), conveys the ungovernable otherness of the dark forces of the psyche when they manifest themselves as disharmonies. The poem, we can see, registers a profound observation of a kind we may find developed in many places in D. H. Lawrence—an observation regarding the possessive and destructive element there may be in 'love'.

There is, then, much more solid ground for attributing 'thought' to this wholly non-ratiocinative and apparently slight poem than to that ostensibly syllogistic, metaphysical piece of Shelley's. And the presence of 'thought' goes with the focused and pregnant strength, the concentration of significant feeling, that makes the poem so unlike the characteristic Shelleyan lyric. Blake, of course, didn't confine himself to such pregnant brevities as *The Sick Rose*; he aspired to give developed and extended expression to his 'profound interest in human emotions' and his 'profound knowledge of them'. I am thinking of his long poems. Of the long poems Eliot says that their weakness 'is certainly not that they are too visionary, too remote from the world. It is that Blake did not see enough, became too much occupied with ideas.' However that may be, it is enough to say here that their weakness as poetry is their weakness as thought.*

That such strength as is represented by *The Sick Rose* isn't necessarily a matter of the inspired *instantané*, the lyrical flash, but *can* be represented in a systematic exploration of experience, Eliot's own poetry very strikingly testifies. I am thinking above all of the *Four Quartets*. Though the procedure is not one of logical discourse, the labour behind these is as much a labour of thought as the labour is that goes to a philosophical treatise, but they can only be understood if their utterly unproselike character is recognized. This unproselike character means the reverse of a relaxed discipline of thought. On the

* I discuss Blake's problem in my essay.

contrary, here, in this poetry of Eliot's, intensely poetic as it is and related to what is strong in other poetry, we have an admirably demonstrative enforcement of the point that the discipline capable of justifying formal literary study is a discipline of intelligence, and one that no one who is committed to using language for disciplined thought can afford to forgo. Dissatisfaction with the relations of thought to experience that are imposed by current linguistic usage—by the conceptual currency as it is ordinarily taken over into poetry—forms an explicit corollary of the positive aim.

(II)

IMAGERY AND MOVEMENT

'Image' and 'imagery' are insidious terms; they have prompted an immense deal of naïve commentary on (for instance) Shakespeare's verse, and, in general, have encouraged confident reliance on two closely related fallacies: (i) the too ready assumption that images are visual, and (ii) the conception of metaphor as essentially simile with the 'like' or 'as' left out. The notion is that the poet finds an image that represents his idea, and that the aptness with which it does so is a matter of illustrative correspondence or parallel, pictorial effects being more vivid than ideas. Even when you have pointed out that there may be imagery that engages any of the senses a poet may appeal to, an assumption tends to persist inertly that the effect of the non-visual image will be the equivalent of seeing a little picture. Perhaps when it comes to tactual effects the assumption doesn't persist so readily—but tactual effects, I think, are not universally, or even generally, recognized as coming under 'imagery'; nor are analogical evocations of different kinds of effort and movement. Yet it would be arbitrary to draw a line anywhere between these and what would be recognized immediately as images.

It will be well to turn at once to an example of what can be done creatively with the English language by Shakespeare. I discovered the exemplary use of the following passage years ago when, having said that in major poetry what is in form a simile sometimes turns out not to be really a simile at all, I thought of

> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast . . .

Setting out to enforce the point, I remarked that a naked new-born babe striding the blast was a disconcertingly odd personification of Pity, but found, when I started to explain the part played by the pseudo-simile—or more-than-simile—in the strange power of the context to which it belonged, that I was committed to the analysis of the whole speech. The speech, Macbeth's, opens scene vii of Act I:

> If it were done, when 'tis done, then 't were well
> It were done quickly: if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease success; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
> But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
> We'd jump the life to come.—But in these cases,
> We still have judgment here; that we but teach
> Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
> To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
> Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
> First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
> Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
> Who should against his murderer shut the door,
> Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off;
> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> And falls on the other side.*

This is superb dramatic poetry; it creates for us the complex state of hesitant recoil, the tragic weakness of self-knowledge, that Lady Macbeth, arriving at the close of the speech, precipitates into murderous resolution. Both the recoil and the desperate plunge needed to over-

* I agree with Henry Cunningham when I read in the notes to my 'Arden' *Macbeth*: 'There can be no reasonable doubt that Shakespeare *wrote* 'side,' and that it ought to come into the text'.

come it are evoked in the first line and a half. There follows the passage in which Macbeth, having declared that, if he could be assured of finality in this world, he wouldn't give a damn for the supernatural consequences, betrays that they are what tell most potently in his intense imaginative recoil. Not that he doesn't imagine with appalled vividness the 'judgment here'. That is made unmistakable by the clear incredulity of the 'if':

> if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease success . . .

The incredulity is conveyed in the vigour of the imaginative realization: the assassination can't conceivably trammel up the consequence, and the impossibility is expressed in the mocking sense of an instantaneous magic that turns the king's 'surcease' into assured final 'success'. No one would call this kind of more-than-stated 'as if' (an effect much used by Hopkins) an 'image', but, in its evocative immediacy of presentment, it replaces mere prose statement or description with a concreteness intimately related to that of 'trammel up the consequence', which anyone would describe as metaphor. The statement that follows, 'He's here in double trust' etc., makes plain to us that the energy with which the 'judgment here' is imagined itself conveys Macbeth's own horror of the contemplated crime, the peculiar heinousness of which would, he can't question, bring on him the inescapable consequences inherent in supernatural sanctions for the impious fool who defies them. Then comes the 'simile', in a total context that makes it something very different from what that word suggests—something very much more complex:

> Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off;
> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind.

Pity, indeed, has its essential part in the comprehensive effect, but 'pity' imagined as a naked newborn babe is not the actor that the

'simile', isolated, would seem to make it. We are compelled to realize that by the immediate development implicit in 'striding the blast', which merges at once into

> heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,

and we don't question that the emphasis in Macbeth's recoil from the deed he nevertheless still contemplates is on the certainty of consequent disaster—disaster the more horrifying because it is the spiritual aspect of such 'judgment here' that will have made worldly success impossible.

This significant intentness on the deed he recoils from—the perverse self-contradiction that makes Macbeth's inner state a tragic theme—is wonderfully exposed to us in the speech, the total dramatic utterance. We see the significance of the opening line and a half:

> If it were done, when 'tis done, then 't were well
> It were done quickly . . .

It must be done quickly, as an act of unreflective desperation, or not at all; what follows tells us, in Macbeth's vivid self-exposure, why. The closing sentence of the speech gives us, compellingly, the paradoxical complexity of his relation to his insistent purpose:

> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> And falls on the other side.

He feels his 'intent' as something external to himself, a horse on which he finds himself mounted, but not as a purposeful rider whose will can spur it on. And then—a non-logical continuation of the sentence that nevertheless affects us as cogent and inevitable—we have the shift of imagery; logically non-sequential, but unquestionably right as completing the dramatically relevant perception and thought. What is developed is not merely his sense of the danger inherent in being 'mounted', but the equivocal perversity of his relation to the danger: the closing imagery conveys to us that he still entertains the ambition that would 'vault' him up towards the saddle, though at the same time he feels the effort required as appallingly dangerous, since, once released, it can't be controlled. It is the woman's part to ensure that masculine ambition, self-destructive in the way the speech has revealed,

shall prevail–'quickly'; that Macbeth shall commit himself to the desperate act. She pulls the trigger, and the bolt flies.

If we say that the complex tension has had its analysis in Macbeth's speech, that is to recognize that Shakespeare's poetry is the agent and vehicle of thought. That Shakespeare so obviously can't have first stated his thought explicitly, 'clearly' and 'logically' in prose, and then turned it into dramatic poetry doesn't make it any the less thought. I recall what I once heard a professor of music say to a very young genius he had been testing: 'You must find the rest of us awfully slow.' Shakespeare was a genius, and genius in him was marvellously quick and penetrating intelligence about life and human nature. The quickness was essential for the apprehending and registering of subtleties and complexities, and the English language in 1600 was an ideal medium for the Shakespearian processes of thought. Born into Dryden's age, when 'logic' and 'clarity' had triumphed, Shakespeare couldn't have been Shakespeare, and the modern world would have been without the proof that thought of his kind was possible. We should have lacked convincing evidence with which to enforce the judgment that neither Racine nor Stendhal represents the greatest kind of creative writer (I am assuming that Balzac is clearly not discussible as great in any way).

The point to be stressed is that, whatever was gained by the triumph of 'clarity', logic and Descartes, the gain was paid for by an immeasurable loss: you can't, without basic reservations, subscribe to the assumptions implicit in 'clear' and 'logical' as criteria without cutting yourself off from most important capacities and potentialities of thought which of its nature is essentially heuristic and creative.

The tragic significance of *Macbeth* as human testimony, the pregnancy of the work as thought, depends on a total conception and an organization that correspond to–that wouldn't have been possible apart from–the Shakespearian use of the English language exemplified in that speech of Macbeth, our examination of which started from the words 'image' and 'imagery'. That use, of course, *was* Shakespearian –it was distinctively Shakespeare's, but he couldn't have developed it in the later phase of the language when (to adopt a Johnsonian formulation) 'English grammar' and correctness had become firmly established. Johnson remarks in the *Preface*: 'The stile of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed and obscure.' How much more than grammar is involved, and that the passage is not to be read as merely critical censure from a period point of view, could, even if

there were not so much else in the *Preface* that is relevant, be divined from what Johnson says about Hanmer:

> He is solicitous to reduce to grammar what he could not be sure that his authour intended to be grammatical. Shakespeare regarded more the series of ideas than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

It is illuminating to see how Johnson transcends the 'positive culture'* of his age, and at the same time shows himself in its power. No one who reads the passage as it comes in the *Preface* will question that 'not being designed for the reader's desk' implies a bias towards the Augustan assumptions about the nature of literary excellence and the way in which it ought to be achieved, and that Johnson noting how Shakespeare subordinated 'correctness' of expression to the 'series of ideas' wasn't unequivocally appreciating the advantages the reckless Shakespearian genius, favoured by the cultural conditions of 1600, enjoyed in relation to obligatory 'correctness' of observance in logic, grammar and decorum.

There is the magnificent (and characteristic) sentence in which Johnson describes more particularly Shakespeare's way with the English language—that is, with subtleties of thought:

> It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by minds that have more leisure to bestow upon it.

There are, of course, unsatisfactory passages in the received text of Shakespeare that might be adduced as justifying the adverse critical implication conveyed in this description. But it is very far from possible to be confident that Johnson, without discriminating, wouldn't have included along with them some of the finest triumphs of Shakespearian creative audacity. He clearly intends the phrase, 'comprises

* 'But so positive was the culture of that age, that for many years the ablest writers were still naturally in sympathy with it; and it crushed a number of smaller men who felt differently but did not dare to face the fact and who poured their new wine—always thin, but sometimes of good flavour—into the old bottles.'

T. S. Eliot, Introductory Essay to *London: A Poem and The Vanity of Human Wishes*.

it in words such as occur', as something of a censure. How little the great representative of polite letters would have applied it to work in the spirit of poetic composition he thought proper comes out in his remark that Shakespeare 'seems to write without any moral purpose'. About the kind of censure he intends by that Johnson is explicit: 'This fault the barbarity of his age cannot excuse.'

The critic seems to see no relation between Shakespeare's untamed licentiousness in the use of the English language and the manifestation of creative genius registered with characteristic Johnsonian vigour here:

> Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just and the learned see that they are compleat.

But the virtue that Johnson praises involves more than he recognizes—much more than his thought, conditioned by Augustan 'correctness', is capable of grasping unequivocally. The sentence is the more significant in that Johnson's assumption regarding our contact with the external world is explicit in it: 'the image which he receives'. This is the Lockean account of perception as a matter of passively received 'impressions'—and it entails the whole conception that Blake was to fight against in defence of human creativity, the enemy being the cultural ethos he associated with the names of Locke and Newton.

For 'correctness' is not a mere matter of expression and presentation. The Shakespearian virtue that Johnson extols was not compatible with the stylistic discipline—the linguistic habit—imposed by the great cultural change that had taken place, irreversibly, by the end of the seventeenth century. The 'correctness' endorsed by Johnson amounted to the assumption that the map was the reality. It insisted that nothing mattered, or could be brought into intelligent discourse, that couldn't be rendered as explicit, clear, logical and grammatical statement. The 'rules' were authoritative and the writer pondered his material—his 'ideas'—reduced them to clarity and order, found by the light of 'judgment' *les mots justes* to put them in, and assembled these according to the rules of logic and grammar, and, if he was a poet, of versification. There was also decorum, and decorum, we can see, merged into morality as Johnson conceived this: Shakespeare, he complains, 'seems to write without any moral purpose'—'moral purpose', he

makes plain, is a resolution to enforce imaginatively (but deliberately) in the given work a moral code that has conventional sanctions as socially necessary and obviously valid and authoritative. He is explicit to that effect:

> From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care and leaves their examples to operate by chance.

Reason as invoked in 'reasonably' is common-sense reason, and 'social' has already very much the force it has for Andreski. 'Correctness', that is, excludes the essential human responsibility defined and vindicated in *The Secret Sharer*. Such responsibility is the individual being's in a sense that Johnson can't recognize—at any rate, in explicit thought; for the insistence on explicitness, clarity and logic characteristic of the 'positive culture' he represents virtually excluded from formulated thought and recognizable thinking the basic truth I have tried to make it possible for myself to refer to unambiguously with the phrase 'life and lives'*—the truth that one finds oneself, or ought to find oneself, confronting in full recognition when contemplating the nature of language. Shakespeare's power, extolled by Johnson, of 'showing plainly that he has seen with his own eyes' manifests itself in a great deal more than the vividness and energy that Johnson has in mind. It is a power of bringing into thought a range of subtleties and profundities central to human experience that were excluded by the Augustan ethos of the eighteenth century. Shakespeare compels one to recognize that language is essentially heuristic; that in major creative writers it does unprecedented things, advances the frontiers of the known, and discovers the new. Blake had good reason for his life-long battle against Locke and Newton.

I spoke of the great seventeenth-century change as irreversible; it clearly was. That doesn't of course mean that Blake's life of protest and positive demonstration on behalf of human creativity was a final chapter. Art and creative literature had actually a great future before them; and it is important that the student should be intelligent about how, and with what significance, literary creativity—it is that which

* See pages 42-44.

is my concern—reasserted itself after the first prolonged consequence of the newly achieved civilization: 'The sound is forc'd, the notes are few'. The 'Romantic' efflorescence had taken place before Blake died (1827) and—what it most concerns my theme to emphasize—there was to come the incomparable achievement in the novel, with the line running from Blake (as I have argued elsewhere) through Dickens to D. H. Lawrence. What it is in place to insist on is not the technology necessary to industrialism (to which we have surely to think of mankind as irreversibly committed), but the continuing potency of 'Newton and Locke'—or Urizen—in the habits of assumption on which thought, both philosophic and common-sense, as well as journalistic non-thought (or plausible fluency) is based.

The repressive 'normality' of eighteenth-century civilisation provoked rebellion, in the form of corrective insistence on human creativity and the evil produced by thwarting it. But the accelerating development of the new civilization has gone on unbroken through the nineteenth-century to our own day; art—I include, in Blake's way, literature under that head—has had, though still enjoying among the still influential educated public of the Victorian age prestige and wide attention, no decisive influence on the climate of intellectual assumption. This important and clear enough truth I have already, in these pages, illustrated from Andreski. Elsewhere I made what seems to me the appropriate point about our own time when I remarked that 'philosophers are always weak on language'.* That I regard Polanyi as portentously an exception I have, I hope, made plain; but his being so much an exception has meant that he hasn't influenced the thinkers who are influential in the climate that formed Andreski.

There is today a cult of Wittgenstein, and my attention has been more than once called to the idea that seminars on his later philosophy should be arranged for students of English. He is an enemy of linguistic 'science' whose philosophy is called 'linguistic': here we have what prompted the suggestion, and still prompts it. But the conception of language implicit in that 'linguistic' is of no interest at all to the intelligent student of English—no interest and no use. The fact that opponents of linguisticianry suppose otherwise illustrates how potently the intellectual habit established by the great seventeenth-century change remains unreversed. Science and technology will go on advancing; but, uncontrolled by thought and purpose of kinds they don't

* *Memories of Wittgenstein* (*The Human World*, No. 10, page 78).

encourage, they can lead only to human disaster—in the nature of things irreversible. The urgently needed change in the inherited habit of assumption—and it will be revolutionary—will hardly be promoted by expositions of Wittgenstein (unless these precipitate a 'No!').

The inherited habit is exemplified by the editor's footnote, in my old Arden *Antony and Cleopatra*, to the following passage (Act III Sc. ii)—for obvious reasons I quote more than the footnote immediately points to:

> *Antony.* The April's in her eyes: it is love's spring,
> And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.
> *Octavia.* Sir, look well to my husband's house; and—
> *Caesar.* What,
> Octavia?
> *Octavia.* I'll tell you in your ear.
> *Antony.* Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
> Her heart inform her tongue—the swan's down-feather,
> That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
> And neither way inclines.

The Arden footnote, which regards Antony's last utterance, runs:

> It is not clear whether Octavia's heart is the swan's down-feather, swayed neither way on the full tide of emotion at parting with her brother to accompany her husband, or whether it is the *inaction* of heart and tongue, on the same occasion, which is elliptically compared to that of the feather.

'It is not clear'—it ought to be clear; that is the implication. The implied criterion, 'clarity', entails an 'either/or': does the image mean *this* or *that*? The reductive absurdity of the conception of language behind the criterion thus brought up is surely plain. It wouldn't be enough to say that the image has *both* meanings: no one really reading Shakespeare would ask to which it is, or to what, that 'the swan's down-feather' is meant to apply metaphorically, because it would be so plain that the relevant 'meaning'—the communication in which the 'image' plays its part—is created by the utterance as a totality, and is not a matter of separate local 'meanings' put together more or less felicitously. The force and precision with which Shakespeare's English imparts its meaning here depend on the impossibility of choosing one of the scholar's alternatives as right and the clear inapplicability of the question he puts.

If I were intent on developing the theme of 'imagery' I might say

that 'the swan's down-feather' gave us an image of weight—or lightness (lack of weight)—but I have already made the offer of such a comment absurd. For it is plain that the effective 'as if' value depends on our simultaneous sense of the massive swell of the tidal water, and that the effect of both depends on our being made by the word 'swell' to feel the 'full of tide' as a swell of emotion in ourselves. There is in fact a complex play of diverse and shifting analogy such as one might—for there is no dividing line—find oneself discussing under the head of 'imagery', 'imagery' conceived as that which makes the difference between mere discursive thought and what we require of art. But we find ourselves, without any sense of a break, observing that movement plays an essential part in the analogical potency of the passage, and we could hardly be altogether happy in bringing that under 'imagery'. This part played by movement insists on our noticing it in the opening of the speech, and in the closing clause:

> Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
> Her heart inform her tongue . . .

and, after the self-contained 'standing' poise of the penultimate line, the lapse into

> And neither way inclines.

'Movement' here, we note, is determined by the meaning which it serves and completes.

Even in so short a passage, we see, there is a marked diversity of analogical mode—we *can* see; but as, taken up in the developing meaning, we read, the stress for us doesn't fall on any diversity: we respond to the actual diversity in a tacit way as we re-create within ourselves the totality of the communication. The argument enforcing the concern that preoccupies me makes me remark here on the contrast between the analogical life in mature Shakespearian verse and the nature of the essential part played by analogy in expositions of Wittgenstein. I say 'expositions' of him, having in particular David Pears's *Wittgenstein* ('Fontana Modern Masters') in my mind, because it is reasonable to assume that one can divine from that what literary students, who will hardly be expected to tackle Wittgenstein's very difficult text, would take away from seminars. The analogies insist on themselves as essential to the thought in virtually every paragraph, but they are all, or nearly all,* of the same kind—I should

* This, e.g., is (superficially) not of the same kind: 'the pressure exerted by those other kinds of discourse was going to change the map of logical space', page 97.

describe them as diagrammatic and, in what seems to me a revealing way, quite unconsciously naïve: 'logical space', 'the depth of logical space', 'areas of discourse', 'the limits of language' (with the implication that the limits are to be represented by a boundary line).

Of course, we can't escape using analogy. I myself, for instance, have said that minds meet in a meaning—meet in a poem. I don't in any case think that that use of analogy is open to the objection that the Wittgensteinian expositors' addicted use is open to—that it exemplifies habits of assumption that make intelligent thought about language impossible. Actually 'meet' as I use it focuses an insistence that my book is devoted to conveying—making clear in a diversity of ways the nature of what is pointed to. The meaning is not 'there' in space, but, without the possibility of 'meeting' in the meaning, there would be no world for us and no reality. That is, the 'meet' points, as I insist explicitly, to a unique convergent relation—in such a degree unique that 'relation' is hardly a satisfying word, though I can't think of a better. The possibility of such meeting is assumed in all discussion, the assumption being so inescapable that it needn't be conscious. Of that kind of meeting no diagram can be drawn; so the 'imagery' with which one tries to call it up into conscious recognition won't have any tendency towards the diagrammatic.

I had better quote a continuous passage in order to suggest what kind of mental habit the analogical addiction reveals:

> His task was still to plot the limit of language, but he had come to take a different view of what this task involved. He had ceased to expect the limit to be one continuous line. For factual discourse no longer held pride of place on the drawing board, and when he did concentrate on it, he found that he was not really able to derive its rich variety of different forms from a single essence. So there would be many points of origin and many subdivisions of logical space. His task, as he now saw it, was to relate these subdivisions to one another by drawing the network of lines between them. (Page 95.)

I will permit myself a further brief quotation, with the aim of making a point about language and thought as exemplified in Shakespeare:

> Wittgenstein's early philosophy had been divisive and tolerant: he saw deep gulfs between the various modes of thought, and he believed that the only kind of theory which would cover them all would be a theory which explained how each of them could exist independently in

> its own appropriate place. His later philosophy retains both of these characteristics, but it offers no theory, and it draws a different map. The various modes of thought are placed side by side on the new map, which does not actually show the third dimension. It must be read against a deep background of dream and illusion, but all that it actually shows is the pattern of our linguistic practices. Any philosophical question is to be answered by bringing it down to the level of these facts about language. (Page 171.)

There are further analogies here—all, in my judgment, infelicitous and revealingly so; but what I quote this passage for is the insistence on the 'gulfs', or insulating boundaries, between the various modes of thought. That for me can only be a cue for pointing out that Shakespeare's use of language knows nothing of the map; his mode of thought is inclusive. The mathematical, of course, is absent from it, but that is not linguistic—or *is* it for Pears and Wittgenstein? Shakespeare is concerned with meaning—meaning as language is concerned with it; and his art exemplifies supremely the truth that the fullest use of language is found in creative writing. Even in that brief speech of Antony's the totality includes in one undivided meaning or communication what Urizen would distinguish as a diversity of modes. Analogy in the passage is analogical life, life analogically engendered—movement and change that transcend logic and defeat expectation; the livingness of the passage depends on that. It picks up and reinforces the life of the dramatic context. Octavia has her specific part in the drama, and our apprehension of that part tells in, and is influenced by, our sense of the emotional episode.

The 'linguistic habit', so utterly un-Urizenic, described by Johnson made possible the profundity, complexity and intensity of a great Shakespeare play. 'Poetic drama', wrote Eliot, 'is more than drama in verse.'* The literary student needs to ask himself what it is that, in major prose fiction, replaces the poetic means that enabled the Shakesperian genius to achieve such concentration. I have attempted some answer to that question in writing about *Little Dorrit*. A serious offer at an answer requires a particularity that will not be the same for two works. I will here merely point to a novel that is very different from Dickens's—*Women in Love*—and suggest a consideration of it as a work of heuristic thought, which it so indisputably is. I might, in a seminar, start from the discussion—it becomes an altercation when

* Introduction to *Savonarola*, a play by Charlotte Eliot.

Ursula joins in—between Loerke and Gudrun about the relation between art and life.* The chapter contains much more, and discussion and altercation form an organic constituent of the whole. It is easy to show, in turn, how the chapter brings to a significant upshot, a tragic climax, the action, which *is* an argument, of the highly organized novel, which *is* a novel, a work of novelistic genius. What seems to me in place immediately is to quote another example from *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act I, sc. iv) of the 'linguistic habit' which, while so obviously not unaware of grammar and logic, makes them by audacious indifference to their authority a means to creative concentration:

Messenger. Pompey is strong at sea;
And it appears he is beloved of those
That only have feared Caesar: to the ports
The discontents repair, and men's reports
Give him much wrong'd.
Caesar. I should have known no less.
It hath been taught us from the primal state
That he which is was wish'd until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er loved till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion.

Shakespeare, of course, has his own miraculous complexity. Nevertheless, the effects examined above serve in their striking way to enforce a general point. What we are concerned with in analysis are always matters of complex verbal organization; it will not do to treat metaphors, images and other local effects as if their relation to the poem were at all like that of plums to cake. They are worth examining —they are there to examine—because they are foci of a complex life, and sometimes the context from which they cannot be even provisionally separated, if the examination is to be worth anything, is a wide one.

But to return now, after the caveat of extreme instances, to something simpler. There is nothing of the complexity of 'Pity, like a naked new-born babe' about the eighth line of the following stanza:

* Chapter XXIX,
"Loerke snorted with rage.
"A picture of myself!" he repeated, in derision, "Wissen Sie, gnädige Frau, that is a Kunstwerk, a work of art. . . .".

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?
Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide
Late schoole boyes, and sowre prentices,
Goe tell Court-huntsmen, that the King will ride,
Call countrey ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clyme,
Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time.

The metaphor in

Call countrey ants to harvest offices

would seem to answer pretty well to the notion of metaphor as illustrative correspondence or compressed descriptive simile. To the lovers the virtuous industry of the workday world is the apparently pointless bustle of ants and as unrelated to sympathetically imaginable ends. But already in this account something more than descriptive parallel or the vivid presentment of an object by analogy has been recognized. We might easily have said 'the silly bustle of ants': it is plain that the function of the metaphor is to convey an *attitude towards* the object contemplated–the normal workday world–and so to reinforce the tone of sublimely contemptuous good humour that is struck in the opening phrase of the poem,

Busie old foole . . .

The function, in fact, parallels that, in the last line of the stanza, of 'rags', the felicity of which metaphor clearly doesn't lie in descriptive truth or correspondence.

So elementary a point may seem too obvious to be worth making, but, at any rate, it is now made. To put it generally, *tone* and *attitude towards* are likely to be essential heads in analysing the effects of interesting metaphor or imagery. And we may now go on to make another elementary point: unlikeness is as important as likeness in the 'compressed simile' of

Call countrey ants to harvest offices.

It is the fact that farm-labourers are not ants, but very different, that, equally with the likeness, gives the metaphor its force. The arresting

oddity or discrepancy, taken by us simultaneously with the metaphorical significance (the perception of which is of course a judgment of the likeness), gives the metaphor its evocative or representational felicity and vivacity—for that it has these we may now admit, on them depending the peculiarly effective expression of the attitude. It is from some such complexity as this, involving the telescoping or focal coincidence in the mind of contrasting or discrepant impressions or effects, that metaphor in general—live metaphor—seems to derive its life: life involves friction and tension—a sense of arrest—in some degree.

And this generalization suggests a wider one. Whenever in poetry we come on places of especially striking 'concreteness'—places where the verse has such life and body that we hardly seem to be reading arrangements of words—we may expect analysis to yield notable instances of the co-presence in complex effects of the disparate, the conflicting or the contrasting. A simple illustration of the type of effect is given in

> Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds,

where 'fester', a word properly applied to suppurating flesh and here applied to the white and fragrant emblems of purity, brings together in the one disturbingly unified response the obviously disparate associations. For a more complex instance we may consider the well-known (probably, owing to Eliot, the best-known) passage of Tourneur:

> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute?
> Why does yon fellow falsify highways
> And lays his life between the judge's lips
> To refine such a one? Keeps horse and men
> To beat their valours for her?

The key word in the first line is 'expend'. In touch with 'spin', it acts with its force of 'spend' on the 'yellow', turning it to gold, and so, while adding directly to the suggestion of wealth and luxury, bringing out by a contrasting co-presence in the one word the soft yellowness of the silk. To refer to silk, emblem of luxurious leisure, as 'labours' is in itself a telescoping of conflicting associations. Here, then, in this slow, packed, self-pondering line (owing to the complex

organization of meaning the reader finds he cannot skim easily over the words, or slip through them in a euphonious glide*) we have the type of the complexity that gives the whole passage that rich effect of life and body. It relates closely to the theme of the play, but there is a vitality that is immediately apparent in the isolated extract, and we are concerned here with taking note of its obvious manifestations.

In the second line, 'undo' has in it enough of the sense of unwinding a spool to give an unusual feel, and an unusual force, to the metaphorical use. This metaphorical use, to mean 'ruin' (developing 'expend'), makes the silkworm more than a mere silkworm and leads on to the next line,

Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships,

where the specious symmetry of 'lordships' and 'ladyships' gives both words an ironic point. There is a contrast in sense between the substance of the one and the nullity of the other; and 'lordships', as we feel the word, gets a weight by transference from the 'yellow labours' and the laborious 'expending' and 'undoing' of the silkworm. And the weight and substance in general evoked by the first three lines, in the labouring movement of their cumulative questions, sets off by contrast the elusive insubstantiality evoked as well as described in that last line, with the light, slurred triviality of its run-out:

For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute.

The nature of the imagery involved in

lays his life between the judge's lips

might perhaps not be easy to define, but it is certainly an instance in which effectiveness is not mainly visual. The sense of being at the mercy of another's will and word is focused in a sensation of extreme physical precariousness, a sensation of lying helpless, on the point of being ejected at a breath into the abyss. In 'refine' we probably have another instance of a double meaning. In the first place 'refine' would mean 'make fine' or 'elegant' (the speaker is addressing the skull of his dead mistress). But the gold image, coming through by way of 'sold' (and the more effectively for never having been explicit), seems

* Cf. the admired couplet:

Lo! where Maeotis sleeps, and hardly flows
The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows.

also to be felt here, with the suggestion that nothing can refine this dross. In this way the structure of the last sentence is explained: horse and men are represented by their 'valours', their 'refined' worths, which are beaten for 'such a one', and so the contrast of the opening question is clinched—'her yellow labours for *thee*?'

The point has been now fairly well illustrated that, whatever tip the analyst may propose to himself for a local focusing of attention, the signs of vitality he is looking for are matters of organization among words, and mustn't be thought of in the naïve terms that the word 'image' too readily encourages. Even where it appears that some of the simpler local effects can be picked like plums out of their surroundings, it will usually turn out that more of the virtue depends on an extended context than was obvious at first sight. Consider, for instance, this characteristic piece of Keatsian tactual imagery:

> Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
> Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
> Or on the wealth of globèd peonies . . .

The 'globèd' gives the sensation of the hand voluptuously cupping a peony, and it might be argued that this effect can be explained in terms of the isolated word. But actually it will be found that 'globèd' seems to be with so rich a palpability what it says, to enact in the pronouncing so gloating a self-enclosure, because of the general co-operation of the context. Most obviously, without the preceding 'glut', the meaning of which strongly reinforces the suggestive value of the alliterated beginning of 'globèd', this latter word would lose a very great deal of its luxurious palpability. But the pervasive suggestion of luxury has a great part, too, in the effect of the word; for what is said explicitly in 'wealth' (and in 'rich' in the next line) is being conveyed by various means everywhere in the poem.

The palpability of 'globèd'—the word doesn't merely describe, or refer to, the sensation, but gives a tactual image. It is as if one were actually cupping the peony with one's hand. So elsewhere, in reading poetry, one responds as if one were making a given kind of movement or a given kind of effort: the imagery the analyst is concerned with isn't (to reiterate the point) merely, or even mainly, visual. *As if*—the difference between image and full actuality is recognized here; a difference, or a distance, that varies from image to image, just as, where poems as wholes are concerned, the analogous difference varies from poem to poem. For images come, in the way in which poems do,

somewhere between full concrete actuality and merely 'talking about' – their status, their existence, is of the same order; the image is, in this respect, the type of a poem. In reading a successful poem it is as if, with the kind of qualification intimated, one were living that particular action, situation or piece of life; the qualification representing the condition of the peculiar completeness and fineness of art. The 'realization' demanded of the poet, then, is not an easily definable matter; it is one kind of thing in this poem and another in that, and, within a poem, the relation of imagery to the whole involves complex possibilities of variety.

In fact, in more than one sense it is difficult to draw a line round imagery (which is why the tip, 'scrutinize the imagery', is a good one). The point has already been made that even what looks like a sharply localized image may derive its force from a wide context. Here is imagery of effort:

> *Macbeth:* If we should fail,–
> *Lady Macbeth:* We fail!
> But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
> And we'll not fail.

A certain force is immediately obvious in the line as it stands here. The *Arden* editor of *Macbeth* comments (page 41):

> The metaphor is in all probability derived, as Steevens thought, from the screwing up of the chords of stringed instruments.

Yet, after confirming Steevens, as he thinks, with other passages from Shakespeare, he can conclude his note:

> Paton and Liddell think the metaphor was probably suggested by a soldier screwing up the cord of his cross-bow to the 'sticking-place'.

To take cognizance of this suggestion and pass it by in favour of the analogy from tuning – that is a characteristic feat of scholarship. An effect of tension can be urged in favour of either of the proposed analogies, but beyond that what peculiar appropriateness can be found in the tuning of an instrument? On the other hand, the dramatic context makes Paton's and Liddell's probability an inevitability. It is the murder of Duncan that is in question; the menace and a sense of dire moral strain vibrate through the scene from its opening, and the screwing up of resolution to the irretrievable deed ('If it were

done, when 'tis done' . . .) is felt bodily as a bracing of muscles to the lethal weapon ('screwing' here is no job for the finger-tips). Besides tension, there is a contrasting sense of the release that will come, easily but dreadfully (a finger will do it now), when the trigger lets the cord slip from the sticking-place and the bolt flies—irretrievably. When twenty lines farther on, at the end of the scene, Macbeth says

> I am settled, and bend up
> Each corporal agent to this terrible feat

the *Arden* editor this time notes, justly: 'The metaphor of course is from the stringing of a bow'. The cross-bow has been replaced by the long-bow.

In the following lines of Donne the most notable effect of effort, equally inviting the description 'image', is not got by metaphor:

> On a huge hill,
> Cragged, and steep, truth stands, and hee that will
> Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
> And what the hills suddenness resists, winne so . . .

Here the line-end imposes on the reader as he passes from the 'will' to the 'Reach' an analogical enactment of the reaching.*

We might perhaps say 'a metaphorical enactment', though what we have here wouldn't ordinarily be called metaphor. The important point is that it provides the most obvious local illustration of a pervasive action of the verse—or action in the reader as he follows the verse: as he takes the meaning, re-creates the organization, responds to the play of the sense-movement against the verse structure, makes the succession of efforts necessary to pronounce the organized words, he performs in various modes a continuous analogical enactment. Such an enactment is apparent in

> about must, and about must goe;

and, if less obvious, sufficiently apparent in

> what the hills suddenness resists, winne so,

* Cf. Keats's *To Autumn:*

> And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
> Steady thy laden head across a brook . . .

where the sense-movement is brought up abruptly as by a rock-face at 'resists', and then, starting on another tack, comes to a successful conclusion.

There is no need to multiply illustrations, though a great variety could easily be mustered. The point has been sufficiently made that in considering these kinds of effect we find 'imagery' giving place to 'movement' as the appropriate term for calling attention to what has to be analysed. That we cannot readily define just where 'imagery' ceases to be an appropriate term need cause no inconvenience, and there seems no more profit in attempting a definition of 'movement' than of 'imagery'. The important thing is to be as aware as possible of the ways in which life in verse may manifest itself—life, or that vital organization which makes collections of words poetry. Terms must be made means to the necessary precision by careful use in relation to the concrete; their use is justified in so far as it is shown to favour sensitive perception; and the precision in analysis aimed at is not to be attained by seeking formal definitions as its tools. It is as pointers for use—*in* use—in the direct discussion of pieces of poetry that our terms and definitions have to be judged; and one thing the analyst has to beware of is the positiveness of expectation (not necessarily, even where fixed in a definition, a matter of full consciousness) that may make him obtuse to the novelties and subtleties of the concrete.

The term having been introduced, it will be best to proceed at once to an instance in which the useful pointer would clearly be 'movement'. Suppose, then, one were asked to compare these two sonnets of Wordsworth's and establish a preference for one of them:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
  The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
  Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
  The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
    Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
    And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
  If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought,
  Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
  And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
  God being with thee when we know it not.

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recall'd thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

One might start by saying that, though both offer to be intimately personal, the second seems more truly so, and, in being so, superior; and might venture further that this superiority is apparent in a greater particularity. Faced now with the problem of enforcing these judgments in analysis one would find that 'imagery' hardly offered an opening at all. On the other hand there is a striking difference in movement, a difference registered in the effort of attention required of the reader as he feels his way into a satisfactory reading-out, first of one sonnet, then of the other. An effort, as a matter of fact, cannot properly be said to be required by *Calais Beach*; it contains no surprises, no turns imposing a readjustment in the delivery, but continues as it begins, with a straightforwardness at every point and a continuity of sameness that makes it impossible to go seriously wrong. *Surprised by joy*, on the contrary, demands a constant and most sensitive vigilance in the reader, and even if he knows the poem well he is unlikely to satisfy himself at the first attempt, such and so many are the shifts of tone, emphasis, modulation, tempo, and so on, that the voice is required to register ('movement' here, it will be seen, is the way the voice is made to move, or feel that it is moving, in a sensitive reading-out).

The first word of the sonnet, as a matter of fact, is a key word. The explicit exalted surprise of the opening gives way abruptly to the contrasting surprise of that poignant realization, now flooding back, which it had for a moment banished:

—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb . . .

Then follows a surprise for the reader (the others were for the poet too):

That spot which no vicissitude can find.

It is a surprise in the sense that one doesn't at first know how to read it, the turn in feeling and thought being so unexpected. For the line, instead of insisting on the renewed overwhelming sense of loss, appears to offset it with a consideration on the other side of the account, as it were—there would be a suggestion of 'at any rate' in the inflection. Then one discovers that the 'no vicissitude' is the admonitory hint of a subtler pang and of the self-reproach that becomes explicit in the next line but one. There could be little profit in attempting to describe the resulting complex and delicate inflection that one would finally settle on—it would have to convey a certain tentativeness, and a hint of sub-ironical flatness. Then, in marked contrast, comes the straightforward statement,

Love, faithful love, recall'd thee to my mind,

followed by the outbreak of self-reproach, which is developed with the rhetorical emphasis of passion:

But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?

The intensity of this is set off by the relapse upon quiet statement in

That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,

—quiet statement that pulls itself up with the renewed intensity (still quiet) of

Save one, one only,

where the movement is checked as by a sudden scruple, a recall to precision (particularity, intensity and emotional sincerity are critical themes that present themselves to the reader in pretty obvious relation here). The poignancy of the quiet constatation settles by way of the 'forlorn'—

Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn

All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
  In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
  The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
  And all that mighty heart is lying still!

So far as the distinction between 'general' and 'particular and personal' is in question, *Upon Westminster Bridge* looks as if it ought to stand with *Calais Beach*. Need we, in fact, do more than replace 'sunset' by 'sunrise', and say that *Upon Westminster Bridge* gives us 'the sunrise emotion'? That would suggest the difference between that sonnet and the highly 'particular and personal' *Surprised by joy*. And yet surely there is another principle of distinction by which these two sonnets would be bracketed as good poems (though not equally fine) over against *Calais Beach*. What is it that makes this last so positively distasteful to some readers (for I have discovered that others besides myself dislike it strongly)? In any case, *Upon Westminster Bridge*, when compared with it, exacts a decided preference, and the question is perhaps best answered by asking why this is so.

The opening looks unpromisingly like that of *Calais Beach*; the key words, 'fair', 'soul', 'touching' and 'majesty', suggest the same kind of solemn unction, and a glance at the closing lines seems to confirm the suggestion:

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
  The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
  And all that mighty heart is lying still!

And the first point that, as we read through from the beginning, calls for particular comment seems also corroborative—the simile here:

This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning

—isn't that a very loose simile? It was inspired, one at first suspects, by an easy and unscrupulous rime to 'fair', and its apparent first-to-hand quality suggests a very facile concern for 'beauty'. The particularity that follows we put, without enthusiasm, but duly noting a superiority over *Calais Beach*, on the credit side of the account:

silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

It seems a very generalized particularity, one easily attained. And yet we should by now be aware of a decided superiority in this sonnet that makes it a poem of some interest; so that some further inquiry is necessary. The clue presents itself in the unobtrusive adjective 'smokeless'. Though unobtrusive, it is far from otiose; obvious as it looks, it does more than it says.* It conveys, in fact, both its direct force and the opposite, and gives us locally in its working the structure of the poem. For this poem, unlike *Calais Beach*, has a structure, and what this is now becomes plain.

Looking back, we realize now that 'like a garment' has, after all, a felicity: it keeps the City and the beauty of the morning distinct, while offering to the view only the beauty. Any muffling or draping suggestion the simile might have thrown over the 'ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples' is eliminated immediately by the 'bare' that, preceding them, gets the rime stress (so justifying, we now see, the 'wear' that it picks up and cancels). They

lie
Open

—the fact is made present as a realized state in the reader's consciousness by an expressive use of the carry-over (the 'lying open' is enacted) and by a good rime which, picking up the resonance of 'lie' with an effect of leaving us where we were, enhances the suggestion of a state:

* Contrast Bridges' *From high Olympus and the domeless courts*, and Hopkins's comment, *Letters to Robert Bridges*, XLVI:

> Courts can never be domed in any case, so that it is needless to tell us that those on Olympus are domeless. No: better to say the Kamptuliconless courts or Minton's-encaustic-tileless courts or vulcanised india-rubberless courts. This would strike a keynote at once and bespeak attention. And if the critics said those things did not belong to the period you would have (as you have now with *domeless*) the overwhelming answer that you never said they did but on the contrary, and that Prometheus, who was at once a prophet and as a mechanician more than equal to Edison and the Jablochoff candle and Mocmain Patent Lever Truss with self-adjusting duplex gear and attachments, meant to say that emphatically they had *not* got those improvements on Olympus and he did not intend they should. But if you cannot see your way to this 'frank' treatment and are inclined to think that fault might be found with *domeless*, then remember that that fault is found in *your first line*.

silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky.

The suggestion is further enhanced by the unenergetic leisureliness and lack of tension (as if giving time for two large indicative gestures) of that last line, which, giving metrically and in sense structure so much room to its two nouns, also reinforces by contrast the evocative strength of the packed preceding line. Then comes the key adjective, 'smokeless'–

All bright and glittering in the smokeless air

–revealing the duality of consciousness out of which this sonnet is organized: the City doesn't characteristically 'lie open', and the 'garment' it usually 'wears', the pall of smoke, is evoked so as to be co-present, if only in a latent way, with the smokelessness.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

–Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples are invested, in this sonnet, with the Wordsworthian associations of valley, rock and hill, and the calm is so preternaturally deep because of a kind of negative co-presence (if the expression may be permitted) of the characteristic urban associations. 'Calm' hasn't the obvious ambivalence of 'smokeless' but beyond question the stillness of the 'mighty heart' is so touching because of a latent sense of the traffic that will roar across the bridge in an hour or two's time; just as 'sweet' (along with 'glideth') owes its force to the contrasting associations of the metropolitan river.

The structure analysed is not a complex one, and perhaps may be thought too obvious to have been worth the analysis. The point to be made, however, is that *Calais Beach* hasn't even this measure of complexity; it has no structure, but is just a simple one-way flow of standard sentiment. Consider the key words: 'beauteous', 'calm', 'holy', 'quiet', 'Nun', 'adoration', 'tranquillity', 'gentleness', 'broods', 'mighty Being', 'eternal', 'everlastingly', 'solemn', 'divine', 'worshipp'st' 'Temple', 'shrine', 'God'–there is nothing to counter the insistent

repetitious suggestion; nothing to qualify the sweet effusion of solemn sentiment. In fact, the cloying sameness is aggravated by an element not yet noted: instead of the kind of complexity introduced by 'smokeless,' we get the sestet, which, with its 'Dear Child! dear Girl!' and 'Abraham's bosom', adds saccharine to syrup and makes the sonnet positively distasteful.

There are, of course, innumerable ways in which 'movement' may come up for consideration. *Suprised by joy* was chosen as an extreme instance, in which 'imagery' hardly gave the analyst an opening at all. Commonly 'movement' and 'imagery' demand attention together. The following is a simple instance:

> The gray sea and the long black land;
> And the yellow half-moon large and low;
> And the startled little waves that leap
> In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
> As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
> And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

The first two lines suggest a preoccupation with pictorial effects, and they invite a languorous reading—or would, if we didn't know what follows. Actually, an approach might be made by asking how it is that, though the stanza is so clearly Victorian, we could have said at once, supposing ourselves to have been reading it for the first time, that it is clearly not Tennysonian or Pre-Raphaelite. The first brief answer might be that it has too much energy. We are then faced with the not difficult task of saying how the effect of energy is conveyed. To begin with,

> the startled little waves that leap
> In fiery ringlets from their sleep

clearly don't belong to a dreamy nocturne. The 'startled', itself an energetic word, owes some of its force to the contrast with what goes before (even though the first two lines are not to be read languorously) —a contrast getting sharp definition in the play (a good use of rime) of 'leap' against 'sleep'.

It is an energetic couplet. The energy is active, too, in 'fiery', which is apt description, but doesn't reveal its full value till we come to 'quench' in the last line, the most interesting word in the stanza. That fire as well as thirst shall come in with the metaphor is ensured by the 'fiery', and in 'quenching' the speed the poet betrays (he

probably couldn't have said why 'quench' came to him) how he has projected his own eagerness—his ardour and desire for the goal—into the boat, pushing on with his will, in a way that must be familiar to everyone, that which is carrying him forward. The nature of the energy that thrusts forward through the tranquil night has defined itself concretely by the time the second half of the poem has been read (it must now be given):

> Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach!
> Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
> A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of a lighted match,
> And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
> Than the two hearts beating each to each!

Neither of the stanzas, it will have been noted, has a main verb, a lack intimately related to the mood and movement of the poem. The absence of main verb, it might be said, is the presence of the lover's purpose and goal: his single-minded intentness upon the goal and the confident eagerness with which he moves towards it are conveyed by the overtly incidental, by-the-way, nature of the sensations and perceptions, and the brisk, businesslike succession in which, from the beginning of the poem on, they are noted and left behind. Though incidental, they are vivid, as in a moment of unusual vitality and receptivity, and that this vividness—it is at the same time a vigour of report—should carry with it no attribution of value suggests the all-absorbingness of the purpose and focus of attention. The succession of notes, in fact, conveys a progression. And the effect of energy observed at the outset derives from this particular kind of movement—the particular sense of movement that has just been analysed. The movement, of course, derives its peculiar energy from the local vividness, but even such energetic imagery as

> the quick sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of a lighted match

owes something to the general movement as well as contributing, and it can hardly be said that 'quench' in the first stanza (an effect of the same order—it works along with 'slushy' as well as having the metaphorical value already discussed) contributes more than it owes.

The movement, it might be commented, isn't very subtle, nor is the total effect; and that is true. But the simplicity has its illustrative value, and the poem is an unmistakable instance of a strong realization.

Vigour of that peculiar kind, obviously involving limitations, is characteristic of Browning, but is rarely manifested so decidedly as poetic virtue, and so inoffensively to the sensitive.

To proceed, by way of concluding this section, to another comparison:

(*a*)

Wake; the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Strews the sky-pavilioned land.

(*b*)

Out of the wood of thoughts that grow by night
To be cut down by the sharp axe of light,–
Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
Cleaving the darkness with a silver blow.
And bright before my eyes twin trumpeters stand,
Heralds of splendour, one at either hand,
Each facing each as in a coat-of-arms:
The milkers lace their boots up at the farms.

Suppose one were asked to compare these in respect of metaphor and imagery, which they both use with striking boldness–a boldness of poetic stylization that might be thought to constitute a similarity. If we look at the first stanza of (*a*) we might be inclined to say that the decorative effect there was the main purpose. Certainly there is a sense in which the metaphorical imagery is offered for its own sake and (apart from being beautiful and striking) not for anything it does; it demands immediate approval, in its own right, as something self-sufficient and satisfying–we mustn't, for instance, ask what becomes of the burning ship as the silver flood mounts (or does it?) and full daylight comes. The function of the imagery here, in short, is to hold the attention from dwelling in a realizing way on the alleged sanction –the actuality ostensibly invoked. It demands attention for what it immediately is, but only a very limited kind of attention: the reader takes in at a glance the value offered; it is recognized currency; the beauty is conventional and familiar.

And 'decorative', after all, is not altogether the right word. It might do for the opening of Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* (which was

possibly at the back of Housman's mind as he wrote the stanza); but there is an emotional drive here that would prompt the accepting reader with 'lyrical'. That drive expresses itself in the urgent movement, which is intimately related to the qualities noted in the imagery. In fact, an admirer of Housman might say that the imagery, like the movement, expresses a passionate indocility to experience, along with a wilful hunger after beauty. A return comment would be that (unless some justifying significance emerges later in the poem) the kind of beauty offered values itself implicitly at a rate that a mature mind can't endorse.

When we come to the second stanza the comment must be that the 'indocility' has become a violence—a violence to common experience, and the relation of the imagery to observable fact a gross and insensitive falsity. The tempo and the whole nature of the passing of night into day are outrageously misrepresented by 'shatters' and the picture of the land strewn with rags of dark. The 'shatters' is reconciled with the 'tatters' (the 'vault' to the 'tent'), it will be noted, only by the bluff of the rime, a kind of bullying or dazing effect; and the stamp of the movement, hobnailed with alliteration, emphasizes the insensitiveness. The movement, in fact, provides the most convenient index of the quality of the poem. To have cut off the two first stanzas from the rest does Housman no injustice, as the reader may confirm by turning up IV (*Reveille*) in *A Shropshire Lad*. And in confirming he will be verifying also that a challenge to a reading-out would be a good introduction to the analysis: even an ardent admirer would, after the second stanza, find it difficult to declaim the poem convincingly, so embarrassing is the patent inadequacy of the substance to the assertive importance of movement and tone, the would-be intense emotional rhetoric.

It is a difference in movement that strikes us first as we pass from (*a*) to (*b*). Associated with this difference there is, we become aware, a difference in the imagery: whereas Housman's depends on our being taken up in a kind of lyrical intoxication that shall speed us on in exalted thoughtlessness, satisfied, as we pass, with the surface gleam of ostensible value, Edward Thomas's invites pondering (we register that in the movement) and grows in significance as we ponder it:

> Out of the wood of thoughts that grow by night
> To be cut down by the sharp axe of light,—
> Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
> Cleaving the darkness with a silver blow.

–Of the use of metaphor here too it might be said that it seems to be decorative in intention, rather than dictated by any pressure of a perceived or realized actuality. To present a 'wood of thoughts' as being 'cut down' by an 'axe of light' looks like a bold indulgence in the pleasure of stylization. Yet we have to recognize that 'wood', with its suggestions of tangled and obscure penetralia, stirring with clandestine life, is not an infelicitous metaphor for the mental life of sleep. And when in re-reading we come to 'silver blow' we have to recognize a metaphorical subtlety–that is, a subtlety of organization–that distinguishes (*b*) from (*a*) (it is subtlety of organization, of course, that produces the effect, in Thomas, of a pondering movement). 'Cleaving' identifies the effect of the sound with that of the axe, the gleam of which gives an edge to the 'silver' of the blown trumpet. The 'silver-sounding' trumpet is a familiar convention, and the element of wilful fantasy in this translation of the cock-crow becomes overt in the heraldically stylized twin trumpeters:

> And bright before my eye twin trumpeters stand,
> Heralds of splendour, one at either hand,
> Each facing each as in a coat-of-arms.

We are prepared so for the ironical shift of the last line, where daylight reality asserts itself:

> The milkers lace their boots up at the farms.

The poet, aware as he wakes of the sound and the light together, has humoured himself in a half-waking dream-fantasy, which, when it has indulged itself to an unsustainable extreme of definiteness, suddenly has to yield to the recognition of reality.

Returning to the comparison between (*b*) and (*a*), we can now make another point, one that has been covered under the term 'movement'. Housman's proffer of his imagery is simple and simple-minded: 'Here is poetical gold; take it! Here is radiant beauty; be moved.' What we are aware of from the first line in Edward Thomas's little poem is, along with the imagery, an attitude towards it; an attitude subtly conveyed and subtly developed.

(III)

REALITY AND SINCERITY

The following comes from an exercise in critical comparison involving three poems: Alexander Smith's *Barbara*, which is [was] to be found in an earlier edition of the old *Oxford Book of English Verse*; Emily Brontë's *Cold in the earth*; and Hardy's *After a Journey*. The challenge was to establish an order of preference among these poems. But only two of them are seriously examined below.

About which of the three poems should come lowest in order of preference there will be ready agreement. Alexander Smith's *Barbara* has all the vices that are to be feared when his theme is proposed, the theme of irreparable loss. It doesn't merely surrender to temptation; it goes straight for a sentimental debauch, an emotional wallowing, the alleged situation being only the show of an excuse for the indulgence, which is, with a kind of innocent shamelessness, sought for its own sake. If one wants a justification for invoking the term 'insincerity', one can point to the fact that the poem clearly *enjoys* its pang: to put it more strictly, the poem offers a luxurious enjoyment that, to be enjoyed, must be taken for the suffering of an unbearable sorrow. The cheapness of the sentimentality appears so immediately in the movement, the clichés of phrase and attitude, and the vaguenesses and unrealities of situation, that (except for the purposes of elementary demonstration) there would be no point in proceeding to detailed analysis: the use of the poem for present purposes is to serve as a foil to Emily Brontë's—which it does by the mere juxtaposition.

Its quality as foil to Emily Brontë's is plain at once. The emotional sweep of the movement, the declamatory plangency, of *Cold in the earth* might seem to represent dangerous temptations; but in responding to the effect of passionate intensity we register what impresses us as a controlling strength. It remains to be seen just what that is:

> Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
> Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
> Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
> Sever'd at last by Time's all-severing wave?
>
> Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
> Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
> Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
> Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers
From these brown hills have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lighten'd up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perish'd,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherish'd,
Strengthen'd and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Wean'd my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

The poem does unmistakably demand to be read in a plangent declamation; in, that is, a rendering that constitutes an overt assertion of emotional intensity. If we ask why, nevertheless, the dangers such an account might suggest don't seem at any point disturbingly present, we can observe for answer that what is said in stanza seven—

Then did I check the tears of useless passion

—is more than *said*; it represents an active principle that informs the poem and is there along with the plangency. We have it in the movement, in the tough prose rationality, the stating matter-of-factness of good sense, that seems to play against the dangerous running swell. It makes us take the suggestion that some strength corresponding to 'these brown hills', which do not themselves melt, underlies the poem. And we see an obvious hint at the nature of the strength in

Then did I learn how existence could be cherish'd,
Strengthen'd and fed without the aid of joy:

the suggestion that something quite opposed to the luxury of 'memory's rapturous pain' is being 'cherished' in the poem; that a resolute strength of will, espousing the bare prose 'existence', counters the run of emotion.

Cold in the earth, then, in its strong plangency, might reasonably be judged to be a notable achievement. I say this, however, in order to go on to judge that Hardy's *After a Journey* is a much rarer and finer thing, to be placed, as a poetic achievement, decidedly higher. I approach in this way because I have not, in fact, found that those who confidently place *Cold in the earth* above *Barbara* do, as a rule, judge *After a Journey* to be obviously superior to *Cold in the earth*, and yet, for such readers, the superiority can, I think, be demonstrated; that is, established to their satisfaction.

The difficulties, or conditions, that explain the failure of response on the part of intelligent readers lie largely, it would seem, in the nature of the superiority itself, though no doubt some stylistic oddities —what there is some excuse for seeing as such—play their part. Here is the poem:*

Hereto I come to view a voiceless ghost;
Whither, O whither will its whim now draw me?
Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,
And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.
Where you will next be there's no knowing,
Facing round about me everywhere,
With your nut-coloured hair,
And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going.

Yes; I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;
Through the years, through the dead scenes, I have tracked you;
What have you now found to say of our past—
Scanned across the dark space wherein I lacked you?
Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division?
Things were not lastly as firstly well
With us twain, you tell?
But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

* Reprinted from *Collected Poems* by Thomas Hardy, by kind permission of the Trustees of the Hardy Estate and of Messrs Macmillan and Co. Ltd.

I see what you are doing: you are leading me on
  To the spots we knew when we haunted here together,
The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone
  At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,
And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow
  That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,
    When you were all aglow,
And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow!

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
  The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily,
Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
  For the stars close their shutters, and the dawn
    whitens hazily.
Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
  The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
    I am just the same as when
Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

A difference in manner and tone between Hardy's poem and the other two will have been observed at once: unlike them it is not declamatory. The point should in justice lead on to a positive formulation, and this may not come as readily; certain stylistic characteristics that may at first strike the reader as oddities and clumsinesses tend to delay the recognition of the convincing intimate naturalness. It turns out, however, that the essential ethos of the manner is given in

Where you will next be there's no knowing.

This intimacy we are at first inclined to describe as 'conversational', only to replace that adjective by 'self-communing' when we have recognized that, even when Hardy (and it is significant that we say 'Hardy') addresses the 'ghost' he is still addressing himself. And it shouldn't take long to recognize that the marked idiosyncrasy of idiom and diction going with the intimacy of tone achieves some striking precisions and felicities. Consider, for instance, the verb in

Facing round about me everywhere . . .

There is nothing that strikes us as odd in that 'facing', but it is a use created for the occasion, and when we look into its unobtrusive naturalness it turns out to have a positive and 'inevitable' rightness the analysis of which involves a precise account of the 'ghost's' status–

which in its turn involves a precise account of the highly specific situation defined by the poem.

Then again, there is that noun in the fourth line which (I can testify) has offended readers not incapable of recognizing its felicity:

> And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.

'Ejaculations' gives with vivid precision that sound that 'awes' Hardy: the slap of the waves on the rocky walls; the slap with its prolonging reverberant syllables—the hollow voice, in fact, that, in stanza three, 'seems to call out to me from forty years ago' (and the hollowness rings significantly through the poem).

In fact, the difference first presenting itself as an absence of declamatory manner and tone, examined, leads to the perception of positive characteristics—precisions of concrete realization, specificities, complexities—that justify the judgment I now advance: Hardy's poem, put side by side with Emily Brontë's, is seen to have a great advantage in *reality*. This term, of course, has to be given its due force by the analysis yet to be done—the analysis it sums up; but it provides the right pointer. And to invoke another term, more inescapably one to which a critic must try to give some useful force by appropriate and careful use, if he can contrive that: to say that Hardy's poem has an advantage in reality is to say (it will turn out) that it represents a profounder and completer sincerity.

Emily Brontë's poem is a striking one, but when we go back to it from Hardy's the contrast precipitates the judgment that, in it, she is dramatizing herself in a situation such as she has clearly not known in actual experience: what she offers is betrayingly less real. We find that we have declamatory generality—talking *about*—in contrast to Hardy's quiet presentment of specific fact and concrete circumstance; in contrast, that is, to detailed complexity evoking a total situation that, as merely evoked, carries its power and meaning in itself. Glancing back at Alexander Smith we can say that whereas in postulating the situation of *Barbara* (he can hardly be said to imagine it) he is seeking a licence for an emotional debauch, Emily Brontë conceives a situation in order to have the satisfaction of a disciplined imaginative exercise: the satisfaction of dramatizing herself in a tragic role—an attitude, nobly impressive, of sternly controlled passionate desolation.

The marks of the imaginative self-projection that is insufficiently informed by experience are there in the poem, and (especially with

the aid of the contrast with Hardy) a duly perceptive reader could discern and describe them, without knowing the biographical fact. They are there in the noble (and, given the intimate offer of the theme, paradoxical) declamation, and in the accompanying generality, the absence of any convincing concreteness of a presented situation that speaks for itself. Locally we can put a finger on the significance of the declamatory mode in, for example, the last line of the first stanza:

> Sever'd at last by Time's all-severing wave.

The imagery there, or the suggestion of it, is essentially rhetorical; the noble declamation, the impressive *saying*, provides the impressiveness, and when we consider the impressiveness critically we recognize that to respond to the declamatory mode *is* to be unexacting in respect of offered imagery: the unrealized rhetorical-verbal will receive a deference that cannot be critically justified. Time's 'wave' is of the order of cliché; prompted, it would seem, by 'grave', it makes as rime—and the closing rime of the stanza—a claim to strength that it certainly cannot sustain.

Turning back to *After a Journey* we may now look at the words in the first line that have made it (strange as that must seem when one has taken the poem) characteristic of Hardy's clumsiness. Actually it is characteristic of the supreme Hardy achievement, the poem in which what at first may look like clumsiness turns out, once the approach to the poem has been found, to be something very different—something supremely right. The vindication of the questioned details in the first line must be, then, in terms of what follows, and of the whole effect in which they have their part. Of 'hereto', the archaism that (in such a use) looks like a Hardy coinage, we need say little more than that it comes to look like one of those Hardy coinages which, in the great poems, cease to be anything but natural and inevitable. Its balanced slowness is precisely what was needed—as appears when we consider 'view', which, again, has been challenged as a perversity, one characteristically settled on by Hardy, it would seem, for the sake of a perverse alliteration with 'voiceless'.

But we cannot judge 'view' until we have realized just what is the nature of the 'ghost'. This should have been sufficiently established by the time we have come to the opening of the second stanza:

> Yes; I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;
> Through the years, through the dead scenes, I
> have tracked you.

Prompted by these lines we are at first inclined to say that the journey has also been a journey through time. But an essential effect of the poem is to constate, with a sharp and full realization, that we *cannot* go back in time. The dimension of time dominates the poem; we feel it in the hollowness of the 'waters' ejaculations'—the voice of the 'cave just under', a voice that has more than a hollowness of here and now; 'it seems to call out to me from forty years ago.' It calls out here and now; but here and now it calls out from forty years ago. The dimension of time, the 'dark space', is in the voice itself, so startling in its immediacy, and, with the paradoxical duality of the experience, so annunciatory that the forty years ago from which it seems to call out is not, all the same, here and now, but forty years away. And memory, having 'tracked' the woman 'through the years, through the dead scenes', attains only a presence that is at the same time the absence felt more acutely. The reference to the time 'when we haunted here together' contains an implicit recognition of the different kind of 'haunting' represented by such presence as she has for him now, when their togetherness is so illusory. And by this point in the poem we know that the 'ghost', if an evanescent and impalpable thing, is in no ordinary sense a ghost.

We can now go back to the opening lines of the poem and judge fairly what it offers, and, having done that, tell how it demands to be read. 'View', we recognize, is no insensitive perversity; it is the word compelled by the intensely realized situation, and we feel it imposing itself on Hardy (and so on us) as right and irreplaceable: such seeing as memory will do (given success in its 'tracking') will be an intent dwelling of contemplation upon the object. And the object will be—again the word is, with a poised recognizing endorsement, accepted when it comes—a 'voiceless' (it will be a one-sided meeting, and the voice will be the cave's) 'ghost': on this word, again after a kind of judicially recognizing pause, the reader's voice descends and rests, as on a kind of summing-up close to the sentence.

It will be seen, then, that to recognize the rightness of 'view' and 'voiceless' and give them their due value is to recognize the kind of rendering demanded by the line: a slow and deliberate 'Hereto I come', followed by judicial discovering and accepting rests on 'view' and 'voiceless', and the concluding tone for 'ghost' that makes it plain that no literal ghost is in question—so that the 'nut-coloured hair and gray eyes and rose-flush' should bring no disconcerting surprise. Once the deliberate stock-taking poise of the opening line has been

appreciated, the rest of the poem is safe against the kind of misreading that would give the movement a jaunty sing-song.

The self-communing tone is established in the first four lines, and there is no change when Hardy passes from the 'its' of the second line to the 'you' of the fifth. He remains 'lonely, lost' throughout the poem; that is not a state which is altered by his communion (if that is the word) with the 'ghost'. The loneliness and the desolation are far from being mitigated by the 'viewing' in memory; for the condition of the 'viewing' is Hardy's full realizing contemplation of the woman's irremediable absence—of the fact that she is dead.

There are two places in the poem where a difficulty of interpretation has been found. One of them is the last line of the second stanza:

> But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

The last line doesn't mean: 'All's closed now, in spite of Time, or Time's derision, standing in the way of its being closed.' It isn't a simple, direct statement of fact. It conveys a quite complex attitude that entails a weighing of considerations against one another and leaves them in a kind of poise. The effect is: 'Well, anyway, all that's over now, the suffering of division, things not being firstly as lastly well—I recognize that, though what, of course, I find myself contemplating now is the mockery of time; it's Time's derision I'm left with.' There is certainly no simple, and no preponderant, consolation. In the 'all's closed now' there is an irony, to be registered in a kind of sigh. '*All's* closed', not only the suffering, though that, Hardy recognizes, is of course included. But the last word is with Time's derision; and the rendering of the closing phrase, 'despite Time's derision', makes a testing demand on the reader: the phrase must be spoken with a certain flatness of inflection—an absence of clinching effect, or of any suggestion of a sum worked out.

The other place is at the fourth line from the end of the poem:

> Trust me, I mind not, though life lours,
> The bringing me here . . .

Not to take the significance of that 'Trust me, I mind not' is to have failed to respond to the complexity of the total attitude, and to have failed to realize the rare kind of integrity the poem achieves. It is to miss the suggestion of paradoxical insistence, the intensity of directed feeling and will, in 'Nay, bring me here again'. For what, in the

bringing him here, he may be supposed to mind is not the arduousness, for an old man, of the long journey and the ramble by night. 'To bring me here', says Hardy, 'is to make me experience to the full the desolation and the pang—to give a sharp edge to the fact of time's derision. But I don't mind—I more than don't mind: bring me here again! I hold to life, even though life as a total fact lours. The *real* for me, the focus of my affirmation, is the remembered realest thing, though to remember vividly is at the same time, inescapably, to embrace the utterness of loss.'

The rare integrity appears in the way in which the two aspects, the affirmation and the void, affect us as equal presences in the poem. Vacancy is evoked as an intensity of *absence* with a power that sends us for comparison to that other poem of the same years (1911-13), *The Voice* ('Woman much missed'); but vacancy, we find, in the other poem prevails, setting off by contrast the astonishing way in which in this poem it does not. *After a Journey* closes on the affirmation. But if 'affirmation' is the word (and it seems to be a necessary one), it mustn't suggest anything rhetorical; the affirmation is dramatic in a quite other sense. The opposite of the rhetorical has its very observable manifestation in the opening of the stanza:

> Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
> The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily;
> Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
> For the stars close their shutters, and the dawn
> whitens hazily.

No one who has responded perceptively to the mode established at the beginning of the poem would read this as a trivial sing-song, but it clearly doesn't lend itself to noble plangency. 'Flitting' and 'flop' are key words—and 'flop', while being so decidedly the reverse of noble, has at the same time a felicity of poetic strength: rendering the sound, as it does, with matter-of-fact precision and immediacy (there is no plangency about the resonance), it conveys both the emptiness and the quotidian ordinariness that are essential notes of the ethos with which the poem leaves us at the end. And 'the stars close their shutters' gives the right defining touch to Hardy's attitude towards the woman—to the spirit of his cult of memory. This spirit is manifested in the stars suggesting to him, and to us, as they disappear, not sublimities and the vault of heaven, but lamplit cottage windows—associations in key with his recollections of 'forty years ago'. The note is intimate—with the

touch of humorous fancy, it is tenderly familiar and matter-of-fact. No alchemy of idealization, no suggestion of the transcendental, no nobly imaginative self-deceiving, attends on this devotion to the memory of a woman. It is the remembered as it was that Hardy is intent on. '*I* am just the same': that is the final stress. *She* is a 'thin ghost'—mattering only because she matters to *him*. It is astonishing how the peculiar reality of the remembered but non-existent is conveyed: vivid—

nut-coloured hair,
And gray eyes, and rose-flush

—and real enough to be addressed; yet at the same time 'flitting', a 'thin ghost'; never, that is, more than something recalled in memory, so that the address is never anything other than self-communing. It is the purest fidelity, the sincerest tribute to the actual woman. Hardy, with the subtlest and completest integrity, is intent on recapturing what *can* be recaptured of that which, with all his being, he judges to have been the supreme experience of life, the realest thing, the centre of value and meaning.

The sense in which, though he now frailly follows, he is

just the same as when
Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers

has been, when the poem reaches this close, precisely defined, and his right to affirm it established beyond questioning. It is a poem that we recognize to have come directly out of life; it could, that is, have been written only by a man who had the experience of a life to remember back through. And recognizing that, we recognize the rare quality of the man who can say with that truth 'I am just the same', and the rare integrity that can so put the truth beyond question. It is a case in which we know from the art what the man was like; we can be sure, that is, what personal qualities we should have found to admire in Hardy if we could have known him.

(IV)

PROSE

As everyone knows, the language we all speak and write is full of 'dead metaphors'. We call them 'dead' because, when we use the

abstract words that, in fact, can be seen to have originated in metaphor, we have no intention, or consciousness, of being in any way metaphorical. The analogies I have remarked on in David Pears's discursive prose are another matter: they are more than conscious, having been deliberately chosen for a given expository purpose, and I call them diagrammatic. 'Logical space' and 'areas of discourse' no doubt involve ghosts of 'imagery'; that is what gives point to the expositor's resort to them. But what gives the point provokes at the same time my adverse comment; for the 'clarity' achieved through the use of such analogies is destructive by reason of their infelicity: only by illusion are they analogies, and they destroy at the outset the possibility of successful thought about the basic issues in question. They betray habits of assumption that disable for the undertaking in view the mind that resorts to them.

That is not the kind of objection that led Herbert Read to rewrite (*a*) of the following coupled passages as (*b*). I found the exercise in his *English Prose Style*. His theme in the given place was the undesirability of gratuitous metaphor; metaphor that wasn't necessary to the presentment in discursive prose of the offered thought, and he claimed that in (*b*) he had eliminated the gratuitous metaphors of (*a*) while retaining the essential thought-content:

(*a*) The Oxford Movement may be a spent wave, but, before it broke on the shore, it reared, as its successor is now rearing, a brave and beautiful crest of liturgical and devotional life, the force of which certainly shifted the Anglican sands, though it failed to uncover any rock-bottom underlying them. It is enough if now and then a lone swimmer be borne by the tide, now at its full, to be dashed, more or less urgently, upon the Rock of Peter, to cling there in safety, while the impotent wave recedes and is lost in the restless sea.

(*b*) The Oxford Movement may belong to the past, but before its end it produced, like its successor of to-day, a fine sense of liturgical devotional life, the force of which certainly had some effect on the looser elements of the Anglican Church, though it failed to reach any fundamental body of opinion. It is enough that the Movement, when at its height, led a few desperate individuals to become converted to the Church of Rome, and there these remained in security of mind when the Movement, losing its force, became a merely historical phenomenon.

The comparison, it should be plain, brings out how little the metaphors of the original passage are, in relation to the thought and judgment it communicates, otiose. In eliminating them Read has eliminated

the writer's insistent intention—his essential thought, it can fairly be said. In fact Read's opening phrase, 'The Oxford Movement may belong to the past', announces that he is going to reverse the implicit conclusion to which the original passage moves. A 'spent wave' that 'breaks on the shore' will be followed by other waves. The writer, in fact, repudiates the suggestion that the Oxford Movement 'belongs to the past' in the sense that Read intends; before it broke on the shore 'it reared', he says, 'as its successor is now rearing, a brave and beautiful crest of devotional and liturgical life'. Read translates (*'traduttore traditore'*) this crest into a 'fine sense of liturgical devotional life', a change that very decidedly impoverishes the word 'force' in his version: The reductive bent turns into flat falsification in what he does with 'force' in the rest of his sentence: it 'certainly had some effect on the looser elements of the Anglican Church, though it failed to reach any fundamental body of opinion'. But the original surely conveys (with an accomplished urbanity that is *of* the mode of thought) the judgment that there *was* no rock-bottom underlying the Anglican sands. And when Read comes to deal with the metaphors of the final sentence, one can find among them, or anywhere else in the original passage, no licence for the 'desperate' that figures—saliently—in his reduction.

The evaluative attitude, explicit enough in the metaphors of the original, is an essential component of the expressed thought. The writer is entitled to his conviction; his last sentence makes plain that he consciously and fully intends a significant contrast between 'Anglican sands' and 'rock-bottom'. That sentence contains not only 'the Rock of Peter', but also 'the tide', so that the sea is not merely contrasted as 'restless', but is subject to tidal recurrences too (shifting the Anglican sands, though not the Rock); the implication clearly is that this 'Movement' must not be thought of as final, but will be succeeded by others—with possibly decisive results. Read too is entitled to express *his* attitude, which is critical and anti-Catholic, but he is not entitled to his mode of stylistic criticism, which involves his offering his substitute for the passage from *Blackfriars* as giving us the thought and meaning of the original.

It is salutary to reflect that a well-known intermediary between literature and philosophy (he was at one time Eliot's colleague in the editing of *The Criterion*) produced that confident demonstration in a book offered as a basic aid to intelligent critical thought. I wish I could call that an astonishing paradox: it is, in kind, too familiar.

The following passage is still prose, but there are grounds for saying

that the prose is more poetic than that of the writer in *Blackfriars*, and at the same time more intellectual:

> Meantime it is my earnest request that so useful an undertaking may be entered upon (if their Majesties please) with all convenient speed, because I have a strong inclination before I leave the world to taste a blessing which we mysterious writers can seldom reach till we have got into our graves, whether it is that fame, being a fruit grafted on the body, can hardly grow and much less ripen till the stock is in the earth, or whether she conceives her trumpet sounds best when she stands on a tomb, by the advantage of a rising ground and the echo of a hollow vault.*

That is of course Swift. In calling it 'more intellectual' one means that it demands a greater alertness of the thinking-mind in the reader. The writer of the other passage is overtly Catholic in his assumptions, one of them being that the reader substantially shares them and will see not merely a felicitous neatness but profound inevitability in the advance from 'rock-bottom' to the 'Rock of Peter', and in general identify himself with the intention metaphorically conveyed. For any reader the hardly questionable felicity is a matter of the neatness and unforced consonance with which the metaphorical totality makes its point; but if, instead of this, we said, 'expresses its thought', we should have to add, 'about which there is nothing to suggest that the writer's thought will surprise by unexpectedness in its developments, or anything strikingly new.'

Swift, as represented even in so brief an extract, is patently a very different kind of writer. I have characterized his prose as in a sense more intellectual than the others, but, as I have made plain in my essay, 'The Irony of Swift',† that doesn't mean that I endorse the conventional emphasis on *intelligence* as among his distinctive characteristics. In fact, if he helps us to a greater awareness of the nature of intelligence, he does so by exemplifying its defeat. What produces the astonishing play of imagery is hatred of life, himself and the reader. His intellectual power is manifested in the way in which he makes the reader take the merciless impact of this hatred and expose the unwilling self to the communicated sense of life as insufferable and its own essential being as contemptible and hateful. The method is one of surprise, and since

* *The Tale of a Tub.*
† *The Common Pursuit*, page 73.

the intention is both so insistent and so limiting, the remarkable thing is that the method should work so unfailingly.

The reader is held as in an apprehensive fascination by the paradoxical and menacing intensity, the paradox being the co-presence in himself of a response to the relaxed rational tone and a simultaneous sense of some insane energy of animus. Intensity and energy are manifest in the brutal insistence of the imagery. But this insistence can't be separated from the discursive movement of the prose—the quasi-logical way in which it runs on as if this were a matter-of-fact exposition. Here too the imagery can be spoken of as analogical, but the analogical in Swift is a very different thing from what we have in the piece from *Blackfriars*, which recommends itself to the reader in view as immediately acceptable and containing no surprises. There the total developed analogy enforces conceptions that one can think of as expounded discursively. Swift's imagery, in the contrast, strikes us as the thought itself; it seems to assail us in the concrete without mediation. So intense is his reaction to life that we don't think of it as statable; instead of description we have this, the product of destructive creativity, in which we have, not talking about, but handing over or presenting. There *is* an insistence of mental activity, manifesting itself in *The Tale of a Tub* in the inexhaustible resource with which he takes the reader by surprise and catches him on the wrong foot. In each instance it is wit, but distinctively a poet's wit, that achieves with intimidating instantaneousness the unforeseeable felicity—a felicity that of its nature disconcerts. This it is that might seem to justify the common emphasis on intellectual distinction in references to Swift. But it is not intelligence that prevails in Swift's intensely and incessantly communicated attitude to life.*

In the essay on Swift to which I have referred I draw a contrast between Swift's characteristic irony and Gibbon's, which depends on a confident appeal to normative assumptions shared in common. I shall not do that here, though I have in mind the passage from chapter XV of *The Decline and Fall* I should choose for the purpose (the fourth

* I ended the essay, 'The Irony of Swift': 'We shall not find Swift remarkable for intelligence if we think of Blake.' A philosophy-addicted Cambridge intellectual, when the essay first appeared (in *Scrutiny*), asked me in an incredulous and calmly militant tone, what I meant by that sentence. (One used to be told of the spot at which, suddenly stopping, he had planted his stick in the towpath gravel and exclaimed: 'That's where I saw the flaw in Wittgenstein!'—he referred to the *Tractatus*. The present book is my answer to his question.)

paragraph). What this book offers is not an extended collection of critical exercises. It is necessary that I should keep in close touch with the concrete, but in the interest of my avowed undertaking I must observe a strict economy. That undertaking, in one of its aspects, is to bring out the force of my contention that the intelligent study of creative literature entails the study of language in its fullest use, the conceptual implications of the word 'linguistic' as used in general by philosophers being disastrously misleading. I have explained why it is peculiarly difficult in an argument such as mine to enforce it by adducing representative pieces of prose, so that one has to rely mainly on formally poetic uses of language for what I may perhaps call one's concrete terms of discourse. But it remains necessary to make it plain that the argument doesn't involve any naïve assumptions about the difference between 'prose' and 'poetry'. For one thing, I have in mind the need to insist that, in spite of the ways in which the 'positive civilization' denounced by Blake with such strong reason affected the literature of the English language in the eighteenth century, the subsequent literary achievement made the nineteenth century one of the greatest creative ages in human history.

I will, then, before I proceed to discuss what the immensely representative Dryden did in *All for Love*, clinch the suggestive reminder of what we might relevantly and abundantly, and in great variety, adduce under 'prose' by adding one critical commentary on a passage. Actually, what I select as appropriate for the purpose I found in a proposed comparative exercise on an examination paper, but it will be plain at once that one of the passages serves merely as a foil to the other.

(*a*) We sat down by the side of the road to continue the argument begun half a mile or so before. I am certain it was an argument because I remember perfectly how my tutor argued and how without the power of reply I listened with my eyes fixed obstinately on the ground. A stir on the road made me look up—and then I saw my unforgettable Englishman. There are acquaintances of later years, familiars, shipmates, whom I remember less clearly. He marched rapidly towards the east (attended by a hang-dog Swiss guide) with the mien of an ardent and fearless traveller. He was clad in a knicker-bocker suit, but as at the same time he wore short socks under his laced boots, for reasons which, whether hygienic or conscientious, were surely imaginative, his calves, exposed to the public gaze and to the tonic air of high altitudes, dazzled the beholder by the splendour of their marble-like condition and their rich

tone of young ivory. He was the leader of a small caravan. The light of a headlong, exalted satisfaction with the world of men and the scenery of mountains illumined his clean-cut, very red face, his short, silver-white whiskers, his innocently eager and triumphant eyes. In passing he cast a glance of kindly curiosity and a friendly gleam of big, sound, shiny teeth towards the man and the boy sitting like dusty tramps by the roadside, with a modest knapsack lying at their feet. His white calves twinkled sturdily, the uncouth Swiss guide with a surly mouth stalked like an unwilling bear at his elbow; a small train of three mules followed in single file the lead of this inspiring enthusiast. Two ladies rode past one behind the other, but from the way they sat I only saw their calm, uniform backs, and the long ends of blue veils hanging behind far down over their identical hat-brims. His two daughters, surely. An industrious luggage mule, with unstarched ears and guarded by a slouching, sallow driver, brought up the rear. My tutor, after pausing for a look and a faint smile, resumed his earnest argument.

(*b*) There's a certain sort of man whose doom in the world is disappointment—who excels in it—and whose luckless triumphs in his meek career of life, I have often thought, must be regarded by the kind eyes above with as much favour as the splendid successes and achievements of coarser and more prosperous men. As I sat with the lieutenant upon deck, his telescope laid over his lean legs and he looking at the sunset with a pleased, withered old face, he gave me a little account of his history. I take it he is in nowise disinclined to talk about it, simple as it is: he has been seven-and-thirty years in the navy, being somewhat more mature in the service than Lieutenant Peel, Rear-Admiral Prince de Joinville, and other commanders who need not be mentioned. He is a very well-educated man, and reads prodigiously—travels, histories, lives of eminent worthies and heroes, in his simple way. He is not in the least angry at his want of luck in the profession. 'Were I a boy to-morrow,' he said, 'I would begin it again; and when I see my school-fellows, and how they have got on in life, if some are better off than I am, I find many are worse, and have no call to be discontented.' So he carries her Majesty's mails meekly through this world, waits upon port-admirals and captains in his old glazed hat, and is as proud of the pennon at the bow of his little boat, as if it were flying from the mainmast of a thundering man-of-war. He gets two hundred a year for his services, and has an old mother and a sister living in England somewhere, who I will wager (though he never, I swear, said a word about it) have a good portion of this princely income.

What the two passages may be said to have in common is the aim to present a character the contemplation of whom evokes both amuse-

ment and sympathetic respect. A preliminary glance at them leaves one with the certainty that (*b*) is the foil, and couldn't be anything else. It has, of its nature, a design on the reader, and the design is so crude and so obvious as to be insulting—at least, that would be one's comment if one had been expected to take the passage seriously. In fact, the design is virtually explicit: the first sentence announces it with the 'meek' (incontinently repeated and reinforced) and the 'coarser and more prosperous men', and what ensues as the filling-out of the human case, or situation, that the writer offers to present is all cliché—down to the old mother and the sister who live on his pay.

This is all that need be said about (*b*), except in so far as, in its quality as foil, it helps with the commentary on (*a*). But we didn't need the contrast to be struck by the distinction of the passage that comes first: it is unmistakably by a great master. The contrast prompts us to describe what produces that conviction as an astonishing specificity. There is in the whole paragraph nothing approaching cliché in any sense the term might carry. The 'unforgettable Englishman' might in another context have seemed to invite the adverse characterization in the most obvious sense, but here the whole actual context evokes in compelling concreteness what it is that makes the Englishman unforgettable; the adjective has nothing of the reach-me-down about it; we are beyond questioning, when we come to it, that it is on the way to being completely validated—to receiving its full charge of particularizing force. We are beyond questioning because the evocative process by which statement and the general are transcended has, in the very few preceding lines, worked on us so potently:

> We sat down by the side of the road to continue the argument begun half a mile before. I am certain it was an argument because I remember perfectly how my tutor argued and how without the power of reply I listened with my eyes fixed obstinately on the ground. A stir on the road made me look up—and then . . . .

Creative art here is an exercise in the achieving of precision (a process that is at the same time the achieving of complete sincerity—the elimination of ego-interested distortion and all impure motives) in the recovery of a memory now implicitly judged—implicitly, for actual judgment can't be stated—to be, in a specific life, of high significance. The evocation of concrete thisness begins in terms of the disciplined act of remembering, which, of course, is selective, and, in its re-creativity, creative, as all our achieved apprehension of the real

must be. The recovered memory is the remembered, implicitly, in the re-creating evocation, valued and placed: it is to be noted that the unforgettable vision is enclosed organically in a vision of the writer's own impressed young self—the attitude towards the Englishman goes with an attitude towards Conrad's youth. For it is, of course, Conrad; I saw at once that it could be no other; I couldn't, however, recall any novel or tale in which the passage could have come. Then I realized that it is Conrad's account of his conceiving the ambition to become a British master mariner, which I had read in *A Personal Record* on the appearance of this in the nineteen-twenties. (The other piece I guess to be by Marryat.)

The highly Conradian passage offers us a study of the difference between mere itemizing description and the evoked specificity that a great writer effects with his distinctive use of the English language—distinctive and unique, yet generating a vital something in which minds can meet, and in that sense real.

> There are acquaintances of later years, familiars, shipmates, whom I remember less clearly. He marched rapidly towards the east (attended by a hang-dog Swiss guide) with the mien of an ardent and fearless traveller.

These coupled sentences enforce, as the whole paragraph, with its diverse wealth of unforeseeable felicities does marvellously in sum, the truth that it is the creative writer who maintains the life and potentiality of the language. The first of the sentences might have been written in a letter. The contrasting second, its exalted dignity enhanced by the parenthetic 'hang-dog' guide, suggests Gibbon describing the advance of a Roman conqueror. It is not parody, though it registers the element of amusement in the mature Conrad's sense of the unforgettable—a prompting, this critical perception, to reflect on the essential part played by the opening two sentences in the subtlety (which, for the reader, is life, vividness and reality) of the whole.

But what I meant to call attention to immediately was the pregnant and diversely manifested truth that, for Conrad, a great writer of our century, to compose in the living English of our time was to use freely and flexibly the resources of a language that had a literature behind it—a great literature still (to creative writers) relevantly native. For Conrad (and it is equally true of Lawrence and of Eliot) to write out of the present is to write out of a present that is with an immensely fuller realization on his part the present of the past than is represented

even by the most cultivated contemporary speech. This goes with the general truth that, in his artist's rightness, precision and freedom from affectation, he is in the good sense of the word (as both Lawrence and Eliot the major poet are) sophisticated–a truth the force of which is exemplified in the sentence that follows the pair just quoted:

> He was clad in a knicker-bocker suit, but as at the same time he wore short socks under his laced boots, for reasons which, whether hygienic or conscientious, were surely imaginative, his calves, exposed to the public gaze and to the tonic air of high altitudes, dazzled the beholder by the splendour of their marble-like condition and their rich tone of young ivory.

The sophistication–the implicit presence of a cultural background transcending what 'vernacular' suggests–can be pointed to at once in 'the tonic air of high altitudes' and 'their marble-like condition and their rich tone of young ivory'. But of course that is very far from all coming under that head, as we can, with great readiness to particularize, say if we use the couple of opening sentences as giving a norm of modern 'ordinary' prose. It is unnecessary to proceed by offering to substantiate the 'readiness'. Instead, I will emphasize that the paragraph is all of a piece–as a poem is: it imposes itself, in its idiosyncratic livingness, as natural and unaffected modern English. What in it is most vividly idiosyncratic, in fact, may itself be felt to refer us implicitly to the cultural heritage; it is unmistakably and inimitably Conrad, but a Conrad for whom the English language that had adopted and naturalized him was the language not only of Shakespeare, but, in the not distant past, of Dickens. What we have everywhere is the antithesis of cliché; it is, given us in the words which it has unerringly found and seems to replace, perceived specificity–the Conradian perception. 'His white calves twinkled sturdily'–a characteristically unprecedented collocation of words that we feel to have achieved itself instantaneously, with such inevitability does it make us see, and, in an implicitly evaluative way, realize and respond in a given total effect. It is everywhere so in the paragraph; 'their calm uniform backs', 'an industrious luggage mule, with unstarched ears'–but further instancing is unnecessary. It remains to note that the final sentence completes the enclosing 'frame' that is in and of the memory, being essential to its subtlety–the subtlety that *is* the livingness.

The passage compares with the speech from *Macbeth* as a creative use of language of a closely related order. We have left the words

'image' and 'imagery' behind, and there is no sharp provocation to use them here; yet the process and the effect are of the kind in which 'imagery' was observed to play a major part: this is prose, but what it achieves is presentment with its concrete specificity, as opposed to the mode of 'taking about' which we call 'description' (I haven't discussed, not thinking it necessary, the expressive play in it of 'movement').

It is prose, and prose—unlike what can be found in *Ulysses*, for instance—in an obvious way that signifies a clear continuity with the 'modern' discursive prose that was established in the great seventeenth-century change.

The time has come for considering what Dryden did with *Antony and Cleopatra*.

(v)

'ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA' AND 'ALL FOR LOVE'

'*All for Love* is beyond doubt a proud and lovely masterpiece; it is the fine flower of Dryden's genius. It was at one time, indeed for a very long time, fashionable to decry it in comparison with *Antony and Cleopatra*, but Dryden was not trying to do at all the same kind of thing as Shakespeare. Free opinion will be forced to admit that though Shakespeare's play contains finer poetry than Dryden could ever write—as he would have been the first to admit—Dryden's has a more tragic effect.'

I take this from the Introduction to the 'World's Classics' volume of *Restoration Tragedies*, and I take it as representative. The critical position would not be generally found surprising either in the academic world or in the world of literary fashions (the critic, Professor Bonamy Dobrée, had standing in both). So, though to myself Dryden and Shakespeare seem to be doing things so different in kind as to make a serious and sustained comparison obviously impossible, the quotation serves to countenance me in offering to enforce this view critically by way of illustrative exercise—a suggestion of critical method.

The superiority in poetry that makes it seem to me absurd to compare the two plays in tragic effect (not to speak of attributing the other superiority to Dryden) is conclusively manifest in the first twenty lines of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is an immediately felt

superiority in the life of the verse—superiority in concreteness, variety and sensitiveness—that leaves us with 'eloquence' instead of 'life' as the right word for Dryden's verse. This superiority asserts itself everywhere; it is a matter of the general texture of the play, and could in spoken discussion be exemplified point by point in the least eloquent and exalted places. Nevertheless, the exigencies of written criticism dictate the choice of some sustained passage, where demonstration can be effected with force and economy. There is an obvious choice, and it will, in fact, serve peculiarly well:

Enobarbus. I will tell you.
The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion—cloth of gold, of tissue—
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her,
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.

Agrippa. O, rare for Antony!

Enobarbus. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings: at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in nature.*

* *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act II, sc. ii.

How does that look in comparison with Dryden's rendering of it?*

Antony. To clear her self,
For sending him no Aid, she came from Egypt.
Her Gally down the Silver Cydnos row'd,
The tackling Silk, the Streamers wav'd with Gold,
The gentle Winds were lodg'd in Purple Sails:
Her Nymphs, like Nereids, round her Couch, were plac'd;
Where she, another Sea-born Venus, lay.

Dollabella. No more: I would not hear it.

Antony. O, you must!
She lay, and leant her Cheek upon her Hand,
And cast a Look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all Beholders Hearts,
Neglecting she could take 'em: Boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted Wings, the Winds
That plaid about her Face: But if she smil'd,
A darting Glory seem'd to blaze abroad:
That Mens desiring Eyes were never weary'd;
But hung upon the Object: to soft Flutes
The Silver Oars kept Time; and while they plaid,
The Hearing gave new Pleasure to the Sight;
And both to Thought: 'twas Heav'n or somewhat more;
For she so charm'd all Hearts, that gazing Crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted Breath
To give their welcome Voice.

It should be plain that a formal comparison is hardly possible; Dryden's version offers in itself little lodgment for detailed commentary, and must serve mainly as a foil to the Shakespearean passage. The juxaposition invites us to point to this, that and the other in Shakespeare and note that Dryden offers nothing corresponding. Our general observation is that Shakespeare's verse seems to enact its meaning, to do and to give rather than to talk about, whereas Dryden's is merely descriptive eloquence. The characteristic Shakespearean life asserts itself in Enobarbus's opening lines.

> The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burn'd on the water . . .

–The assonantal sequence, 'barge'–'burnish'd'–'burn'd,' is alien in spirit to Dryden's handling of the medium (it reminds us of Hopkins

* *All for Love*, Act iii; page 58 in *Five Restoration Tragedies* (World's Classics).

who, though he has a technical deliberateness of his own, is, in his use of English, essentially Shakespearean). The effect is to give the metaphor 'burn'd' a vigour of sensuous realization that it wouldn't otherwise have had; the force of 'burn' is reflected back through 'burnish'd' (felt now as 'burning' too) upon 'barge,' so that the barge takes fire, as it were, before our eyes: we are much more than merely told that the barge 'burn'd'. Further, the assonantal repetition, following immediately upon the quiet

I will tell you,

has the effect of the ejaculatory superlative—the tone explicit in

It beggar'd all description.

Even if, by the way, this 'beggar'd' is not, here, an original metaphorical creation (though the *New English Dictionary* gives this as the earliest instance of the phrase), we feel it as such; as we take it in its context the surrounding life seems to inform it, so that there is an effect of re-creation, in spite of our familiarity with the phrase as a cliché.

But there has, before this, been something else to notice. Shakespeare's superiority over Dryden is not merely an affair of metaphors; it is equally observable—if not as amenable to written commentary—in tone and movement. These too exhibit Shakespeare's marvellous power of realization, of making language create and enact instead of merely saying and relating. There is in them a life corresponding to—bound up with—the metaphorical life. We become aware of it as sensitive variation. As already noted, the narrator's introductory

I will tell you

sets off by contrast the restrained-intense of the assonantal passage, in which the thing described seems present and not merely told of. In

the poop was beaten gold

there is relaxation; we slip back into telling, the 'was' getting its full value. But with the succeeding inversion (in which the verb is omitted)—

Purple the sails

—we have again the tone of immediacy, and in the next clause the superlative intensity is explicit. After this,

> the oars were silver

comes as a relapse into mere telling, into narration at a distance. What it introduces is an effect of movement that may be said to be implicitly of the order of metaphor; while there is nothing obviously mimetic in the rhythm, the water following faster seems to be more than told about, it seems to be done:

> the oars were silver,
> Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
> The water which they beat to follow faster,
> As amorous of their strokes.

—The relapse into comment in this last line (with the closing pun) sets off the amorous eagerness of the water, which is conveyed observably by the even hurry of

> and made
> The water which they beat to follow faster . . .

The fluid movement of this (overflowing the line-division) is again felt to be enhanced by the preceding succession of stressed and consonantally packed monosyllables:

> Which to the tune of flútes képt stróke . . .

These three rigid-seeming stresses suggest both the oars and the strokes which the hurrying water follows (it is, perhaps, well to say again that there is nothing directly and simply mimetic—*e.g.*, no approach to the rhythm of rowing; the suggestive process is a subtler matter).

This kind of action in the verse (if 'kind' does not misrepresent, for there is indefinite variety) cannot be done justice to in written analysis. In the mature Shakespeare it is pervasive, but it can be fixed on for convincing comment only where the working is comparatively simple and obvious. At the most obvious we have this:

> With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
> To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
> And what they undid did.

—The 'undid did,' with its repetition that is at the same time reversal, plainly enacts the sense. But even this effect owes its full force to the movement of the preceding three or four lines, which is not so easily

annotated. Here, then, is what as much as the metaphorical life makes the difference between Shakespeare's poetry and Dryden's eloquence.*

One aspect of the difference is that Dryden's text would give little lodgment to the commentator who finds so much to explain or puzzle over in Shakespeare's. Not that there would appear to be any notable crux in the passage under examination. The Arden editor of my old edition, however, does find a difficult one here:

> Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
> So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
> And made their bends adornings . . .

—Against this last line ('this much vexed passage') there is a note directing the reader to an appendix. Perhaps it is a long untroubled familiarity with the passage that makes me, after reading the half-dozen large pages of the appendix, unable to see that any vexing was necessary. At any rate, the obvious meaning still seems to me obviously the intended one: the stylized deference—movements, gestures, obeisances—of the attendant gentlewomen as they wait upon Cleopatra plays up to the *décor* in a kind of ballet ('adornings,' the verbal form, is clearly the right word for movement and action).

The lines that follow exemplify well Shakespeare's characteristic sensuous strength:

> at the helm
> A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
> Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
> That yarely frame the office. From the barge
> A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
> Of the adjacent wharfs.

* Cf.

> What you do
> Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
> I'ld have you do it ever: when you sing,
> I'ld have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
> Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
> To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that; move still, still so,
> And own no other function: each your doing,
> So singular in each particular,
> Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
> That all your acts are queens.

The Winter's Tale, Act IV, sc.iv, l.135

—The tactual imagery of the second clause derives its strength partly from contrast: the hard and energetic associations of 'tackle' (they are not overtly felt as such, but are transformed, as it were, into their opposite) give the adjective 'silken' a strength of sensuous evocation that it would not otherwise have had. 'Tackle' here, no doubt, is inclusive, and it is the sails that swell; so that to feel, as I have done (and do still), that the verb makes the reader's hand grasp and compress the silken rope was perhaps a mere private vagary. Yet the 'touches' insist that 'tackle' (to which they are drawn by alliteration) also includes here what it ordinarily denotes—hands take hold of cordage, and it seems impossible to dissociate 'swell' from the tactual effect. The hands are made more 'flower-soft' by the contrasting 'yarely,' with its suggestion of brisk seamanlike efficiency ('ay, ay!').

In the next sentence the explicit 'strange' is curiously enforced by 'invisible': we shouldn't expect visibility in a perfume, and the unexpected adjective (intimating, no doubt, that there was no smoke or vapour to see) adds to the suggestion of a mysterious spell. The contrast between 'perfume' and the associations of 'wharfs' itself 'hits the sense,' and 'hits,' taken simultaneously with the soft suggestions of 'perfumes,' has already an oddly immediate force. The whole phrase—

> A strange invisible perfume *hits the sense*
> *Of the adjacent wharfs*

—conveys the multitudinous impersonality of the packed masses of onlookers:

> The city cast
> Her people out upon her . . .

What follows—

> and Antony,
> Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,
> Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
> Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
> And made a gap in nature

—comes as an invitation to make the shift from considering verse as verse to the plane on which we discuss 'characters.'

Dryden's Antony couldn't have sat in the market-place whistling to the air; his dignity wouldn't have permitted it. Or rather, to ask whether he could or not is to introduce a criterion of reality in the

presence of which he doesn't exist. His Cleopatra couldn't have hopped in the public street, or anywhere. His tragic *personae* exist only in a world of stage-postures; decorum gone, everything is gone. Shakespeare's have a life corresponding to the life of the verse; the life in them is, in fact, the life of the verse. Correspondingly, his poem as drama—in situation, larger rhythm, cumulative effect—has an actuality, a richness and a depth in comparison with which it becomes absurd to discuss Dryden's play as tragedy. It is, of course, understood that in a sustained reading Shakespeare's poetry conveys an organization such as cannot be examined in an extracted passage. But the passage analysed exhibits representatively the difference from Dryden.

About Dryden's rendering there is nothing to say except that it has none of the poetic—and that is, we have seen, the dramatic—life of the original. It is accomplished verse, and verse that lends itself to stage-delivery, but it is hardly poetry. It is not poetry, in the sense that it is not the product of a realizing imagination working from within a deeply and minutely felt theme. Dryden is a highly skilled craftsman, working at his job from the outside. The superior structure with which his play is credited as a theatre-piece is a matter of workmanship of the same external order as is represented by his verse. He aims at symmetry, a neat and obvious design, a balanced arrangement of heroic confrontations and 'big scenes.' The satisfaction he offers his audience is that of an operatic exaltation and release from actuality, a ballet-like completeness of pattern, and an elegantly stylized decorum.

It may, of course, be urged on his behalf that he does not offer a poetic concentration comparable with Shakespeare's, but exhibits his strength only to the more inclusive view, in more spacious relations, so that it is peculiarly unfair to represent him, as above, in a short passage. To this it must be replied that his quality is still the quality of his verse, his virtue still a matter of taste, judgment and workmanship. The point may be fairly coercively made by an observation regarding what, in Dryden's verse, takes the place of the life of metaphor and imagery in Shakespeare's. What we find, when we can put a finger on anything, is almost invariably either a formal simile, or a metaphor that is a simile with the 'like' or the 'as' left out. The choice is so wide and the showing so uniform that illustration must be random:

> He could resolve his mind, as Fire does Wax,
> From that hard rugged Image, melt him down,
> And mould him in what softer form he pleas'd.

And yet the Soul, shut up in her dark Room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But, like a Mole in Earth, busie and blind,
Works all her folly up and casts it outward
To the Worlds open view.

the least kind word, or glance,
You give this Youth, will kindle him with Love.
Then, like a burning Vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain before the wind,
To fire the Heart of jealous Antony.

With fiery Eyes, and with contracted Brows,
He Coyn'd his Face in the severest stamp:
And fury shook his Fabrick like an Earthquake;
He heav'd for vent, and burst like bellowing Aetna,
In sounds scarce humane . . .

I find your Breast fenc'd round from humane reach,
Transparent as a Rock of solid Chrystal;
Seen through, but never pierc'd.
But I am made a shallow-forded Stream,
Seen to the Bottom: all my clearness scorn'd,
And all my Faults expos'd!

The structure, it will be seen, is always that of simple, illustrative, point-by-point correspondence. One analogy may give way to another, and so again, but the shift is always clean and obvious; there is never any complexity, confusion or ambiguity. When there is development, it is simple, lucid and rational.

This habit of expression manifests plainly the external approach, the predominance of taste and judgment. It is an approach equally apparent in the treatment of emotion in what are meant to be the especially moving places—as, for instance, in the scene in which Octavia and the children are loosed upon Antony:

Antony. Oh, Dollabella, which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my Soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?

. . . . . .

[Here the Children go to him, etc.

Ventidius. Was even sight so moving! Emperor!

Dollabella. Friend.

Octavia. Husband!

Both Children. Father!

Antony. I am vanquished: take me,
Octavia; take me, Children; share me all.
(Embracing them).

—The emotion doesn't emerge from a given situation realized in its concrete particularity; it is stated, not presented or enacted. The explicitness is of the kind that betrays absence of realization.

It would be unprofitable to carry the show of formal comparison any further: the terms, it is plain, are too disparate. And it should be plain too that we needn't take the disparateness as an excuse for the implication that judgments of comparative value are out of place. They are only out of place in the sense that they should hardly need making explicitly. But they do need making when it is urged that, though Shakespeare's play contains fine poetry, Dryden's has a more tragic effect. It doesn't, of course, follow that, because it becomes impossible to talk seriously about tragic effect or of 'characters' in connection with Dryden's play when Shakespeare's is placed by it, *Antony and Cleopatra* is among Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. In fact, there seem good grounds for some such conclusion as A. C. Bradley came to.* Nevertheless, *Antony and Cleopatra* is a very great dramatic poem, and if the comparison with *All for Love* is proposed it can be seriously taken up only as an approach to Shakespeare—a way of setting off the character of the Shakespearean genius.

It might, for instance, be an introduction to the study of Shakespeare's imagery. Commentators on Shakespeare's text too commonly betray a notion of metaphor that would make Dryden's practice the standard, and one might start with the Arden editor's note on

the bellows and the fan
to cool a gipsy's lust:

'Johnson suggests *to kindle and to cool*, misled by the usual use of bellows; for which, as a cooling implement . . .' etc. It would be fair to comment here that even when Shakespeare's metaphors are most

* See *Oxford Lectures on Poetry.*

like Dryden's he cannot be counted on to exhibit the same tidiness, and that there is no need to establish the use of bellows as a cooling implement. It seems probable that, though Johnson's emendation is unnecessary, he takes the meaning rightly, and that the effect here is much that of 'what they undid did'. If that is so, Shakespeare's metaphor is, characteristically, less simple, as well as less tidy, than one of Dryden's.

We might then pass to one we have already considered—one that, though it is not more difficult, we recognize immediately as not of Dryden's kind:

> Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
> Her heart inform her tongue—the swan's down-feather,
> That stands upon the swell at the full of tide,
> And neither way inclines.

'It is not clear whether Octavia's heart is the swan's down-feather, swayed neither way on the full tide of emotion . . . or whether it is merely the *inaction* of heart and tongue . . . which is compared to that of the feather.' Dryden would not have left it not clear. And Dryden could not have evoked the appropriate dramatic feeling with that vividness and particularity. When we try to say in what ways the passage is incomparably superior to anything Dryden could have produced, we have to think of metaphor as something more immediate, complex and organic than neat illustrative correspondence. And as we pass from example to example in *Antony and Cleopatra* it becomes less and less easy to suppose that a neat line can be drawn round the study.

3

Four Quartets

(I)

'BURNT NORTON'

As I have said, my commentary requires that the reader should have the text of Eliot's poetry open in front of him. Some quotation, however, is entailed if the critical argument is to be intelligible, and I will begin by quoting the first paragraph of 'Burnt Norton':

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.
> What might have been is an abstraction
> Remaining a perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.
> Footfalls echo in the memory
> Down the passage which we did not take
> Towards the door we never opened
> Into the rose-garden. My words echo
> Thus, in your mind.

The first ten lines ask to be read as if, but for the metrical movement, they were a passage of discursive prose, propositional, logical and general. But by the end of the paragraph we know that, however the theme introduced in this discursive way is to be developed, it will not be at the theoretical distance that seems to be promised. The word 'distance' is suggested by the sudden shift at line 11; a shift registered

by the voice as one reads–for one *must* read poetry out, if only to oneself and in imagination. With 'Footfalls echo' we have, abruptly, the immediate, concrete and personal–not the less because of the complex nature of the immediacy, which is reinforced by the brief last sentence, with the different attack (a comment on the prior constatation being thus signalled) that it imposes on the voice, and then the admirably placed 'Thus'.

The intensity of Eliot's personal engagement becomes unmistakable when we read the detached sentence that follows:

> But to what purpose
> Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
> I do not know.

If we say that the voice must render a shift again here with the 'But', this time to a greater distance, we have to add that the 'distance' in question is of quite another order. The poet sinks back in his chair, withdrawing for a moment from what has become for us his total immersion in a personal problem, but it is not a withdrawal that lessens the immediacy. On the contrary, it intensifies the immediacy in a way that makes us feel it as an informing life that makes the paragraph organic from the beginning. The question, in fact, as to how such discursive passages as the first ten lines have been made poetry is answered. We note that the sudden change at 'Footfalls' is not felt as a break in the continuity. That it wasn't even at first reading is explained when we observe how inevitably it was for us an illustrative case in point continuing the abstract argument. The abstractness of the propositional passage, we are now able to tell ourselves, is an ingredient in the inclusive concreteness of a creatively presented experience. The 'thought' as something abstract and general–something capable of re-phrasing and re-statement–is most certainly not more important than the actual thinking, the thinking quality and force of which relate essentially, in terms of the total significance, to its being impelled by a personal need and directed by an imperative personal concern.

The need and the concern are there, we recognize, even in the opening logical sequence of ostensibly impersonal propositions; they are there in the 'unredeemable' and the 'what might have been':

> What might have been is an abstraction
> Remaining a perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.

I myself used the word 'abstract' with the implication that it was to be defined as the antithesis of 'concrete'—an implication that went well enough with my purpose in that context. If we assume that 'abstraction' is to have its value defined by the same antithesis, then we must conclude that the function of the sentence that opens with 'Footfalls' is not after all to advance the argument with an illustrative instance, but to bring in an implicit contradiction—not to confirm the proposition, but to demonstrate its questionableness. Actually, we have here a manifestation of that intensely questioning awareness of language which characterizes Eliot's thinking; an awareness of which we take note in the opening sentence where, as the succeeding paragraph brings out, the difference in value between 'present' in the first line and 'present' in the second is essential to the thought (which, producing its metaphysical paradox, leaves all three words, 'present', 'past' and 'future', necessary). And we note that where 'abstraction' is concerned the implicit questioning as to what it portends, or obscures, is shared by 'possibility' and 'speculation'. 'Footfalls echo in the memory'—is that speculation? Though no steps were taken down the passage, the echoing footfalls certainly present themselves as actual—which is more than merely 'possible', and the detached

> My words echo
> Thus, in your mind

has the effect of establishing an unquestioned reality.

This last word has hovered over the text as the one that points to the nature of the poet's preoccupation, a preoccupation which, as we advance through the poem, we find ourselves describing as exploratory-creative. Though the word 'reality' doesn't yet actually appear, the positive purpose, the directing nisus, makes itself felt in the opening paragraph. That subtly creative evocation of a really real which begins here entails an associated de-realizing process, and what the paragraph does is to undermine the authority of Newtonian clock-time in its common-sense version—that which takes its Paterian form in the 'Conclusion' to the *Renaissance* volume:

> Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each one of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also, all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to

> apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp . . . what is real in our life fines itself down.

The creative nisus manifests itself positively in 'memory'. The passage was not taken, and the rose-garden remains an *ahnung*, but the effect of the later part of the paragraph is to have made the 'possibility' something more than theoretical—something of which we may aspire to achieve a concrete apprehension. This last clause—in fact the whole sentence—would look odd if examined with analytic rigour. But to say that nevertheless it is justified, some such use of language being compelled by the effort to initiate intelligent commentary on the text, is to pay a tribute to Eliot's creative resource in making language serve him in a basic exploration of experience.

The status in relation to common-sense actuality of what is with such compelling realness 'remembered' in the 'memory' is elusive, but we respond with an implicitly endorsing positiveness to the evoking. And *a* memory, we tell ourselves, prompted by the opening propositional part of the paragraph, is both past and present—it is here and now, but 'we cannot say where'. At the same time, without qualifying the essential potency for thought of that realization, we recognize that the given memory is of a very odd kind: what is remembered didn't take place. The effect of the recognition is to prime and sensitize our attention for what is to follow—for we know that the force or 'value' of the this and that we take note of depends on a total context that hasn't yet been established. Tentatively we may wonder whether it is just regret that is registered in 'What might have been'. The 'unredeemable' that precedes it suggests guilt too, or at any rate something that is to be expiated.

At this point we must recall that when D. W. Harding discussed 'Burnt Norton'* it stood alone, with no hint of intimately related other 'quartets' to follow. Nor was the description 'quartet' offered the reader for the poem itself. The musical analogy made explicit in the title, *Four Quartets*, has a marked felicity, and prompts the commentator on the co-present four to reflections that yield him light for an intelligent reading. This 'music' works with language, and so with

* I refer to his memorable characterization of the poem in *Scrutiny* Vol. V No. 2 (September, 1936), 'Here most obviously the poetry is a linguistic achievement, in this case an achievement in the creation of concepts. . . . One could say, perhaps, that the poem takes the place of the ideas of "regret" and "eternity". . . .'

meanings and meaning as actual music doesn't. Its invention represents Eliot's need to use all the resources of the English language. He couldn't do this by achieving (if that were possible) a pre-logical innocence, and, in fact, in all the manifestations of his creative originality, he implicitly assumes in the reader skill in taking the communication of normally logical English. This is apparent, for instance, in the passage beginning 'Footfalls echo': the significance depends upon the reader's perceiving the illogicality, and being alerted by it to be ready for what, following, will bring the point of it home to him—will enable him to realize fully the part it plays in meaning. He doesn't, when habituated to the 'musical' organization, expect the contradiction to be explained in logically discursive or narrative terms.

It goes with this that he is prepared for frequent abrupt transitions of a kind disconcerting to anyone who feels he has a right to require some familiar form of continuity. Actually, of course, the organization is close and delicate, the relevance of a given separable stretch to its neighbours subtle, essential and pregnant. 'Music' is the licence Eliot takes to defy the criteria we implicitly expect to be observed in (one can reasonably say) all forms of written English—certainly all forms that offer us a sustained development of thought. And that *Four Quartets* offers us *thought*, searching, basic and rigorous, we have our assurance in the first ten lines of 'Burnt Norton'. We have, then, to see the licence as an extreme exactingness, imposed on the poet by the personal urgency of his thought. As thought, it aspires to a general validity, and our sense of this as attained will be a matter of an acquiescing response. But acquiescence, as I have noted, is commonly qualified by 'yes, but's.

What I have said amounts to saying that the 'music' of *Four Quartets* challenges a criterion that is not logic, but something equivalent in the field of total meaning. We can only tell what it is by intelligent self-exposure to the poetry, and it will not then be capable of anything like precise definition. The determination, therefore, of what it is faces the reader, if in a peculiarly exacting form, with the same kind of challenge faced by the critic of all serious creative work. As we move forward through 'Burnt Norton' (and anything approaching an ideal reading will have been preceded by many earlier readings) we have to ask: 'What end—"in my beginning is my end"—is the intrinsic principle of life that determines the thisness of this music?' That question is clearly inseparable from the question: 'By what criteria shall we arrive at the essential critical judgments?'

We can't doubt that Eliot's creative purpose, dictated by his desperate inner need, goes with a marked intensity of consciousness. We mustn't, though, identify the conscious with the creative purpose in its totality. The degree in which he can hold in conscious apprehension the 'end' of his *ahnung* must obviously fall short of completeness. He may very well form imperfect and misleading conceptions of the nature of the need that drives him, and be tempted to move towards kinds of satisfaction which the reader who truly honours him with the attention he demands has to judge adversely—kinds of satisfaction at odds with the profound human need the poem actually reveals.

Awareness of such possibilities is a necessary qualification for intelligent reading and judgment where an enterprise like Eliot's in *Four Quartets* is in question. The explorations it proposes for itself mean plunging deep into regions of the equivocal, and the delicacies of apprehension and divination, an aptness for which qualifies Eliot for the attempt, necessarily involve special hazards and temptations.

We have to consider now the long paragraph that concludes the first movement—the paragraph that begins with

> Other echoes
> Inhabit the garden.

Between this and the evocation of the footfalls there is only the sentence in which the poet draws back from the immediacy of 'memory', and the rose-garden becomes only a bowl of dusty rose-leaves. The withdrawal (which, we note, is into an actual present that is—to the poet and us—less vividly present than the remembered past) serves to set off the return to an evoked immediacy which, in its significant compellingness, is not that of present actuality. I say *an* immediacy, because this time, while again all 'distance' has been eliminated, what is present to us is different in quality and status (in this region of exploration there are no words to hand for essential distinctions—we have to do, analogically, the best we can with the words there are), and the difference, we perceive, has the closest bearing on the importance 'memory' has for Eliot's thought.

His gift with language appears in the way the paragraph opens:

> Other echoes
> Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
> Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
> Round the corner.

If we saw the first sentence by itself, insulated, we should read it as if it were general statement, and 'distant'. But the eye of the reader sees forward; we take simultaneously the sharp practical question and the urgent 'Quick', and know that we have moved back into a presented immediate as unquestionable as

> My words echo
> Thus.

The difference is that *this* immediacy imposes decision and instant action—action as a result of which we find ourselves *in* the rose-garden. We are given no account, narrative, dramatic or discursive, of how this changed relation to the rose-garden has been brought about. Nor do we ask for one, for the 'music' imposes itself on us: we recognize its authority. We perceive by now that the musical organization is a means of developing, in the exploratory-creative way, the significance of 'memory'. This is a key-word for Eliot; we note how it goes with 'echo', and we shall soon have noted other associated words. In 'Burnt Norton' he invokes our experience of the creativeness of memory, and gives new life to our knowledge that creativeness isn't necessarily irresponsible.

The living core of the 'rose-garden' memory, which recurs so significantly in *Four Quartets*, belongs to early childhood—to 'our first world'. Harry in *The Family Reunion*, recalling with Mary their childhood days, says

> You bring me news
> Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor,
> Sunlight and singing.

The peculiar felicity that lies at the end of the corridor (which both does and does not belong to childhood) plays its part in defining his 'regret':

> The bright colour fades
> Together with the unrecapturable emotion,
> The glow upon the world that never found its object.

Of course, there is more than regret here; a sense of failure ('unredeemable'), of something to be expiated, is registered in the 'never found its object'. There is a good deal more than that to be said about Harry's case, which has the most intimate bearing on Eliot's. But I will keep

now to the text in front of us. We can say of 'Burnt Norton' too that the 'regret', the word for something at the core of the poem, is not a mere matter of 'the lost glow upon the world'—a regret for the lost enchanted felicity that is not to be recovered. The remembered 'first world' is certainly there in the evoked 'rose-garden', a potent and essential presence, but the 'rose-garden' experience as actually communicated is not, and doesn't offer to be, just an evocation of what belongs to childhood. Memory has done its creative work, and that work has concerned itself with significances that are outside the range of childhood apprehension.

> And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
> The surface glittered out of heart of light

—of that, if offered it as the recovered sensibility of 'the first world', we should have to say that it presented the inescapable equivocalness of the adult recall. Eliot himself (for it is unmistakable Eliotic poetry) knows that he is doomed, or privileged, or both, to write as an adult and is highly conscious that a 'way of putting' it is more than merely that. He may not have been aware that in writing

> And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
> Had the look of flowers that are looked at

he was recalling Mallarmé,* but he was profoundly conscious of being a highly sophisticated poet who owed a 'practitioner's' debt to French poets of the later nineteenth century. The indisputable proof that the conscious and transmuting adult preoccupation informs memory in this recall of the 'first world' presents itself in the summing-up when the cloud has passed:

> Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
> Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
> Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

At last we get the word itself, 'reality'—the word that gives us the nature of the adult quest, though it doesn't give us the nature of the upshot, goal or answer; it takes the whole complex work to do that.

> **Rien, ni les vieux jardins reflétés par les yeux*
> *Ne retiendra ce coeur*
>
> 'Brise Marine'.

'Reality', that is, serves perhaps better than 'eternity' as an index of the preoccupation that explains the peculiarity, the 'music', of 'Burnt Norton'.

'Regret', the other of the pair of terms I quoted in opening this inquiry, points to what is for us a closely associated subordinate theme. Implicated as it is in the considerations that focus on 'reality', it has its part in one's account of what the latter preoccupation portends—what basic attitude, what sense of human life, what nerve-centre of valuation. The hints we receive in 'unredeemable' and 'what might have been' don't, after all, signify repining over either the loss of that enchanted childhood felicity or failure to take the passage and open the door into the rose-garden we have just revisited (for, in a way made familiar by the Eliotic music, it both is, and is not, 'our first world'—is not, because the intimations with which it is alive are inseparable from an adult apprehension of significances). The 'regret' (though we emerge knowing that we need another word) is there with us in the garden. It is there in the past tense, and in the elusiveness, the unseizableness, that Eliot's genius in using the English language as he develops his music renders so marvellously. He renders the paradox of it: this is not a mere gleam of the rose-garden; it is a firm apprehension.

That is intimated in the short opening sentence—

> Other echoes
> Inhabit the garden

—which I described as, at first glance, comparatively 'distant' statement. With what firm certainty the garden is 'there', inhabited by 'echoes' (already a potent word), is established by the instantly following 'Shall we follow?'—an incitement to prompt and purposeful action. 'The deception of the thrush' (which phrase completes the question) conveys the elusiveness of the sought reality, which is not an actuality of the common-sense world. When, by an immediate transition, which (as in dreams) we accept unquestioningly, we find ourselves *in* the garden, there is a change of tense to the past—which is not just the past of 'our first world', though the garden is one we know: this past, familiar in continually creative memory, is again a present past. With a dreamlike acceptingness we both are, and, almost explicitly after the cloud passes, are *not* children (they are hidden with the 'unheard music' in the shrubbery):

Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.

The 'go' and 'Then a cloud passed' are hardly distinguishable in our sense of them—which is a sense of their significance. The significance, given in 'Cannot bear very much reality' involves, paradoxically, a suggestion of failure on the part of human kind, the paradox being that of *cannot but ought*. Plainly, the 'regret' intimated in 'What might have been' is not merely regret, but guilt too; it is a sense of sin. The movement closes with a variation on the opening lines:

Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end which is always present.

The 'end' is there in the implicit 'ought', which is always present, an imperative that gives (it is hoped) direction and significance to life. The 'reality' of which there were elusive intimations in the rose-garden was the accepted injunction to achieve a firm apprehension ('Quick, said the bird'). Without the firm apprehension there can't be the kind of acceptance necessary for assuagement—for liberation. I say 'kind of acceptance' because it is in Eliot's attitudes towards the divined reality that we may expect to find it discussibly characterized.

By the close, then, of the first movement we are primed and alerted for what is to follow. The process of evocative definition that is to leave us with something sufficiently 'there' for even tentative appraisal has only begun, and plainly entails subtle complexities of development. But we can at least tell ourselves that the implicit appeal for our corroboration is a challenge to the profoundest responsibility of judgment, and that this responsibility may compel us to reserves and questionings, and even to a 'No'. And I had better say at once that early in my own acquaintance with *Four Quartets* as a completed work I experienced a decided arrest at

human kind
Cannot bear very much reality,

divining that this was an intimation of something basic in Eliot's 'answer' that I couldn't endorse. Such a reaction means a corres-

pondingly sharpened and sensitized attention in the reading of what comes after.

The second movement opens with fifteen lines that call for little comment; what they are there for is plain enough. They give us an antithesis to the opening ten lines of the first movement. Instead of the abstract, discursive and propositional, we have an evocation, non-logical and directionless, of the disordered, distracting, thought-baffling confusion we actually live in. For 'actually' I had almost put 'immediately', but hesitated: Eliot has brought home to us the equivocalness of 'abstract', 'concrete' and 'immediate'. In this evoked immediacy thought has played its part, and can't be said to be not present:

> The dance along the artery
> The circulation of the lymph
> Are figured in the drift of stars
> Ascend to summer in the tree
> We move above the moving tree
> In light upon the figured leaf . . .

The challenging sensuous *mélange* of the start suggests once more an 'echo' of Mallarmé:

> Garlic and sapphires in the mud
> Clot the bedded axle-tree.*

The essentially relevant antithesis is to be seen in what the next paragraph introduces:

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
> I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
> And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

This is not propositional and discursive in the way of the ten lines with which 'Burnt Norton' opens; but it does, like the earlier passage,

* Cf. *Le temple enseveli divulgue par la bouche*
Sépulcrale d'égout bavant boue et rubis
'Le Tombeau de Charles Baudelaire'.

appeal to the logically thinking intelligence. 'At the still point of the turning world', in its verblessly constating way, is more than statement: it carries the implication that no one can *not* recognize and endorse the perception that is evoked; for constatation here is evocation—of an illuminatingly 'abstract' kind. We all of us remember to have registered the perception repeatedly; some of us from the early days when we used to watch, from above, the spinning flat round of the wooden top we were whipping. At this end of the diameter it is going away from us; at that, it is coming towards us. In between, at the centre, there is 'neither from nor towards'—there is 'the still point'. But could it be still, seeing that the top in its wholeness is spinning? At any rate, do not call it fixity.

Between the potent first phrase of the paragraph (the phrase ends with a full-stop) and 'Neither from nor towards', there comes 'Neither flesh nor fleshless', which is a prompting, or incitement, of a different order from the two that enclose it—and to which enclosure it owes its power of suggestive implication. The implication is that the analogy of 'the still point' has a force ('Neither from nor towards') that inheres equally in 'Neither flesh nor fleshless'. Since this phrase pretty obviously conveys an intention in keeping with the *ahnung* and the nisus that we register as giving us the informing preoccupation of Eliot's 'music', his creative commitment, we don't find ourselves (though we shall watch where it leads and what company it keeps) objecting to the *procédé*. Nor do we when he extends it to time in the way that led Harding, in his review, to speak of 'Burnt Norton' as creating the concept of eternity.

> And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement
> from nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline.

The intrinsically compelling virtue resides in 'the still point'; the 'musical' cogency of the development is a persuasive use of that, which, both clear in itself and pregnant, remains unquestioned. We respond tentatively, knowing that the music will continue developing the complex creative argument through four quartets.

Immediately we note that in the second line of the paragraph another theme, or major illuminative idea, has been brought into the music:

at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement.

Then, two lines further on, we have:

Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

Dance is moving pattern, and 'pattern' has appeared just before, in the close of the opening paragraph of the movement:

We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.

The word 'pattern' had come once before that—in the long closing paragraph of the first movement

There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.

In both these places the pattern is one of movement, and the word 'dance' has been given us a few lines before 'the still point':

The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars
Ascend to summer in the tree. . . .

My remark that in the sensuous concrete of this paragraph, the evoked *mélange* of actual living experience, thought has played its part asks to be taken up again in the commentary invited by the passage from which I have harked back. That passage repays careful pondering; it lies behind all the appearances of 'pattern' and 'dance' that are to come—and they come again and again, in different contexts, the last instance being the penultimate paragraph of 'Little Gidding'. Eliot found the words peculiarly congenial to his thought and to the nature of the reassuring apprehension it aimed at achieving—the firm apprehension of the 'end' (his 'beginning'). They are words that played an

important part in the relevant *avant garde* thinking when Eliot was, whether in full consciousness or not doesn't matter, equipping himself to write *Four Quartets*. Let the reader turn up R. G. Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature* (it is to be had in 'Oxford Paperbacks') and, in Part III, look through the second chapter, paying special attention to section 3: 'The new theory of matter'. Collingwood, of course, was not a physicist, but a philosopher, one concerned to describe non-technically the new concepts entailed by the revolution in physics that took place in the 1920s, and to suggest the consequences for intelligent non-technical thought about the nature of the real.

Consider then this, which I quote merely in order to enforce my point that the whole context provided by Collingwood's chapter bears illuminatingly on the contemporaneity, in its originality, of Eliot's thought—thought that is his effort to assuage a characteristically modern unease.

> Thus we get back to a single physical unit, the electron; but we also get a very important new conception of chemical quality as depending not upon the merely quantitative aspect of the atom, its weight, but upon the pattern formed by the electrons that compose it. This pattern is not a static pattern but a dynamic pattern, a pattern constantly changing in a definite rhythmical way, like the rhythmical patterns discovered by Pythagoras in the field of acoustics.

My point is not that Eliot read Collingwood, whose book didn't come out till 1945 (though the lectures were given in 1934-35). Nor is it that the *ahnung* of the really real that, in his heuristic-creative way, he offers, in making it communicable, to develop and confirm for himself could conceivably have been derived from Collingwood. Indeed, prompted by the last line of the movement I am examining–

> Only through time time is conquered

–I think of invoking Collingwood when it comes, as it must, to explaining why and how Eliot's 'reality' doesn't at all recommend itself to me (to be made to say this being, let me add, to have incurred a debt).

At the moment, I note how intimately Eliot associates the 'pattern', or 'dance', with 'the still point': 'at the still point, there the dance is'. Neither the association, nor the 'dance' itself, has the clear intrinsic force of meaning that makes 'At the still point of the turning world'

so obviously basic for the poet's business of evocative definition and 'musical' development. His 'musical' logic in any case exacts the closest and most sensitive attention we can achieve and sustain. And, looking ahead beyond the point at which I stopped ('for that is to place it in time'), we perceive that immediately there is a significant modulation, a shift into the decidedly personal—not the less decidedly and significantly personal because the 'I' disappears:

> The inner freedom from the practical desire,
> The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
> And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
> By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving.

The 'pressure of urgent misery and self-disgust' (to quote a phrase from D. W. Harding) asserts itself plainly here, and at the same time, with the 'yet', the specifically religious nature of the intention becomes explicit in 'a grace of sense'. This 'grace' is the 'white light' which, described as 'still and moving', associates itself unmistakably with 'the still point'. We can hardly say 'identifies itself'; the association is not—at any rate as yet—inevitable or compelling enough. But we remember that when, in the first movement,

> we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
> Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
> To look down into the drained pool

the pool became, or had become

> filled with water out of sunlight,
> And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
> The surface glittered out of heart of light.

'Pattern' at its first introduction comes in as belonging to the rose-garden, and associated with a transcendent reality. The deprecatory comment on the effect ('the pool was dry') of the cloud's passing makes that explicit and the 'heart of light' out of which the surface glittered is sufficiently identifiable with the 'white light still and moving'. Yet we are faced with questions about the significance of the 'dance', and the relation of the 'dance' to 'the still point', that we can't at this stage answer to our satisfaction. Before we go further it will be well, since *Four Quartets* demands, and repays, the most intelligent attention we can give, to sharpen our sense of those questions. The best way

of doing that that occurs to me is to consider how Harding explains Eliot's insistent preoccupation with 'pattern' in discussing the last of the quartets.

His criticism of Eliot's poetry is to be found in *Experience into Words*.* I refer to it in this way because it seems to me to yield more profit than any other I know of. That is not to say that I agree with it; I have found it helpful because of the way in which it has challenged profitable dissent, so being for me the means of clarifying and defining my own perceptions and judgments. Emphasizing the importance of the idea of 'pattern' in Eliot's communication he says (page 123) of 'Little Gidding':

> The final section develops the idea that every experience is integrated with all the others, so that the fulness of exploration means a return, with better understanding, to the point where you started . . .
>
> The tyranny of sequence and duration in life is thus reduced. Time-processes are viewed as aspects of a pattern which can be grasped in its entirety at any one of its moments . . . One effect of this view of time and experience is to rob the moment of death of any over-significance we may have given it. For the humanist of Section II life trails off just because it can't manage to endure. For the man convinced of spiritual values life is a coherent pattern in which the ending has its due place, and, because it is part of a pattern, itself leads into the beginning. An over-strong terror of death is often one expression of the fear of living, for death is one of the life-processes that seem too terrifying to be borne. In examining one means of becoming reconciled to death, Mr Eliot can show us life too made bearable, unfrightening, positively inviting:
>
> With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
>
> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.
>
> Here is the clearest expression of motive force other than repulsion. Its dominance makes this poem—to put it very simply—far happier than most of Mr Eliot's.

Harding of course has more to say, but this quotation, made for my purpose, is, I think, a fair one. I shall return to consider his commentary on 'Little Gidding' later, as an aid to formulating my own comprehensive judgment on the whole undertaking of the poem,

* London, Chatto & Windus, 1963.

Four Quartets. For it is one poem, and, if we are aware of a significant difference when we come to 'Little Gidding', the significance bears decisively on our understanding of the earlier quartets. Whatever development we may detect, there is nothing to make Harding's way of referring to 'pattern' unilluminating in respect of 'Burnt Norton' (though it is not adequate to explaining the part played by 'pattern' in the 'music').

I don't unsay this contention when I remark that I have left a question-mark in the margin against the last two sentences of Harding's that I quote. My query doesn't regard the justness of the statement that in 'Little Gidding' we have the clearest expression in Eliot's poetry of a motive force other than repulsion. It portends disagreement with Harding about the nature of the motive force, and a questioning of the quality of the happiness the closing sentence imputes to Eliot.

What I agree with Harding about, valuing his corroboration the more because he is (I think) something like a wholly sympathetic critic of Eliot as I myself am not, is the large part played in his poetry in general by the motive force of repulsion. I will quote from Harding one sentence more. He says about the passage of unrimed *terza rima* in 'Little Gidding':

> The verse in this narrative passage, with its regular measure and insistent alliteration, so effective for combining the macabre with the urbane and dreary, is a way to indicate and a way to control the pressure of urgent misery and self-disgust.

'The pressure of urgent misery and self-disgust' describes admirably the motive force that Harding, rightly (I think), judges to have impelled Eliot to creativity. It is obviously not a baffling paradox, but it faces us with more disturbing complexities, and raises more questions, than Harding seems to realize. And it is not merely in regard to 'Little Gidding'; the questions clearly concern us when we are trying to achieve an intelligent reading of 'Burnt Norton'. By Eliot's own implicit avowal, 'Little Gidding' derives an essential measure of the authority to which (whether or not he would have endorsed that word), of its nature, it lays claim from the creative work that has been done in the preceding quartets.

When we turn back, then, to 'Burnt Norton' from Harding's explanation of 'pattern' and the part it plays in Eliot's creative treatment of the basic problems as he has experienced them and met them, we find that we have been primed to ask several questions that should be

active in our attention as we go forward through the poem. There can be no questioning of the assumption that Eliot's interest in the problems is not merely intellectual and theoretical but, in an intense and imperative way, personal. But 'personal' has different forces. Harding, with good reason, lays great stress on repulsion as, in the greater part of Eliot's work, a major, if not the dominant, motive force behind his creativity, and seems to assume that this is so normal, so humanly inevitable or central, as to need no discussing—as to call, from the critic, for nothing but the accepting constatation. But is that a tenable attitude? Certainly it would seem to have the endorsement of Eliot's own. It is surely not the less true, however, that the question is one that ought to be intensely, and, in the face of the difficulty—and the spell—of Eliot's 'music', pertinaciously, alive in our minds as we read. If we should decide, by such criteria as every serious critic has, under the stimulus of a given work (which may not prove wholly *sympathique* even in his ultimate judgment), to evoke as vividly and responsibly as he can in reading it, that the repulsion, far from being humanly inevitable, has something wrong about it, the way in which we take 'pattern' in *Four Quartets* would be adversely affected. We might still agree that Harding's account of the kind of satisfaction that determines Eliot's insistence on the theme was, as far as it goes, sound, but we should be committed to a limiting and qualifying judgment on the poem—in relation, that is, to the implicit claim to a general validity and human centrality.

Further, we must from now on advance with a sharpened vigilance for the signs that may tell us something about the relation between Eliot's specific genius and his sense of, his attitude towards, the human creativity which that genius, a poet's, represents—for so potent a 'dominance' of repulsion is a curious trait. The manifestation of the 'pressure of urgent misery and self-disgust' that Harding specifies in the passage I have quoted in reference to 'pattern' is 'an over-strong terror of death'. If all the daringly inventive complexity of *procédé* we have met with already was necessary to the generating of the pregnant affirmation at which we have halted—

> Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance

—there would be an effect of disparity when we read, as an exegetical comment on the force of 'dance' (or 'pattern'), such a statement as this: 'For the man convinced of spiritual values life is a coherent

pattern in which the ending has its due place, and, because it is part of a pattern, itself leads into the beginning.'

Of course, it is only a summary, and that there are other things that need saying is obvious. And it is helpful in the reading of *Four Quartets* to be reminded at this stage, between which and 'Little Gidding' there are such complexities of development to come, how necessary it is to be able to say more. It is clear, for instance, that for Eliot the insisted-on association of the 'dance' with 'the still point' is essential to the significance of 'pattern' and to the 'release' it brings. Harding's 'For the man convinced of spiritual values' in itself tells us nothing. When I myself say, as I might very well have done before this *as a start*, that Eliot's reality is clearly spiritual, I haven't said enough to suggest anything like adequate answers to the questions that challenge us. It would have been the preface to an explanation, if I had one, of what Eliot means by 'Except for the point, the still point, There would be no dance'; but I hadn't one to give. His undertaking, we can see, is of its nature so difficult, and his 'musical' method, correspondingly, of such a kind, that we don't expect to be ready with satisfying explanations at every point in a quartet as we move forward. It is well, then, to remind ourselves, and to be reminded, that there *are* questions that, if we were attending duly to the 'music', we should have to ask—questions to which we should be right in thinking that we ought, ultimately, to find answers.

It is partly a compliment to the poet to say that for the first few readings of *Four Quartets* we may remain undisturbed by any arresting sense of unanswered questions—so obviously does the 'music' transcend paraphrases, and yet so persuasive is it in the impression of intellectual mastery it gives. Nevertheless the obligation rests on us to arrive, in relation to the offer of the poem, at a grounded judgment that we can articulate with conviction and clarity and that entails the measure of understanding enabling one, in face (say) of 'Except for the point . . . there would be no dance', to formulate the questions and give with conviction intelligent answers (which, one should tell oneself, might very well involve criticism of one kind or another—which would be tentative).

Of course (since, as I have said, no one would suppose himself qualified for a sound appraising criticism of *Four Quartets* in a first reading—or a second or third), I read now with a sense of what is coming, and I know my mind about the completed poem. The problem of critical method is largely tactical; it is how to convey the

force, justice and full significance of one's mature judgment. There can be no coercively demonstrated conclusions; one works, and hopes, for convinced concurrence.

We are considering the part played in Eliot's creative thought by 'pattern' and 'dance', ideas or themes that, as we apprehend them, are involved in a complexity of varying and cumulative evocation. It seems, then, the obvious thing to turn with our questions a couple of pages on from the passage in movement II of 'Burnt Norton' to the opening of V:

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time; but that which is only living
> Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

The distinctive kind of creativeness with which Eliot's genius focuses consciously on language is illustrated in the last two lines in the way the 'still' (placed with a characteristic perfection of art at the line's end) of 'still moves perpetually' stands enclosed between the repeated 'still' of the first and the concluding 'stillness'. One may ask, not very urgently (such is the irresistible felicity of the whole effect), whether the form of the Chinese jar really comes under 'pattern'. Not very urgently, because the Chinese jar is felt to bear rather on 'stillness' than on 'pattern', introducing as it does

> Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
> Not that only . . .

The question that engages us is again: What is the relation between 'the still point' and 'the dance' (or 'pattern')? It seems to me plain by now that Eliot has no intellectually statable answer in his mind for us to elicit from the 'music'. We have perhaps been led to take 'pattern' with a mistaken kind of seriousness. 'Pattern', it is true, as Eliot uses it, is a word belonging to the age, but nevertheless, as I have noted, Eliot's 'pattern' is not a close analogue of the rhythmic pattern of electrons in which the physicist sees the basic physical reality. Eliot himself is of course intensely concerned to achieve a sure apprehension of what he can feel to be the ultimately real—and that would, of its nature, be an achievement universally valid for humanity.

It is true that the emphasis Harding lays on recoil from death might seem to have an endorsement in

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time; but that which is only living
> Can only die

–which makes one think of Yeats's

> Whatever is begotten, born and dies.

Eliot's preoccupation with establishing an apprehension of, and so an assured relation with, an eternal reality is, in its disciplined pertinacity, its subtlety, and its intellectual resource, a more serious and impressive thing than Yeats's. Yet the part played in its intensity by the peculiar desperateness of his need can't but alert our critical sense to the question, how far his findings have the validity to which, necessarily, they make an implicit claim–for Eliot we take with the appropriate seriousness: there are no Swamis or Madame Blavatskys or symbolic elaborations in his case.

The reality his concern for which explains the emphasis laid on 'pattern' and 'dance' in his 'music' is, in contradistinction to the physicist's, spiritual. But as the first sentence I quoted from Harding brought home to me, not only is 'spiritual' an equivocal word; it may cover irreconcilable intentions. Let me say at once that it does in Eliot–or at least that it points to a paradox that, when one considers it in the complexities of his poem, one has to judge to be an essential contradiction. The ultimate really real that Eliot seeks in *Four Quartets* is eternal reality, and *that* he can do little, directly, to characterize. He can, and insistently does, by creative suggestion continue variously to convey the force of what is said in

> Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

The 'dance', the 'pattern', to be found by the individual human being in his lived experience is the significance that might be given to his life and so to his inevitable death, making both acceptable; but except by relation to the ultimately real, which is eternal, there is no (Eliot is emphatic) significance. The 'still point' except for which there would be no dance is not now just 'the still point' of the opening phrase of the paragraph. That, though a striking paradox, is simply,

for all the cosmic scope of the suggestion, the evoked observable fact of the every-day physical world. By its quality of paradox, yet easily and ordinarily to be observed—a reminder that the observable matter-of-fact world can seem a very queer place, it lends itself to the poet's need. Its function is to be the springy *pied-à-terre* for the quick inevitable glide into the spiritual realm; the realm in which the expectations sorting with common-sense matter-of-fact are left behind and the exploring must be 'musical'. In the four or so lines that come before the statement that establishes so firmly the association with the 'dance', the 'point', the 'still point', has been transmuted by that characteristic Eliotic process of creative suggestion which affects us so potently as the work of intelligence into a focus of analogical pregnancies: we no longer need to ask, no longer think of asking, just how the still point known to the engineer is related to the spiritual dance. There now come into implicit association with it—with both it and the 'dance'—the following 'white light still and moving' (which is a 'grace of sense'), and the 'water out of sunlight', the 'lotos' and the 'heart of light' that we recall from our experience of the 'rose-garden' in the first movement. If we have carefully conned *The Family Reunion* (as we ought, for it exhibits a very close and illuminating relation to *Four Quartets*), we can adduce as also immediately relevant this, spoken by Agatha to Harry:

> There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,
> Only a present moment of pointed light
> When you want to burn. When you stretch out your hand
> To the flames. They only come once,
> Thank God, that kind.

Anticipating, we remember (for no one offers to discuss *Four Quartets* in a first perusal) the way in which fire figures in 'Little Gidding':

> The only hope, or else despair
> Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
> To be redeemed from fire by fire.

The direct consideration of that theme must wait. It is time to note that one comment prompted by what we have read of 'Burnt Norton' is to the effect that Harding was on the mark after all, when, in his review, he laid the emphasis on the word 'eternity'. I myself suggested that the emphasis might properly fall on 'reality'; but, as I have

marginally, in passing, recognized, the really real for Eliot is the eternal. We have been following (to adduce Harding's formulation again) the creating of the 'concept of eternity', and by now can tell ourselves that it has become for us of great importance to cultivate a vigilant critical awareness of the attitude towards time revealed in the process—for an attitude towards time is an attitude towards life. Eliot's, I had better say, is for me already suspect—suspect of being one that, if my suspicion were confirmed, I should have to judge adversely.

In a tactical shift I turn my thought again on 'reality', and recall the statement that, near the end of the first movement, seems to come from the heart of the poem—from, that is, the essential Eliot himself:

> Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

That, I perhaps only half intimated, seems, in its mode of formulation, to imply both a conception of 'reality' that I must repudiate for myself, and a perverse judgment of 'human kind'. That the conception is a consciously religious one in a variety of Christian tradition is confirmed when, four or five lines on in the passage beginning

> The inner freedom from the practical desire,
> The release from action and suffering,

we read

> both a new world
> And the old made explicit, understood
> In the completion of its partial ecstasy,
> The resolution of its partial horror.
> Yet the enchainment of past and future
> Woven in the weakness of the changing body,
> Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
> Which flesh cannot endure.

This surely is again

> human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

The 'dance' is the manifested spirit, which, deriving it from its momentary and remembered apprehensions of the eternal and real, has 'consciousness' enough to be aware of the alternatives, and so

(though we mustn't forget Baudelaire, who, Eliot once told us, at least believed in damnation) to have chosen heaven.

'Conscious' goes with 'moment' and 'intersection' (which is yet to come). We have it here, in the closing paragraph of the second movement:

> Time past and time future
> Allow but a little consciousness.
> To be conscious is not to be in time
> But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
> The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
> The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
> Be remembered; involved with past and future.
> Only through time time is conquered.

I don't like the opposing of 'consciousness' to flesh—of spirit (which can achieve the 'dance') to body. Nor do I like the given preoccupation with 'eternity', and the attitude it seems to entail towards time. Those two distastes go together; in fact, if confirmed into criticism, they would be emphases in the same adverse judgment, which would be a fundamental one. But it has yet to be determined what value we must assign to 'conquered'. Is it 'escaped from'? Under the convention that must govern such an inquiry as the present, this observation, interrogative in form, is to be regarded as merely tentative. Nevertheless I judge it proper to say that I divine an attitude of implicit self-contradiction behind the paragraph of 'Burnt Norton' I have just quoted. At any rate, the questions, how must reality be conceived, and what is the nature of the human situation, have been raised in a way that compels one to determine and verify one's own ultimate beliefs, and I am sure already that my answers to those questions are not Eliot's.

The decisive prompting to come out with this explicit affirmation came in the couple of lines that complete the effect of the line and a half I have twice quoted:

> Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
> I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
> And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

At the third line I felt for a moment the pleasure with which one responds to a welcome corroboration. 'That,' I had the impulse, or the fleeting apparition of one, to comment, 'is the way I use "there"

when I am offering to explain how the poem is *there* between us, so that we can meet in it, though it is neither public in the sense that it can be measured or pointed to, nor merely personal and private.' But the difference between me and Eliot insists on itself immediately as immense. The poem, the real poem as opposed to the black marks on the page, exists, I should say, in the third realm, which is spiritual. And when I say 'spiritual' I am not thinking of spirit (or mind or 'consciousness') as something that is to be set over against body as its antithesis. The minds that meet in the poem are the minds of persons who have tongues and vocal organs together with the bodies these imply. But for the fact that minds are the minds of bodies there could have been no poem—there could have been no meaning and no communication. When I say that the poem, the real and living poem, is 'there' between us I think of it as the type of that collaboratively created and sustained reality, the human world, without which there could have been no significance, and no spiritual problem to be explored.

As for the way in which the poem relates to time, we might perhaps think of it as representing a liberation from 'the enchainment of past and future', for 'enchainment' suggests shackles and oppression, but we could hardly for long try to think of it as an escape from time. For the poem is a manifestation of language, and one might very naturally use the word 'there', not implying spatial location, in discussing the kind of reality the living English language is. One might say with relevant significance, if not with any precision: '*There* it concretely is, between us—or *there* it was in the criss-cross of meaningful utterance that has gone on between us (between the four or five foci of comprehension we represent) since we began this discussion of a paragraph of "Burnt Norton".' The discussion, or exchange, takes time, and the English language itself, a reality that linguistic science can't engage upon, is an immemorial living process, exemplifying the essential part time has had, and has, in the life that, having become conscious, capable of responsibility and given to thinking, inquires into its own meaning.

But Eliot insists on the unreality, the unlivingness, of life in time. The aim of those who are in the ordinary sense 'alive' can only be, if they indeed are capable of aim ('Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose'), to experience the 'moment', which is 'in and out of time'.* To have achieved it (if 'achieve' is the word—and the poet succeeds

* 'The Dry Salvages', V.

in prompting us with both the word and this parenthesis) is to be 'conscious', which is 'not to be in time'. The conscious moment is not of time and we cannot stay in it; in so far as we really live—this is Eliot's insistence—we live on the memory, 'But only in time can the moment . . . Be remembered.'

The third movement is devoted to bringing home to us the positive intention of the paradox by emphasizing the negation, the entailed judgment of unreality. 'I can only say, *there* we have been', but

> Here is a place of disaffection
> Time before and time after
> In a dim light . . .

This unreality, contrasted with the 'darkness' sought in the spiritual exercise—

> Emptying the sensual with deprivation
> Cleansing affection from the temporal

—is not pure nothingness. We are to identify it with life in time as evoked by the poet:

> Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
> Over the strained time-ridden faces
> Distracted from distraction by distraction
> Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
> Tumid apathy with no concentration
> Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
> That blows before and after time,
> Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
> Time before and time after.

The major poet's contemporaneity is manifested in the evocation of 'this twittering world', modern London, in which the Underground, with implicit metaphorical potency, plays its Eliotic part.

I say 'Eliotic' because the *parti pris* that goes with the potency becomes overt and unmistakable in the close of the next paragraph, the last of the movement, where it is made plain that we are to take the evoked Underground as giving us not merely an aspect of life in time, but life as it must essentially be; temporal life as opposed to the postulated state (for is it imagined—or imaginable?) of being 'conscious'. The paragraph, invoking in contrast to this life of 'Time before and time after' the spiritual descent

> Into the world of perpetual solitude,
> World not world, but that which is not world,

concludes:

> This is the one way, and the other
> Is the same, not in movement
> But abstention from movement; while the world moves
> In appetency, on its metalled ways
> Of time past and time future.

The 'metalled ways' do indeed belong—they sharpen the presence of the Underground and we may be sure that they had their part in the inevitable rightness, to the poet's sense, that brought the Underground imagery into the poem. But to say that is to emphasize the element of *parti pris*, of anti-life, in his basic disposition. Ten lines have come between 'this twittering world' and the 'world' that 'moves in appetency on its metalled ways'. Nevertheless we find ourselves asking whether the development that makes the 'appetency', now identified with life and the world of time, an inhuman meaningless drive isn't arbitrary—and arbitrary in a way that we recognize as very much Eliot's. He registers his recoil from mechanistic determinism; but in doing so he denies life's essential creativity, though committed to vindicating by creative means his *ahnung* of a spiritual reality he posits as the only escape.

In this self-contradiction, from which there is, for him, no escape, Eliot is imprisoned; it defeats intelligence in him and imposes, as clairvoyance and spiritual courage, an acceptance of defeat. I recall once more a sentence and a half of Michael Polanyi's:

> If all men were exterminated, this would not affect the laws of inanimate nature. But the production of machines would stop . . .

The 'appetency' that produced the 'metalled ways' didn't itself belong to inanimate nature. It was a manifestation of that vital creativity which has so wide a range of modes—a range that includes the livingness of language, the religious quest of value and significance, and the work of major poets. How could 'spiritual reality', for the apprehending of which Eliot (thus involuntarily conceding the point) uses the word 'conscious', *be* a reality for us, or anything but a conventionally empty phrase, unless apprehended out of life, in which we are, and in terms of our human livingness? That is Blake's insistence when he says:

'Jesus was an artist'. The courage that doesn't think of itself as courage—the courage of genius (which in Eliot was so disablingly qualified)—is still more apparent in what Crabb Robinson reports:

> on my asking in what light he viewed the great question concerning the Divinity of Jesus Christ, He said—*He is the only God*—But then he added—'And so am I, and so are you.' Now he had just before (and that occasioned my question) been speaking of the errors of Jesus Christ.

That last sentence would not by itself, I suppose, give Blake immunity from the charge of hubris. But no one worth arguing with would think of bringing it against him. It didn't occur to him to think of himself as exposed to it—and in that too he was very different from Eliot. I don't mean that Eliot tended to ask himself whether or not he was especially guilty of impious human presumption; but the emphasis that in his religious poetry he lays on humility certainly implies a preoccupation with the sin of hubris. Curiously enough, or very significantly, the word itself came to my mind when I was pondering the nine lines of the brief section IV that immediately follows, and asking myself what it was that made the passage in its elusive way so essentially Eliotic:

> Time and the bell have buried the day,
> The black cloud carries the sun away.
> Will the sun turn to us, will the clematis
> Stray down, bend to us; tendril and spray
> Clutch and cling?
> Chill
> Fingers of yew be curled
> Down on us? After the kingfisher's wing
> Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
> At the still point of the turning world.

There is the poignant wistfulness, the note of tender longing—a starved yearning for tenderness: we recall Tiresias

> At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
> Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,

and reflect that both passages are the striving homeward of one who has no home. The later passage sharpens the poignancy—with the imagery with which Eliot has offered elsewhere to give an assuring concreteness to the 'moment' of apprehended reality, but which here

carries on the vibration of a yearning suffered in inescapable remoteness ('Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time'). The answer is there when one turns up the passage in *The Waste Land* with which this brief section of 'Burnt Norton' associates itself first and, as one considers and reconsiders, lastingly:

> *Dayadhvam:* I have heard the key
> Turn in the door once and turn once only
> We think of the key, each in his prison
> Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
> Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
> Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus.

Wistful yearnings at nightfall, 'aethereal' memories and intuitions in the waning light, self-doubting and thwarted tenderness and aspiration—it is the same *Stimmung*, though it is not one that the name of Coriolanus normally evokes. Nor do we associate Coriolanus with T. S. Eliot—even a broken Coriolanus. But this last phrase makes it plain that Eliot himself does—in the special way that the whole passage from '*Dayadhvam*' ('sympathize') to the concluding phrase itself lays open to our perception. There is no need to attribute a clairvoyant self-knowledge to Eliot; it was just his case that he was aware of more in himself than he was capable of recognizing, and that characteristic is manifested with peculiar strength, it seems to me, here.

Coriolanus, of course, recurs significantly in the poetry, and there is no question of our not registering that it is as the hero representative of human pride—pride that is hubris and incurs as such its overt Nemesis. The heroic and brutally naïve form of hubris personified in the Coriolanian pride Eliot hardly associated as such with his own case. It serves him for satiric use in 'Triumphal March', the second poem of the 'Coriolan' fragment. But there is nothing satiric about the presence of Coriolanus in the passage of *The Waste Land*—the brief passage that, after '*Dayadhvam*', begins with 'I' and maintains, with its peculiar Eliotic mode, a continuity of direct personal inwardness of feeling, so giving us the poet himself as 'a broken Coriolanus'. The un-Eliotic suggestion of the phrase goes with the peculiar self-diagnostic significance of what we are given: the tacit awareness conveyed that is not full conscious recognition—not unequivocal and surely possessed self-knowledge. It is plain that but for the anti-Eliotic ostensible 'value' of Coriolanus Eliot couldn't have used him in this way, and equally plain that the use isn't calculated or calculating.

What I have been pointing to is the significance of his interest in that tragic hero. Eliot himself was in no danger of being a tragic hero of that kind, or a hero at all, and in the twilight condition attending on the difference the *pudeur* and profound *amour propre* that were alerted by the threat of self-knowledge lost some of their power—and (we must remember) Eliot's personal need of a true impersonality of insight into human nature was intense and desperate. He doesn't, then, think of the insight registered in the passage of *The Waste Land* as self-diagnosis: he doesn't, that is, take—in conscious recognition—its full force. The passage itself reveals that; in it he 'confirms a prison'—and he remains in prison through *Four Quartets* to the end. The prison is the selfhood.

I am invoking here the distinction that, within the individual being, Blake makes between the selfhood and the identity. What the passage reveals is Eliot's own confirmed inability to recognize any such distinction. The '*Dayadhvam*', a note tells us, means 'sympathize'; but the 'I'—not the less for Eliot's not saying so to himself, or clearly seeing it—is the Coriolanus who declares:

> I'll never
> Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
> As if a man were author of himself
> And knew no other kin.

What, in short, follows on '*Dayadhvam*' implies—the irony clearly entails it—is that the imprisonment in the enclosing self exemplified with tragic naïvety by Coriolanus gives us the inescapable human condition. If this were thought to be in any way open to question one could settle the doubt by turning up the note at the end of *The Waste Land* on 'I have heard the key' and pointing to the quotation from F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* that occupies most of it:

> My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.

Bradley was not a poet, and, like most philosophers, could ignore the significance of his needing, and being able to use, the language in which he not only wrote his philosophy, but thought it. The language

one speaks, which seems so inwardly, intimately and personally *of* one's individual being, was not created by oneself, though one plays incidentally one's part in keeping it alive and continually renewed. One doesn't, on the other hand, resort to it 'out there' for communication as if it were an instrument lying ready to be used. Nor if it were that could it have served for such purposes of human communication as Eliot's in *Four Quartets*. In fact, when we really consider (as linguisticians neither do nor can) the reality of a language, we are contemplating, and trying to think about, that unique relation of individual lives to life which isn't susceptible of statistical treatment, and, for the procedures of science, mathematics or logic, doesn't exist—though the existence of these implies it. It is so inherently and essentially 'there' in a functioning language that it doesn't need to be consciously assumed—indeed, escapes conscious recognition even in philosophers, and necessarily in linguisticians. But it is 'there', inescapably, in all thought, and in such a way that the forms, idioms, and conventions of what is recognized as thinking make, and *could* make, no provision for dealing with it explicitly. It is antecedent to consciousness and formulation, which have supervened upon it. In fact, the uniqueness of the unique relation is such that 'relation', a word one has to use, seems to lack felicity and is perhaps misleading.

What is immediately relevant to these reflections on the nature of language, and to Eliot's case, is Blake's distinction. The 'identity' and the 'selfhood' are not separable, but present in the organic wholeness of every human life a varying relation—or perhaps it would be better to say a shifting emphasis on one or the other. To give an account of Shakespeare's Coriolanus is to describe the dominant 'selfhood'. The identity is the individual being as the focal manifestation of creative life—the mode of manifestation in which alone, each instance being unique in its individuality, life can be pointed to as 'there'. When Blake said, 'Tho' I call them Mine, I know that they are not Mine', he meant that when the artist is creatively successful the creativity to which the achievement belongs is not his, though, while transcending the person he is, it needed his devoted and supremely responsible service. The creative power and purpose don't reside within his personal self-enclosure; they are not his property or in his possession. He serves them, not they him. The pride that Blake defends as a virtue is conscious and resolute responsibility. It goes with the belief in human creativity that is not hubris; that belief is what I have been endeavouring to define.

For Eliot pride is Coriolanian. The word we have to take note of in *Four Quartets* is 'humility', which goes with 'self-surrender' and 'submission' and the idea of expiation. In the essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', which is supposed to offer us a doctrine of 'impersonality', he speaks of the poet's 'continual surrender of himself to something which is more important', and says: 'The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.' The essay is confused and ambiguous, like the attitude behind it, which couldn't—certainly not by the essayist himself—be clearly and cogently stated; but what I quote asks to be set against Blake's 'I know that they are not Mine.' For Eliot's dismissal of 'personality' is comprehensive; it distinguishes no Blakean 'identity'. The point to be made in relation to the key that turns in the door and turns once only is that to recognize with full implicit belief, as should surely be natural above all to a major poet, the fact of human creativity is to know that the nightmare of hopeless self-enclosure *is* a nightmare, and, if irresistible and lasting, an insanity. Everyone, whether articulate about it in explicit recognition or not, is familiar with the relevant basic truth as it is manifested in the livingness of the language he participates in. Eliot himself, contemplating a poem that he recognizes as an achieved creation, must—like any poet or critic or cultivated person—assume that minds (which are also sentiences) can meet in it. But Eliot, even in his major work, and most significantly there, is not consistent; there is essential self-contradiction which the prepotent implicit intention entails disguising—in the first place from the poet himself.

The Coriolanian section concludes:

> After the kingfisher's wing
> Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
> At the still point of the turning world.

The purpose is to reinforce the evocation of a transcendent reality, one that makes a positive third meaning out of 'neither living nor dead'.* But what evocation has there been? What has it amounted to? The 'still point', which invokes our perceptual experience, has the

* I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
The Waste Land, l.38

effect of being a pregnant potentiality for heuristic development. The association with light in the lines I have quoted is moving and suggestive, but it is made rather than elicited—not development but association; there is nothing like intrinsic inevitability. And when we turn again to the last movement of the quartet we find that the characteristic suggesting logic, now resumed, is illusory. What we have, rather, is the cumulative association of analogies, and the suggestion of there being a significant inevitability in the succession depends on the effect of paradox that characterizes them all. In fact, even where there seems most decidedly to be development we find, on consideration, something arbitrary. Taking the challenge to examine critically the structure of the thought, we ask what relation there is between the play on 'still' in

> the light is still
> At the still point of the turning world

and the ostensible carry-on in the opening of the last movement:

> Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

And what significant connexion is there between that and

> Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
> Not that only . . .?

I break off there, because the last phrase of the quotation, emphasized thus, alerts us to the nature of the Eliotic *procédé*. What kind of argument, or method of persuasion, we ask as we read on to the second full-stop (which is followed by a decided shift of tone, address and overt intention), is it that concludes its summing-up in this way?

> but the co-existence,
> Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
> And the end and the beginning were always there
> Before the beginning and after the end.
> And all is always now.

The succession of discursively stated paradoxes makes an implicit claim to be, by reason of a continuity of organic life that charges them from

what has gone before, more than merely abstract and discursive. They have the air of carrying focally, and so summarizing, a truth and a significance made cogently present by those subtly organized Eliotic felicities like 'the still point', the Chinese jar that 'still moves perpetually in its stillness' and 'I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.'

It is an illusion (shared, no doubt by the poet) that such successions achieve any co-operative total presentation; there is no cogency of that kind. A local and limited intensity of thought again and again there certainly is; but the subtly marshalled complexity of movement that offers to have enclosed, and presented for our contemplation, an unstatable transcendent reality is marshalled, not by the promptings of a supremely apprehensive and confident *ahnung*, but merely by an insistent intention, the intensity of which is the intensity of the poet's need. This intensity manifests itself as an ostensible cogency, and what the poet's compulsive intention, which its insistence can't make anything but illusionist, proposes to have presented us with is represented by the brief closing sentence of my quotation; 'And all is always now.'

The explicitness of this is spectral; the air of meaning something, and something supremely important, is merely an air. All the discrediting of clock-time and common sense that Eliot's peculiar poetic genius has achieved, and all the creative play with memory, have, between them, done nothing to make the spectral anything but a personal plight disguised—and betrayed. The magnificent first movement of 'Burnt Norton' has not, in exploring the paradoxes—the succession-transcending subtleties—of time, disposed of time. If life is real, then time is an essential constituent of reality; for time would seem to be inescapably involved in life. Just what Eliot would have said to these propositions it is impossible to be sure; he pretty clearly feels that he has reasons for not accepting them unequivocally as I state them. But no such reasons issue by inevitable implication from what is most impressive in his exploration of conceptual thought, language and experience.

His characteristic quasi-logical movement by successive analogies towards a foreseen goal arrives (to anticipate the formulation that comes towards the end of 'The Dry Salvages') at 'the point of intersection of the timeless with time'—presented, we have to judge, as the most persuasively logical of the cogencies implicit in 'And all is always now'. But the movement is not logic and there is no demonstrative cogency. What Eliot is doing is exploring the field of his own

apprehensions, and testing those which seem to him to be crucial in the effort to turn them into firm and pregnant certainties. It is the evidence of his painfully earnest concern for sincerity that recommends his representations to our sympathetic reception. But Eliot is a divided man; hence the desperate need that directs his creative work—desperate, because it is of a kind that admits of no fully and consistently imagined answer.

The profoundest and completest sincerity, that which characterizes the work of the greatest writers, is then impossible for him. There is a limitation of self-knowledge that he can't transcend; a courage that he hasn't—though he can recognize it in Blake.* In fact, the gift for an equivocal subtlety of formulation that exasperated one so much in the Editor of *The Criterion*—the talent that enabled him, in writing (for example) an obituary of Robert Bridges, to satisfy the institutionalist *bien-pensants* while making the undisturbed dismissive judgment plain to readers like myself, who knew that Eliot's view of the deceased Laureate as a poet coincided with my own—went very deep. It went down to the core of the centrally divided inner being, and the attendant lack of courage in the face of life.

'The point of intersection of the timeless with time' proposes itself as Eliot's escape from the Yeatsian dilemma. If we recoil from the idea of death, and from life itself because it entails dying, we need to be assured of an attainable state that is neither death nor 'only living', for

> that which is only living
> Can only die.

The element of intellectual persuasion in the 'music' is essential to its reassuringness—reassuringness in the first place for Eliot (and to be convinced of that he must feel, of course, that he has established a general validity—for he is concerned with the real). 'The point of intersection' owes its plausibility and its persuasiveness or power to what has gone before. It picks up, seeming to reinforce it, 'the still point of the turning world', which, we have seen, serves the poet's

* 'And because he was not distracted, or frightened, or occupied in anything but exact statements, he understood. He was naked, and saw man naked, and from the centre of his own crystal. To him there was no more reason why Swedenborg should be absurd than Locke. . . . He approached everything with a mind unclouded by current opinions. There was nothing of the superior person about him. This makes him terrifying.'

Selected Essays, page 307.

purpose not by being developed in any logically reinforcing or intellectually demonstrative way but by subtle processes of association and suggestive juxtaposition. With the conclusions of both IV and V before us at the one opening of the book, we are prompted to make a further observation regarding the way in which 'the still point', the 'now' of 'And all is always now', is given the charge of paradoxical livingness without which it could hardly serve to reassure. I have quoted the sentence linking the flash of the kingfisher's wing with the light 'at the still point of the turning world'. The close of V (and of 'Burnt Norton') is more insistently significant in the same way. The insistence is first of all explicit and intellectual, occupying ten lines of the final paragraph with a quasi-logical succession of propositions that ask, with their Aristotelian authority, to be taken as a résumé of a significance generated and defined by the complex 'music'. I will quote enough to bring out the intended force of the sudden transition:

> Love itself is unmoving,
> Only the cause and end of movement,
> Timeless, and undesiring
> Except in the aspect of time
> Caught in the form of limitation
> Between un-being and being.
> Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
> Even while the dust moves
> There rises the hidden laughter
> Of children in the foliage
> Quick now, here, now, always . . .

With what purpose this 'disturbs the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves' needs no divining: it frankly evokes the rose-garden of the opening movement, thus implicitly presenting 'the point of intersection', 'the still point', as a compellingly charged apprehension—'Quick now, here, now, always'—of a reality that is neither life nor death. But the enchantment of remembered childhood is life, and so is the transcendent-seeming swift transit of the kingfisher, 'answering light to light.' The manoeuvres of analytic and constructive thought that have led us up to the implicitly required acceptance of 'the still point', 'the point of intersection', as the 'now' of 'And all is always now' have not themselves generated any charge that validates the 'now' as the apprehended real reality, the eternal. The 'now' remains an intention, and the association with it of evoked life is external merely, a matter of juxta-

position; any effect of its being more than that is an effect of 'musical' sleight.

I don't mean by this that Eliot is deliberately playing false: his art doesn't differ from manifestations of the creative impulse in general in being essentially heuristic, and with what intense earnestness it is *that* comes out in the subtlety and originality of the 'music' that confounds suggestively conveyed intention with something more compelling. If, of course, the reader finds himself convinced that the validity of the intention is sufficiently established by the 'musical' *procédé*, then his judgment on 'Burnt Norton' will be different from mine. My own tribute to Eliot's genius must be a profoundly convinced 'No'. The advantage offered by the present passage is that it invites me to point immediately to the grounds for this decision. They are contained in the last two lines of 'Burnt Norton', those following on from the closing line of what I have already quoted:

> Quick now, here, now, always–
> Ridiculous the waste sad time
> Stretching before and after.

What compels my 'No' is the assumed antithesis between the 'now' and time–for 'time' here, the waste, sad and ridiculous (what belongs to it 'can only die'), represents that which is 'only living'. It is an antithesis unmistakably meant as a dismissing judgment passed on the world of time and on life that involves time, being necessarily lived in it. Such an antithesis is not made respectable by a varied insistence to the effect that

> Only through time time is conquered.

'Conquered' is an equivocal word; but there can be no doubt about the attitude to time and human life assumed, and insistently expressed, in 'Burnt Norton'. And it is not merely that I, personally, find it unacceptable. A poet who, offering to achieve and confirm his reassuring apprehension of a really and supremely real by creative means, dismisses all but the non-temporal 'now' as 'the waste sad time stretching before and after' stultifies himself. He is committed to discrediting the creative process he undertakes to demonstrate and vindicate; positing a kind of living that is not process (for process involves change and death), he offers us, dazed himself and deceived by the astonishing inner duplicity or dividedness that is one aspect of

his genius, an impressive effect that, considered, resolves itself into a play of distractions, evasiveness and equivocation.

My commentary, together with the criticism it intends, seems to me to be reinforced by the stridently implausible–being crudely willed and calculated–half-dozen lines that immediately precede the last paragraph of the quartet:

> Shrieking voices
> Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
> Always assail them. The Word in the desert
> Is most attacked by voices of temptation,
> The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
> The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

I find the closing rhythmic felicity betrayingly infelicitous. In fact, the interpolated passage seems to express a misgiving of the poet about the confident 'And all is always now'–about not merely its validity as an apprehension but its air of conveying something more than a self-avowed recognition of a dilemma or impasse.

(II)

'EAST COKER'

And yet Eliot is a major poet: one's certainty of that is (if it could be supposed to have wavered) decisively renewed by the opening movement of 'East Coker'. 'Home is where one starts from': that, quoted from the last paragraph of the quartet, might have stood as epigraph beneath the title. The intimation that the force of it is to be conveyed by emphasizing 'starts' comes to us in the opening phrase: 'In my beginning is my end'. The life that is time and change–that is the theme. The 'end', as the affirmation gives it us, is posited–to be justified in strenuously achieved apprehension and faith; it is what is present to us in the 'now' of the 'moment of consciousness', the eternal 'now'. Where Eliot 'starts from' in the opening paragraph is the arbitrary beginning of the family-history he knows, and the arbitrariness is the opening theme. What, that is, starts in Eliot as he contemplates the ancestral village is a meditation on change–on the interminable succession of beginnings that is inseparably a succession of ends:

> In succession
> Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,

Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.

He is playing, in fact, on the ambiguity of both 'end' and 'now', and there is no arbitrariness in that, for such play is a direct manifestation of the obsessive concern, the profound inner questioning, that drives him in his daring and very diverse originality. 'End' in the sense that gets its brutal emphasis in death—'Houses live and die'—dominates implicitly in the insistence of the first paragraph. The major poet is apparent in the way in which this contrasts in mode with the second. The first, while evoking (as opposed to generalizing about it) the all-pervasive and never-ceasing process of change, has an effect of monotonous generality. The second, after the repeated 'In my beginning is my end', follows directly with 'Now'. The word here announces a shift to immediacy: this is not history or reflective brooding on the past; this is the here and now, the actuality of the lived present moment:

Now the light falls
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,
Where you lean against a bank while a van passes,
And the deep lane insists on the direction
Into the village, in the electric heat
Hypnotised.

The major quality of the poet is manifest in the vivid completeness of the immediacy. This, we can't fail to recognize, is a creative master of the English language; only poetic genius could do this with words. The critical recognition is spontaneous; it is an essential element in the recreative response—that which pays one's proper tribute to the compelling felicity. We feel the rhythmic livingness as, in the particular rightnesses, inseparable from the felicities of evoked concreteness and actuality. So in

leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,

the 'shuttered' takes inevitably the right emphasis, and the ensuing phrase leaves the lane shuttered (as if it were an airless room*) in

* Cf. '*And female smells in shuttered rooms*', 'Rhapsody On A Windy Night'.

contrast to the open field across which the light falls—the 'deep lane' which

> insists on the direction
> Into the village, in the electric heat
> Hypnotised.

We recognize immediately that 'insists' does more than tell us that the lane winds. 'Electric heat' recalls the 'autumn heat' and the 'vibrant air' of the rose-garden, but the suggested imminence is different. What we get is indeed a transition from the 'now' of present actuality, but it is not to the eternal or transcendent, but to the evocation of an imagined actuality now long dead. This evocation certainly has a bearing on the way we take the rose-garden, the still point, and the 'reality' of which human kind 'cannot bear very much'. It precipitates the formulation of an adverse criticism of Eliot's thought—for it is as thought that he presents what we are to take as his maturely considered attitude.

The third paragraph, which is now in question, and in length almost equals the two preceding together, is not as satisfying as either of them. The mastery is still there in the way in which Eliot effects the shift of distance. He picks up from the beginning of the second paragraph—

> Now the light falls
> Across the open field . . .

That 'now' belongs to the 'deep lane, shuttered with branches', where the evoked closeness has become a brooding imminence ('Hypnotised . . . Wait for the early owl'). As we stand in the sultry dusk our attention is abruptly turned outwards, the shift of distance being confirmed and established in the first full line:

> In that open field
> If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
> On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire . . .

It is a shift of distance in more than one sense, being a shift from the 'now' of present actuality to a 'now' of the past—that is, to one imagined and essentially non-tangible and unapproachable. Yet this is offered us as having too the unquestionable authority of fact, and

there can be no doubt that Eliot offers it so in full sincerity. One's conviction of that is what compels the criticism, which involves the charge of a most gravely disabling ignorance. This is how he presents the country-folk of pre-industrial England:

> Round and round the fire
> Leaping through the flames, or joined in circles,
> Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter
> Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,
> Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
> Mirth of those long since under earth
> Nourishing the corn. Keeping time . . .

I will comment first on what comes in the close:

> The time of milking and the time of harvest
> The time of the coupling of man and woman
> And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.
> Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

I don't see how that can be explained away. In its reductivism it is so patently innocent, and it is the innocence that is so revealing. One might have thought, how surprisingly close to the Lawrence of *The Rainbow*!—until the final touch. That leads one to reflect that the intuition Lawrence expresses in the places one would point to may be called religious, while Eliot is hardly thinking of such an adjective as applying here in his poem; he appropriates it (one divines) to a kind of context that is very different. Why then, one is impelled to ask, did he earlier in the same paragraph work into his verse that passage from Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Governour*?—

> The association of man and woman
> In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
> A dignified and commodious sacrament.

It could hardly have been with a profane intention—whether or not directed at Sir Thomas. The explanation surely is an intention of a different kind that possessed him—possessed him with monopolizing completeness. The name, as both that of a well-known Tudor writer and his own, having attracted him, he found, disposable as Eliotic verse, a passage to quote that suited his strongly emotional purpose, which was to present the sixteenth-century 'now', and to present it in a way that would give a grim resuming force to the concluding 'Dung and death' (for that close was certainly in view, and working

decisively in his mind). The close itself, if one likes, is an irony—an Eliotic one. The poet's unconsciousness of the effect in relation to Sir Thomas's 'sacrament of matrimonie' emphasizes the reductive force of 'the coupling' in that culminating sentence, and can't but be judged to exemplify another of Eliot's traits—the distaste he tends to assume as proper and (in a higher sense) normal at the thought of sex.*

The given reductivism is in keeping with Eliot's conception of the rural English populace contemporary with his Tudor namesake. He clearly thinks of them as yokels, clumsy, crude, gross and incapable of the spiritual or cultural graces.†

> Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter
> Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,
> Earth feet, loam feet . . .
> . . . Feet rising and falling.
> Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

Yet it was they who created the English language—robust, supple, humanly sensitive and illimitably responsive and receptive—and made possible in due course Shakespeare, Dickens and the poet of *Four*

* Consider, e.g., this expression of his reductive habit—less circumspect than usual for reasons implicit in the reference: Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals*, Translated by Ch. Isherwood, Introduction by T. S. Eliot (Blackamore Press, 1930): 'But in the adjustment of the natural to the spiritual, of the bestial to the human and the human to the supernatural, Baudelaire is a bungler compared with Dante; the best that can be said, and that is a very great deal, is that what he knew he found out for himself. In this book, the *Journaux Intimes*, and especially in *Mon Coeur mis à nu*, he has a great deal to say of the love of man and woman. One aphorism which has been especially noticed is the following: *la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour gît dans la certitude de faire le mal.* This means, I think, that Baudelaire has perceived that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil (of *moral* Good and Evil which are not natural Good and Bad or puritan Right and Wrong). Having an imperfect, vague romantic conception of Good he was at least able to see that to conceive of the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than to think of it as the natural, "life-giving", cheery automatism of the modern world.' A characteristic unconsciousness is apparent in the implication that the assumed alternatives are exhaustive—or in the confused assumption that he has presented us with alternatives.

† Cf. 'Even the aspect of social life most deeply rooted in the bodily endowment of man, that of man and woman and of mother and child, is different from that of animals because it is *always* bound to definite *norms* and follows a rule in every society.' Buyterdijk quoted by Marjorie Grene, *op. cit* page 177. The context in Grene is immediately relevant.

Quartets. A language is a cultural life, a living creative continuity, and English, remaining English, took into its life the values, perceptions, refinements and possibilities of a complex civilization. The culture inherent in it was more than a matter of agriculture, craft-skills and bumpkin socialities. Eliot would have done well to consider, or reconsider, how and with what essential propriety 'A dignified and commodious sacrament' found itself in the passage he quotes. But, even though he wouldn't have disputed that, by way of the part played by the Church in English life, the English language participated decisively—for itself and those who spoke it and those who also wrote it—in the higher intellectual and spiritual continuities, so that it had the power to ingest the Renaissance cultural inflow, truth of that kind could have only a limited meaning for him. For he was, however much more subtle, a fellow-countryman of Pound, and shared the American blankness, the inability to recognize the evidence—the fact—of the kind of human world that has vanished.

Of course, in England—in Europe—today it is an American world, or one rapidly Americanizing, that we live in. On the other hand, Eliot's genius was, as I have said, paradoxical: it was that of a major poet who had disabling inner contradictions to struggle against. His achievement makes plain both the unquestionableness of the genius and the frustrations that life suffered in him. The genius and those conditions together make his involuntary testimony challenging in a highly significant way; that is, consideration of the plight his poetry reveals sharpens our understanding of our civilization.

There is something very illuminating about the inevitability with which that whole assured visionary contemplation of the 'open field'—'you can hear', 'you can see them'—comes to rest in 'Dung and death'. I recall the way in which the securely poised equivocation of 'Lady, three white leopards' in 'Ash-Wednesday' concludes:

> Under a juniper-tree the bones sang, scattered and shining
> We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,
> Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand,
> Forgetting themselves and each other, united
> In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye
> Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity
> Matters. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

That—it was never an established resting-place—belongs to a past phase of the advance towards 'Little Gidding'. In it Eliot (in the given

mode of contemplation) accepts extinction as an escape from the sick tension–'no country for old men'–of a dilemma that mocks at choice, but the acceptance is neutralized by his astonishing gift for identifying profound and full integrity with a kind of duplicity or doubleness–for using language to create and convey a duality of attitude that, as being neither this nor the other, but a third thing, evades analysis (at any rate his own). There is the evocation of emptiness, but the emptiness is charged with an enchantment of spiritual suggestion, and there is no hint of any obsession with age and decay that had to be exorcized: the bones are sterile, and consort with the heraldic white leopards. But 'Dung and death' is unequivocal recoil: this is death as it is brooded on by Hamlet in the grave-diggers' scene. Eliot contemplates the fact in its unacceptableness. What we also note is that the frankness of the contemplating relates in an obvious way to the insistent positive preoccupation of *Four Quartets*, the concern to establish the apprehension of a state that is neither death nor the life that is 'only living' and so 'can only die.'

It seems certain that he will end satisfied–to say which is to anticipate the severest judgment exacted by the completed poem. But perhaps at this point I ought to confine myself to saying that, in any case, he won't, one divines, have left equivocation behind him. He is condemned to it by the impasse manifest in his unintelligence about language–his inability to recognize its nature and significance. He is blind to the contradiction he enacts and is. What he believes in supremely (the evidence being the poetry itself) is the taxing human responsibility represented by his devotion to his art–the art to which his genius has dedicated him. What he *asserts* about his spiritual quest is worth little; the questing that matters is inseparable from the arduous creativity. In spite of the key that turns in the door once and turns once only, it would have been vain for him to assert that he didn't as a poet believe in the possibility of communication; and that evident truth carries an essential more with it, for more than what the word 'communication' implies is involved in creative utterance: the pre-existing English language, essential to Eliot's need, was a product and manifestation of creativity, and he hadn't, and couldn't have, created it.

The participation of his own nisus in the life already 'there' is exemplified with cogent beauty in the brief last paragraph of the movement–exemplified sensuously and spiritually, the vital perception that naturalizes into the human world having its focus in

Out at sea the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides.

This is again the 'now' of the poet's temporal present—in its immediacy a remembered 'now', but not one offered as 'at the point of intersection'. Yet it is certainly not a 'now' of any 'waste sad time stretching before and after.' The 'wrinkles' and the 'slides' are Eliot, but we might very well say that they come to him from Shakespeare, and if they come, in a sense, from Shakespeare they came *to* Shakespeare from the multitudes of those who had spoken English before him. They present the continuous process of implicit creation that seeks and serves the real—the process that generates the human world and is served consciously and intensively by the great artists. The truth implicit here is what Blake was testifying to when, of works of his own, he said what I have quoted a number of times. While there is nothing of Coriolanus in Blake, he scorned 'humility', and had little use for 'expiation'; and the equivalent of Eliot's appeal to F. H. Bradley is inconceivable in him.

It goes with that sense of irremediable insulation that Eliot gets no comfort from continuities—there are for him none that matter. There is merely succession:

In succession
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended.

What he gets from his pilgrimage to East Coker is not a gain of strength from the cultivation of piety; it is the reverse of that—the reverse of reassurance: the point of the title is irony. The second movement makes that very plain. The opening short-lined paragraph—

A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion

—evokes the irreducible and irreconcilable strangeness of experience. It yields no pattern: this we find stated in the contrasting paragraph that follows—contrasting in mode, but not in communication. What we have here is immediately, intensely and disturbingly personal; the poet's highly conscious idiosyncrasy of art ('The poetry does not matter') is devoted, in an

intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings,

to conveying the desperation, the urgent need, that is behind the whole unprecedented enterprise. There is a significant propriety in the phrase

I have just quoted from him: used by Eliot thus, with this profoundly personal directness of avowal, it points to the singularity of *Four Quartets* as a creative work. For what such a phrase registers is not the major artist's self-commitment to what, formidable as the challenges are with which it confronts him, he knows to be the promising conception of a major created thing. Whatever he may tell himself, Eliot 'wrestles' in the deep awareness that the enterprise is desperate. He has, then, courage and, with it, modesty; but the modesty is not merely that, and 'courage' is not the last word. Perhaps we may say he is aware that success is impossible; if so, the awareness itself has something equivocal about it.

It will be well to reiterate again that Eliot matters because he is truly distinguished. He has rare gifts, but not the kind of human representativeness he implicitly—and inevitably—assumes. By reason of his gifts and his paradoxical weaknesses together, he compels us to recognition and fortifying explicitness in relation to basic issues. His desperation has a close bearing on one's sense of *la condition humaine*, the bearing being a potent challenge that can awaken to consciousness, and so to the effort of thought, in an age when the 'educated' world has forgotten what consciousness is.

The second movement of 'East Coker' strikes us with its personal intensity. The intensity is plain; it is with Eliot's expressive mastery frankly avowed; what we may at first hesitate about is the question of how to take it. One couldn't suppose it simulated; but habituated to the 'musical' organization, we may wonder for a moment whether it isn't so insistently there in order that it may tell in a total effect that will modify the emphasis. Actually, what follows brings home to us that the note of autobiographico-personal intensity is a significant main development that was announced by the pilgrimage to the ancestral village. The closing paragraph of the whole quartet begins:

> Home is where one starts from. As we grow older
> The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
> Of dead and living.

When—having read so far—we are prompted by that to turn back to the paragraph I was commenting on, we recognize that the development is apparent in the way in which the quietly personal note of

> It was not (to start again) what one had expected

is intensified—transmuted—into a desperately accusing cry; a cry against 'the quiet-voiced elders', human wisdom, humanity and life. What offers itself as matter-of-fact constating argument rapidly becomes extreme—so extreme that it constates no longer, but, as a directed emotional intensity, indicts:

> There is, it seems to us,
> At best, only a limited value
> In the knowledge derived from experience.
> The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
> For the pattern is new in every moment
> And every moment is a new and shocking
> Valuation of all we have been. We are only undeceived
> Of that which, deceiving, can no longer harm.

To tell us that the knowledge derived from experience has only a limited value is sound wisdom. But to tell us that it has none is another thing, and Eliot slips rapidly into affirming that. 'Slips' doesn't imply accident or a momentary surrender to spleen; it registers my sense of a transition so easy that the poet didn't need to be conscious of one. He still uses the word 'pattern', but a pattern that is 'new in every moment' contradicts the meaning of the word. It is a word that played an important part in the constructive 'music' of 'Burnt Norton':

> Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness . . .

But 'pattern' as invoked here in 'East Coker' plays no part in anything like positive creation—in generating the suggestion of a transcendent reality with the apprehension of which we may hope to reassure ourselves. On the contrary, the purpose it serves is the unqualified discrediting of experience, life and effort. Here too it is a key-word, and by the way it is used it is made to discredit itself. It is 'imposed', by experience, and 'the pattern is new in every moment'—nothing that is, but illusion, deception and betrayal. The inescapable conclusion comes, clear and firm, in the close:

> The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
> Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

The word that ends the line preceding is 'God', and that is not fortuitous. It too belongs to the development—it certainly has the air

of taking us beyond the 'point of intersection of the timeless with time', the 'moment of consciousness', the hint of a 'reality' of which 'human kind cannot bear very much.' But, we may ask, how far has the generative 'music'–the tactically creative play with 'still point', 'pattern', the 'moment in and out of time', the 'Chinese jar', the 'stillness of the violin, while the note lasts'–really availed to charge the word with an authority, a power, not inherent in it already from traditional use and convention? It is this, clearly, that Eliot is relying on here. The essential ancillary part played by equivocation is to be seen in the destructively paradoxical way in which 'pattern' is now used in order to reduce us to 'humility' as the only wisdom. Because human kind is impotent, blind, worthless and utterly contemptible, there is nothing for it but to recognize that we, with self-condemning abjectness, belong to God: 'humility is endless'–here, in the unqualified recognition of this, is the 'end' that is 'in my beginning'.

The inner condition, the personal plight, that makes it possible for Eliot to expose so unacceptable a contradiction as if it were an irresistible cogency–to present as recommended by the constructive intellectual subtlety he has demonstrated an attitude that is so far from asking us to call it intelligent (he presents it as utter human nullity, capable of nothing but self-recognition)–is conveyed with great power. This is the sentence of which I have quoted the last word:

> Do not let me hear
> Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
> Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
> Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.

It is important to bear in mind that when Eliot wrote this he thought of himself as an old man–that is virtually explicit in the first part of the paragraph. I have called the emotional intensity 'accusing', but what is in question is in the first place self-accusation.

It is a genuine and proper tribute to Eliot to say that we are indebted to him for such testimony. The issues are of moment–of immeasurable moment at this crisis of human history. I have made it plain that I am moved by Eliot to fundamental dissent. He compels one, as a genius can, to the kind of disagreement that, positively, is a sharpening of one's power to perceive and to realize, and a strengthening of one's thought, conviction and resolution. The very nature of the contradiction does that, made manifest, as it is, by a distinguished

being's plight. Tentatively, it is well at this point, I think, to make some brief resuming notes.

To tell us that

> human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality

sounds plausible, but it soon turns out to involve an essential nihilism. For, the reality that Eliot seeks to apprehend being spiritual, he assumes that the spiritual must be thought of as the absolutely 'other'—the antithetically and excludingly non-human. He is doomed to frustration by the inability to recognize the nature of the plight (such inability being a mark of it) that makes the effort of escape to which he dedicates himself seem the only kind that offers hope. Inability, effort and frustration (which too remains unrecognized) are all aspects of the same disorder: the inner conflict bred by irremediable self-division. In *Four Quartets*, for all the creative energy devoted to establishing the approach to apprehending, the painfully developed or enforced offer of apprehension is illusory: the real to be apprehended is nothing. It is the postulated otherness, the only relation to which that can be conceived for human nullity is one of conscious utter abjectness, utter impotence, utter nullity.

Confusion and unawareness of it are curiously and very relevantly betrayed in the continued demonstration of Eliot's creative gift that follows on the 'Honours list' passage that opens III:

> As, in a theatre,
> The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
> With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on
> darkness,
> And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama
> And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away—
> Or as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too long
> between stations
> And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence
> And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
> Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about . . .

This is a magnificent piece of Eliotic poetry. Surrendering to the recoil into darkness, Eliot—he being so much more than an 'eminent man of letters'—evokes, appropriately if paradoxically, the actual presence and process of the world we know; evokes it felicitously for his purpose.

But how odd—and how significant—that, recreating that memory of the Underground which seems for a moment so tellingly to the point, he should have been carried by the *élan* into the confusion (permanently unrecognized, it seems) of

> And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
> Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about . . .

We accept as natural and right the move from the 'distinguished civil servants', 'chairmen of many committees', and the rest, to the faces in the underground train. The 'mental emptiness' in those faces is the spiritual philistinism, the vacuity, of the civilization they represent. But 'growing terror of nothing to think about'—that, surely is unacceptable; it doesn't belong to their case at all. They are probably wondering, with mild impatience, how long the stop will last, whether they will be in time for the appointment, or whether there's any chance now of catching the train at Liverpool Street. Curiously enough, as if there were no difference, Eliot slides evenly from *their* 'mental emptiness' to that which he is prescribing for himself in a tradition of spiritual discipline:

> Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing—
> I said to my soul, be still . . .
> . . . . . .
> Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought . . .

It is impossible, so far as I can see, to believe that there is some intended irony, bearing on the essential difference that distinguishes the states ostensibly assimilated under the one phrase. The explanation, I conclude, is an inadvertence on Eliot's part that is both curious and significant. It points to the way in which his powers of concentrated attention are focused on his own strong reaction and the field to which that belongs.

As I have already remarked, there is an inevitable naturalness about the way in which the thought of the Underground comes to reinforce the recoil represented by the 'Honours list' evocation of our world. I deleted 'immediate' from before 'way', recollecting after having written it that the Underground 'as' comes after that of the scene-shifting. Since it is followed by the simile from anaesthesia the conclusion that it is offered as a pure parallel seems irresistible. The terror of nothingness—we think of 'The Hollow Men'—is Eliot's own; he

brings it from the funeral where 'there is no one to bury'. Itself it is intense ('real'), and it spontaneously asserts itself, when Eliot recalls the symbolic faces of the Underground: 'think' is an ambiguous word, and, in any case, it is the stop between stations that, felt as the sudden suspension of life, determines the force of the simile, and dominates in its suggestion, for him. This, it seems to me, is the inescapable explanation of the oddity, which, as I have said, is significant. The significance is that it brings out a distinctive trait of Eliot's: his inner conflict, with the accompanying insecurity, entails an uncertainty, a limitedness and a lack of imaginative penetration in his awareness of other people. It is an aspect of the limitedness of his sense of the human world.

What I have been offering is both a recognition of Eliot's great importance and a severe adverse criticism. It is his using a major poet's command of the English language to bring home to us the spiritual philistinism of our civilization that makes him important to us. The criticism regards his fear of life and contempt (which includes self-contempt) for humanity. This combination of fear and contempt commits him to a frustrating and untenable conception of the spiritual. By 'untenable' I mean one that cannot without his implicitly contradicting it be served by a poet. This was the point made positively by Blake when he said: 'Jesus was an artist.' When we set by this what he said about his own creative works, the nature and force of his dismissal of what we may call the Eliotic contradiction becomes plain. In demonstrating his supreme respect for his creativity, the artist demonstrates his allegiance to what he knows to be other than himself. The demonstration is the assertion of spiritual values, spiritual significance, spiritual authority; the resulting evidence their vindication. In his witness to the disastrousness of today's triumphant philistinism Eliot performed a great service to life and humanity; in his assertion of human abjectness and nullity he denied his implicit affirmation, but the contradiction and what it reveals should be plain enough to all who are capable of recognizing his genius and showing it the true respect. Only out of life and by the living, who are *of* it—of the life that is inseparable from the creativity intensively manifested by the artist—can spiritual values be recognized, served and maintained. To posit, as Eliot does, human impotence and nullity is to face oneself with the void, with emptiness, with nothingness. Deep down in himself Eliot knows this; the 'growing terror' that he seems to perceive behind the faces in the tube is his own—there we have the significance

of the anomalous simile, the formal inconsistency of which we too tend not to notice. His dividedness remains irremediable; in the non-poetic life in which it gives him patent satisfaction to be an 'eminent man of letters', a social value, the distinguished Editor of *The Criterion*, and a successful playwright, he can't escape the inner contradiction and the basic equivocation.

The emptiness he consciously seeks in the 'Honours list' movement is that to be achieved by evacuation practised as the spiritual exercise of the tradition:

> the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
> Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
> So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

The last line prompts us to a recall of 'Burnt Norton', and so does what follows, the evocation of the 'echoed ecstasy' that comes to fill the evacuated sentience, the achieved emptiness:

> Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning,
> The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
> The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
> Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
> Of death and birth.

We have here the same offer—a matter of intention and will—to associate the constructive 'music' of the 'still point', 'pattern', 'stillness' and the 'dance' with the enchanted 'memories' that belong with the rose-garden and suggest apprehensions of the transcendent. Here too we note that (inevitably, whatever Eliot may intend or feel) it is, however equivocally, on life and living experience that he draws, and that the wonder, the enchantment and the 'ecstatic' gleam belong, in an essentially normal way, to human life. Simply (along with his impressive subtleties) he is narrowly selective, and there is no intrinsic reason why a preoccupation with spiritual reality should confine itself to so limited an experience (inevitably human) and seem to find only that congenial, or significant—other than negatively.

The concluding phrase of the last-quoted passage too—

> pointing to the agony
> Of death and birth

—draws its meaning from life and points to facts of distinctively human experience. For Eliot it is the Christian reference that takes the

emphasis, as we perceive at once, not being unprepared. We already know—there have been decisive intimations—that the 'end' he has in view implies the Christian tradition as the context that defines and explains his attitude. But that tradition includes a wide range of diversities; there is more than one Christianity. What kind it is towards which Eliot inclines can't be by now wholly in doubt, and I have made it plain that my own reaction to what I divine is not sympathetic. I have meant to convey it as an adverse critical judgment, and my grounds for that seem to me strongly confirmed by the movement that follows—that (IV) which consists of five emphatic rimed stanzas.

The emphasis is the same in each. It leads us to reflect on that peculiarity in Eliot's case which makes him, later, insist that Celia, the vindicator of the spirit in *The Cocktail Party*, shall die, a missionary among savages, crucified and eaten (alive, it is delicately intimated) by ants. Eliot obviously assumes that the vindication of the spirit—which Celia's 'conversion' represents—entails that kind of association of 'birth and death' with blood and 'agony'. As insisted on, the association seems gratuitous and willed: at any rate, I can't see that the foregoing play—it is towards the end that we are told of the martyrdom—entails anything like the infliction on Celia of that kind of atrocity. Nor can I see that the exploratory-creative process leads us in any inevitable way to that kind of Christianity—the kind that Eliot seems to embrace.

> The dripping blood our only drink,
> The bloody flesh our only food:
> In spite of which we like to think
> That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood

—that emphasis (insisted on dramatically in Celia) seems to go with Eliot's inability to give 'conversion'—in either Celia's case or Lord Harry's—any charging significance; any significance but the merely posited, which remains, though asserted and insisted on, an algebraic x. The context does little for it. Eliot doesn't recognize the failure, for the word portends in him a profound emotional disturbance, something that Reilly, the ambiguous spiritual authority of *The Cocktail Party*, who speaks with Eliot's voice, calls (advising Celia, who 'thinks she really had a vision of something', but adds 'though I don't know what it was'),

> The kind of faith that issues from despair.

But the quatrains certainly give us something essential in the position defined by *Four Quartets*, and my 'No' is as emphatic as the quatrains. Something important, then, is confirmed in the tentative judgment forming about the work: a central criticism it compels is very like that which one had to pass on *The Waste Land*. The earlier work invites the criticism that it is in a limiting way more personal than the form and the notes suggest. The 'waste land' is not that of western man or 'the modern sense of the human situation', but the peculiar personal 'waste land' of T. S. Eliot, who (inevitably, one may say) assumed it to be, in its significance, representatively human.

Eliot knows, of course, that in *Four Quartets* it is the pressure of his own personal problem that drives him. But in the nature of the case the 'answer' he seeks must have, in essentials, a universal validity. Certainly the first of the *Quartets*, 'Burnt Norton', invites us to expect a serious offer of that. I remember very well the effect the poem had when it appeared separately and stood alone. When D. W. Harding, describing what it offered and what it was, said that it was not 'about' anything, but stood instead of the words 'eternity' and 'regret', his account was a felicitous pointer to the astonishing kind of originality Eliot's genius exhibits in 'Burnt Norton'. I myself have remarked that it seems to do the work of a discursive treatise. Of course, it does more than that; it does what merely discursive means of themselves couldn't, and the means it actually uses are extremely diverse. What I was thinking of was the way in which, dealing with the most intimate of inner experience, it seems to keep impersonal intelligence in full command.

One couldn't, when there was only 'Burnt Norton', foresee the complex totality of which we now see it as the introductory part.

'East Coker' calls for a very different description; for one thing, it is in a very obvious way very much more personal. Looking back at 'Burnt Norton' we recognize intimations of the coming development, as for instance in

> human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

That represents a decidedly personal report, but one that we clearly are expected to receive as unchallengeable. It is offered, indeed, as axiomatic. This becomes plain when 'East Coker', developing the Eliotic personal presence, alters our sense of what the poet is undertaking. We couldn't in any case, if we had read 'Burnt Norton' as

introductory, have expected what would follow to go on exhibiting the same ostensible impersonality of inquiring intelligence. The reigning purpose and impulsion, divinable after all, must, in further development, assert themselves more unmistakably, and the immediate dependence on experience, necessarily that of an individual, become—together with the distinctively and intensely personal situation—more overt.

I use the word 'exploration', but, of course, by the time Eliot came to write *Four Quartets*, which was a good deal later than 'Ash-Wednesday', he knew where he was going to arrive. In reading the Quartets as forming one work we are aware of that, and recognize that his economy depends on the foreknowledge. But his relation to the goal is still not that represented by *The Cocktail Party*, regarding which I have remarked that his aim in that play seems to be that of bringing home the inevitability of the Christian position to an audience presumed to be pagan.

I don't think that in *Four Quartets* he is any less certain what 'the Christian position' is. He assumes it; that is what I meant by saying that the observation regarding 'human kind' and 'reality' is offered as axiomatic. The difference between the poem and the play is that in *Four Quartets* Eliot's preoccupation is focused, not on an audience and an effect to be produced in the theatre, but on his own inner state and its commanding needs. The poem, in fact, explores that complexity; and the urgency of the needs, the hunger, limits the awareness that directs the exploration; the intensity that impels is also a disability.

On the other hand, we mustn't crudely judge what is before us as something other than what it essentially is. I have remarked that there seems to be nothing intrinsically inevitable or compelling in the association between the enchanted suggestions of the rose-garden and what by comparison may be called the intellectual 'music' that develops out of the basic analogy, 'the still point'. But Eliot is not really concerned for discursive cogency: the nature of the drive behind *Four Quartets* is given in 'The Hollow Men'. The urgent question is: 'What *can* I affirm?' It commits him to the profoundest and completest sincerity he can achieve, and his poetic technique, with its astonishing diversities of originality, is a technique for that. One way of intimating the rare kind of value the poem has for us is to say that it provides us with an incomparable study of what, in its most serious use, is meant by 'sincerity'—a word we cannot do without.

Sincerity, in the kind of enterprise *Four Quartets* represents, was for Eliot a peculiarly difficult achievement, and to say that is to say that it challenges our perception (which entails judgment) with complexities, subtleties and the need for delicate discriminations—not the less important for being delicate. My observation that the constructive 'music' of 'the still point', 'pattern' and the 'dance' doesn't, in its own distinctive terms and spirit, lead compellingly on—or give any intrinsic corroboration—to the evoked 'laughter in the garden' and the enchantment of 'echoed ecstasy' seems to me sound enough. But the question how—just in what way—such an observation may count as criticism in the total *compte rendu* is certainly affected by the new sense of what the poem is that forms, and confirms itself, as we read 'East Coker'. We realize with what force the word 'personal' applies: the experience explored is distinctively and decisively personal in being that of the poet whose inner situation made him write 'The Hollow Men'. The questions behind his 'music' and the ordering of his diversities of *procédé* are: 'What can I with certainty affirm? By what tests, what tactical approaches, do I arrive at my certitude and assure myself that it is valid and inescapable?' His cogency is for himself, but his situation and experience, whatever the phrase 'peculiarly personal' may here portend, are human, and the poetry that issues from them, he being a major poet, is of great human significance, and representative even if not compelling the judgment: 'humanly central.'

We are reminded by 'East Coker' that to judge poetry to be sincere doesn't amount to endorsing it. I had tentatively illustrated the point earlier when I questioned the intended general validity of

> human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

When in 'East Coker' I came to the stanzas that constitute IV my comment, I see from my marginal notes, was: 'Unambiguously committed now—explicitly—to what he was moving towards. But what Christianity is this? And I can't see that endorsement is entailed by my "being the poem"* up till now.' I didn't, by this dissociating of myself, mean to question that the position to which I said 'No!' was

* or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.

'The Dry Salvages', V

entailed for Eliot, or to suggest that I saw any ground at all for questioning his sincerity. What ordinarily challenges recognition as sincerity, in fact, was imputed implicitly in the significant force of the 'No.' But a 'No' of that kind, confirmed and reinforced as one goes forward in *Four Quartets*, means that only with a great deal of qualifying reservation can one 'be the music while the music lasts'. In any case, a creative literary work is conceived and composed in and of language, and in challenging thought and critical reflection *Four Quartets* is not distinguished from other literary works that one thinks of as major. The 'No', however, stands for a basic critical dissent, an adverse judgment that couldn't be neutralized, and could hardly be seriously qualified, by any development in the poem. The positively appreciative attention with which one goes on reading is accompanied by a directed critical vigilance, the judgment itself seeming likely to call for reinforcing elaboration.

I think that as one reads one should have the word 'sincerity' in mind. I have used it responsibly—used it, that is, where it necessarily had to be used, there being no other for the work. Being a word of the greatest importance, it faces any attempt at defining it with a difficult problem—which is to say that the human problem it portends eludes satisfactory statement (a mark of its basic importance). Even in scrupulously responsible use its force and *timbre* seem to vary from context to context. At any rate one has that feeling, and the challenge to inquire what the feeling may mean and what may lie behind it recurs in a peculiarly rewarding way for the duly attentive reader of *Four Quartets*. One makes much the same point in remarking, as I have done, that sincerity in such an undertaking was a peculiarly difficult achievement for Eliot. That constatation can hardly not have been arrived at in full explicitness by any reader by the end of 'East Coker'. The difficulty inhered in the distinctive Eliotic self-contradiction that has become unignorable by the middle of the quartet. We have to note as entailed by this, not only the self-ignorance that limits perception and insight, but the disturbingly arresting 'eminent men of letters'. Is that, we ask, *in*sincerity? If so, insincerity can be unconscious. But we know that already, and know that it is the unconscious kind that really matters—a point worth making now because of its bearing on the idea of sincerity (in the profoundest and completest sense, for that is what the study of *Four Quartets* should illuminate and lead us to ponder).

In the last movement we have again that characteristic negativeness that takes itself for something else. Or does it? Eliot obviously means

there to be an essential difference between the attitude of defeat and submission expressed there, and the abeyance of effort and positive impulse represented as a discipline of evacuation in the last paragraph of III, immediately before the Christian stanzas:

> In order to arrive at what you are not
> You must go through the way in which you are not.
> And what you do not know is the only thing you know
> And what you own is what you do not own
> And where you are is where you are not.

The straightforward stating and paraphrasable first half of V make it plain that effort *is* required of us—the last line of the paragraph runs:

> For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

But if the emptiness and inertness produced by evacuation make a new start possible, this can hardly be a matter of new hope, as the sober first-person epitome of experience that Eliot gives us intimates:

> So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
> Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*—
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure . . .

If one thought for a moment that this, as an avowal of total and inevitable defeat, had a special qualified sense that made it, in intention, less than a comprehensive assertion of human nullity, one would very soon be corrected. Trying is incumbent on us, but there is only the trying; it can achieve nothing, except to make our sense of our nullity final and absolute. If there seems after all to be, in the context, some concession made in respect of certain human representatives, the seeming is in fact only a confirming insistence on Eliot's completely anti-Blakean sense of the human relation to that reality of which, according to him, 'human kind cannot bear very much'.

> And what there is to conquer
> By strength and submission, has already been discovered
> Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
> To emulate—but there is no competition—
> There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
> And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
> That seem unpropitious.

The wrongness and perversity here are so unambiguously explicit as to make it an occasion for paying one's tribute to Eliot in the confidence that the justice of it may count on general endorsement. The tribute being critical dissent regarding basic issues, the prompted criticism entails a confirmed and completer awareness of one's own perceptions and apprehensions and what they portend and imply. Certain things about 'reality' and the human relation to it are made sufficiently clear. About what it is that has been discovered 'once or twice, or several times' and 'lost and found and lost again and again' there can, we gather, be no explicitness. Or rather (we see reason for venturing) it is the apprehension, surely possessed, and represented by the 'moment in and out of time', the 'intersection'. There is, then, worse to be said about the inherent weakness of 'human kind' in general than that it 'cannot bear very much reality'. It is imparted in what we learn about 'human kind's' relation to the 'men whom one cannot hope to emulate': it is essentially, we have to deduce, a non-relation.

What strikes me about this conception—if 'conception' is the word—is its blindness to the nature, conditions and significance of human genius (for, however perversely, it is human achievement he refers to). It is true that humanity has depended in vital ways, and depends, on 'men whom one cannot hope to emulate'—but their genius depends on their humanity. Not only is human creativity concentrated in them, so that they represent supremely the distinguishing characteristic of life, but in the exercise of their genius they are dependent on collaboratively creative human continuity in the way exemplified by Eliot's own dependence on the English language. I am invoking the truth that Blake invoked in the avowal I have quoted so often—an avowal the anti-Eliotic bearing of which gets an emphasis in 'Jesus was an artist'. Eliot's position as made explicit in the passage from which I have just quoted makes me think of those scholar-industrialists who hope that by research into Blake's symbolism they may discover a key that will unlock a revelation—an access to a transcendent reality. Such a conception of human genius, absurd and futile in itself, is necessarily blindness and hostility to what gives Blake importance of a kind that entitles him to human gratitude.

Eliot, however, is not thinking of his 'men whom one cannot hope to emulate' as poets or artists or persons who are in human terms creative in any way. His manner of presenting their achievement makes that plain:

> And what there is to conquer
> By strength and submission, has already been discovered
> Once or twice, or several times . . .

The discovery is not the conquest; what their strength has availed to conquer is their humanity. The apprehension vouchsafed them, they having achieved complete 'submission', has in itself no element of human achievement about it, and the reality they apprehend is, in human terms, the absolutely other. There is nothing positive worth learning to be learnt from life and experience; for the individual (say Eliot) 'every attempt is a wholly new start', and, in the historical perspective (if that means anything), the discovery made by the rare genius, itself coming of a 'wholly new start,' is made merely to be lost.

This kind of religious stance involves Eliot in inescapable inconsistency. I know, of course, that doctrines, theological and religious, in which human nullity has been made a basic postulate, are to be found in western tradition. I say this recognizing for myself in *Four Quartets* a challenge to make, in terms explicitly relative to the sickness of the modern world, the contrary—the fiercely rebutting—positive affirmation. The characterizing self-contradiction whereby Eliot addresses his offer at convincing, or converting, to the appreciative—that is, critical—reader of poetry is in and of the challenge. It invites one to point out that it is an odd infelicity in a poet, and such a poet as Eliot, to speak of the developed 'practitioner' as having learnt 'to get the better of words'. *Four Quartets*, for the responsive reader, testifies that 'using words' is a misleading way of describing its author's relation to the English language. It is actually his incomparable living ally, and more, for its life is active within him; as a sentience that can think and feel and judge man to be abject in his impotence, he is in essential ways constituted of the language he speaks, uses and lives. It is *in* the English language that he conceives, feels, refines, and achieves subtleties of definition (definition that is inseparable from communication, or, at any rate, from making communicable). In the English language he is drawing on the creativity of numberless generations of mankind and profiting collaboratively. The spiritual geniuses he refers to, the 'men whom one cannot hope to emulate', are not, it appears, to be thought of as poets or creative writers; yet apart from such collaborative creativity there could have been no 'discovery' for Eliot to invoke.

To say this is to dismiss his conception of reality—it seems to me

to be a vacuum—and hisoffered vindication of the 'spiritual'. In the realm—the 'third realm'—where values and meaning belong, coercive demonstration is impossible, and mankind cannot have anything like positivistic finality; but there, for it, are reality and significance, and what, behind them, they may imply. To subscribe to the essential force of Blake's I know that they are not mine', and to see that the 'third realm', the 'human world', which is maintained and renewed by human creativity, is necessary to human life is to recognize the transcendent importance of spiritual values. It is to see that the technologico-Benthamite ethos, like the official ethos of Russia, entails, in its spiritual philistinism, a dehumanizing proscription of what gives significance—that it is lethally reductive. Eliot's kind of 'humility', consistently believed in, amounts to nihilism. But he is not, of course, consistent: what a part of one believes isn't necessarily believed by the whole. Even where there is no conclusive evidence, one suspects in cases of such anti-human 'spirituality' that there is a compensating worldliness. But the inconsistency that stares us in the face is his seeking to establish the inevitability of his pondered negation by the exercise of intensely skilled human creativity—his own as a poet. And there is perhaps a kind of felicity in his lapsing once more, as he insists on his anti-creative 'humility' (or avowed impotence), into a stylistic infelicity—an embarrassingly infelicitous 'use of words' that reminds one of Pound:

> And so each venture
> Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
> With shabby equipment always deteriorating
> In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
> Undisciplined squads of emotion.

There can't, I think, be any defence of this. It is an error of taste that, in such a place, seems to have a significance that makes it worse than that. The informal self-communing manner, which Eliot shows in *Four Quartets* that he can use with success, was meant here to have an effect of unstudied spontaneity that would give convincing rightness to an intimately personal avowal. The actual wrongness is of a kind one is familiar with in his work when he affects colloquial licence. One feels that he couldn't have fallen into it here if the conditions making a profound and difficult sincerity possible for him had obtained with any sureness.

In the last paragraph of the quartet he is unequivocally a great poet

again—in a mode that one finds it natural to describe as a great poet's spontaneity. The clue to the 'music', which, in its easy mastery, has the effect of being unquestionably right as well as spontaneous, is given in the opening lines:

> Home is where one starts from. As we grow older
> The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
> Of dead and living.

There is neither narrative nor argument, and no organizing intention but to develop 'musically' this beginning, and lead, as the 'music' does in the last four lines, into 'The Dry Salvages'.

(III)

'THE DRY SALVAGES'

The first movement, in its nervous flexibility, is a magnificent piece of Eliotic poetry. In fact, with its ease of continuity in change, it could be read as itself convincingly a poem. The manner established in the opening lines, one of intimate self-communing—

> I do not know much about gods, but I think that the river
> Is a strong brown god—sullen, untamed and intractable,
> Patient to some degree, at first recognized as a frontier;
> Useful, untrustworthy . . .

gets no arresting contrast within the movement: a characteristic that is the condition of the distinctive kind of development which carries us forward to the close through the actual changes without imposing on us any conscious effort of reorientation. The first part of the first paragraph evokes in terms of the great river the portentous nineteenth-century history of North America, a history moving so rapidly that it can in the poet's time be present to thought and imagination as a familiar matter of family experience. The river had become in the not distant past

> only a problem confronting the builder of bridges.

For Eliot himself, born in the eighteen-eighties, the significant constatation now is:

The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten
By the dwellers in cities—ever, however, implacable,
Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder
Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured, unpropitiated
By worshippers of the machine . . .

The last phrase, giving us the distinctive mark of our civilization, is followed by a 'but':

but waiting, watching and waiting.

For what 'choose to forget' intimates is a basic unavowed insecurity—no mere matter of the unsubdued hostility of external nature. The symbolic inner significance is enforced by a new rhythmic insistence in the four lines, beginning

His rhythm was present in the nursery bedroom,

that conclude the paragraph.

Thus there is a smooth transition to the second paragraph:

The river is within us, the sea is all about us . . .

The ostensible simple contrast itself goes with the immediate sense of a straightforward inevitability in the development. But actually there turns out to be no simple contrast; the suggestion of an approach to the diagrammatic is illusory. It was for the 'builder of bridges' that the river was just an external fact—merely for him and for the 'dwellers in cities' as philistine 'worshippers of the machine'. The effect of the two paragraphs—of the whole movement indeed—is to dismiss any suggested simple opposition of within to without. It might immediately seem that 'the sea is all about us' promises an evocation of the world considered as external. Certainly strangeness that is hostility or frightening indifference is evoked; but so it is too by the river as 'a strong brown god—sullen, untamed and intractable', the destroyer that keeps its seasons and rages. And what the second paragraph does is to intensify the sensed alienness of the 'Nature' that is 'all about us'; of the universe to which we belong, but in which we are not at home.

The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
Its hints of earlier and other creation.

—The effect is to dissolve the reassuring familiarity of the solid land, and generate an acute sense that we are, and can be, at home nowhere. Unable, in his paradoxical way, to believe in human creativity, Eliot can't believe in the reality of any humanly created world, or in the human responsibility that maintains one, and the second paragraph continues and sharpens the reminder of what men 'choose to forget', which is the unreality of what seems to give significance to the familiar world they live in. The poetic success he aims at involves the dissolution of any hope at all of a significant world in which humanity may suppose itself to live.

We perceive that the dissolvent he basically relies on here is an evocation of time as so disconcerting in its actual experienced diversities and paradoxes that the commonsense assumption of a normal common time, constituent of a real common reality, is badly discredited. In the unsettling play at the expense of Newtonian, Paterian and conventional clock-measured time that Eliot opens with in 'Burnt Norton' we can feel that the rôle implicitly assigned to 'memory' means that time in human experience is not dismissed as altogether illusory and without a part in the real. But at the stage in our reading that brings us to the end of the first movement of 'The Dry Salvages' we tell ourselves that Eliot's emphasis falls so heavily and insistently on illusion and human nullity that we must ask, in wonder, what reality—beyond the tormenting privation he so disturbingly evokes—he concedes to time. That, we shall see, is a question that presses more and more urgently, leaving no possibility of an answer favourable to Eliot—one that acquits him of self-stultification.

The irresistible realness of the evoked world in this movement manifests the creative genius of a major poet: to that vivacity of evocation the inference he at the same time insinuates owes its potency. The genius is apparent too in the subtlety that goes with the vividness —subtlety I point to here with 'insinuates'. We have it in the separated sentence that interrupts the second paragraph:

> The salt is on the briar rose,
> The fog is in the fir trees.

This immediately, of course, is the Massachusetts coast, but the effect is to confirm the continuity: there is no discontinuity between the world of the ocean and the fishermen on the one hand and the world of the river and the dwellers in cities on the other; Eliot insists for his purpose that they are one. What he is concerned with is the

essential human condition. And the final section of the paragraph, which begins with

> The sea howl
> And the sea yelp, are different voices,

closes with this:

> The tolling bell
> Measures time not our time, rung by the unhurried
> Ground swell, a time
> Older than the time of chronometers, older
> Than time counted by anxious worried women
> Lying awake, calculating the future,
> Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
> And piece together the past and the future,
> Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
> The future futureless, before the morning watch
> When time stops and time is never ending;
> And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
> Clangs
> The bell.

One can imagine contexts in which this use of human creativity to generate a paralysing sense of hopeless human impotence might be a foil to the creative affirmation of the responsibility resting on man—man as the representative of life, intelligence and purpose. But *Four Quartets* represents no such context. Having read to the end of 'The Dry Salvages' we know that the significance Eliot is concerned to convey entails our taking the testimony regarding life and time that is imputed to the 'anxious worried women' as Eliot's own: everything in the total poem—except the contradictory poetic creativity—confirms it. The past *is*, it insists, all deception, and time *can* (unless at the moments of 'intersection'—when we may feel that we escape from it) yield nothing but illusion or the recognition of human nothingness.

This nothingness, or unreality, from which life in time as Eliot conveys his sense of it cannot in fact escape is a torment for which nevertheless the poem offers to have found a cure. The nature of the torment is given in the line

> When time stops and time is never ending.

The sure remedy for that state, one is tempted to comment, is death. And actually, in the last of the poignant intensely Eliotic stanzas that

open the second movement, Eliot, in his ostensibly not altogether committed way, comes out with what we may take for his own accordant recognition:

> There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
> No end to the withering of withered flowers,
> To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless,
> To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
> The bone's prayer to Death its God.

We once again are prompted to recall the second poem of 'Ash-Wednesday':

> Under a juniper-tree the bones sang, scattered and shining
> We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,
> Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand,
> Forgetting themselves and each other, united
> In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye
> Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity
> Matters. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

The poem is in the heuristic and frankly inconclusive mode of 'Ash-Wednesday', with its astonishing use, in the interest of a sincerity that finds itself unable to affirm, of equivocations and interacting incompatibles or contradictories. So we have—countering in suggestion the significance that is explicit and insistent in that closing paragraph—the liturgical diction, canorousness and phrasing and the unmistakable invocation of a given Catholic tradition. Such a heuristic poise was of its nature momentary; it couldn't be maintained for long. Between *Four Quartets* and 'Ash-Wednesday' years have passed, and Eliot has attained to telling himself that he can now as poet—and it is as poet that he achieves sincerity—affirm.

Yet the great drive behind his creativity is still desperation. Once that has been said the evidence everywhere, it seems to me, compels our recognition. The indisputable fact manifests itself in the paradox of his poetic creativity—in his blindness to the self-contradiction. It is intimately associated with that habit of subtlety which, where we disapprove of it, we call a talent for being equivocal, but which appears in the poetry as a necessary creative means. In 'Marina', for instance, it is, clearly and essentially, *of* the poetic strength:

> What is this face, less clear and clearer,
> The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger

–Here the combining of 'is' and 'is not' in the one offer at defining the indefinable certainly justifies itself. But the exploratory-creative method, the collaborative union of *procédés*, that Eliot develops in his most ambitious work, his long poem, is incomparably more complex. He himself is a victim of it–as he was sometimes, perhaps, of his gift of double-talk as Editor of *The Criterion*. He has lost the power to recognize what the upshot of his affirmative subtlety amounts to; the power to perceive that what he presents as affirmation is empty.

The intensity of the stanzaic poem that opens the second movement of 'The Dry Salvages' is the characteristic Eliotic desperation. The theme is goallessness and the drive the obsessed recoil from it–a recoil that itself has no goal but (one is inclined to tell oneself tentatively) serves instead.

> There is no end, but addition: the trailing
> Consequence of further days and hours

–it is Eliot's personal voice, speaking out of his sense of his own desperate and insufferable case. The next stanza gives us a résumé of the case in its totality–the case Eliot's poetry, from 'Gerontion' on, has made so familiar to us:

> There is the final addition, the failing
> Pride or resentment at failing powers,
> The unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless,
> In a drifting boat with a slow leakage,
> The silent listening to the undeniable
> Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation.

There they are, the fear of death which is a fear of life; the 'resentment' felt at failing powers before it is plausible to represent them as failing; the insecurity that, calling itself pride, takes Coriolanus ('broken') for its symbol; the 'unattached devotion', not forgotten, familiar to us as characterizing the prelusive experience that produced 'Ash-Wednesday'.

The fishermen–

> Where is the end of them, the fishermen sailing
> Into the wind's tail

–don't come into the poem until it is half-over. They don't, as a matter of fact, come into it then; they neither displace Eliot nor

qualify his distinctive unignorable presence. What we have is Eliot's contemplative and characteristic sense of them:

> We have to think of them as forever bailing,
> Setting and hauling, while the North East lowers
> Over shallow banks unchanging and erosionless
> Or drawing their money, drying sails at dockage;
> Not as making a trip that will be unpayable
> For a haul that will not bear examination.

But neither Eliot's 'we have to think of them' nor his 'not' gives us the reality, for they are in the essential regard altogether unlike him: they have purpose and goals that, giving life meaning, preclude the kind of human collapse, the paralysis, voiced in 'There is no end of it'. If it is commented that fishermen are unintellectual extraverts, that challenges a statement of the radical point to be made against Eliot. In his American blindness to the nature of languages, and to the implications of his creative use of a given one as essential to the pursuit of his quest, he denies himself the power to recognize the relevance, or even the existence, of that created human world on which significance depends, and without which there would be no spiritual problems, no quest and no poet. There is a full continuity between the problems of time, purpose, goal and death as they concern fishermen and as they concern Eliot, whose preoccupations we characterize as, in their distinguished way, intellectual and spiritual.

We have noted the close relation between Eliot's denial of human creativity and his attitude to time. Such are the subtlety and diversity of his techniques of exploration and evocative definition that, while we can say that his treatment of time is by intention undermining and unsettling, we hesitate to say that he dismisses time from the reality he offers to apprehend. Yet it seems to me that by this point in *Four Quartets* no truly appreciative (that is, exactingly critical) reader can have failed to recognize that what Eliot apprehends in the 'sudden illumination' coming to him in 'the moment in and out of time'—the Eternal, the really real, the end that gives meaning—has not, by all the heuristic pertinacity and play of evocative suggestion that forms the substance of the poem, been made more than a matter of mere personal affirmation.

We don't question that Eliot feels justified in affirming; the judgment we have to pass is that he has not in fact achieved what he clearly supposes himself to have achieved—he has not made the affirma-

tion as the poem makes us aware of it more compelling, more charged with cogent force, than the mere affirmation, however earnest and pertinacious, could in itself be. He has not, in terms of the achievement to which he aspires, justified the arduous elaboration of *procédé* he devotes to making an arrival at such affirmation as he intends (he can hardly be said to evoke it) inevitable—inevitable for the reader who is not 'there' already. He has deceived himself—for a creative enterprise, of its very nature, aims at something more generally cogent and irresistible than just the convinced self-reassurance of the writer himself ('*Now* I can affirm and be sure I am justified').

Avoidance of essential inconsistency—though the kinds of intellectual demand made on the reader that are entailed in the method challenge us to expect it—was impossible for Eliot, given the paradox implicit in *Four Quartets*, the fundamental contradiction. Immediately after the close of the set of stanzas I have been discussing the movement proceeds:

> It seems, as one becomes older,
> That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence—
> Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy
> Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
> Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.

But the past, surely, never *is* 'a mere sequence'—unless for the Eliot represented by the preceding stanzas. The phrase, which is hardly accordant with the implications of 'the past has another pattern', seems in fact an inadvertent carry-over resulting from the fixed and prolonged concentration required of the poet as he composed that poem. In any case, the word that demands our attention is 'pattern'. And it seems to me that our sense of a significant looseness in Eliot's use of that word is by now confirmed. It is a looseness disguised against detection (and Eliot himself is a victim) by the subtle ways in which the logic-transcending 'logic' of the heuristic method moves as it offers to build up conclusive implications.

I myself have after many readings concluded that in Eliot's use of 'pattern' there is no thought that will bear scrutiny—no thought that really plays its ostensible part in a total cogency. He seems to have been decisively influenced by the pregnant suggestiveness of the word 'Gestalt', finding it congenial to his anti-positivistic intentions—which indeed it is. But as far as I can see he does nothing to make their performance of a contributory role—of the part they are relied on to

play in advancing his insistent intellectual-spiritual purpose—anything but specious.

> Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

Whatever definition one arrives at in trying to define a 'word', words involve meaning of kinds and in ways we shouldn't think of looking for in music or in plastic form: Eliot called his poem *Four Quartets*, but he wrote it in words—necessarily, the necessity being not merely that Eliot was a poet and not a composer. The sentence of his I have just quoted implicitly denies the distinctive kind of creativity involved in using words. Such a sentence, in its betraying way, comes naturally from the poet whose conscious intention in writing the poem implicitly denies his own creativity.

You cannot give an intelligent account of how words mean without tackling problems of epistemology. Polanyi's essay, 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading'*, to which I should send literary students for (as far as my knowledge goes) a uniquely enlightening account, comes from the philosopher whose *magnum opus* is with point called *Personal Knowledge*. It is to Polanyi that I refer students for a use of the term 'pattern' that enforces my criticism of Eliot's use, and brings out the significance of the debility which that use—a misuse—betrays. Polanyi, a scientist, starts from an intense inquiringness about the nature of scientific discovery, being not the first thinker to judge that no received theory of induction throws much light on the processes that lead to the achievement. The particular essay of his that, in discussions, I use for my critical purpose has for title 'The Logic of Tacit Inference'. The word 'pattern' will be found there in a congenial context of thought—and the congeniality is of an order that to me is wholly convincing. The scientific discoverer, Polanyi points out, adducing the evidence, has an apprehension of a pattern asking to be verified (and that is, discovered) in the field of his special interest and frequentation. That gives a direction to a sustained activity of experimental research. In the course of this the intuition, if at all near the mark, will be confirmed, and confirmation will involve refinement and development. Polanyi associates 'intuition' with 'imagination'. I myself, bringing it from discussions with literary students of the creative

* In *Knowing and Being*.

writer's concern with language, use the word *ahnung* by way of emphasizing—for I have the phrase 'creative imagination' in mind—that imagination, like intuition, is concerned with the real and that the establishing of the given reality by the seeker on the frontiers of the known lies now (he hopes) in the not too remote future.

But this is no place to offer an exposition of Polanyi. It will be plain, at any rate to those who read the essays I have referred to, that Polanyi's account of scientific discovery entails, and is one with, an account both of the way in which life as represented by human sentience attains to knowledge of that to which it must impute reality and of the way in which it creates the human world. 'Pattern', it is to be noted, implies creative activity and purpose (or at any rate the telic), which are manifestations of life. Eliot's confused sense of this truth determines, no doubt, his emphasis on the word and on 'dance'; but, serving as it actually does an unresolvably confused vagueness, and not the creative thought that takes us to a focus of illumination, doesn't justify the emphasis.

I will quote again the opening sentence of the last movement of 'Burnt Norton'—the pregnant sentence that explains why Eliot, for all his gifts of intelligence, can't escape vagueness and confusion, the accompaniments of fundamental self-contradiction:

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time; but that which is only living
> Can only die.

Eliot says implicitly here that life too moves only in time, and raises as he does so the objection to both time and life. Since life is process, time is of its reality. No one minds the thought that a poem or a piece of music must end, but the poet of *Four Quartets*, familiar though he is with 'the bone's prayer to Death its God', recoils from the idea of escaping from the thought of death by dying. The solution postulated in *Four Quartets* is a demonstration that the idea, or the *ahnung*, of a life that is not 'only living', or of an escape from death into something that is neither death nor merely life, is no mere illusion generated by linguistic sleight, but points to a supreme reality *sui generis*.

The postulate, of course, is familiar in religious tradition—to which Eliot appeals. But Eliot—it is a condition of his major status and his importance—belongs to *our* time: his desperation is the desperation of the sophisticated. He is more intelligently sophisticated than Yeats;

Eliot couldn't have contemplated even for a moment, or half-contemplated, Byzantium as his symbol of the eternal. All his major poet's mastery of the English language, and all the subtlety of his desperate need, are devoted, in D. W. Harding's phrase, to 'creating the concept' of eternity—in a process that is not confined to the first of the quartets.

The part played by 'pattern' in the process is exemplified by this passage from 'Burnt Norton' which I have already quoted:

> Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

'Form' and 'pattern' ('Gestalt' in the background) are words that convey the indisputable truth that the whole may be more than the sum of the parts. This last phrase suggests organism, and 'organism' implies life. But that word which has just been by implication dismissed with 'that which is only living can only die' is not itself meant to be thought of now. The evocation that 'form' and 'pattern' are explicitly associated with in this representative context, as if by virtue of their intrinsic significance, is 'stillness'; or rather, '*the* stillness', the definite article playing an essential part. It has the effect of identifying the 'stillness' with the stillness at the 'still point of the turning world'; thus reinforcing the suggestion of an apprehended supreme reality out of time on which the world of science and common sense depends. That this stillness is not 'the quiet of the desert', the unlivingness of death, the simile that follows—

> As a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness

—comes in to convey with tactful suggestiveness.

That all this is not legitimate in the way Eliot assumes, that the astonishing directed play of imaginative thought hasn't the kind of validity, or, pondered, the coerciveness he obviously imputes to it, may escape one's critically articulate recognition for a number of readings. And this is not merely by reason of the great complexity, and the subtleties, of the 'logic' or offered build-up, but because the very wealth of compelling evidence that a great poet is at work makes

one slow to perceive that an adverse judgment is challenged. The distinctive Eliotic genius is apparent in

> as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

We have it in what immediately follows:

> Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
> Not that only . . .

This is characteristic in that, in spite of the 'Not', the felicity of the observation as evoked tells against the intellectual force of the actual *procédé* being employed—or, rather, helps the 'logic' to be accepted as cogent by relaxing the critical attention needed to remark its speciousness.

Perhaps the questionableness of what Eliot does with 'pattern' comes out most significantly when he associates it with 'words' and associates 'words' with 'music':

> Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness . . .

It is astonishing that a 'practitioner' whose genius manifests itself in his practice as a rare intelligence about the language in which he works should, obviously without self-suspicion, exhibit so grave an unintelligence here. What, when it is said of words ('after speech'), we may ask, does 'reach into the silence' mean? What is it meant to convey? Actually, of course, seeing the word 'pattern' ahead, we know at once what kind of effect Eliot intends the sentence to contribute to. In any case, 'silence' becomes 'stillness' in the next sentence, and 'stillness' belongs to the *procédé* that associates 'pattern' with 'the still point of the turning world'—the 'still point' that, by virtue of the evocative-associative process, is to give us our apprehension of a real reality to be assured of which will be everything to us because, being out of time, it somehow promises an escape from transience.

I have expressed an adverse view in general of Eliot's use of associative procedures. It merely conveys Eliot's personal intention, which for him is something more because of the intensity of the need expressed in it—his personal sense of deprivation, his hunger. It is not,

in spite of the intellectual element—the appeal to the cogitative mind—logical; it has no cogent propriety in sum, or irresistible felicity: we feel always the element of the *voulu* that is entailed in the calculated movement towards the goal (which actually is a vacuum). The show of imaginative validity or compellingness won't survive a full realization of what Eliot's creative enterprise, with the measure of creative achievement we have to concede, signifies.

I intimate in this last sentence why he matters so much to us, and why *Four Quartets* repays a closely critical yet sympathetic study. The defeated genius *is* a genius, and the creative power is inseparable from the significance of the defeat. Eliot was a victim of our civilization. We all suffer from the malady that afflicts it, and the power with which he makes us recognize the malady and feel it ('Cry what shall I cry?') for what it is, establishes him as a great poet of our time, one whose work has the closest relevance to our basic problems. This is not to say that his diagnosis, in so far as he offers one, is acceptable. But it is not to be dismissed as merely unacceptable; his poem, as I am testifying, affects the reader profoundly, and one's disagreement is profound: it compels one to attempt the most cogent presentment of one's own positive position that one can achieve; that is, to rethink this. One starts doing that by way of making the force of one's adverse criticism clear, and what, being inevitably entailed, follows is a sharper and fuller realization of one's indebtedness: the criticism is at the same time a tribute.

The contradiction, then, that invalidates Eliot's play with the 'pattern' *procédé* is most challenging when he brings in 'words', assimilating 'words', 'music' and 'Chinese jar' as all 'reaching' the 'stillness'. The immediate point I have in mind is that which I made in commenting on the significance of Eliot's quoting in his note to '*Dayadhvam*' in *The Waste Land* the passage from *Appearance and Reality* in which F. H. Bradley 'confirms a prison'. 'Words' for Eliot the poet—and it is as a poet that he writes *Four Quartets*—are the English language. He implicitly demonstrates human creativity in the English language—which *he* didn't create. It represents an immemorial collaborative human creativity, and, in using the language, he enters into that collaboration—he implicitly recognizing that in an important sense he belongs to a community (the word takes on a new force) that has a very present depth in time: the life he lives in creating his poem is more than the personal life (which, as a matter of fact, is itself never atomic or hermetically enclosed).

Composers too need, for their creating, something that can be thought of as a language, and a musical work can have 'meaning' attributed to it. But 'meaning' means different things. As Michael Polanyi's essay, 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading', should suffice to make plain, an adequate account of how words mean will be a venture into epistemology and have ontological implications that are more than implicit: it will necessarily entail, not merely a formal repudiation of the Cartesian dualism, but a thorough exorcism of the ghost of Descartes. A living language is a tested and continually adapted product of human experience that establishes a reality *of*, as well as *in*, which the individual being lives, and it makes possible constructive thought, including science, everyday discourse and the kind of heuristic creativity exemplified by *Four Quartets*.

This is the point at which to return to the second movement of 'The Dry Salvages'. I will quote again, augmenting the quotation I made some pages back, the opening of the paragraph that follows on the stanzas:

> It seems, as one becomes older,
> That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence–
> Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy
> Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
> Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.

I have commented already, apropos of my earlier quotation, on the uncertainty revealed yet again here as characterizing Eliot's attitude towards time. The uncertainty, the indeterminateness, offered (to himself and us) as a due subtlety, is necessary to his purpose, which entails the stultifying paradox of his attitude towards human creativity. To call attention to the contradictions and inadequacies of the commonsense notions of time that implicitly centre on clock-time is not to dispose of time. It is made impossible for us to doubt that Eliot wants to discredit time, but to eliminate time from the real would be to eliminate life. For life is process. 'Hence life'–I quote from Collingwood*–'like motion, is a thing that takes time and has no instantaneous existence.' Motion means change, and change is an idea that Eliot shies away from: it plays on his sense of insecurity. On the other hand, to the living–and the poet of *Four Quartets is* living–the idea of perpetual unchangingness is insufferable.

Here we have the explanation of that offer at a convincingly evasive

* *The Idea of Nature*, page 146.

equivocality which Eliot develops from 'the still point of the turning world' ('at the still point, there the dance is') to the 'Chinese jar' which 'moves perpetually in its stillness'. The intimated escape from the life that is 'only living' and so 'can only die'—escape into something that shall not be the 'bone's prayer to Death its God' granted—is reinforced in the mode, equally characteristic, illustrated in the close of 'Burnt Norton':

> The detail of the pattern is movement,
> As in the figure of the ten stairs.
> Desire itself is movement
> Not in itself desirable;
> Love itself is unmoving,
> Only the cause and end of movement,
> Timeless, and undesiring
> Except in the aspect of time
> Caught in the form of limitation
> Between un-being and being.

This in itself seems to lay the significant emphasis unequivocally on 'unmoving' and 'timeless'. Eliot doesn't withdraw the emphasis, of which his intimated (and evasive) position gets—in so far as it *is* a position—the benefit. But while there is no 'still moves perpetually in its stillness' here, an equivalent and reinforcing subtlety reveals itself when we come to the 'sudden' transition, typographically unsignalled and not meant to be taken as a mere transition, to what follows and brings us to the final full-stop:

> Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
> Even while the dust moves
> There rises the hidden laughter
> Of children in the foliage
> Quick now, here, now, always—
> Ridiculous the waste sad time
> Stretching before and after.

The evocation that Eliot presents as a gleam and resonance of the transcendent is actually an evocation of life—the life that is 'merely living'. All the evocations he depends on to precipitate what may pass for a concrete apprehension—something to be taken as the convincing upshot of his complex and insistent *procédé*—are similarly evocations of life. It couldn't have been otherwise: Eliot, in assuming that it can

be, is a victim of self-deception; the self-deception implicit in his undertaking—to which no undivided man could have lent himself.

In committing myself to these adverse judgments I am committed to enforcing them by pointing to the real defence of spiritual values that would have been consistent with the creativity actually employed by Eliot to discredit the creativity of life.

The importance of Eliot is that the challenge his genius presents precipitates positive conviction and a robust expression of it. The conviction is that implicit in Blake's remark regarding those creative works we know as his. As I have observed in writing about Blake, the essential realization testified to there is that avowed by Lawrence through Tom Brangwen in the opening of *The Rainbow*. I relate this to a couple of sentences of Collingwood's*—which I have quoted before in these pages, and, thinking them pregnant and much to the point, will quote again:

> This at any rate seems clear: that since modern science is now committed to a view of the universe as finite, certainly in space and probably in time, the activity which this same science identifies with matter cannot be a self-created or ultimately self-dependent activity. The world of nature or physical world as a whole, on any such view, must depend for its existence on something other than itself.

I will add now another sentence of Collingwood's.†

> The most vigorous thought of our time, scientific and philosophical alike, has turned away from these subjectivist or phenomenalist doctrines, and agrees that whatever nature depends on it does not depend on the human mind.

And this brings me back to Eliot's observation that, 'as one becomes older', the past ceases to be a mere sequence

> Or even development

and to his dismissal of the latter as

> a partial fallacy
> Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
> Which becomes, in the popular mind, a way of disowning the past.

* *The Idea of Nature*, page 155.
† ibid., page 156.

This *is* a dismissal; Eliot says nothing more about evolution or development. But who will dispute what Michael Polanyi puts with characteristic trenchancy here, and who, faced with it (it bears the insistence), can ignore, or equivocate away, the beliefs that go with it?—

> If all men were exterminated, this would not affect the laws of nature. But the construction of machines would stop, and not until men arose again could machines be formed once more.*

'Nature', here, is the inanimate nature of physical science. There indisputably *is* life now, and human life, and in the person of T. S. Eliot it writes *Four Quartets* and offers what we are to take as a cogent assertion of spiritual significance and a defence of the spirit. Being an educated modern, he can write:

> The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
> Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
> Its hints of earlier and other creation:
> The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone,

but he is content to disparage the idea of development, though with 'hints' he is invoking the immense and ever-growing body of knowledge on which the belief in evolution is based. One may judge that nineteenth-century evolutionism has been outgrown without refusing to see that in the twentieth century the idea of development has demonstrated its vitality. This is what Collingwood testifies in Part III ('The Modern View of Nature') of *The Idea of Nature*.

Eliot's reaction to the sickness of humanity is potent, and we may call it diagnostic, but his constructive thought is weak; it lacks the necessary impersonality. The thinker is immersed in his own plight. The weakness is apparent in his use of the idea of 'pattern'. It is significant that in this latest appearance of the word we hardly notice that it is now virtually 'a mere word'; the effect of being charged with a justifying meaning is here little more than a ghost:

> It seems, as one becomes older,
> That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence . . .

The idea of pattern, as Collingwood shows, plays a very important part in the physics that has superseded 'classical' physics, and the philosophical thought that modern science has vitally influenced. I

* *Knowing and Being*, page 225 ('Life's Irreducible Structure').

think it likely that Eliot's addiction to the word was prompted by its currency in the world of higher intellectual fashion at the time—the nineteen-thirties—when Collingwood, the true creative mind, was thinking, writing and lecturing. It is characteristic of Eliot's own intellectual weakness, his imprisonment in his own sick plight, that he should have used the idea so differently. By way of enforcing together both the suggestion of a period prompting and the 'differently' I will adduce Collingwood again:

> This idea of rhythmical pattern as a link between quantity and quality is important in the modern theory of nature . . . as revealing a new significance in the idea of time. If an atom of hydrogen possesses the qualities of hydrogen not merely because it consists of a certain number of electrons, nor even merely because those electrons are arranged in a certain way, but because they move in a certain rhythmical way, it follows that within a given instant of time the atom does not possess those qualities at all; it only possesses them in a tract of time long enough for the rhythm of the movement to establish itself.*

It is not, however, the physicist's and the physical chemist's conception that I want mainly to emphasize, but Polanyi's account of the way in which that conception was arrived at and the significance of the way described for the critical commentator on *Four Quartets*. Polanyi, it is relevant to note, has exorcized from his own thought the Cartesian dualism. His account of 'The Logic of Tacit Inference' is in terms that essentially apply—apply without forcing—to the human achievement of knowledge in general and the process by which we create the human world we live in. I won't offer to add to such brief summary of it as I have offered, but I will permit myself one further quotation:

> All thought is incarnate: it lives by the body and by the favour of society. But it is not *thought* unless it strives for truth, a striving which leaves it free to act on its own responsibility, with universal intent.†

I quote this characteristically and essentially anti-Cartesian passage (it is equally anti-Eliotic) because of the way in which it brings in the word 'responsibility'. This is Polanyi's way of asserting human responsibility in the sense in which, in a recent essay on Blake, I discussed that poet, artist and sage as the great testifier to it, and a

* Op. cit., page 146.
† Ibid., page 134.

portent in human history because he knew so consciously and profoundly what he meant, and uttered it so unequivocally. Blake too insists that 'life' is a necessary word and that life is 'there' only in the individual life; hence his distinction between the individual human being as 'identity' and that being as 'selfhood'. His concern as poet and artist to get things 'right' is a concern to ensure that the 'identity', in the right way, prevails. Polanyi's basic theme is that without the individual person, who as such has a body and a unique personal history, there could be neither knowledge nor the *ahnung* that leads to it. His 'with universal intent' posits the equivalent of the 'identity'. His 'striving for truth' is a recognition that discovery of the real is human achievement, and involves human creativity. I myself have remarked on the significance of Blake's insistence, in the world of 'Newton and Locke', on the unbroken continuity from perception to the trained and developed creative activity of the artist (Blake's favourite inclusive word). And now in 'The Logic of Tacit Inference'* I light on this:

> While the integration of clues to perceptions may be virtually effortless, the integration of clues to discoveries may require trained efforts guided by exceptional gifts. But the difference is only one of range and degree: the transition from perception to discovery is unbroken. The logic of perceptual integration may serve therefore as a model for the logic of discovery.

Polanyi's conclusions coincide with Blake's. Discovery is achievement that involves creativity, and Blake's avowal, 'I know that they are not Mine', doesn't deny that. The efforts of both the scientist and the poet aim at establishing as valid an apprehension of the real, but there can be no achievement of certainty, completeness or finality.

I need not now discuss the inconsistency in Blake about which I have argued† that it was virtually inevitable in a profoundly creative—that is, essentially religious—mind of the eighteenth century: I refer to his cherishing the idea of an ultimate Τέλος, the reversal of the Fall, and his conviction that he knows what that means—knows as a poet must know what he is justified in attempting to render creatively. His distinctive genius manifests itself in the nature of his belief in human creativity—the belief implicit in his successful art, and expressed in his aphorisms. It is a belief in a selfhood-subordinating creativity

* Ibid., page 139.

† 'Justifying One's Valuation of Blake', in *The Human World* No. 7.

that is the irreconcilable enemy of hubris; a devoting of the powers of perception, intuition and thought, which are inescapably personal, to the discovery of the real. The 'humility' defined and evoked in *Four Quartets* is the refusal of responsibility.

I have yet to be explicit about the implication of my passing comment on Eliot's equivocal way of dismissing 'development' and 'evolution'—for his reference to them amounts to an unchallenging dismissal. Blake died in 1827. Between his time and Eliot's the idea of evolutionary development achieved its dominance in Western thought. Eliot would have had no difficulty in adducing ostensible justification for his insinuated critical attitude. But it is an implicit comment, and a very damaging one, on himself—who supposed the paragraph from F. H. Bradley would strengthen the Notes to *The Waste Land*—that he should be able to dismiss so easily the truly important thinkers of his own times: I will specify here only Alexander, Whitehead and Collingwood. In the work of these distinguished minds process, development and the telic are *of* the vital principle informing the thought; they are in and of the thought's creativity—a creativity that, in various ways, is nourished by a close acquaintance with the achievements of modern science.

The thinkers I have mentioned assume evolutionary development as unquestionable fact: it is for them a basic datum. So it is for Polanyi. I adduce him once more because his account of 'tacit inference', and his elucidation of the way in which language creates and conveys meaning and of how meaning rides 'there'—rides inaccessible to linguistic science—is of unique value to students of language as used to the full (that is, by great creative writers), and because the characteristics of life that he assumes in developing and applying his epistemology are those that we have to postulate when we consider the development that led to man.

In casting back from Polanyi and his distinguished contemporaries to Blake, what I have in mind is to bring out an implicit significance. The creative-heuristic nisus those twentieth-century minds, on abundant evidence, assume to have been at work through the long succession of millennia ensuing on the emergence of life had in Blake a notable manifestation. If one says that, in his creative human testimony, he anticipated them—for their combined intellectual achievement, with its foundations in modern science, constitutes a further impressive manifestation—one is pointing to the fact of development. Their achievement can be said to be essentially *not* one

that 'disowns the past'. It is plain that Polanyi, for instance, could have had no difficulty in seeing that his own work enforces, with a formidable command of scientific knowledge and with experimental backing, the significance that Blake constates as an artist—one who worked hard at his art. Between Blake and him there *is* development, and there is reason to insist on the significance. No one would question that when Blake testified to his consciousness that life in him was dependent on something other than himself—that in acting on his *ahnung* of what that something required of him he assumed a responsibility that must rest on him—the apprehension and belief he spoke out of and acted on were religious. But Collingwood and Polanyi are philosophers, and philosophers on whose outlook and approach modern science has had a decisive influence. 'Religious' is not the word that would inevitably present itself first to everyone faced with describing either's unmistakable sense of human responsibility. Yet I don't think that Polanyi—I confine myself now to him, because he is still alive, and has still, it seems to me, to get due recognition as the great potential liberating and impelling force he is—would disapprove of the application of the word 'religious' to his own basic apprehension. And unless it has a religious quality the sense of human responsibility can't be adequate to the plight of the world that so desperately needs it—won't, in fact, be what is needed.

The comparison between Eliot and Blake much facilitates the making of this point; in what other way, indeed, could one evoke the force of 'religious' as it needs to be evoked for my purpose? The purpose in question *can* be served only by a literary critic and only by a critic who is adequately aware that a major creative writer is concerned with heuristic thought. The critic as I conceive him—this follows—addresses a non-specialist educated public, and, if it is weak, can't separate his critical preoccupations from the problem of strengthening it and making it capable of decisive influence. That is, writing —as a critic must who aspires to matter—out of the civilization I live in, I judge those preoccupations to be inseparable from a concern for the university as society's essential organ for the regenerating and maintaining of the educated public. Knowing, then, that a minimal constatation of what one sees as obvious, basic and undeniable in regard to issues so complex is proper here, where such a concern has been avowed, I will state the upshot of the foregoing considerations in this way now: there is no acceptable religious position that is not a reinforcement of human responsibility.

Explicitness to that effect is compelled on us by *Four Quartets*. To say this, while of course it amounts to basically adverse judgment, is also a tribute.

After dismissing, tacitly, with 'development', human responsibility as, with the help of Blake, Collingwood and Polanyi, I have defined it, Eliot enforces the significance of the dismissal by once more pointing to the 'moment', the 'illumination'. With a series of 'nots' (which perhaps justify 'ceases to be a mere sequence', but hardly the 'another pattern')–

> not the sense of well-being,
> Fruition, fulfilment, security or affection,
> Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination

–he insists on the *sui generis* uniqueness of the illuminated moment and of the apprehension that distinguishes it as such. The insistence falls also on the 'suddenness': the apprehension has no more any relation to process than the 'illumination' belongs to time; it is merely and purely, as Eliot emphasizes later,* vouchsafed. He nevertheless proceeds to bring in memory, though the indeterminateness of its operation as evoked is merely veiled by the ostensibly precise phrasing:

> but the sudden illumination–
> We had the experience but missed the meaning,
> And approach to the meaning restores the experience
> In a different form, beyond any meaning
> We can assign to happiness.

The carefully intimate and 'inevitable' formulation–so neat, unfaltering and unchallenging in the effect of spontaneity that conditions its power–seems implicitly designed to exclude any of the hints of creative nisus we might think of as inherent in 'memory' (the word that is not actually there). What immediately follows is this, and it is in perfect accord:

> I have said before
> That the past experience revived in the meaning
> Is not the experience of one life only
> But of many generations . . .

* See 'The Dry Salvages' V–the passage beginning:
Men's curiosity searches past and future . . .

I say 'it is in perfect accord' because, taken by itself, it might seem to come from someone to whom Blake was congenial, and Collingwood, and Lawrence—the Lawrence who, knowing that 'he didn't belong to himself', answered the inquiring young novelist who visited him near the end: 'One writes out of one's moral sense—for the race, as it were.' Actually, of course, there is no hint here of the *ahnung* that, in the genius as 'identity', inspires the creative masterpiece or the Doycean inventive discovery.* Whatever the *ahnung* dominant in the Eliotic enterprise, it is one, not of human responsibility, but of human abjectness. This, immediately, is what it prompts Eliot with:

> —not forgetting
> Something that is probably quite ineffable:
> The backward look behind the assurance
> Of recorded history, the backward half-look
> Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.

What we have here is certainly very far from being the recognition of a creative nisus in life behind 'recorded' or divined history—a nisus of which man is now the representative. The passage gets no development. The rest of the paragraph seems to depend for its effect of carrying on and developing thought on the vague suggestion of the word 'pattern'. I confess that the parenthesis in the following remains something that I have failed to understand:

> Now, we come to discover that the moments of agony
> (Whether, or not, due to misunderstanding,
> Having hoped for the wrong things or dreaded the wrong things,
> Is not in question) are likewise permanent
> With such permanence as time has.

The affirmation about the 'moments of agony', which Eliot doesn't develop, but insists on to the end of the movement, seems to be in a more restrictive way than Eliot suspects personal—to be a casually prompted personal avowal, having actually no heuristic or definitive energy to contribute to the essential 'music', the complex total process designed for the establishing and confirming that there is an authoritative apprehension of the really real to be achieved. The major part

* See page 238, *Dickens the Novelist*, F. R. & Q. D. Leavis. Dickens makes plain that in emphasizing Daniel Doyce's creative disinterestedness he has in mind a conviction about art and the artist.

of the long paragraph exemplifies, in fact, that element in the poem which, in mode, presents an antithesis to the intellectually directed *procédé* that makes its insistent quasi-logical claim on us in the second paragraph of the second movement of 'Burnt Norton' ('At the still point of the turning world . . .').

If the passage I am now considering is as lacking in inevitability and functional point as I suggest, the reader's arrival at such a judgment is retarded by the ratiocinative manner established in the opening of the paragraph and kept up. Moreover, the emphasized word 'pattern'–

> It seems, as one becomes older,
> That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence

–has, after the desperate intensity of the preceding stanzas, the effect of a steadying promise of meaning and hope, though the promise (I have argued) loses its force when the validity of Eliot's reliance on 'pattern' becomes, as we consider in what way he offers to bear out the virtue he imputes to the word and the idea, questionable. I say all this with due modesty, for there is great and daring diversity of mode and *procédé* in the poem, and, along with it, so much subtlety that is not questionable.

Eliot's insistence on the permanence of the 'moments of agony' takes up the last twenty lines of the movement. When I read

> For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
> But the torment of others remains an experience
> Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
> People change and smile: but the agony abides

I think of Wordsworth's

> She lies in the calm earth, and peace is here.

The pressure of personal experience behind *The Ruined Cottage* and the tension of the poise that, between the 'I' and the dramatized *alter ego*, the poem has created, ensure that a potent determining context encloses the utterance when we come to it. It is, however, quotable and memorable, and, recalling it and thinking of the Wordsworth who survived the crisis and lived serenely for so long, one has an impulse to recoil from the serenity expressed in the line and implicitly enjoyed by it. Eliot's emphasis may then seem salutary. But the question I have raised regards the significance it has, or hasn't, in relation

to his insistence on the theme of 'pattern'. Once such a question is seriously canvassed the inevitable concomitant is a realization that the problem confronting Wordsworth in *The Ruined Cottage*—the problem Eliot offers to confront here—is one to which there can be no simple and valid final answer. Eliot's emphasis, however, is confident and insistent, and it plainly offers us a simple answer as final. The passage and the movement end:

> And the ragged rock in the restless waters,
> Waves wash over it, fogs conceal it;
> On a halcyon day it is merely a monument,
> In navigable weather it is always a seamark
> To lay a course by: but in the sombre season
> Or the sudden fury, is what it always was.

The rock stands for the abiding agony; that which in a world of change and evanescence is permanently and menacingly what it is—real with such reality as time has. In so far as this emphasis relates to the essential 'logic' of *Four Quartets* (it hardly does in any justifying way to the insistence on 'pattern'), it does so by reinforcing the utterly reductive presentment of humanity and life. One can't help recalling the simple choice offered us later in *The Cocktail Party* between being a saint (which Eliot doesn't himself claim to be) and recognizing with modest resignation that one is just a Chamberlayne (which the complete Eliot hardly reduces to). One recalls at the same time the Eliotic determination that we shall think of Celia as being crucified and eaten alive by ants.

On the other hand, a due pondering of Eliot's quest of success in the theatre entails a recognition that his implicitly evaluative experience of life comprehended kinds of satisfaction that his creative quest of the real and spiritual takes no account of. One may even, perhaps, reflect that the insistent emphasis on the agony and its permanence is significantly related to the discrepancy. In fact, one has to recognize again the inner contradiction, the dividedness, that plays an inseparable part in the paradoxical Eliotic creativity.

The next movement, III, must surely be taken as confirming finally one's tentative answers to the questions that have so insistently posed themselves; questions regarding Eliot's essential attitude in relation to time, effort and responsibility. That is not the less so because the opening line—

> I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant—

leaves one, at least for a while, in doubt as to just at what point in what follows we are to feel that we have Krishna himself, or are closest to that. Not that the doubt gives the reader any serious trouble; it is so plain that the meaning all the way through, together with the equivocalness, is Eliot's own. The three lines following the colon that closes the introductory pair–

> That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
> Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,
> Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened

–have their intention made plain by the brief sentence that constitutes the fourth:

> "And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.

The evocation is of time as meaningless and change as illusory; when the future comes–if there is point at all in talking of the future–it will be the same kind of thing as the past. The Greek epigraph–ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή–has become here a dismissing judgment on life: inescapably confined to a 'sphere of being' where there is no direction and no pattern, it is meaningless. The next sentence, varying the approach, develops the discouragement:

> You cannot face it steadily, but this thing is sure,
> That time is no healer: the patient is no longer here.

The patient is no longer here because, Eliot insists, helped by Krishna to do so with an effect of profound impersonal constatation of indisputable truth, there is no such thing as persisting–that is, real–identity, and we mustn't rest on the illusion.

> Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
> Into different lives, or into any future;
> You are not the same people who left that station
> Or who will arrive at any terminus,
> While the narrowing rails slide together behind you;
> And on the deck of the drumming liner
> Watching the furrow that widens behind you,
> You shall not think 'the past is finished'
> Or 'the future is before us'.
> At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial,
> Is a voice descanting (though not to the ear,

The murmuring shell of time, and not in any language)
'Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;
You are not those who saw the harbour
Receding, or those who will disembark.'

About the insistence on the illusoriness of identity there can be no question. There hardly could be any about the unqualified directness with which such a passage gives us Eliot himself. Unquestionableness in the given matter is so important for critical recognition that there is point in quoting this from the embarrassing later document, *The Cocktail Party*:

Unidentified Guest
You set in motion
Forces in your life and in the lives of others
Which cannot be reversed. That is one consideration.
And another is this: it is a serious matter
To bring someone back from the dead.
Edward
From the dead?
That figure of speech is somewhat . . . dramatic,
As it was only yesterday that my wife left me.
Unidentified Guest
Ah, but we die to each other daily.
What we know of other people
Is only our memory of the moments
During which we knew them. And they have changed since then.
To pretend that they and we are the same
Is a useful and convenient social convention
Which must sometimes be broken. We must also remember
That at every meeting we are meeting a stranger.

We identify the unidentified guest at once with Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, and he, we know—there is no other way of accounting for his nonentity as a *dramatis persona* and his too-necessary performance of his function—speaks for Eliot himself, uttering the judgments constituting the spiritual communication that Eliot is intent on the play's imparting. I myself can't help recalling Hardy's 'After a Journey':

Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
I am just the same as when
Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

It is not only that love in this sense doesn't exist for Eliot, and so plays no part in his conception of the spiritual and real. A continuing essential identity as Hardy doesn't question it in himself entails 'identity' as Blake opposes it to 'selfhood'—the 'identity' that speaks, testifying to its authority for him, in that most relevantly quotable of his utterances. Eliot's denial that personal identity is real goes with his self-stultifying way of refusing to recognize human creativity, and, if we ask why he should be committed to such a paradox, the significance of the contradiction presents itself in the word 'responsibility', which points to what Eliot recoils from.

The word, I've said, is used by Polanyi in a sense and with implications that are consonant with what is implied when we say that Blake's insistence on human creativity is an insistence on human responsibility:

> All thought is incarnate; it lives by the body and by the favour of society. But it is not *thought* unless it strives for truth, a striving which leaves it free to act on its own responsibility, with universal intent.

A pondering of such propositions in their context brings out the force of the constatation that Eliot's recoil from human responsibility restricts in a paralysing way his power to conceive significance-giving ends and spiritual values. The restriction is disguised, the diagnosis is for a while held back, by the complexity of the constructive music and by the genius again and again irresistibly (and paradoxically) apparent in it.

The passage of 'The Dry Salvages' I quoted last continues:

> Here between the hither and the farther shore
> While time is withdrawn, consider the future
> And the past with an equal mind.
> At the moment which is not of action or inaction
> You can receive this: 'on whatever sphere of being
> The mind of a man may be intent
> At the time of death'—that is the one action
> (And the time of death is every moment)
> Which shall fructify in the lives of others:
> And do not think of the fruit of action.

In what living state, we ask, is it possible to consider the future and the past with an equal mind? Eliot's phrase, 'while time is withdrawn', gives us no answer, for if time is withdrawn, so is life, apart from which there can be no thought or contemplation—life being process. Perception and understanding take time, and are achievement. And 'the

moment which is not of action or inaction' is not a good instance of Eliot's habit—which again and again he justifies—of defying the 'either/or'. It consorts rather with that posited livingness which (since 'that which is only living can only die') is neither life nor death.

As for the nature of the 'action'—a kind of 'intentness', it would seem—prescribed for 'the moment which is not of action or inaction', I think that the intention behind the not readily intelligible subtlety of this passage only becomes clear when one goes back to it from the third paragraph of 'Little Gidding'. Eliot is anticipating the affirmation he makes there. We see then that the emphasis for us should fall, not on the 'whatever' of 'whatever sphere of being', but on the 'one' of the prescribed 'one action'. What he has in view is the less cryptic avowal he is to give, once arrived at 'Little Gidding', of his very restrictive conception of the spiritual (and real):

> You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid.

He can only be certain that prayer here 'has been valid' because he himself entertains the same conception of the spiritual as that which he associates with the Little Gidding community.

The three stanzas that compose the fourth section of 'The Dry Salvages' make it plain that he thinks of his conception and his convictions as belonging to a given Christian tradition. It is the fifth that takes us to the point at which further passage towards 'Little Gidding', the last quartet, is hardly to be called a transition. The movement opens with a bold, and therefore refutable, presentment of Eliot's offer to discredit and dismiss time. I say bold and therefore refutable because, in the lines (which strike me as uninspired Eliot) leading up to the uttered solemn affirmation that comes at last, the reductive *parti pris* is crudely obvious; the 'either/or' now makes no pretence of plausibility, and it is the offered cogency, the constructive or generating 'musical' *procédé*, that is discredited: is there (we ask) no more serious concern with past and future than this?—

> all these are usual
> Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:
> And always will be, some of them especially
> When there is distress of nations and perplexity
> Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road.

> Men's curiosity searches past and future
> And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
> The point of intersection of the timeless
> With time, is an occupation for the saint . . .

Eliot proceeds at once to withdraw the word 'occupation'—confirming one's reflections on the stultifying way in which the basic contradiction implicit in his enterprise makes him (inevitably) present the reality of which 'human kind cannot bear very much' as a vacuum:

> No occupation either, but something given
> And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
> Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

'Occupation' suggests directed activity, and, in order that the work done in the preceding Krishna movement on 'action', a word stressed in a 'musical' process of paradoxical equivocation as now a focal pointer, shall have been as little as possible undone, that suggestion must be neutralized (for 'action' needed to be made by paradox, induced confidence and distracting confusion to suggest what it never could naturally). The occupation that makes Eliot's saint is rigorous self-confinement, the identity's self-reduction, to purely passive receptivity; responsibility for the saint (if that is the word for the sense of obligation that commands him) reduces to the steady aim of realizing in his own person the abject nullity of human kind ('that which is only living can only die'). What—'given' to be passively 'taken'—he attains to apprehending at 'the point of intersection' is the pure otherness postulated in Eliot's conception of the supreme Real.

In fact, a conception of pure non-human otherness can hardly be a conception; it can be no more than the ghost of one—a mere postulate. The space cleared for the Other by the elimination of all that 'human kind' can recognize as life, value and significance is a vacuum; nothing is left to qualify it.

It is not, of course, as vacuous that he offers it. The phrase, 'a lifetime's death in love', like the equivocal play with the word 'action', exemplifies the subtlety with language that enables his need-impelled genius, servant of the dividedness in him as it is, to deceive itself in the essential way, and substitute the illusion of (necessarily) human significance for the vacuum that—if we take the insistent challenge to conclude seriously about the offered thought—he has actually created. Love belongs to the human 'saint' and to life, and, for all the bemusing suggestiveness of the phrase, life is not death—as Eliot himself testifies

with conviction when he in protest says, 'that which is only living can only die'. He hasn't really communicated to us an apprehension of a third state, a livingness that is neither life nor death. In fact, his saint is a mere postulate—by definition *not* a poet.

Eliot, poet and, as such, vindicator of the spiritual and real, has his own kind of humility. He attributes a heroic purity of selflessness to the saint that he doesn't claim for himself. 'For most of us', he says, plainly meaning readers whom he thinks of as responding favourably to the 'logic' of the poem,

> there is only the unattended
> Moment, the moment in and out of time,
> The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
> The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
> Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
> That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
> While the music lasts.

The 'you' are readers whom Eliot assimilates to himself, and they, not being saints, must (he intimates) make the most of what he here calls 'hints and guesses'. These have become very familiar to us, for recurrent resort to them is an essential feature of his inclusive *procédé*. In the first movement of 'Burnt Norton' they evoke unmistakably the enchanted resonance of early childhood memories, and something akin to that is always there. We recall, as we read the passage beginning 'For most of us', the end of 'Burnt Norton':

> Love is itself unmoving,
> Only the cause and end of movement,
> Timeless, and undesiring
> Except in the aspect of time
> Caught in the form of limitation
> Between un-being and being.
> Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
> Even while the dust moves
> There rises the hidden laughter
> Of children in the foliage
> Quick now, here, now, always—
> Ridiculous the waste sad time
> Stretching before and after.

In the diversity of the total complex *procédé* the function of the 'hints' is to offset the logico-analogical and the insistently intellectual

in all its forms, and evoke the real potently as a 'sphere of being' that, though (it is postulated) transcending time to which the life that can only die belongs, is not after all repellently abstract, void and anti-human. They suggest that 'being' in the quoted phrase means something positively other than the unlivingness of death. But they do that, we reflect, by being essentially *of* the life that Eliot lives–lives, purposefully and creatively in the way his undertaking commits him to, as he works at the poem, corrects his proofs, and remembers childhood in Missouri and holidays on the Massachusetts coast.

His consciousness that paradox is central to the undertaking has, of course, been manifest in many ways throughout the three quartets. But the paradox finally clinched–in conscious intention–by the formally Christian affirmation to which the last-quoted lines of 'The Dry Salvages' lead immediately up is certainly not to be identified with the paradox that *Four Quartets* actually and essentially is, or the paradox that Eliot himself, in writing the poem (and, again, in going on to write *The Cocktail Party*), enacted. The emphatic theological pronouncement means to be the affirming explicitness that completes and vindicates the whole undertaking, consummating the complex logico-musical process of constructive thought, suggestion and evocation which, clearly, is assumed to have achieved what was intended and to have established its sufficient cogency:

> These are only hints and guesses,
> Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
> Is prayer, observance discipline, thought and action.
> The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.
> Here the impossible union
> Of spheres of existence is actual,
> Here the past and future
> Are conquered . . .

Eliot has had this affirmation in view as his Τέλος, of course, from the beginning of 'Burnt Norton'; in the nature of the case, he knew where he would arrive. He is not, in *Four Quartets* as we have them, going over this ground for the first time, but out of his experience is offering to define, with economy, cogency and precision, the essential path of the explorer, or quester, as he conceives it now, and that necessarily entails knowing to what it leads. He has determined, he feels, and verified what seems to him the inescapable logic.

The conviction implied by 'inescapable' is, in such a matter, intimately and intensely personal, and that Eliot, having arrived at this point in the sustained heuristico-definitive process, judges himself to have established both his right to make such an affirmation and the necessity of making it now, since, coming at this point, it issues with an impressive inevitability from what leads up to it—this we accept as a fact, and a fact of major significance.

Criticism here, then, doesn't bring or suggest charges of insincerity; there is nothing to prompt them. There is, however, reason here for a decided limiting judgment—one that involves an adverse commentary. It is obviously not enough to say that Eliot in *Four Quartets* applies a major poet's genius to expressing intense personal conviction. In such an undertaking, what he offers is offered as having general validity. That, in the nature of things—in the nature of life, thought and the challenge taken—is necessarily so; and it can hardly be suggested that Eliot shows himself inclined to dispute that truth. The critical comment that is clearly called for here, it seems to me, is that Eliot's affirmation is not coercively entailed in the way he supposes; there is about it none of the inevitability of issue out of what has gone before that he invites us to be impressed by.

In fact the reflection that, with some gratitude, we find ourselves pondering at this point is how profound a lesson in the nature of sincerity a truly appreciative reading of *Four Quartets* represents, and how exacting are the criteria for using, in literary criticism, the word 'sincere' responsibly—that is, with a full sense of its importance and the delicacy of the kind of judgment it implies. It is one thing to say, as I have just done, that Eliot's arrival at the long-deferred decisive affirmation, clear and unequivocal, doesn't prompt one with the idea that charges of insincerity might be in place. But actually the positive attribution of 'sincerity' *could*, I think, propose itself only to be judged out of the question; it would imply something about the poet, in relation to this after all basic issue, that one's commentary is bound to negate.

What the textually immediate approach to the affirmation has impressed on us sharply once again is how significant a part in the challenged commentary must inevitably be played by the diagnostic. Eliot, to whom nevertheless we find that we can't deny major status, remains a 'case'; his inescapable dividedness is an incapacitating malady. We can't call him anything but a major poet because of the impressiveness of his astonishingly daring and original heuristic creativity—the

creativity in which the drive has its clear association with his desperate need. The desperateness of the need gives his poetry (which in so significant a way contradicts his Francophil theorizing) a penetration, a subtlety and a memorableness in relation to very important regions of human experience. But the inner contradictions and irreconcilabilities *are* incapacitating—how incapacitating we are bound to tell ourselves (it is our paradox of tribute to the essentially paradoxical poet) at the close of 'The Dry Salvages'. When we come to the theological affirmation we have to recognize that the emphatically firm explicitness is, for us, not acceptable, it is so clearly addressed by the divided man in an admonitory way to himself. The complete and sure 'impersonality', the disinterestedness, of major creative genius is impossible to Eliot; the dividedness that denies him the courage of life denies him that—denies him the Doycean incapacity for self-deception and evasion which, positively, would have been a completeness and clarity of insight into himself.

The subtle mastery then, manifested in his creative way with the English language, isn't merely to be exalted as serving delicacy and precision of thought. In the nature of the 'case' that he is, he can have no sureness of perception of the point at which positive subtlety becomes evasion: the mastery, beyond question, lends itself insidiously to purposes too suggestive of the ethos one recalls as characterizing, from time to time, the editorial prose of *The Criterion*. One can at any rate hardly, in a careful reading of *Four Quartets*, come to the end of 'The Dry Salvages' without reflecting that one function served by the complex 'musical' *procédé* is that of enabling Eliot to have it both ways—as he does, surely, in the 'action' that is not action. That equivocation, or subtlety, though it bears in a significant way on the relaxed ethos of achieved security that makes 'Little Gidding' so fundamentally different in kind from the preceding three quartets, gets no justifying further attention; it is merely, in the distinctively happy concluding quartet, something assumed as of the background—assumed as having established an essential and highly germane truth.

(IV)

'LITTLE GIDDING'

The word 'relaxed' that I have used in describing the distinctive effect, or prevailing personal tone, of 'Little Gidding' suggests a poetic

inferiority, and actually, it seems to me, a poetic inferiority too sustained to be doubted faces us as we read through—and re-read—the first movement of the fourth and last quartet. What helps the critic to turn that impression into a convinced judgment is the presence of a substantial section of very different quality—the stretch of unrimed 'terza rima' that occupies the greater part of the second movement. It is astonishing how, while being so Dantesque in its measured gravity and weight, it is at the same time unmistakably Eliot the great poet—as unquestionably major here as anywhere in his *oeuvre*. It is by so much the most impressive thing in the whole quartet as to be a foil that prompts one to the perception that the 'relaxed' describing, as one senses it, the general poetic inferiority of 'Little Gidding' can be justified convincingly in checkable terms of literary criticism. The nature of the imagery in the first dozen lines of the All Clear passage assures one of that as one recalls the impression left by the opening movement of the quartet:

> In the uncertain hour before the morning
> Near the ending of interminable night
> At the recurrent end of the unending
> After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
> Had passed below the horizon of his homing
> While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
> Over the asphalt where no other sound was
> Between three districts whence the smoke arose
> I met one walking, loitering and hurried
> As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
> Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.

The vivid precision of this is an involuntary recognition on Eliot's part of the reality of life, life in time—involuntary and paradoxical, because the reality that compels the vividness is the sinister reality of bombed London. The sinisterness is wonderfully evoked. If the dark dove cannot be seen, the flickering can, and the actuality portended by the uncanny silence is destruction and death. A great poet's imaginative creativity is at work; the complexity of the passage is organic, and the organic life is strong and sustained. Constituents that can be pointed to for admiration have a context in which they grow; what is so vividly realized is a living totality. Thus we say with some surprise, 'Yes, dead leaves do rattle like tin!'; but the evoked silence plays its inseparable part in the precision we recognize—

While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
Over the asphalt where no other sound was
Between three districts whence the smoke arose

–and this last line evokes the cause and the accompaniments of there being 'no other sound'. That is not all; it turns out as we read the next three lines that a major constituent of the effect of irresistible vividness and precision is the way in which the dead leaves tell in the evocation of the *alter ego*, his motion and the mode of his being 'there'.

I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.

There is no poetic life of this strength in the score of lines that make up the opening paragraph of 'Little Gidding', though metaphorical imagery plays a most important part in relation to Eliot's intention, which is to convey prelusively the theme and *Stimmung* of the concluding quartet. Examination of the difference in the use of imagery between the two passages bears out, so far as the opening one of the quartet is concerned, the description 'relaxed'–and bears out the adverse criticism implicit in that description. There is certainly insistent metaphor in the opening passage:

Midwinter spring is its own season
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.
When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
Reflecting in a watery mirror
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.
And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire
In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing
The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell
Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time
But not in time's covenant.

I break off here, because, in these insistent lines, I have quoted enough to make my immediate critical point clear, and the reader, with Eliot's whole text in front of him, will be able to verify that nowhere in the first movement is there anything to prompt a commentary running counter to what I note about the use of metaphor

in the opening paragraph, or to the critical argument into which those observations lead me. It will help if I refer the reader to D. W. Harding's critique in *Experience into Words*. Harding, it will be seen, is more sympathetic with Eliot and more favourable to 'Little Gidding' than I am; it is the challenge to disagree that helps me with my own problem of critical presentment and, in the course of doing that, gives edge to my judgment and strengthens my critical grasp. In what I shall quote first I find confirmation. He says to begin with (Page 121):

> The opening of 'Little Gidding' speaks of renewed life of unimaginable splendour, seen in promise amidst the cold decline of age. It offers no revival of life-processes; it is a spring time, 'But not in time's covenant.' If this 'midwinter spring' has such bloom as the snow on hedges,
>
> Where is the summer, the unimaginable
> Zero summer?
>
> With the sun blazing on the ice, the idea of pentecostal fire, of central importance in the poem, comes in for the first time, an intense, blinding promise of life and (as later passages show) almost unbearable.

The phrase, 'pentecostal fire', making the theme of the passage explicit, appears five lines from the end of my verse-quotation. It is significant that Harding, in testifying that the theme comes in now for the first time, seems to think no suggestion of adverse criticism in place, though he says that, for the poem (and he must mean not merely 'Little Gidding' but *Four Quartets* as a whole) it is of central importance. It is certainly of central importance in 'Little Gidding', which opens with it; but, as Harding seems to agree, it doesn't issue out of, it gets no authority from, the justifying music that led up to 'Incarnation'.

But the term belongs to theology; no doubt there have been developed round it diverse contexts of theological thought, and Eliot himself was not a theologian but a poet and a 'case'. It is readily imaginable that when he judged that the 'musical' dialectic now authorized the formal affirmation he meant it as making unequivocally plain his Christian allegiance, and assumed, having arduously achieved a security for himself about which he could feel both convinced and conventionally countenanced, that he had done enough—the special company of distinguished religious friends and associates he cultivated served to confirm his resting happily where 'The Dry Salvages' left him. At any rate, in 'Little Gidding' the tension of exploratory and testing thought is there no longer. As Harding says, 'the idea of

pentecostal fire' is brought in for the first time, but it is significant that Harding's way, which has its critical felicity, of intimating what the first movement does begins: 'The opening of "Little Gidding" *speaks of* renewed life of unimaginable splendour.' The suggestion conveyed by 'speaks of' (italicized by me) is felicitous because Eliot's mode of imparting his sense that the pentecostal theme is for him of central importance is in essence one of mere statement—statement so insistent as fairly to be called emphatic assertion.

It is here that critical attention to the difference in metaphorical life between the first movement and the stretch of 'terza rima' is in place, serving to justify what amounts to an adverse judgment and bring out its force. There is certainly imagery in the first movement, and it has its function—an essential one; it is the nature of the function that prompts the adverse judgment implicit in 'mere statement' and 'emphatic assertion.' The prevailing metaphor is announced in the opening lines of the movement, together with the naïve subtlety that is to make less obvious the naïve simplicity of the function:

> Midwinter spring is its own season
> Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown.

—If we ask why 'sodden' as well as 'sempiternal', we are not left in doubt as to the answer; it is given us immediately in its redundant obviousness, throughout the long paragraph. The clear enough essential purpose—it could hardly have been calculated (the exaltation is plainly a relaxed Eliot's)—is to disguise the complete dependence of the exaltation, as expressed, on the metaphor, which is the simplest kind of compressed simile. For the evoking of pentecostal fire in its transcendental splendour and authority Eliot, though a great poet, has no resource but to appeal metaphorically to natural glories as they impress living 'human kind'. His subtlety reduces to combining opposed but complementary suggestions in his use of metaphor in a way that implicitly denies the completeness of his actual dependence. The 'sodden towards sundown' insists 'Of course I am using metaphor', but the mode of compressed and elliptical expression that begins with the opening line suggests that, even if the relation between the response to nature and life and the apprehension of the transcendental doesn't amount to an identity, they are very hard to distinguish—they defy separation:

When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
Reflecting in a watery mirror
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.

Actually it all depends on the metaphorical transference of the evoked this-worldly splendour to the postulated transcendental apprehension, and the transference is a matter of nothing more than mere assertion.

This is the spring time
But not in time's covenant. Now the hedgerow
Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
Of snow, a bloom more sudden
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
Not in the scheme of generation.
Where is the summer, the unimaginable
Zero summer?

The whole nature of the simple uncreative process is brought out in that concluding sentence, which, while in form a question and assuming the 'unimaginable' to have the effect of conveying some supremely positive significance, is mere assertive emphasis to which the sustained assertion of the preceding paragraph leads up. No transcendental apprehension is convincingly imparted, because the life of the meaning insists on belonging to what figures as metaphor—that is, to the this-world actual of human existence and experience; to the life to which Eliot denies value.

The further two paragraphs of the movement add no poetic strength—they have, it seems to me, no strength of any kind; the same relaxedness characterizes them.

If you came this way in may time, you would find the hedges
White again, in May, with voluptuary sweetness.

The only point of this reference to the spring time that *is* in time's covenant would seem to be that it tends to blunt the perception that the metaphorical insistence was indispensable. The curious inertness continues to prevail—a fact that comes home to the reader who is in the habit of feeling his way to the proper reading-out of the poetry he takes seriously: there seems to be no life here in the rhythm and tone. The creative-exploratory battle over the issues has been fought, and

Eliot now lives in a world of settled and earned assumption—that is the impression one gets. The movement of the thought doesn't sufficiently explain itself, and, in the absence of the signs of tension, one finds that irritating and a warrant to push one's radical criticism home.

> It would be the same at the end of the journey,
> If you came at night like a broken king,
> If you came by day not knowing what you came for,
> It would be the same . . .
> . . . And what you thought you came for
> Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
> From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
> If at all. Either you had no purpose
> Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
> And is altered in fulfilment.

—We are left to conclude not only that what is fulfilled was never 'your' purpose, but that it is misleading to call the altered 'purpose' a purpose at all—it is certainly not a human one. What in fact we have to remember is Eliot's insistence on humanity's utter abjectness and nullity and on the supremely Real as the completely Other. The relaxed and unintransigent mode of the last quartet, however, means that it is very possible not to recognize fully what the nature of that insistence is, or was. So in regard to the church of Little Gidding, of which Harding says: 'Anchored in time and space, but for some people serving as the world's end where they can fulfil a purpose outside time and space, it gives contact with spiritual concerns through earthly and human things', we read towards the close of the first movement:

> You are not here to verify,
> Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
> Or carry report. You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
> Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
> Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.
> And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
> They can tell you, being dead: the communication
> Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the
> living.

It will be seen that this is not more specific in meaning, and that nothing in the quartet makes it more challengingly definitive or

explanatory, than Harding's brief summarizing account. How, we ask, does Eliot know that prayer in the church of Little Gidding has been valid? He has no doubt found the history and associations of the community congenial, and I can't guess what more satisfactory answer could be given. The asserted 'pentecostal idea', brought in by way of giving content and explanatory force to 'valid', remains merely personal testimony that is merely asserted.

It is time now to return to the comparative critical judgment that started with the contrast in metaphorical life between the opening of the Dantesque narrative passage and the first paragraph of the quartet. The poetic inferiority of the first movement, we saw, is manifested in the simple resort to the simple obvious metaphor in order to enforce the merely asserted 'pentecostal idea'. The repeated use of a single metaphor so simple, and so obvious in itself, has an effect of insistent assertion. No such account can be given of the imagery in the passage that—significantly—presents so much evidence of the value to the poet of his firsthand experience as an air-raid warden. Paradoxical as it may sound to say so, that experience was a rude and salutary exposure to life—a kind of exposure necessary to a life-fearing potential major poet. In the Dantesque narrative Eliot *is*, and very impressively, a major poet; the complexity inseparable from its being so unmistakably creative evocation—organic and, in a way remote from assertion, so urgent—is not confined to the sensory vividness of the warden-poet's report.

Nowhere else does Eliot come so close to full recognition of the reality of what he is—to full recognition, that is, of the human nature that he shares, life being *in* himself. The real spiritual problem that torments him is evoked, and even, in intention, acknowledged; he challenges himself, at any rate, to recognize it without any of the usual evasiveness, knowing that *that* is what responsibility requires of him, and that without achieving the courage of responsibility he can't hope to escape from the absolute and unidentifiable 'guilt' he has offered to study in Lord Harry (for *The Family Reunion* is a touching personal document, and throws a good deal of light on *Four Quartets*). When I discuss 'Little Gidding' in seminars I ask my students, who don't as a rule need introducing to *Experience into Words*, to pay, in reading Harding on 'Little Gidding', especially close attention to what he says about the evoked 'All Clear' experience.

I cite him now in order to express disagreement that I think very necessary. Harding, it seems to me, has too ready a sympathy for the

Eliotic ethos to be safe in perception and judgment where the poetry is concerned. What I find about his commentary on the strongest part of 'Little Gidding'—a part that shows up the general weakness of the quartet—is that the uncritically sympathetic approach makes him *essentially* unfair to Eliot. Harding's account of the long narrative passage in unrimed *terza rima* is in fact, in a fundamentally disastrous way, a misreading, and his use of the term 'humanist' an indefensible misdirection. 'Section II', he writes (page 121), 'can be regarded as the *logical* starting point of the whole poem.' Well, in so far as it stresses the fear of death (sharply evoked in the three prelusive stanzas) as the essential impulsion that determines the nature of Eliot's religious poetry, one can endorse this critical observation. But we are pulled up, and must see that the endorsement was premature, when Harding goes on: 'It deals with the desolation of death and the futility of life for those who have had no conviction of spiritual values in their life's work.' For we don't suspect him of having any thought of a meaning that might be imputed to this ambiguous sentence—the meaning represented by the question: 'What conviction of spiritual values as intrinsically *in* his life's work had Eliot himself?'

It is impossible to suppose that Harding is offering so radical a criticism of Eliot, whose assumption regarding spiritual reality and its utter otherness in relation to 'human kind' the poetry conveys persistently and unambiguously. I have not disguised my own conviction that the assumption in a religious poet is a symptom, manifesting as it does the extent to which he is a 'case'—that it entails a fundamental contradiction, making him incapable of cogent or coherent thought. So little does Harding agree with me that he continues: 'The tone having been set by these stanzas, there opens a passage describing the dreary bitterness in which a life of literary culture can end if it has brought no sense of spiritual values.' How can any life that it is not deplorably and reprehensibly a misdirection to call a life of literary culture *not*, one exclaims, bring a sense—bring, by what it essentially is and must be, a cultivated and heightened sense—of spiritual values? Harding's use of 'literary' seems to give the word the meaning, or no-meaning, it has when a pornographic work is defended as fit for unimpeded general enjoyment by virtue of its 'literary value'. Whether Eliot in his articles in *The Criterion* used the words 'humanist' and 'humanism' in the way Harding seems to imply I can't remember, but I say with the completest confidence that the account given here of the relation between the air-raid warden poet and the *alter ego*

falsifies most lamentably Eliot's achieved, and consequently manifest, intention:

> The life presented is one, such as Mr Eliot's own, of effort after clear speech and exact thought, and the passage amounts to a shuddering, 'There but for the grace of God go I.' It reveals more clearly than ever the articles in *The Criterion* did, years ago, what it was in 'humanism' that Mr Eliot recoiled from so violently. What the humanist's ghost sees in his life are futility, isolation and guilt on account of his self-assertive prowess–'Which once you took for exercise of virtue'–and the measure of aggression against others which that must bring.

Was Blake a humanist? He certainly had 'no sense of spiritual values' as Eliot conceived them. Yet I should have said that *he* pre-eminently stood for the spirit. 'I know that they are not Mine': it is because Eliot, in his fear of life, cannot feel the truth of the account of 'spiritual values' and their relation to life and creativity that is implicit in that utterance that he makes the supremely Real a vacuum, and cannot see that he commits himself to a frustrating self-contradiction as a man is committed to prison. Yet in this magnificent passage he comes near to escaping. For, with the passage in front of me, I have to insist that it presents no such opposition of poet to 'humanist' as Harding sees, and no such clear duality.

> Between three districts whence the smoke arose
> I met one walking

–Eliot rapidly makes it plain that the other mustn't be reduced to being merely and clearly *one* in a numerical sense, or merely and clearly another: the indeterminateness is not at all the relaxed quality that I take to be the distinctive weakness of 'Little Gidding'. To enforce this judgment as an essential presence in my argument I must quote some lines that exemplify Eliot's genius at its strongest:

> And as I fixed upon the down-turned face
> That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
> The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
> I caught the sudden look of some dead master
> Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
> Both one and many; in the brown baked features
> The eyes of a familiar compound ghost

Both intimate and unidentifiable.
So I assumed a double part, and cried
And heard another's voice cry: 'What! are *you* here?'
Although we were not. I was still the same,
Knowing myself yet being someone other–
And he a face still forming . . .

Anyone who has read at all recently Canto XV of the *Inferno* is likely to recognize in 'What! are *you* here?' the 'Siete voi qui, Ser Brunetto?' that Dante addresses to Brunetto Latini who has plucked his skirt as he passes. A refreshing glance at Canto XV picks up at once 'lo cotto aspetto' which gives us 'the brown baked features' in Italian. If Brunetto Latini is to be called a 'humanist' it can hardly be in the modern sense in which Harding uses it. But of course the text, with its insistent subtlety, forbids simple identification; the *alter ego* is 'both one and many'

–A familiar compound ghost
Both intimate and unidentifiable.

The anti-Cartesian precision (it may be called) with which Eliot establishes that the 'ghost' *is* an *alter ego*–with which he evokes the reality-status that makes it unmistakably that–is significant. It is *he* who, assuming a double part,

cried
And heard another's voice cry: 'What! are *you* here?'

The precision, the compelling inevitableness, is significant in that it reveals the pressure under which, in these abnormal circumstances ('here?'–'Although we were not'–the 'here' wasn't a spatial location), Eliot is to achieve the full self-recognition that, ordinarily, something precludes. What that 'something' is he comes nearer to recognizing with due courage in this creatively strongest part of 'Little Gidding' than anywhere else in his work.

It is not, however, abnormality that should take the stress. What Eliot achieves in the *alter ego* evocation–in the definition by creative presentation of what, for thought, the phrase portends–is a momentary escape from the prison in the door of which he had 'heard the key turn once and turn once only'. I have commented already on the significance, in relation to Eliot's disability, of the '*Dayadhvam*' passage and of the supporting quotation, in the relevant note at the

end of *The Waste Land*, from F. H. Bradley. I myself will quote in support of my own contention, which seems to me to insist on a truth that is central for any just criticism of Eliot, three sentences from a paragraph of Buytendijk quoted by Marjorie Grene in *The Knower and the Known* (page 178):

> Mother and child soon constitute a human society. Every society is founded on identification with the *alter ego*, which is nevertheless an *other* I precisely because every individual distinguishes himself from his fellow man. This distinction doesn't have to be accompanied by clear self-consciousness.

The truth that Buytendijk here is obviously concerned to get recognition for is the far from readily statable truth that I put in my own way when I say that 'life' is a necessary word, but that the reality it portends can be present—can be pointed to as concretely 'there'—only in the living individual being. It is a truth the full realizing consciousness of which is implicit in Blake's distinction between the 'identity' and the 'selfhood'. A liberating flash of consciousness of such a distinction is entailed in Eliot's inspired treatment of the *alter ego* theme. The prospective profit immediately relevant to the pressure that is inseparable from the inspired burst of creativity is given in

> And so, compliant to the common wind,
> Too strange to each other for misunderstanding,
> In concord at this intersection time
> Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,
> We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.

Recalling

> Both intimate and unidentifiable

we are prompted, when we read the second line of what I have just quoted, to play with the idea of rewriting it, for purposes of elucidation as

> Too strange and intimate for misunderstanding.

For the achievement associated with the *alter ego* realization is genuine and liberating impersonality. It is too late for Eliot to tell himself that, for all the paradoxes of his profound self-contradiction,

he has always been committed to creativity, and creativity belongs, in terms of the Blakean distinction, to the identity. But he knows now that he has a desperate need to overcome shame; he cannot, in the Dantesque moment of the 'All Clear', *not* know that.

'Shame' is a word that comes—it would have carried the rime had Eliot's verse been literally English *terza rima*—prominently in the utterance ascribed by Harding to the 'humanist', conceived to be someone the poet puts over against himself as representing 'humanist' vices escaped (with their penalties), and always recoiled from. Actually the solemnly intense ferocity of the admonition is that of self-accusing and avowed self-exposure; Eliot's consummate evocative use of the *alter ego* intuition makes that plain. In his 'you' and 'yours' he is addressing himself. What immediately precedes the 'Second', from which Harding quotes 'Which once you took for exercise of virtue', is this:

> 'Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age
> To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort.
> First, the cold friction of expiring sense
> Without enchantment, offering no promise
> But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
> As body and soul begin to fall asunder.'

This is the Eliotic fear of life, the recoil from decay and inevitable death, so surprisingly expressed with such power in 'Gerontion', which was among the earliest proofs of his genius—it had been published well before the Armistice of 1918. It is not plausibly imputed to a 'humanist' whom we are to take as the 'placed' and repudiated antithesis of the actual Eliot—the Eliot whose recoil from the thought of death Harding himself makes a main premise in the 'logic' that leads the poet and us compellingly to the Eliotic spirituality (for 'Little Gidding', with all its relaxedness, is still an expression—a self-contradictory and so self-discrediting expression—of that).

What follows the 'First' in unbroken continuity is:

> 'Second, the conscious impotence of rage
> At human folly, and the laceration
> Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.
> And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
> Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
> Of motives late revealed, and the awareness

Of things ill done and done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.
From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.'

But there will be no permanent escape from prison; the unequivocal recognition of motives late revealed and of things ill done and done to others' harm won't be maintained. Human kind cannot bear very much burning shame, and the exercise of Eliot's genius has entailed the intensive practice of a subtlety that makes the self-recognition now required of him peculiarly difficult. I will not develop or repeat what, with direct relevance, I have said about locally examinable effects of 'musically' explored and expressed thought. I will, rather, vindicate (I hope) my last constatation—demonstrate that it *is* that and not a mere unsympathetic contention—by referring to the theme of *The Family Reunion* and the treatment of it. *The Family Reunion* came out in 1939, and there is strong reason for saying that it was very closely associated in gestation with *Four Quartets*. As I have already remarked, it is unmistakably a highly personal document, and the personal intensity goes with—is manifest in—its great distinction as a poetic experiment, a product of Eliot's profoundly original poetic genius.

The protagonist, Harry, through whom Eliot is clearly exploring, and endeavouring to master, a problem that he himself is troubled by, suffers the torments of a consciousness of guilt that he can't explain. The guilt and his powerlessness to account for it are not explained by his uncertainty whether or not he did in fact push his wife overboard; he displays a curious lack of interest in that question. That he should display it is clearly the reason for the question's being raised and getting so much emphasis in the play. We have to see the explanation of Harry's guilt in his conversion, which, towards the end of the play, we know we have to take for a fact.

I put it in this way because we know so little else about the conversion. The supremely Real, the source of 'spiritual value', being the completely Other, and, as such, indistinguishable from a vacuum, the idea of conversion is vacuous too, and in *The Family Reunion* there is no Little Gidding to give it content. And we can't be quite sure that Harry, who, when he departs from Wishwood, takes his chauffeur-

valet with him, is actually going to be a missionary. There is certainly no hint that the end in store for him is to be like Celia's of *The Cocktail Party* of whom we are told that she has been crucified close to an anthill and eaten alive by ants. But the statement, coming from one of the comic-strip uncles, that Harry is bent on becoming a missionary gets some support from more responsible utterances—which nevertheless are not explicit or wholly definitive.

The clue to understanding lies, I assume, in the distinctive conception of Original Sin that goes with Eliot's conception of spirituality and of humanity's relation to the Real. There is confirmation to be found in (among a good deal else that might be quoted from *The Family Reunion*) this—it comes from the exchange between Harry and his spiritual-adviser aunt Agatha that takes place in Part II, scene ii:

Harry

Perhaps my life has only been a dream
Dreamt through me by the minds of others. Perhaps
I only dreamt I pushed her.

Agatha

So I had supposed. What of it?
What we have written is not a story of detection,
Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation.
It is possible that you have not known what sin
You shall expiate, or whose, or why.

The sin recognized in the truly strong section of 'Little Gidding' as requiring expiation is a sin against life. The distinctive religious ethos of Agatha's speech explains how Eliot escapes from the self-recognition achieved, briefly, in the *alter ego* impersonality of the 'All Clear' phase.

The speech continues:

It is certain
That the knowledge of it must precede the expiation.
It is possible that sin may strain and struggle
In its dark instinctive birth, to come to consciousness
And so find expurgation. It is possible
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

The *alter ego* recognition was, inseparably, the shame of motives late revealed and the guilt of things ill done to others' harm 'Which once you took for exercise of virtue'. Nothing further comes of the interlude of fierce 'abnormal' courage; he slips easily back into the old virtue, familiar and irresistible. The word 'expiate' itself is a hint of the insuperable difficulty, the unrecognizable temptation, that defeated Eliot. It doesn't occur explicitly in the *alter ego* passage, but 'fire' does—a few lines after 'shame', which holds the rime-position in the '*terza rima*'. In my commentary I referred to 'burning shame', but it is not felt as burning, or as shame at all, after the conclusion of the second movement. It is not one of the 'fires' sternly confronted as possibilities in IV:

> The only hope, or else despair
> Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
> To be redeemed from fire by fire.

The limitation of the choice redeems the poet from shame. Harding sees the choice in this way.

> . . . the fourth section is a forceful passage, close-knit with rime and incisive. Its theme is the terrifying fierceness of the pentecostal experience, the dove bringing fire. This is not the fire of expiation, such as the humanist had to suffer. It is the consuming experience of love, the surrender to a spiritual principle beyond us, and the only alternative to consuming ourselves with the miserable fires of sin and error. This pentecostal ordeal must be met before the blinding promise seen in 'midwinter spring' can be accepted.

This, I think, is how Eliot's own commentary might have run.