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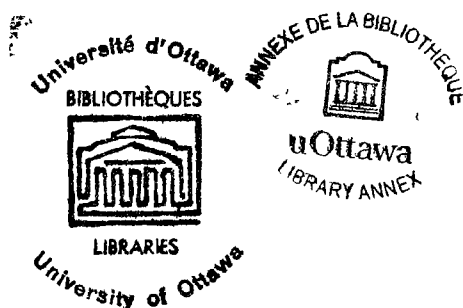
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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

A CRITICAL PRESENTATION OF THE AESTHETIC-POETICS OF  
T.S. ELIOT

by Paul John Marcotte

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of the University of Ottawa through the  
Department of English in partial fulfill-  
ment of the requirements for the degree  
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The writer was initially introduced to the myriad problems involved in the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot by Mrs. Mariana Ryan, docteur de l'Université (Paris).

No one interested in aesthetic-poetics will doubt the unrepayable debt which the writer hereby acknowledges to Jacques Maritain.

Gratitude is also expressed to those other persons who made this thesis possible in one way or another.

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## INTRODUCTION

The name T.S. Eliot has become almost synonymous with contemporary poetry. Consequently, it is not at all surprising that a phenomenal amount of work has been written concerning Mr. Eliot, the Poet and Mr. Eliot, the Critic and Mr. Eliot, the Dramatist and et cetera and et cetera. Some of this work has been genuine and some of it has been spurious and such is to have been expected. Permeating the chaff and tingeing the corn, however, it is possible to detect an insidious attitude. Briefly stated, it is the attitude of viewing Mr. Eliot's poetry and therefore Mr. Eliot as a unique curiosity essentially different from all the rest of the members of the classification into which the words poetry and poet place them.

This is not a new attitude, though the extent to which it has been pressed in Mr. Eliot's case is new. A long time ago, in the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, Mr. Eliot urged critics to examine their methods of criticism and added that, "One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else".<sup>1</sup> Such precisely is what has happened to Mr. Eliot. As a matter of fact, it has been

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 14.

carried so far that it sometimes seems that the only conclusion possible is that if Mr. Eliot has made poetry, then no one else ever has; or conversely, if others have made poetry, then Mr. Eliot has not.

In addition to poetry, Mr. Eliot has written an appreciable amount of literary criticism in prose. The vast majority of Eliot commentators agree that the pithy essays in which this literary criticism is found are the key to his poetry and this is true. These essays have received almost as much attention as his poetry. However, they have received this attention from the same persons tinged with the same attitude and hence these studies have tended merely to substantiate the unique curiosity, the essentially different, art or achievement or design of T.S. Eliot. That Helen Gardner, and F.O. Matthiessen, and Elizabeth Drew and other "critics" of their kind have made contributions which shall ultimately lead to a just evaluation of Mr. Eliot is not being denied, but that they have corrected the insidious attitude already described is emphatically denied and evidence validating this denial is ubiquitous. Let him who has not experienced the "strangeness" still engulfing Eliot challenge this denial.

If the art and the achievement and the design of T.S. Eliot are essentially different from the art and the achievement and the design of other poets, then it

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necessarily follows that T.S. Eliot is either not a poet or that there is a dichotomy between his theory and his practice. The present thesis shall not endeavour to prove that Eliot is a poet - this should be obvious. Nor shall the present thesis endeavour to determine whether or not there is a dichotomy between his theory and his practice - this is adequate subject matter for many more than one thesis. It would be the task of these several theses to compare his theory with his practice and thence to note their agreement or disagreement. However, before such comparisons could be made his theory of aesthetic-poetics would have to be presented and critically evaluated. This is precisely the problem with which the present thesis presumes to deal. It shall be a critical presentation of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot.

A poet's theory of aesthetic-poetics can either be inferred from a study of his poems where he practices it; or, it can be inferred from his prose, especially his prose criticism, where he talks about it. The first method entails an assumption. It assumes that he practices what he preaches. Against the second method it is often urged that if he does not practice what he preaches then the theory of aesthetic-poetics thus inferred is not the explanation of his poetry. That the aesthetic-poetics thus inferred is not

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the explanation of his poetry is true, but that it is his theory of aesthetic-poetics is all that is being alleged. Consequently, it is the second method that shall be utilized in this thesis.

Were the Formal Object of this thesis simply the presentation of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot, its Material Object would be confined to those of Eliot's prose essays in which essential elements of his aesthetic-poetics are discussed. However, the Formal Object of this thesis is a critical presentation of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot. Therefore, the Material Object of this thesis must also include subject-matter from which a critique can be derived.

Since a critical presentation implies a norm, and since aesthetic-poetics implies a metaphysics, and since there is only one valid system of metaphysics and that the metaphysics of Aristotle and St. Thomas, and since the aesthetic-poetics that can be derived from Aristotelian-Thomism is only now being formulated, Chapter One shall present a few pertinent principles of this aesthetic-poetics and these principles shall be the norm with which Mr. Eliot's principles shall be compared. Incidentally, as these principles are being presented in Chapter One, Mr. Eliot shall be given an opportunity to comment upon them. (How

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this shall be achieved and other features of the first chapter's plan are explained at the beginning of that vitally important chapter.) The actual analytical presentation of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics shall be included in the four remaining chapters. Only the essential concepts of his aesthetic-poetics shall be presented. Chapter Two is principally devoted to his concepts of "tradition" and what might be termed "the individual's talent"; Chapter Three, to his explanation of how a poem is made; and Chapter Four and Chapter Five to the two principal concepts, the concept of the "objective correlative" and the concept of the "auditory imagination" respectively. When these concepts of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics have been analysed, they shall be compared with their appropriate counterparts in the aesthetic-poetics presented in Chapter One. This shall be done, not in a separate chapter which would make a great deal of repetition necessary, but in the same chapters in which they are analysed.

Jacques Maritain has said that though the Schoolmen have composed no special treatise concerning aesthetic-poetics, there is nevertheless such a theory implicit in their writings. Several philosophers and a few - too few - literary critics have been labouring to render this theory explicit. Such labours are of relatively recent vintage.

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Chapter One shall be indebted to a select group of these "labourers": above all to Jacques Maritain; much less to Raïssa; sometimes to Maurice De Wulf; and especially for little things and its plan to Victor M. Hamm. In spite of this obviously necessary indebtedness, Chapter One shall be justified in claiming credit for laying a few newly moulded bricks in the edifice that shall one day be recognized as the theory of aesthetic-poetics.

The peculiar nature of this thesis shall render the use of secondary sources quite incidental. Consequently, the concepts of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics shall be derived directly from his essays. Though a very great deal has been written in an effort to trace the origin of these concepts to other writers, either English or French or American, the present thesis shall make no use of such works; since, from its point of view, these other works are based upon the assumption that when they have succeeded in tracing a concept to its source, and when they have explained the concept in terms of the source to which it has been traced, they have also explained it in terms faithful to Mr. Eliot's thought. On the other hand, again because of the peculiar nature of this thesis, a number of fundamental text-books in the various branches of Scholastic philosophy shall be used quite extensively as a source of definitions,

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distinctions, et cetera. No separate section shall be set apart in which to define terms because they are better defined as they occur and because such a section could not escape being a catalogue due to the large number of terms which it shall be necessary to define. Incidentally, the definitions and distinctions borrowed from philosophy shall be purposively taken from secondary sources rather than primary sources in the belief that such a practice will simplify understanding for readers more interested in literature than in philosophy. However, the Bibliography's annotations shall supplement much of what has been sketched in this paragraph.

To conclude, it is hoped that the present thesis shall not only contribute to the solution of a coeval problem, the problem of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot; but that it shall contribute a concept or two to the aesthetic-poetics even now being derived from the writings of the Schoolmen. As Scholastic philosophy is eclectic, it may well be that more than one concept of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics shall ultimately find a place in the New Critique.

## CHAPTER ONE

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There are, perhaps, no words that could be quoted that would sound the keynote of this all important opening chapter and that would simultaneously lend such authority to the present project, than those which comprise the following paragraph, which is, incidentally, the first paragraph of Jacques Maritain's excellent book, Art and Scholasticism:

The Schoolmen composed no special treatise with the title "Philosophy of Art". This is a consequence, no doubt, of the stern discipline of teaching to which the philosophers of the Middle Ages were subjected. They were absorbed in sifting and exploring in every direction the problems of the School and indifferent about leaving unexploited areas between the deep quarries they excavated. There is nevertheless a far-reaching theory of Art to be found in their writings, but it is to be sought in austere dissertations on some problem of logic: "Is Logic a liberal Art?" - or of moral theology: "How does Prudence, at once an intellectual and moral virtue, differ from Art, a merely intellectual virtue?"<sup>1</sup>

Either consciously or unconsciously, either explicitly or implicitly, every author who has ever written a non-creative work has had to make assumptions. The present chapter assumes the validity of Aristotelian-Thomistic thought and the present chapter assumes the validity of the above quoted paragraph, especially the assertion that there is a

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1. Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, p. 1.

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far-reaching theory of Art implicit in Scholasticism. The latter element of this bipartite assumption, in view of Maritain's stature as an Aristotelian-Thomistic commentator, and in view of his speculations in aesthetics, almost ceases to be an assumption at all. In addition, the principles, distinctions, definitions and the like that shall be presented should be able to compel assent on the basis of their own intrinsic merits. There is no conceivable reason, other than plain unadulterated old fashioned prejudice, why anyone dissatisfied with the sub-human theories - theories derived ultimately from Freud or Marx, and formulated in relatively recent times by psychiatrists or socialists who are to be congratulated for their wandering interest, condemned for their pertinent ignorance and deplored for their insidious effects - which have deluged the once sovereign kingdoms of literary criticism and aesthetics, from viewing these principles simply as theories in what has become known as the scientific spirit. Even a "philosophy" of utilitarianism should argue their acceptation as so many tools somewhat suited to the task at hand, the task of exploding the general confusion surrounding, especially, literary criticism; a confusion nurtured by the most devastating of all the equalities, the equality of opinion. It is a fair challenge even to the most imaginative to conceive of anything more foolish than that one man's

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opinion of a work of art, a poem for example, is as good as another's. Therefore, what follows is introduced first, to provide a means by which Eliot's aesthetic-poetics can be critically presented; and second, to provide a norm by which they can be objectively praised or blamed. The second motive - if it may be so termed - is the one conspicuously absent from most of the presentations of his so-called method or achievement. All too often, Eliot's aesthetic-poetics are presented as if they were something entirely new. This is so much the case that, if much of what has been written were taken to its logical conclusion, an absurdity would emerge: if what Eliot writes is poetry - no one has ever made poetry before; if others have made poetry - then Eliot has not. Of course, such an absurdity is not obvious to very many, because there are not very many who - outside of certain spheres of thought - approach Eliot with a purpose clear in mind. They do not know what they expect to find there, much less what they have a right to expect to find there. Consequently, coterie are formed, some extravagantly enthusiastic for Eliot, some against him. Usually, such frantic persuasions are determined for or against on the basis of what Eliot writes about; or, more accurately, what Eliot proponents or opponents believe he writes about. Therefore, it shall be the business of the

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present chapter to set forth as concisely as possible a few of the essential principles without which criticism of Eliot, or any other artist for that matter, is necessarily illusory. Such principles shall have been derived from the aesthetic-poetics implicit in Aristotelian-Thomistic thought, though the actual process of derivation shall not be traced in this place. The limits of what is being undertaken here must be quite clearly understood. First, no complete system of aesthetic-poetics is being presented. Second, those elements of an aesthetic-poetics presented are selected with an eye to the task to which the present thesis is dedicated and no other consideration. Third, the order in which the principles are presented is adopted and is not intended to imply any relative importances or any essential juxtaposition, interdependence - unless explicitly stated - or anything at all of a similar kind that might be inferred from any physical accident of this presentation. And fourth, that the fragmentary appearance of this presentation is absolutely no reflection on the theory of aesthetic-poetics that might have been derived from Aristotelian-Thomism if time and space and purpose allowed. In short, then, nothing is implied designedly in the following sections of this chapter. What is intended shall be made explicit. Therefore, nothing should be

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inferred or read between the lines. The name Eliot has too long served as an excuse for the taking of such liberties - thus the, otherwise unnecessary, preamble.

So as to infuse some semblance of order into this chapter, it shall be sub-divided into eight parts. The titles of the sub-sections are respectively: "The Premises of Criticism", "The Nature of Literature", "The Difficulties of Reading", "The Work of the Intellect", "Literature and Morality", "The Affective Element", "The Literary Imagination" and "The Formal Principle". These titles have been taken from Victor M. Hamm's The Pattern of Criticism. In the Preface of this book, it is explicitly stated that the author "is in general following the Aristotelian-Thomistic approach wherever philosophical judgments are demanded".<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, one reason why the titles of the first eight chapters of this particular book have been appropriated. Another is that by treating the problems of criticism in the order employed by Hamm Hamm's order of treatment is imposed upon an otherwise unruly chapter. However, notwithstanding an obvious indebtedness, it would be a grave error indeed to interpret the present avowal as anything like an implied endorsement of either the completeness or the ubiquitous

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<sup>1</sup> Victor M. Hamm, The Pattern of Criticism, p. vi.

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correctness of Hamm's pattern of criticism. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hamm would be the last person to expect or even to desire such an endorsement. For, he has said:

This book has been meant as merely an introduction to the many problems of criticism, and not even as a complete account of those, much less as the last word on the subject. The field is too vast, the problems are too profound and delicate, the individual critic is too limited, to accomplish more. If, with the aid of this book, the student has become aware of the ground-work and the methods of criticism, he will have accomplished all that can be expected.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it may well be that additional designs shall have to be weaved into Hamm's pattern. It may even be necessary to tear out a design or two with which Mr. Hamm appears satisfied. Sometimes the added designs shall be gleaned from the work of other authorities, Jacques or Raïssa Maritain or Maurice De Wulf or someone else. And sometimes it may even be necessary to include a design for which no authority can be quoted because none is known. However, such elements shall always be consistent with the overall pattern and with the underlying philosophy, Aristotelian-Thomism. There is one additional shaping factor which shall contribute to the final form of the present chapter. It has to do with Mr. Eliot and it has to do with him in two ways. Eliot, of course, is himself a critic. Therefore, it would be interesting and

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1. Ibid., p. 290.

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singularly revealing to see how his pattern of criticism squares with the one being presented here. And since the principles of criticism being here evolved shall be the measure of Eliot's aesthetic-poetics in the following chapters, an effort shall be made to show that Eliot would be in accord with the critique by which he is to be judged. In a figurative sense, he is being given a say in the seating of the jury that must come to a decision in his own case. Thus, with the plan of this complex first chapter clearly in mind, it is time to proceed to the first sub-section.

## The Premises of Criticism

Literary criticism is, by definition, "the judgement of literature".<sup>1</sup> There are, at least, three attitudes, coevally popular, that completely undermine this apparent truism. The first is that since the mind of man cannot grasp works of art, it cannot judge them. The second is that works of art are by their very nature mysterious. The third is that even the desire to judge works of art is unwarranted, misguided and intrinsically illegitimate. These objections to criticism bring to mind objections once made against poetry; and these, some few words of Sir Philip Sidney's slightly altered, "Truly these objections are much,

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1. Ibid., p. 3.

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if there be much truth in them". As a matter of fact, if these objections were true, criticism would be ipso facto impossible, and the Aristotelian-Thomistic thinker would be the first to say so. However, the interesting and revealing thing to remark is that the very people who formulate such arguments do not reach the conclusion that criticism is impossible. On the contrary, most believe themselves to be critics and ultimately fall into one of two general classifications of "critics", either they are impressionists or historicists. Therefore, by turning their own premises against them, it is demonstrated conclusively that neither impressionism nor historicism is criticism; or, if it is criticism, that it is not criticism of works of art but of something else.

In "The Function of Criticism" essay, first published in 1923, and reprinted in Selected Essays, Mr. Eliot cites one of his own critical premises which, once understood, reveals his attitude towards impressionism and historicism viewed as kinds of criticism. He says, "I have assumed as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autotelic; and that criticism, by definition, is about something other than itself".<sup>1</sup> There is a sense in which

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 30.

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impressionistic criticism is about itself. To exemplify: according to both the theory and the practice of an impressionistic critic such as Walter Pater, the true critic is one who remains faithful to the impression which the work of art, with which he is dealing, has made upon him. He asks himself a number of questions concerning this impression and a kind of reflection that is very like imagining renders answers. These answers seem simply to amount to associations elicited as much by the initial impression itself as by the questions. These answers Pater terms "original facts", and it is by virtue of these "original facts" themselves, or by virtue of these "original facts" analysed, that the critic approaches the work of art "as in itself it really is". Indeed, it is far from clear how all of this brings the "critic" closer to the object per se. At best, it would seem as if it all tends toward the elucidation of the impression which the work of art has made upon the critic in question. Consequently, it becomes increasingly obvious that such a "critic" is preoccupied with his reaction to an object in a manner quite analogous with that of the creative artist. As a matter of fact, if he manages to express this reaction, this impression, he has, perhaps, created something - but he has certainly criticized nothing. It is in this sense that impressionistic

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criticism seems to be about itself. Since Eliot insists that criticism is, by definition, about something other than itself, it follows that impressionistic criticism is not criticism at all according to the thought and theory of Mr. Eliot.

Neither does the historicist judge the work of art per se. He assumes that a work of art, a poem for example, is the necessary effect of a series of somewhat related causes. This series can be either long or short or simple or complex. Given a certain set of circumstances and place a man within them and a poem is produced. Man is thus reduced to the level of an animal completely determined by his environment. Or, it may be, that this man is born with a tendency which determines him towards the production of poetry provided that this innate tendency be unhampered from without by his environment. Consequently, there is an analogy between what the Marxists and what the Freudians see in literature. Their respective theories both fall within the shallow but wide mouthed pale of historicism broadly conceived. Their fundamental error seems to be a wrong psychology. They view man as if he were an animal rather than a rational animal. Man's freedom is, of course, denied. From another point of view, it might be said that the historicist approaches a work of art, not as a thing of beauty, but as a thing of truth. For him, a poem is merely

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a sociological or a psychological document. It is reduced to the category of scientific writing. It is the sign of something other than itself. In the final analysis, the historicist implies that works of art are about something other than themselves. Such a conclusion is explicitly contrary to the theory of Mr. Eliot, for whom a work of art is autotelic. Therefore, historicism is not criticism according to T.S. Eliot.

Hamm says directly, "Criticism is judgment".<sup>1</sup> Eliot says indirectly what amounts to pretty much the same thing. However, a very great deal is revealed by virtue of Eliot's indirection. For example, in the Introduction to The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism Eliot says:

Criticism, however, may be separated from the beginning not into two kinds, but according to two tendencies. I assume that criticism is that department of thought which either seeks to find out what poetry is, what its use is, what desires it satisfies, why it is written and why read, or recited; or which, making some conscious or unconscious assumption that we do know these things, assesses actual poetry.<sup>2</sup>

Notice that Eliot is careful not to imply that there are two kinds of criticism. His distinction is a logical one. It is the distinction between the parts or the steps or the stages of criticism. This quotation affirms five things

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1. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., p. 10.

2. Thomas Stearns Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 16.

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pertinent here: first, that criticism is somehow bipartite; second, that criticism is a department of thought; third, that criticism seeks to discover what poetry is; fourth, that criticism assumes that it knows what poetry is; and fifth, that criticism assesses actual poetry. When it is realized that judgment "is the pronouncement of the mind upon the agreement or disagreement of two ideas",<sup>1</sup> the similarity between Hamm's and Eliot's thought becomes clearer. The vaguest of Eliot's affirmations is the first, it is the one weakened by the either or element and by the word tendencies in the quotation, it is the one hardest to reconcile with the succinctly stated thought of Hamm. However, there is a reason for this apparent vagueness. Actually, it is the result of Eliot's attempt to deal with a very real problem. When a writer tries to evaluate a particular poem, he is obviously writing criticism. When a writer attempts to set down the norms of criticism or the nature of poetry or the nature of criticism, he is perhaps less obviously yet nevertheless still writing what is classified as criticism. Nor will it suffice to admit a distinction between practical and speculative criticism and so dismiss the matter, because the former activity is impossible apart from the latter and this whether the latter be valid or invalid. (The point being made here is that no

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1. Paul J. Glenn, Dialectics, p. 70.

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one can say that this or that particular work is a poem unless he possesses, at least, a wrong idea of what a poem is. For example, if A thinks that poetry is versification, he is capable of making judgments. When he perceives a work written in verse, he predicates poetry of the work. His judgment may be wrong, but it is possible.) Thus Eliot says that "There are these two theoretical limits of criticism: at one of which we attempt to answer the question 'what is poetry?' and at the other 'is this a good poem?'"<sup>1</sup> The Schoolmen speaking of judgments distinguish between the material element and the formal element. The two ideas present in the mind and the comparison of the two ideas by the mind constitute the material element. The pronouncement by the mind on the agreement or the disagreement of the two ideas constitutes the formal element. The two ideas in question here are first, the idea of poetry and second, the idea of this or that particular work. When these ideas are compared they must necessarily agree or disagree. If they agree, the particular work is said to be a poem; if they disagree, it is said not to be a poem. The validity, that is, the truth of the judgment, depends upon the validity of the terms of the judgment. If the critic's idea of poetry represents the essence of poetry

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 16.

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and if his idea of this particular poem represents its essence, then the conclusion reached is valid.

There is a vitally important point which neither Mr. Hamm nor Mr. Eliot raises in their respective contexts here being discussed. It is the fact that the experience of poetry entails sense knowledge as well as intellectual knowledge. (In Chapters Four and Five of this thesis, Eliot's awareness of this consideration is discussed at some length.) To avoid duplication of detail, let it suffice to simply state that "there are such things as sense-judgments"<sup>1</sup> and that the criticism of literature implies sense-judgment as well as intellectual-judgment.

That the man who is a critic can possess the idea of poetry and the idea of this work, which is, of course, the idea of poetry also, if this work is poetry, is an assertion which begs a question which is legitimately begged in this context. It is not the function of either criticism or aesthetics to demonstrate the fact that man is able to attain true and certain knowledge of beings outside of himself. Criteriology, "the science of true and certain knowledge",<sup>2</sup> is the branch of metaphysics dedicated to this task. Therefore, that man is capable of acquiring true and certain knowledge is a premise of

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1. Paul J. Glenn, op. cit., p. 71.

2. Paul J. Glenn, Criteriology, p. 2.

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criticism. This established, Eliot's explanation of how man comes to know what poetry is can be accepted:

At the first stage we find out what poetry is by reading it and enjoying some of what we read; at a later stage our perception of the resemblances and differences between what we read for the first time and what we have already enjoyed itself contributes to our enjoyment. We learn what poetry is - if we ever learn - from reading it....<sup>1</sup>

Neither Mr. Hamm nor Mr. Eliot affixes a name to the kind of criticism above described so as to differentiate it from so-called impressionistic or historical criticism. Mr. Hamm refers to it simply as "criticism" and to its practitioners simply as "critics". Presumably, he is thereby endeavouring to imply that neither impressionism nor historicism are criticism from any point of view. Unfortunately, such a "revelation" is at bottom a fallacy because an exaggeration. Because best is best, it does not follow that better is not better or that good is not good. It would perhaps have been far more effective and rewarding to have called the third approach by a name something like artifactism. For, notwithstanding Shakespeare, there is something in a name, even if only a mnemonic device. And this label alone would serve to accentuate the tremendous importance placed upon the artifact per se by the genuine critic. Incidentally, this direction of attention upon the artifact rather than upon an impression or upon historical

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 19.

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facts is the specific difference between artifactism on the one hand and impressionism and historicism on the other.

Since criticism is judgment, it implies three things: first, a subject, the one who judges; second, an object, that which is judged; and third, a norm or norms, that by which the subject judges the object. The proper use of these terms can be illustrated by means of an example. The "Hamlet" essay will serve quite adequately. The subject of this essay is its author, T.S. Eliot. The object of this essay is Shakespeare's play, Hamlet. The norm of this essay is the nature of poetic-drama as that nature is known to Eliot and expressed by him in two concepts especially, in the concept of the "objective correlative" and in the concept of the "auditory imagination". Ultimately, the judgment which is the essence of this critical piece of writing is the comparison of Eliot's idea of Hamlet, the effect of his study of that particular artifact, with his idea of poetic-drama, the effect of his study of a number of poetic dramas. As shall be seen in Chapter Four below, Eliot noted a disagreement between these two ideas and so concluded that Hamlet was an artistic failure.

"The work of criticism has indeed been summed up in three questions: What did the author set out to do? How successful was he in his attempt? What is the value of his

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work?"<sup>1</sup> Hamm admits quite innocently that "these questions are based on Goethe's famous text on the aim of constructive criticism". However, what Mr. Hamm fails to do - and should have done - is to point out that these questions can only be answered validly, primarily on the basis of evidence presented to the critic by the artifact itself. Where else, for example, can the critic possibly discover what the author set out to do? The nature of poetry is such that even if the author were by to tell him, the critic could not accept such evidence as absolutely reliable. Sometimes the poet himself does not know what he wants to do until he has done it; at which time he stands in exactly the same relationship with his work as does the critic and consequently possesses no necessary advantage over said critic.

According to Mr. Hamm, the third of the questions enumerated in the immediately preceding paragraph introduces the concept of beauty. "The value with which the fine arts are specifically concerned is, of course, the beautiful."<sup>2</sup> Anything approaching even a semi-formal discussion or presentation of this most obtuse of concepts is absolutely inadmissible within the limitations of the present context. Nevertheless, the intrinsic importance of the concept of beauty to criticism, together with the many coeval

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1. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

misconceptions engulfing this concept, make, at least, an outline-like sketch imperative to the essential integrity of the critique being presented in this chapter.

Some Scholastic philosophers consider beauty to be one of the transcendental properties of being. This implies that everything that is is beautiful and "everything" certainly includes such beings as God and angels, poor paintings and horrid verse. The mere cataloguing of these examples makes it quite obvious that transcendental beauty is not the norm with which an artifactistic critic judges an art object. St. Thomas, with his usual economy of phrase has said, "Things are beautiful which please when seen".<sup>1</sup> Neither God nor angels can be seen by man in anything like a natural manner. Neither poor paintings nor horrid verse has what it takes to please man. Therefore, there must be some other point of view from which the concept of beauty can be defined and this other point of view is from the nature of man. Consequently, it may be affirmed that there is such a thing as experiential beauty, beauty viewed from the standpoint of man's nature, beauty that is connatural to man. Hamm points out that the beauty that is "connatural to man is that which delights the intellect through the intuition of the senses".<sup>2</sup> A more analytical rendition

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1. Celestine N. Bittle, The Domain of Being, p. 210.

2. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

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of the same definition may be quoted:

Beauty is a blending of the unity, truth, and goodness in a thing, characterized by completeness, proportion, and clarity of presentation in an intellectual-sensuous form, so as to produce a disinterested emotional pleasure in a rational perceiver.<sup>1</sup>

And it is this experiential beauty, this connatural beauty which enables an art object to delight the intellect through the intuition of the senses.

When a rational perceiver comes into contact with a work of art and experiences the impression of art, a part of the critical activity has taken place for the rational perceiver can affirm beauty of the artifact in question. On the other hand, when a work of art fails to evoke aesthetic pleasure in a rational perceiver there are two ultimate explanations possible: first, that the work of art in question is not beautiful; or second, that the rational perceiver involved has not what it takes to appreciate the beauty that the artifact does possess. The ability to be pleased by a thing of beauty is called taste. Taste may be defined as the peculiar condition of man's faculties, both sense and intellectual, which makes pleasure or pain a necessary result of the perception of an art object. Thus when Aristotle assumes a man of sound aesthetic instincts as the standard of taste and as the one to whom

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<sup>1</sup>. Celestine N. Bittle, op. cit., p. 215.

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final appeal in such matters should be made, his meaning is quite clear. He is most certainly not making beauty subjective for he is not saying that a thing is beautiful because it pleases a man of taste but far rather that it pleases a man of taste because it is beautiful. A thing is beautiful when it has what it takes to please a man of taste. A man has taste when he has what it takes to be pleased by a thing of beauty.

Mr. Eliot, in a note appended to the first chapter of The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, clearly implies that taste in poetry comes as the result of an active acquaintance with poetry. Taste in beauty, the kind of taste introduced in the previous paragraph, is a human perfection acquired by experience, experience of the beautiful. There are a number of misconceptions concerning the concept of taste which should be, at least, catalogued in this context: first, that taste is a mysterious faculty of the soul which discerns the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike in some mysterious way that, of course, cannot be explained; second, that taste is a gift or a grace given only to a few either at the time of conception or birth; third, that taste cannot be acquired by those who have not been given it; and fourth, that taste is entirely a matter of feeling. This is not the

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place to enter upon a systematic refutation of these misconceptions. It shall serve the present purpose simply to state that the contrary of each of these propositions is much nearer to the truth of the matter. All that is being alleged here is that that disposition or condition of man's sense and intellectual faculties requisite for the appreciation of the beautiful is actualized by virtue of the experiencing of the beautiful and in no other essential way. Consequently, the unique relationship which exists between taste and beautiful art objects has been rendered apparent: the experience of beautiful art objects makes taste and taste is the detector of beautiful art objects. The man of taste experiences aesthetic pleasure, or more specifically the impression of art, when he perceives a beautiful art object. Incidentally, when the man of taste perceives, for example, the horrid verse spoken of above he experiences a kind of pain. The impression of art corresponds to what Eliot terms the significant emotion. It is the feeling of the beautiful. It must be clearly understood that it is neither the beautiful per se nor is it taste. "To take the feeling of the beautiful for the beautiful itself is to mistake the effect for the cause."<sup>1</sup> It is ultimately to make beauty subjective. Such, incidentally, is the error most commonly made by

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<sup>1</sup>. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., p. 11.

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contemporary writers concerned with aesthetics and/or criticism. For example, Benedetto Croce says that "beauty does not inhere in things; it is not a physical fact; it belongs to man's activity, to spiritual energy".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, to take the feeling of the beautiful for taste is to mistake the feeling which accompanies the function of faculties for the condition of the faculties.

Criticism is not a simple thing. It is a highly complex activity. There is no royal road to becoming a critic. In addition to being a man of taste, a critic must know what poetry is (one of the theoretical limits of criticism according to the thought of Eliot)<sup>2</sup> and there is only one way of acquiring such knowledge and that is by experiencing a great deal of poetry. Certain principles can be derived from the product of such experience. These principles are the norms by which a particular piece of work can be evaluated (the other theoretical limit of criticism according to the thought of Eliot).<sup>3</sup> However, before endeavouring to evaluate a particular work, the particular work in question must be resolved into its essential elements by means of analysis. The critic may

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1. Maurice De Wulf, Art and Beauty, p. 40.

2. Thomas Stearns Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 16.

3. Ibid., p. 16.

even compare the essential elements of the particular work in question with the essential elements of some other appropriate particular work so as to discover the specific qualities and differences possessed by the work being evaluated. Incidentally, Mr. Eliot has said, "comparison and analysis... are the chief tools of the critic".<sup>1</sup> Now the critic is ready to apply the appropriate principles to the appropriate elements and to note their agreement or disagreement. This paragraph has presented a brief recapitulation of the genesis and the activity of an artifactistic critic. What Mr. Hamm has to say in the following quotation adds a great deal of trimming, but nothing essential, to this sketch of a critic:

But if analysis and comparison leading to judgment are the main job of the critic properly considered, it must not be hastily assumed that he can dispense altogether with those aspects of literature which the historian and the impressionist regard too exclusively. The more the critic knows, the better equipped he will be to cope with his task. Literature is as wide and as deep as life, and nothing that is human will be alien to his interests. Historical knowledge and a vivid sensitivity to impressions of imagery and style will make him a better critic, not a worse.<sup>2</sup>

In general, Mr. Eliot would tend to agree with this series of sweeping statements. His concept of the "sense of fact" as formulated in "The Function of Criticism" essay would

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, pp. 32-33.

2. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., p. 15.

provide a palpable clue to the kind of "historical facts" which he would consider of benefit to the critic. His concepts of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" (two of the most important concepts to be found in the thought of Eliot, and two concepts to be treated at length in separate chapters below) would argue the importance of "wide knowledge" and "sensitivity to impressions" to the critic.

The first sub-section of this chapter has discussed some of the principal premises of criticism. The kind of criticism with which this chapter is chiefly concerned is, of course, literary criticism. Therefore, the second sub-section shall discuss the nature of literature.

#### The Nature of Literature

A discussion of the nature of experiential beauty was included in the first sub-section of the present chapter. That discussion is the natural link between that sub-section and the present one whose single object is an examination and a presentation of the nature of literature.

No one will deny that a piece of literature is something which is made by man. Therefore, it is immediately valid to infer that literature is art for the "sphere of Making is the sphere of Art, in the most universal meaning

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of the word".<sup>1</sup> However, the sphere of art is a large sphere and one that readily admits of sub-divisions. Traditionally a distinction is made between what is known as the "useful" arts and what is known as the "fine" arts.

Here Aristotle draws a sharp distinction. The arts called 'useful' either provide the necessary means of existence and satisfy material wants, or furnish life with its full equipment of moral and intellectual resources. Their end is subordinate to another and ulterior end. The end of the fine arts is to give pleasure or rational enjoyment.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as this distinction is understood, it is clear that literature is one of the fine arts; and since the fine arts "tend to make a work of beauty",<sup>3</sup> it can be said that a piece of literature is a thing of beauty. Now when this is said, a very great deal has been said about literature. The difficulty is simply that very few critics realize how much is predicated of literature by saying that it is a collection of "things of beauty" because few critics have a real grasp of the concept of experiential beauty and fewer still possess what is even more important, an essential experience of the beautiful. Many critics have read much literature and this is what they call taste. However, taste is quite a different thing from this as has already been

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1. Jacques Maritain, op. cit., p. 6.

2. S.H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and the Fine Arts, p. 198.

3. Jacques Maritain, op. cit., p. 26.

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demonstrated. For example, to say that a piece of literature is a thing of beauty is to affirm all those qualities of literature which are required to delight the intellect through the intuition of the senses of any man who has what it takes to be so delighted or pleased. In other words and in order to introduce an important concept, it might be said that a piece of literature, viewed as a thing of beauty, has what it takes to cause an aesthetic emotion in a rational perceiver who has taste. When this aesthetic emotion - significant emotion is Eliot's term for it - is experienced by an appreciator of a piece of literature rather than by its maker, it is termed the impression of art. "The impression of art is that delightful stirring of the emotions which is produced in us when we are in contact with an artistic production."<sup>1</sup> Of course, De Wulf means an artistic production that is fine art and not merely useful art. When he goes on to say that by "the term 'artist' we must understand both the one who produces the work and the one who enjoys a production done by another",<sup>2</sup> he is approaching a very significant fact that is seldom made explicit. The fact is that the one who produces a work of fine art experiences an aesthetic pleasure as well as the one who appreciates it. In order to distinguish it from

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1. Maurice De Wulf, op. cit., p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

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the impression of art, it is termed the creative emotion. However, the impression of art and the creative emotion are both aesthetic pleasure. Qualifiedly they are identical. Incidentally, this is the aesthetic concept behind the much bantered, little understood popular truism, that it takes a poet to appreciate poetry. It is also a palpable hit - with all due respect to Osric - a very palpable hit struck against the proponents of the "theory" that poets are "born" and not "made"; unless, of course, they are prepared to add to their position the absurdity that appreciators of poetry are also "born" and not "made". This concept of aesthetic pleasure or significant emotion is one factor - though certainly not the only one - which Eliot has in mind when he says that the "'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards".<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact aesthetic pleasure is the first positive norm by which a piece of work is judged to be literature, that is a thing of beauty. (Obviously, of course, this norm is not valid negatively, though for the man of taste, the real critic, it is often quite indicative.) All that is being implied here is that when a man of taste comes in contact, significant and real contact, with a piece of work and as a

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 388.

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result experiences the impression of art he knows that he is in the presence of a thing of beauty because it is the beautiful and only the beautiful that is capable of causing such a pleasure within him. How this concept is important to the aesthetic-poetics of Eliot and what he has to say about it shall be presented when his concepts of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" are presented below. In saying that a piece of literature is a thing of beauty or that a piece of literature has what it takes to cause the impression of art, the fact that a piece of literature is an intellectual-sensuous form is necessarily implied. For it is only an intellectual-sensuous form, that is, a form which has appeal to both the intellectual and the sense faculties of man, that could possibly cause an aesthetic emotion in a rational perceiver. It must be remembered that aesthetic pleasure is not exclusively intellectual pleasure nor is it exclusively sense pleasure, but it is an intellectual-sensuous pleasure properly related to beauty as its cause and as such is unique.

All that has been inferred thus far may be concisely recapitulated in a sentence. A piece of literature is an intellectual-sensuous form capable of causing an aesthetic pleasure in a rational perceiver who possesses taste. Or still more concisely, a piece of literature is a thing of

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beauty. However, it will be noticed that as much can be said of a Rembrandt canvas. Therefore, the next step towards a workable definition of literature is to discover what is the basis of distinction among the various fine arts. Or, simply to serve the exigencies of the present context, to discover what it is that distinguishes literature from the other fine arts.

That which distinguishes one fine art from another is its matter or more accurately its material cause. The material cause of a thing is that out of which it is made. The material cause of literature is words. Therefore, a piece of literature may be defined as a thing of beauty made of words. The three essential notes which comprise the idea of a piece of literature are all included in this definition. The word made expresses the fact that a piece of literature is a work of art. The words a thing of beauty express the fact that a piece of literature is a work of fine art. And finally, the word words distinguishes a piece of literature from a piece of any one of the other fine arts.

It may be objected that what was defined was a piece of literature and not literature. If there is anything at all to this objection, it can be answered by introducing the word collection. Literature is a collection of things of beauty made of words. Such is an expression

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of the essence of literature. Of course, there will be relationships among these pieces of literature and there will be differences among them; however, these relationships and these differences are accidental and not essential notes of literature and as such can demand no attention here.

Incidentally, when the concept of "essential literature" is introduced in Chapter Two below, it should be understood as alluding to the essential notes just presented.

The next step in the presentation of the nature of literature is a somewhat negative one. It is to show that not every piece of work made of words is literature. It has already been established that literature is one of the fine arts. Therefore, to demonstrate that there are some pieces of work made of words which must be classified as useful art would constitute, at least, an appreciable beginning. Any piece of work made by man of words is clearly, in one sense, art. Some pieces of work made of words have as their prime object the recording or the communication of truth. Obviously, such works are mere means and not ends in themselves and as such must be classified as useful works of art and not as fine works of art. Tradition has assigned the term scientific writing to useful works of art made of words. Thus, a fundamental distinction between literature and scientific writing is that the former is a fine art and the latter is a useful

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art.

Nevertheless, when all of this is said the problem somehow seems to persist. Admittedly, there are a great variety of possible reasons why a man would make a piece of work of words. The point, however, is that the final cause, that for the sake of which an efficient cause acts, is not the criterion of whether or not a piece of work made of words is a piece of literature or a piece of scientific writing. The material cause, that out of which the piece of work in question is made, is the ultimate criterion of its status. The artifactistic critic could never accept the final cause as the criterion because it is an extrinsic cause and he insists that the thing to be judged is the work per se and nothing else. Furthermore, most of those who would argue in favour of the final cause as the criterion discover, sooner or later, that they must deal with the material cause in order to know the final cause. (And even then their knowledge is necessarily uncertain or assumed; uncertain, inasmuch as the author's purpose may have been different from his achievement; assumed, inasmuch as they assume his purpose to have been in accordance with his achievement. As a matter of fact, there is a sense in which an author's conscious purpose may have had little or nothing to do with the real final cause of a piece of work made of words.) Therefore, the material cause is the

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ultimate criterion in either case. The principle virtue of this distinction in favour of the material cause is the fact that what the critic is interested in is what the piece of work actually is and not what its maker intended it to be. And everyone is able to name any number of pieces of English literature which were probably made for some purpose quite important to their authors, for some purpose which can only be regarded at the present time as an ulterior motive; though, of course, these authors may never have been conscious of this fact.

Since the material cause of works made out of words is words, the need of an examination of words, at least, from a single point of view is indicated. There are three separate functions of words that are pertinent to the present discussion: the first is the expressing of ideas; the second is the expressing of sense images or sense pictures; and the third is the expressing of sounds (this third may be termed the "music" of words). These three things have been termed "functions" designedly. They have been termed "functions" in order to clearly imply the fact that a thing can be said to possess a function whether or not said function is being performed. The word activities might have served as well. The first function may be spoken of as the most proper function of words since words seem always to strive towards the

expression of ideas. From this tripartite distinction among the functions of words flows naturally a tripartite distinction among pieces of work made of words. When the words of which a piece of work is made express ideas exclusively, or very nearly so, the piece of work is potentially<sup>1</sup> a piece of scientific writing. When the words of which a piece of work is made express sense images in addition to ideas, the piece of work is poentially<sup>1</sup> literature. When the words of which a piece of work is made express sounds - or more accurately impressions by means of sounds - in addition to ideas and sense images, the piece of work is likewise potentially<sup>1</sup> literature. Consequently, it has been established that scientific writing most properly viewed expresses only ideas; while literature, most properly viewed expresses in addition to ideas sense images and sometimes by virtue of the very sound of words impressions or feelings. When literature expresses impressions or feelings by virtue of the very sound of words, in addition, of course, to ideas and sense images, the conditions of poetry have been achieved; when literature does not utilize the sound of words, but only

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1. The word potentially had to be introduced in order to circumvent the implication that these distinctions tell the whole story - they do not. For example, a piece of work made of words that express ideas and sense images is not necessarily literature since a piece of literature is a thing of beauty and the mere appeal to the intellect and to the senses does not guarantee the pleasing of these faculties.

expresses ideas and sense images, the conditions of prose have been achieved. Thus, the pieces of work made of words have been sub-divided into literature and scientific writing and literature has been sub-divided into prose and poetry. (Notice that this last is a distinction between prose and poetry and not between prose and verse.)

A great deal of time and space might have been expended discussing the implications and the qualifications relevant to the distinctions that have just been presented. Even the distinctions themselves might have been presented in different terms; for example, the distinction between literature and scientific writing might have been expressed as the distinction between a thing (an intellectual-sensuous form) and a sign ("anything that gives knowledge of something other than itself"<sup>1</sup>). A number of attractively interesting paradoxes might have been written; for example, literature possesses what it takes to be scientific writing and something in addition and this something in addition is just the thing that would tend to make it bad scientific writing if viewed as scientific writing. And finally, a number of objections might have been introduced; for example, that in order for a word to express an idea, it must express an image, from which proceeds or which is the phantasm, from which the idea can be abstracted by the active intellect; and answered; for example, that in one

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1. Paul J. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

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sense the letters B-O-O-K printed in block letters on an otherwise blank sheet of white paper is as much an image as the still-life of a book painted in beautiful pastels by a master against a well-worked background, but that the latter is in another sense "more of" an image than the former and that the latter is the kind of image that literature expresses while scientific writing expresses the former. Such and myriad are the things that might have been done were they necessary to the present project. Incidentally, a few shall be done in other places below where their need naturally arises.

That Mr. Eliot would approve much of what has been said above can be demonstrated by citing a single, short, pregnant quotation which he himself "stole" from Mr. I.A. Richards: "it is never what a poem says that matters, but what it is".<sup>1</sup> His obvious agreement with this aesthetic aphorism at once argues an awareness of both the distinction between literature and scientific writing and the definition of literature as a collection of things of beauty made of words which have been derived from the aesthetic-poetics, at least implicit, in the writings of Aristotle and the Schoolmen.

Mr. Hamm's chapter on the nature of literature is not a good one. It lacks direction and as a result is

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

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unable to arrive at the heart of the matter, a real concise definition of literature. All of the essential elements of such a definition are introduced and discussed but there is very little effective synthesis. As a result Mr. Hamm stumbles into a couple of unfortunate conclusions. For example, "That literature is the expression of personality, not merely in the sense of individuality but in that of full human organization...."<sup>1</sup> There are several other statements such as this one which do not say what literature is but far rather say something about literature which can only have meaning for someone who already knows what literature is. Space has been taken to point this fault out, because it is a fault common to many writers who appear to be defining literature. Neither Newman nor DeQuincey completely escapes it. Another extremely unfortunate conclusion is this one concerning beauty: "'Beauty' - the word points to a specific difference which has obtruded itself almost too much in modern discussions of art".<sup>2</sup> The importance of the distinction between fine art and useful art viewed as a principle was demonstrated above by the use to which it was put.

Before proceeding to the third sub-section of the present chapter, there is one proposition rehearsed by

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1. Victor M. Hamm, op. cit., p. 29.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

Mr. Hamm which deserves to be included here. It is that a piece of literature is a new thing. Since a piece of literature has already been defined as a thing of beauty made of words and since uniqueness is a property of things and since uniqueness guarantees newness (according to the meaning of the word new being utilized by Hamm), this note may be added to the concept of literature above evinced without examining its genesis in Mr. Hamm's thought.

#### The Difficulties of Reading

The present sub-section need not be long.

Mr. Hamm's chapter is tripartite in composition. The first part establishes a thesis: "The very nature of language, as has been indicated, forces the writer to communicate meaning. And meaning is a matter of intellectual perception and expression."<sup>1</sup> The second part recapitulates and briefly comments upon those things which render reading difficult. And the third part - which is more a general and colouring tone than an explicit part - is a manifestation of Mr. Hamm's attitude towards modern literature, and especially modern poetry, and the question of its difficulty.

Mr. Hamm's thesis simply affirms what was said above concerning the most proper function of words, that is, their tendency to express ideas. He is insisting that the words

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1. ibid., p. 34.

out of which a piece of literature is made express ideas as well as the words out of which a piece of scientific writing is made. No doubt, his insistence upon the obvious is motivated by his attitude towards much modern literature. Provided that such insistence does not obliterate the line between scientific writing and literature, it is perfectly harmless. Mr. Eliot has stated quite unequivocally that, "The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly, as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not."<sup>1</sup> Human beings are rational animals and rationality includes intellect and the proper object of intellect is truth. Therefore, Eliot has committed himself to a position which acknowledges that poetry, for example, contains matter ultimately, at least, perceivable by the intellect. Such is Hamm's point somewhat less accentuated.<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, as soon as Eliot accepted Richards' pronouncement that, "it is never what a poem says that matters, but what it is", he accepted the omnipresent

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Points of View, p. 17.

2. That Mr. Hamm realizes that words appeal to the senses as well as to the intellect is not assumed. He makes the sense appeal of words quite explicit: "Man is not a naked intellect, and even in the most abstractive sciences, like mathematics or metaphysics, language must remain anchored in the concrete. 'No idea without its phantasm' is an old scholastic maxim" (Ibid., p. 34.).

intellectual appeal of words and more than that, he subordinated the inevitable sign quality of a poem to its thing quality. All of this is tending in the direction of a distinction between two kinds of truth, logical truth and artiological truth. However, the development of this important distinction belongs properly to the immediately following sub-section. Mr. Hamm too, is aware of a difference: "But if language must, to be true to its nature, communicate meanings, those meanings are rarely the clear and distinct ones of science, nor ought they to be such."<sup>1</sup> It is by means of "the suggestive power of language" or "the evocative aura of words" that the "meanings" of literature are "communicated" according to Hamm and he adds, "It is this that produces the difficulties of reading, particularly of reading poetry, where language tends toward the nth degree of its evocative power."<sup>2</sup> In spite of his use of words like meaning and communicate and in spite of a good deal of rubbish implying that poets and readers are "born" and not "made" (actually a kind of historicism ultimately) and in spite of a few dangerous sentences which come very near implying that a poet expresses his personality in the sense of its individuality,

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1. Ibid., p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 34.

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in spite of all these things, Hamm's thought is generally tending in the right direction.

The second part of Mr. Hamm's chapter - as was indicated above - recapitulates and briefly comments upon the things which render reading difficult. His catalogue is commonplace and his illustrations are juvenile. Neither require nor deserve attention in this context beyond pointing out the fact that a few of these things such as the use of "private symbolism" and certain peculiarities of "construction" are infused with some significance because they are presented with an eye fixed upon modern, twentieth century, poetry. However, this preoccupation introduces the third "part", the most interesting "part" of Hamm's chapter.

As a matter of fact, this preoccupation is so all-pervading that the title of Hamm's chapter is somewhat misleading. Perhaps, it might better have been entitled, "The School of Abuse"; and as the original "School of Abuse" was answered by "An Apology for Poetry", the present subsection might have been suitably entitled, "An Apology for Difficult Poetry", the word apology meaning a defence of. For, Mr. Hamm is unmistakably writing his chapter with modern poetry principally in mind - though, of course, some modern prose is being considered, that of Mr. James Joyce, for example. It is quite apparent that Mr. Hamm finds these

poets difficult, and just a little less apparent is his desire to call them "silly". This unmistakable bipartite impression brings a comment made by Mr. Eliot to mind. Speaking of "difficult" poetry, Mr. Eliot remarks that: "we know the ridicule accorded in turn to Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, Tennyson and Browning - but must remark that Browning was the first to be called difficult; hostile critics of the earlier poets found them difficult, but called them silly".<sup>1</sup> Such a tendency among critics is probably less indicative of a vice peculiar to critics than it is of an inability common among men to acclimate themselves to the new, the really new, in literature, especially in that part of literature called poetry. And this, incidentally, might explain, at least, in large part, why a poet so very often has to die and be dead awhile, sometimes a very long while, before he becomes what men term "recognized".

The final judgment which must be passed on Hamm's chapter is that while he has his eye fixed on the problem of why modern poetry is difficult, his pen is employed with the problem of why reading is difficult. While it is true that these problems sometimes overlap and that consequently Hamm is sometimes writing something about the former problem, it must be said that such hits are incidental and accidental.

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 50.

In short, modern poetry is not difficult merely because it is sometimes difficult to read, though that it is sometimes difficult to read is true. Therefore, when Hamm talks about "private" symbolism and the peculiarities of construction, he is explaining why some poetry - not only modern poetry - is difficult to read. For a list of reasons why poetry is difficult - especially modern poetry - recourse must be had to the writings of Mr. Eliot. He is explicit upon this point in the following long quotation:

The difficulty of poetry (and modern poetry is supposed to be difficult) may be due to one of several reasons. First, there may be personal causes which make it impossible for a poet to express himself in any way but an obscure way;... Or difficulty may be due just to novelty:...Or difficulty may be caused by the reader's having been told, or having suggested to himself, that the poem is going to prove difficult....And finally, there is the difficulty caused by the author's having left out something which the reader is used to finding; so that the reader, bewildered, gropes about for what is absent, and puzzles his head for a kind of "meaning" which is not there, and is not meant to be there.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation brings the matter of this sub-section to a head and also serves as a kind of prologue to the next sub-section. It was strongly suggested above that Hamm finds modern poetry difficult but would like to prove it "silly". Hamm as an individual, of course, matters nothing. However, there is an attitude abroad which would like to prove modern poetry "silly" and which means by "silly", not

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1. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

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poetry. This attitude would not deny a piece of work the sphere of poetry because it is "obscure" or because it is "novel" or because it inspires "pit" or "gallery" fright in its "readers". It would therefore allow Eliot's first three reasons as legitimate; however, the fourth reason, the absence of "a kind of meaning" would be seized upon as a fatal admission, as a pleading of guilty. Mr. Eliot seems aware of his jeopardy for he hastens to qualify his fourth reason. Placing the word meaning in quotes - to indicate a peculiar utilization of the word - he compares it to "a bit of nice meat for the house-dog" with which the imaginary burglar is always provided, thus implying that "meaning" is not an essential element of poetry and that its absence is therefore no reason for negating its essence. However, the solution of the problem lies in the realization that because a poem has not a "meaning", in the same sense of the word meaning as a piece of scientific writing is said to have a meaning, it does not follow that such a poem does not affect the intellect. It was pointed out above that Eliot admits that a poem always affects man wholly, and therefore always affects man's intellect. Eliot is only saying, in other words, what he has already said, "it is never what a poem says that matters, but what it is". He is viewing a poem as a thing and not as a sign though admitting that a poem is sometimes a sign as well as a thing.

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And in introducing the question of the relationship between a poem and the intellect he is introducing the topic of the next sub-section.

## The Work of the Intellect

St. Thomas teaches that truth is "an equational balance in which intellect equals reality".<sup>1</sup> Analogously, it may be suggested that artistic truth, artiological truth, is an equational balance in which intellect and senses, both internal and external, equal the artifact. These are interesting premises with which to begin a discussion of the work of the intellect in the making of a piece of literature. They suggest several important relationships: first, the relationship between the artist and reality; second, the relationship between the artist and the artifact; third, the relationship between the artifact and reality; and fourth, the relationship between the artifact and its appreciator or experiencer. It shall be the task of the present sub-section to examine these relationships and perhaps to say a word or two concerning one theory touching upon the question of "greatness in literature".

To speak of the relationship between the artist and reality is not precisely the same thing as to speak of the relationship between a man and reality. Every artist is a

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1. Robert Edward Brennan, General Psychology, p. 448.

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man, but not every man is actually - though he is potentially - an artist. There are many possible relationships which may exist between a man and reality. However, the relationship alluded to here is that peculiar relationship - or, as is often preferred, that peculiar union - called knowledge. When a man's intellect actually conforms to an object, a piece of reality, the knowledge is true, the man is said to possess logical truth. "Logical truth...is the conformity of thought to thing, of judgment to object."<sup>1</sup> Such knowledge - logical truth - can be expressed by means of the meaning of words. When that which the meaning of words expresses conforms with the knowledge which the speaker or writer possesses, it is said to be morally true. "Moral truth...is the conformity of thought with its objective expression."<sup>2</sup>

Maritain points out that the relationship between the artist and reality "is not a knowledge 'by mode of knowledge', it is a knowledge by mode of instinct or inclination, by mode of resonance in the subject, and which proceeds toward creating a work".<sup>3</sup> He therefore makes a distinction between knowledge and poetic knowledge. Knowledge is conceptualisable - poetic knowledge is non-conceptualisable.

1. Paul J. Glenn, op. cit., p. 98.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

3. Jacques Maritain, The Situation of Poetry, p. 64.

Consequently, poetic knowledge cannot be expressed by the meaning of words alone. (This is the aesthetic justification which supports Eliot's arguments concerning the need for poetic drama.) Maritain goes on to explain that poetic knowledge "does not completely attain consciousness except in the work".<sup>1</sup> However, as was demonstrated above, the work, the artifact, the poem is a new thing of beauty made of words and as such cannot be expected to conform to anything in reality. Therefore, one should not seek conformity between poetic knowledge and reality, for poetic knowledge actually amounts to the expression of a particular poet's unique reaction to reality and this reaction to reality is complete only when the poem has been made.

In a particular poet's reaction to reality there is more than the reality to which he reacts. There is something, perhaps, a good deal, of himself. In a certain sense, there is all that reality with which he has ever been in contact and in addition to this, his experience, there are his environment and his traditions. All of these things contribute to his particular reaction and to its uniqueness. Consequently, given a particular poet in contact with this piece of reality and the resulting reaction is necessary. The reaction is and everything that is is true. Therefore, there can be no question of the truth of a poet's reaction to reality - poetic knowledge is always

<sup>1</sup>.Ibid., p. 65.

true; that is, poetic knowledge is always ontologically true- there is no question of moral or logical truth here. ("Ontological truth is the truth of things."<sup>1</sup> A poet's reaction to reality is a thing, a being.)

It is now clear that the relationship between the artist and reality is bipartite: proximately, there is the clash between artist and reality which produces a reaction which initially amounts only to an awareness of a tendency to make stirring within; and remotely, there are all those myriad elements of reality which the artist had experienced in the past which both contribute to the condition which makes the present particular reaction possible and which furnishes the artist with the materials that he requires to render this present reaction completely conscious. In other words, simpler words, though sometimes dangerous words, it might be said that, the artist depends upon reality for both his "inspiration" and for the wherewithal to express it. All of this shall be clearer still when, in Chapter Three, the creative process is analysed.

The second relationship is that which exists between the artist and the artifact. This is where the concept of artiological truth is encountered. An artifact can be defined from many different points of view. It is convenient in the present context to define it as poetic knowledge

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<sup>1</sup>. Paul J. Glenn, op. cit., p. 96.

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objectively expressed. Poetic knowledge can be viewed as an artistic ideal ("the exemplary cause which directs the action of the efficient cause"<sup>1</sup>). When the artifact conforms to the artistic ideal, the artifact is said to possess artiological truth or to be artiologically true. When the artifact does not conform to the artistic ideal, the artifact is said to be artiologically false. Since God is a perfect creator or maker there is, of course, no such thing as ontological falsity. Man is not a perfect maker, therefore, there is always the possibility that the artifact shall not conform to the artistic ideal. Usually, the lack of conformity is due to one of two reasons: first, to a lack of manual dexterity on the part of the artist; or second, to the artist's unwillingness to make in strict accordance with the artistic ideal. This second contingency introduces the concept of artistic sincerity and blasts the determinism implicit in historical theories of creation. An artist is sincere when he makes in strict accordance with the artistic ideal. He is insincere when he allows some ulterior motive to direct his making. There is, of course, no justification for imputing artistic insincerity to an artist whose lack of manual dexterity allows a dichotomy to exist between his artistic ideal and the artifact which he makes. Maritain has said quite unequivocally that,

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1. Maurice De Wulf, op. cit., p. 21.

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"Manual dexterity...is no part of art, but merely a material and extrinsic condition".<sup>1</sup> Obviously, the definition of an artifact suggested above assumes both manual dexterity and artistic sincerity when it says that an artifact is poetic knowledge objectively expressed. . A critical comment of Eliot's is appropriate here, "the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious".<sup>2</sup> Manual dexterity demands consciousness; artistic sincerity thrives on "unconsciousness". There is no need of pursuing this second relationship any further in this place, for it shall be completely analysed in Chapter Three.

The third relationship is that which exists between the artifact and reality. There cannot be any doubt about the fact that elements of reality appear to be represented in artifacts. For example, Eliot's play, Murder In the Cathedral, appears to represent the chain of events which comprised the significant part of Thomas à Becket's life. However, such "representation" is purely coincidental. Eliot himself states that, "I wanted to concentrate on death and martyrdom"<sup>3</sup> in this poetic drama. It can be said that this was the poetic knowledge with which Eliot started

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1. Jacques Maritain, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 21.

3. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poetry and Drama, p. 29.

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and that it was poetic knowledge and not conceptual knowledge - for had it been the latter, he would have written an essay in prose to express it. In general terms what happened was that Eliot came to "realize" that the events which comprised the significant part of Becket's life were an appropriate "objective correlative" for his poetic knowledge, that is, these events enabled him to express his poetic knowledge more clearly and this because they enabled him to be more conscious of it. Eliot introduced the Four Tempters as palpable beings, he arranged situations, he invented dialogue and he created a Chorus of Women of Canterbury because these things contributed to the adequacy of his "objective correlative" and not because they represented reality. In other words, he made in order to complete and to externalize poetic knowledge and not to represent. Therefore, to compare an artifact with the reality which it appears to represent is to search for a kind of conformity or truth which is essentially alien to art. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the artist is dependent upon reality for his "objective correlatives". This is not a contradiction, it is only a rather pale paradox. It simply takes account of the fact that there is nothing in man's mind - nor in the poet's mind either, though many, at least implicitly, seem to introduce an essential distinction between the mind of man

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and the mind of the poet - which was not, in some form, in reality. All that is being asserted here is the obvious fact that in some form the Four Tempters and the Chorus existed in reality. They need not have ever been associated with Thomas à Becket, or with Canterbury, or with martyrdom. The point is that they could be in the artifact because they could be in the poet and they could be in the poet because they could be in reality - at least, in some form. Chaucer could portray Chanticleer and Pertelote because there are such things as cocks and hens and because human beings speak. It does not matter at all that cocks and hens do not speak. Therefore, the relationship between the artifact and reality may be recapitulated in two principles: first, reality furnishes the materials from which artifacts are in part made; and second, artifacts do not represent reality though they often appear to do so. A corollary springs from these principles, a vitally important corollary which is widely ignored: artifacts cannot be judged by their power of representation.

The fourth relationship is that which exists between an artifact and its appreciator or experiencer. When the artifact in question is made of words, it is especially important to point out that reading is only a preliminary step to appreciation. It cannot be over-emphasized that an

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artifact made of words is a thing and not a sign of something other than itself. Simply to read, is to regard a poem, for example, as a sign. A poem must be experienced as any other intellectual-sensuous form. The conceptual knowledge which a poem conveys is always knowledge of something ultimately traceable to reality. The distinction between knowledge and poetic knowledge must be kept in mind when discussing this relationship. Poetic knowledge - as Maritain has explained - is most conscious when the work is made. Obviously, therefore, the concepts which a poem conveys to its experiencer are not poetic knowledge though they may well be a part of poetic knowledge. Poetic knowledge is most conscious to an experiencer when he has perceived the poem as a thing, when he has experienced it as an intellectual-sensuous form. The meaning of this relationship can be rendered quite clear by a homely illustration. There is a difference between a picture of a beautiful woman and a beautiful picture of a woman. The former is the sign of the beauty possessed by the photographer's model; the latter is a thing of beauty. To compare a picture of a beautiful woman with the photographer's model is to determine the truth of the picture; to compare a beautiful picture of a woman with the artist's model is not to determine the truth of the painting. A beautiful

painting of a woman is true because it is. Once again the existence of the artiological order is indicated. Such comparisons demonstrate the fact that an artist is not a camera and that an experiencer is not a screen. Each is more active. Actually, the relationship between an artifact and an experiencer is analogous to the relationship between an artist and an artifact. It might be said, in general terms, that what the artist is able to express by making a work is eventually evoked within the experiencer by his perception of the work which the artist has made. In other words, the artist proceeds from A to B and the experiencer from B to A and aesthetic pleasure requires not only the presence of A and B, but also the movement from the one to the other. In other words again, both artist and experiencer come to poetic knowledge, one by making, the other by recapitulating the making. This, incidentally, is why De Wulf insists that, "By the term 'artist' we must understand both the one who produces the work and the one who enjoys a production done by another."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it does avoid ambiguity to keep the two terms artist and experiencer, for the two activities are analogous and not identical.

The importance of much of what has been said concerning these four relationships shall become more

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1. Maurice De Wulf, op. cit., p. 2.

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apparent in the chapters that follow. However, one thing must be made quite explicit here. The activity of the intellect engaged in the making of artifacts or in the experiencing of artifacts is different from the activity of the intellect engaged in the acquiring of ideas. In non-philosophical language, it may be said that in the former activity the intellect works in close collaboration with the senses, both external and internal; while in the latter activity the intellect works in a much more independent manner. It cannot be said that the intellect works in a completely independent manner even in the latter activity, because there the senses serve, at least, as channels. In making artifacts, the senses are more than channels, they are principles; in experiencing artifacts, the senses are more than channels, they are termini. Consequently, an artifact must be a product of the cooperative efforts of the intellect and the senses of its maker. This is, in part, what is meant by saying that an artifact is an intellectual-sensuous form. Incidentally, such manifest cooperation must be characterized by proper proportion and balance and proper proportion and balance is indicated by the nature of man. It is on the basis of this proportion and balance that artifacts can be designated as classic, romantic, neo-classic, realistic, naturalistic,

et cetera. For example, artifacts that seem to appeal more to the intellect than to the senses are often classed as neo-classical or as neo-classic-like. Admittedly, this is only a part of the story of these terms. However, it is the only part of their story which is pertinent here.

The question of "greatness in literature" is sometimes discussed in connection with the work of the intellect. The reason for such association is the fact that greatness is related to truth in many minds. Such thinkers argue that, assuming equal art, one thing of beauty made of words is greater than another thing of beauty made of words when the "truth" of the one is greater than the "truth" of the other. At first sight such an approach seems like a substitution of one problem for another. What makes one "truth" greater than another? However, and without hesitation, the answer given is reality. There is a hierarchy of being which gives rise to a hierarchy of truth which in turn gives rise to a hierarchy of things of beauty made of words according as these pieces of literature deal with these truths. Provided that proponents of a theory such as this realize that they are not judging a piece of work made of words to be literature, provided they realize that they have already assumed the works being compared to be literature, and provided that they realize that what a

poem means matters less than what a poem is, this theory may be accepted. Its usefulness will be far less than might be supposed, because greatness in literature is only determined in this way when equal art is assumed and equal art is seldom encountered. Though this theory is allowed, it must be pointed out that it is dangerous because it advocates a preoccupation with the reality with which the poet is in contact rather than a preoccupation with the poet's reaction to that reality. While it is true that Mr. Eliot has said that the "'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards",<sup>1</sup> it must be remembered that he immediately added that, "we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards"<sup>2</sup> and that he accepted Mr. Richards' statement that "it is never what a poem says that matters, but what it is".<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that it is with precisely these qualifications that the above theory has been allowed.

In the final analysis, a theory such as this one can only be safely accepted by a critic who realizes that a poem may say, "God does not exist" and be an everlasting

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 388.

2. Ibid., p. 388.

3. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

monument to His Existence. However, such an example suggests implications more properly treated in the next sub-section.

### Literature and Morality

The title to the present sub-section is ambitious, for it advertises a great deal more than shall be delivered. Mr. Eliot has said that, "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint".<sup>1</sup> What is the relationship between literature and morality? Should literature deliberately teach morality? What is the relationship between literature and immorality? The answers to these questions briefly presented shall shed some light upon Eliot's statement and perhaps, not impalpably, strike a blow in defense of some modern writers indiscriminately accused of moral indiscretions or theological aridity. To do more in this place - though a temptation - would be a violation of the predetermined scope of this thesis.

There is a relationship between a piece of literature and morality. It is only in relatively recent times that this relationship has been denied. It has already been shown and the fact has been emphasized that a piece of literature is a thing of beauty made of words. A

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 388.

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piece of literature is not a human act; it is the effect of a human act. The making of a piece of literature is a human act, but that which is made is a thing and not a human act. This fundamental distinction is as important as it is overlooked. Since ethics is the practical science of the morality of human acts, and since the creative activity is a human act, it is obvious that literature and morality are properly related whenever a piece of literature is made. Analogously, the activity involved in the experiencing of a piece of literature is also a human act and as such involves moral implications. While these conclusions are rather commonplace, there is a problem both more difficult and more universal. The problem is encountered when a given piece of literature is viewed by itself, apart from its maker and apart from its experiencers. Has such a piece of literature so viewed anything to do with morality? Morality is the relation of human acts to their norm. It has already been shown that a piece of literature is not a human act. Therefore, it follows that a piece of literature so viewed has nothing to do with morality. In other words, it follows that a piece of literature so viewed is neither morally good nor morally evil. And notwithstanding much that has been written usually implying sometimes stating the contrary, this is true. When a piece of literature is viewed as a new thing of beauty made of words, the thing viewed is amoral; that is, it is an artiological

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being and moral judgments do not apply in the artiological order. However, a piece of literature is not always - as a regrettable matter of fact, it is seldom - viewed as a thing of beauty made of words. For the most of men, it is what a piece of literature says that affects them. Therefore, if a piece of literature says that God does not exist, or that fornication is healthy, or that divorce is virtuous, or any other similar nonsense, the most of men conclude that a piece of literature saying such things is "immoral". Their mistake is obvious and it is a mistake in aesthetics and not a mistake in ethics. They are condemning a piece of literature because it "affirms" something which is not true. Ultimately, they are condemning a piece of literature because it has "told a lie". This is their mistake and it is an old mistake long ago answered by Sir Philip Sidney: "Now for the poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth".

Nevertheless, poetry does represent and some of that which poetry represents is human acts. The important thing to remember is that poetry represents in order to express a particular emotion. How a particular emotion is expressed by means of the representative quality of words shall be demonstrated when Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" is analysed. For the present, Eliot's contention that the "only way of expressing emotion

in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'<sup>1</sup> shall be assumed. If this is so, then it follows that a poet may portray a man carbuncular and a typist committing fornication because this situation is an adequate "objective correlative" for some emotion that he is endeavouring to express. If Maritain's concept of poetic knowledge - discussed in another part of this thesis - is correct, then the emotion which the poet wishes to express is made more conscious by virtue of this situation viewed as an "objective correlative". The representation of an immoral situation is not in itself immoral. It might be rendered immoral by its end; for example, to cause a venereal pleasure in a reader or in a listener. However, the poet's end has been already stated; his end is to express some particular emotion and this end is not immoral. It doesn't matter whether or not some readers of his poem may find that it is an occasion of sin for them. Because a thing proves an occasion of sin, dancing, for example, it is not ipso facto declared immoral. Even if a given poem proved to be an occasion of sin for the most of men and if it were consequently placed on the Index, the poem in question is not per se immoral. This is testified to by the practice of the Church of granting permission to especially qualified persons to read or

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1. Ibid., p. 145.

experience this or that Indexed work and the Church could not grant such permission were the work in question immoral.

At this point in the discussion many will agree that a writer may represent an immoral human act, a sin. However, they will hasten to insist that he has the obligation to represent the sin as sin. Of course, this introduces the second question: Should literature deliberately teach morality? Oddly enough, many of the many who insist that sin must be represented as sin fail to realize that by such insistence they are supporting an affirmative answer to this question and when this question is put to them directly, they answer it negatively. No one will deny that literature very often does teach morality. However, no one who knows what a piece of literature really is, a thing of beauty made of words, will deny that the teaching of morality by a piece of literature is an accidental and not an essential function of literature. Incidentally, the question, "Should literature deliberately teach morality?" really means should a maker of a piece of literature be preoccupied with the intention of teaching morality. When the creative process is analysed in Chapter Three, it shall be obvious that any such intention must be relegated to the category of ulterior motives. The history of literature would support this contention simply by being

the history of things of beauty and not of didactic documents. Undoubtedly, a great many works were written against those things which Jonathan Swift was attacking when he wrote Gulliver's Travels; however, Gulliver's Travels, a thing of beauty is remembered when the rest are forgotten because the satire - a way of teaching - became an ulterior motive for Swift. He became more interested in Gulliver's Travels as a thing than in Gulliver's Travels as a sign. Thus it may be recapitulated that while a piece of literature need not teach, it often does teach. It may be said that a piece of literature which does teach morality is "better" than a piece of literature which does not - assuming equal art. It may be also said that a piece of literature which contains a Catholic doctrine of faith or morals is "better" than a piece of literature which does not; however, this is to affirm nothing more than has already been allowed when "greatness in literature" was discussed in the immediately preceding sub-section. As to whether or not a writer who would represent sin must represent it as sin, the answer is simple and only apparently sophisticated. Either a writer represents sin as sin or he represents something else. If, for example, a writer represents sin as virtue he represents a state of mind and the piece of literature so representing may be judged inferior to another representing a more noble state of mind. This is precisely why Eliot insists that

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literary criticism must be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. If a writer should affirm that sin is virtue this is a very different thing; he is a scientific writer and, of course, scientific writing is not being discussed here. (The absolute distinction between literature and scientific writing already presented is often overlooked by writers discussing morality and literature with the result that their conclusions concerning literature are often actually only valid for scientific writing.)

The relationship between literature and immorality has already been discussed within the very narrow limits which this sub-section allows. However, before proceeding to the next sub-section a few things more must be said. The first must be made very explicit. It is that the conclusions reached here have been inferred from certain principles of aesthetic-poetics and, therefore, that their validity depends upon the validity of these principles. If the principles are valid and if the inferences are logical, the conclusions are true. The second thing that must be pointed out is that these arguments far from opposing such institutions as Censorship and the Roman Index of Forbidden Books actually and enthusiastically support them. The third thing that must be said is that in "defending" authors

who make things of beauty of words which do not teach morality or theology or which represent immorality or erroneous theology, the need of ethical or theological criticism is not being denied; what is being denied is that these things prevent a piece of work made of words from being literature and this denial is absolutely valid both according to the aesthetic-poetics that are being inferred from the writings of the Schoolmen and according to the aesthetic-poetics of Mr. Eliot. And finally it must be said, again quite explicitly, that pieces of literature can be occasions of sin for experiencers or occasions of sin or even sinful for their makers. When such is the case, the human acts involved are sinful and no amount of beauty can change the situation. No matter how good the making or the experiencing of a thing of beauty may be per se, it can never justify the placing of an immoral act. The end never justifies the means.

#### The Affective Element

The present sub-section shall analyse the effect which an artistic production has upon its experiencer. It shall show that this effect is in fact two effects, one essential and one accidental. It shall show that the essential effect of an artistic production upon an experiencer is aesthetic emotion and that the accidental

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effect of an artistic production upon an experiencer is any kind of emotion except aesthetic emotion. It shall also show that aesthetic emotion may be viewed in two ways; first, as the creative emotion; and second, as the art emotion. And it shall end by showing that Mr. Eliot is aware of these distinctions.

The effect which an artistic production has upon its experiencer is emotion. Emotions, according to St. Thomas, are "movements of the sensory appetites, following upon conscious recognition of some stimulus, and characterized by definite modifications in the regulated activities of the body".<sup>1</sup> Obviously, when emotion is viewed as the effect which an artistic production has upon an experiencer, the artistic production is viewed as the stimulus. Emotions have been classified by St. Thomas according to their intensity and according to the character of their stimulus: according to their intensity, a distinction is made between mild emotions and emergency emotions; according to their stimulus, a distinction is made between favorable and unfavorable emotions. Thus, love, desire and joy are classified as mild emotions produced by a favorable stimulus; hatred, aversion and grief are classified as mild emotions produced by an unfavorable stimulus; hope and despair are classified as emergency

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Edward Brennan, op. cit., p. 264.

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emotions produced by a favorable stimulus; and courage, fear, and rage are classified as emergency emotions produced by an unfavorable stimulus. Consequently, these classifiable emotions may be viewed as the various kinds of reactions that an artistic production may produce in an experiencer. (Whether or not artistic productions can produce all of these emotions or only some of these emotions is not being considered here.)

However, at this point an interesting situation suggests itself. If one artistic production produces a reaction in an experiencer which satisfies the definition of love and a second artistic production produces a reaction in an experiencer which satisfies the definition of joy, it follows that neither reaction can be regarded as the essential effect of an artistic production upon its experiencer. Therefore, when Maurice De Wulf says that the impression of art "is that delightful stirring of the emotions which is produced in us when we are in contact with an artistic production",<sup>1</sup> it is clear that he is not equating the impression of art with any of the so-called "classifiable emotions". Nevertheless, experience teaches that artistic productions do produce emotions in experiencers that can be recognized as love or desire or joy or as some other classifiable emotion. Now since it cannot be denied that

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1. Maurice De Wulf, op. cit., p. 2.

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artistic productions do produce classifiable emotions in their experiencers, it might be thought that the particular classifiable emotion produced by an artistic production is accidental; but the fact that some classifiable emotion is produced is essential. In other words, that the essential effect of an artistic production upon its experiencer is the production of some classifiable emotion. Such a conclusion though widely accepted is not valid because it completely disregards the fact that an artistic production is before all else a thing of beauty.

Since an artistic production is essentially a thing of beauty and since a thing of beauty is an intellectual-sensuous form capable of producing a disinterested emotional pleasure in a rational perceiver, it follows that the essential effect which an artistic production produces in its experiencer is this disinterested emotional pleasure. The classifiable emotions are neither necessarily disinterested nor necessarily pleasurable. Consequently, when Maurice De Wulf speaks of the impression of art, he is speaking of this disinterested emotional pleasure, he is speaking of the pleasure which beauty alone can produce in a rational perceiver, he is speaking of aesthetic emotion. When he goes on to say that by the term artist "we must understand both the one who produces the work and the one

who enjoys a production done by another",<sup>1</sup> it is clear that both the maker and the experiencer of an artifact must experience the aesthetic emotion. Nevertheless, aesthetic emotion experienced by the maker of an artifact is termed the creative emotion and aesthetic emotion experienced by the experiencer of an artifact is termed the art emotion. Though the creative emotion and the art emotion are essentially identical, a great deal of confusion is avoided if these two terms are retained and properly applied.

A recapitulation of the heart of this sub-section is easy to make. Most artistic productions have two effects upon their experiencers. Both effects are emotion. The first effect, the essential effect, is the art emotion. This effect follows because of what an artistic production is, a thing of beauty. The second effect, the accidental effect, is some classifiable emotion. This effect follows because of what an artistic production says, because of what it represents. It is said that most artistic productions have two effects because it is, at least, hypothetically possible for an artistic production to have only one effect; obviously, of course, if an artistic production has only one effect, that effect must be the essential effect, the art emotion. Incidentally, it is quite possible, especially in longer art productions, for a work to produce more than

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1. Ibid., p. 2.

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one accidental effect within its experiencer.

Before concluding this sub-section, it is necessary to mention that Mr. Eliot is aware of the distinction that has been made between the essential effect and the accidental effect of an artistic production upon its experiencer. As a matter of fact, it shall be shown in other places in this thesis that his distinction between significant emotion and particular emotions is substantially the same distinction.

It was not the function of the present sub-section to demonstrate how it is possible for an artistic production, a poem for example, to produce a "double" effect upon an experiencer. However, this shall be demonstrated below, especially in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

#### The Literary Imagination

The present sub-section, like the immediately preceding one, is aware that it is a dependent sub-section. A dependent sub-section is one that is meaningless or if not meaningless then, at least, horribly incomplete, if taken apart from the work of which it is a sub-section. The problem of "the literary imagination" is an involved, complicated and important problem and one that has inspired a vast amount of attention. From Longinus to the latest Freudian, conclusions have been reached, distinctions have

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been made and definitions have been forged and still the problem remains largely a problem. It shall not be solved here.

Chapter Four of the present thesis shall attempt to analyse Mr. Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative". It is with the intention of supplementing what shall be said there that this sub-section is designed. Consequently, it is probable that the answer to a single question is all that need be included in this place. How does the imagination contribute to the genesis of a poem? This is the question. However, in order to answer it, what shall be proved in Chapter Four must be assumed here.

Mr. Eliot has said that:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this quotation that the particular emotion is present within the artist. His problem is to find a set of objects, a situation or a chain of events which shall be the formula for the particular emotion. The artist wishes to express the particular emotion. He cannot do so unless he finds an "objective correlative" for it. He will recognize the right "objective correlative" when he finds

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 145.

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it, because it will be the one which shall enable him to express the particular emotion. As a matter of fact, as shall be explained later, he shall recognize it because it shall make the particular emotion most palpable to him. The pertinent question is, Where does the artist find the "objective correlative"? The answer to this question is the special contribution of this sub-section.

Briefly stated, what happens is essentially this. The mere presence of the particular emotion charges the imagination and causes it to flash forth spontaneously into images. The imagination is "the power of re-presenting to mind, in a concrete way, things that have already been perceived by the senses but are no longer present".<sup>1</sup> These images may be sets of objects, situations or chains of events and these things must have been perceived by the artist at one time or another. Consequently, it is obvious that the number and nature of possible "objective correlatives" is only limited by the artist's experience of reality and reality is the books and the persons and the places and the things that the artist has known since his early childhood. Nevertheless, the sets of objects, the situations, the chains of events which are presented by the imagination are always more or less suitable "objective correlatives" for the particular emotion which has fired the imagination into action. This

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Edward Brennan, op. cit., p. 211.

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fact seems to indicate that the particular emotion "prompts" the imagination as to the kind of "objective correlative" or formula that is required. When the best of these more or less suitable "objective correlatives" has been evinced by the imagination, the particular emotion is most palpable to the artist and it is then that he can express the particular emotion by means of the "objective correlative". In other words, it is then that he can express emotion in the form of art. Incidentally, he can best express the particular emotion then because it is then that he knows it best. Thus, it is obvious that the imagination not only enables an artist to express; it also enables him to know. (The full significance of all of this shall emerge when Jacques Maritain's description of "poetic knowledge" is presented in a later chapter.)

The present sub-section, though short, has explained how the imagination contributes to the genesis of a poem by presenting a series of images "in the hope" that one might prove an adequate "objective correlative" for the particular emotion which initially moved the imagination to act. In addition it has shown that the imagination is ultimately dependent upon reality for its material and therefore that an artist's store of "objective correlatives" is directly proportional to his experience of reality.

## The Formal Principle

This, the eighth and last sub-section of the present chapter is actually more an appendix than a sub-section. The principles of Scholastic aesthetic-poetics that needed to be introduced have been introduced. Mr. Eliot has commented upon most of these and so everything seems adequately prepared for the direct assault that shall be made upon the essential concepts of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot in the following four chapters.

The chapter of The Pattern of Criticism, from which the present "sub-section" takes its name, though dealing with a theory which is not pertinent to the project being compassed by this thesis, nevertheless raises a problem which, at least, deserves brief attention here. The problem which it raises is the problem posed by the mere use of the word form. This word is without a peer for ambiguity among the too ambiguous nomenclature of aesthetic-poetics. Consequently, before endeavouring to explain what the form of an artifact might be, it is absolutely imperative to explain what is meant by "form".

Though there are many slight variations played upon each, there are ultimately two fundamental connotations of form utilized by those who write of aesthetic-poetics. The simplest way of distinguishing between these two is by

terming one "outer form" and the other "inner form". The former, outer form is by far the more easily comprehended. Put in the most general manner possible and applied to a piece of literature, outer form is the external pattern or structure of an artifact. On the other hand, inner form is the "formal cause" of an artifact. By the formal cause, Thomists traditionally signify, "that through which a thing is made to be what it is".<sup>1</sup> It may appear that to say that the outer form of a piece of literature is its external pattern or structure and that the inner form is that through which it is made to be what it is is to make the distinction unmistakably clear. However, such is not the case for many believe that that through which a piece of literature is made to be what it is is its external pattern or structure. While it certainly must be acknowledged that no two pieces of literature have exactly the same external patterns or structures, and while it therefore may be said that one piece of literature is different from another because their external patterns or structures are different, a more ultimate question remains to be answered. Why is the external pattern or structure of one piece of literature different from that of another? To answer this question is to answer many questions: Why did this artist write in verse? Why did he use these

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1. Celestine N. Bittle, op. cit., p. 334.

particular words rather than some others? Why did he make a sonnet instead of an elegy? He made as he made because the artistic ideal (this concept has already been introduced above) which is the exemplary cause directed him, the efficient cause, to do so. When it is realized - and it shall become more easy to realize in later chapters - that the artistic ideal is "poetic knowledge" and that "poetic knowledge" is most fully present in the work made, it shall be seen that the artistic ideal is infused into the artifact when the body, that is, the matter of the artifact is properly prepared to receive it. Consequently, it may be said that the inner form, or the formal cause, or the artistic ideal is the soul of a piece of literature and thence with Edmund Spenser:

For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:  
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

When the inner form, the soul shines forth in the proportioned parts of the outer form, the matter, the artifact is an intellectual-sensuous form and it appeals to both the intellect and the senses of its experiencers and it has what it takes to please them and, in short, it is a thing of beauty!

Chapter One is now completed. The critique is now presented. In a figure, of which Mr. Eliot would approve, the operating room is ready, the instruments have been

sterilized and lie in silence waiting. The patient, Mr. Eliot, is etherised upon the table; and stretched there, all that remains of him are the essential concepts of his aesthetic-poetics. He has withdrawn and stands further off at Stephano's command completely at the mercy of Ariel's devices. It shall be the task of the following four chapters to discover whether he has given the aesthetic-poetics of the Schoolmen the lie and consequently whether or not he deserves to receive it of them.

## CHAPTER TWO

## MR. ELIOT'S "TRADITION" AND "TALENT"

To study the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot is somewhat analogous to wishing to learn to swim in an indoor pool, a pool peculiar in so far as it is totally devoid of any indications of depth. The non-swimmer walks several times around the margin of the water, but cannot discover the shallow end. Unknown to him the pool is everywhere equally deep; and also unknown to him, it matters very little where he shall finally take the plunge; for wherever that may be, two effects shall follow: first, he shall get wet; and second, he shall be in over his head. While Eliot's writings are not unlike this pool, scholars seem to have found a spot at which they like to take their plunge and this spot is the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay. And there seems no very good reason for breaking with this budding precedent.

"Tradition and the Individual Talent" was written in 1919, and first published in The Sacred Wood. It was subsequently included along with thirty-seven other essays in the volume entitled, Selected Essays. Eliot has divided his essay into three unequal parts. It is this division that gives rise to the three sub-sections into which the present chapter shall be separated.

## Part One

The first chapter of The Achievement of T.S. Eliot, by F.O. Matthiessen, is entitled, "Tradition and the Individual Talent". This chapter is advisedly submitted as a good example of a very great deal of Eliot criticism. Admittedly, the essay of Eliot in question there and here is difficult. Probably, a good part of the difficulty is Eliot's own fault; that is to say, it is probable that Eliot is grappling with problems there which at that time (1919) he had not completely solved, or if he had solved them, the solutions were not sufficiently formulated in his own mind to allow him to set them down clearly - no one can complain about the conciseness of his presentation. Mr. Matthiessen's chapter is valuable - but not as a commentation or exposition of the essay in question. The point being raised here is simply that there are a number of provocative passages in Eliot's essay touching upon essential elements of his thought which have not been adequately analysed. Some of these points are intimately related to his aesthetic-poetics and are therefore validly part of the material object of the present thesis. These last points are the ones that shall be treated in this chapter.

The first such point, treated in the first subsection of this essay, is the question of tradition and the

individual writer. What makes a writer traditional? Eliot answers this question directly, the "historical sense... is what makes a writer traditional".<sup>1</sup> What is the historical sense? Again Eliot is direct:

...the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.<sup>2</sup>

Was ever directness so vague? A description-like definition such as this one certainly justifies the critical opinion that Eliot had not allowed his thought sufficient time to crystalize. Nevertheless, by means of analysis and comparison his thought can be grasped. By the pastness of the past Eliot alludes to all those things, concepts, relationships, opinions, et cetera, that were once entertained by men and are no longer accepted; by the presence of the past, all those things which existed in the past and which still exist at the present time. In other words, a nice distinction is being made between the changing and the changeless, between the temporal and the permanent.

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

Eliot asserts that a poet must have a perception of both of these kinds of things. It must be understood, of course, that the present itself is tomorrow's past and as such is bipartite, containing elements which existed in the past and which shall exist in the future as well as elements which are peculiar to itself, elements which did not exist in the past and elements which shall not persist into the future. Thus every poet possesses his own present, a composite of that which always was and always will be and of that which never was before and never shall be again.

The second element of the above quotation asserts that a man must write not only in terms of his own present and not only about his own present, but also in terms of and about those things that his present shares with all other presents that are past. One of the things shared by all presents is literature. Therefore, there is a sense in which literature is timeless; there is an element of literature, an essential element, that all literature must possess in order to be really literature. Both the momentum of Eliot's argument and Eliot's word simultaneous modifying both existence and order point to this conclusion. Monuments of literature such as Beowulf and The Canterbury Tales and Utopia and Shakespeare's plays and Donne's most typical poems and Dryden's least and "An Essay on Criticism" and "Kubla Khan" and Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Eliot's "The Waste

"Land" are capable of conveying two sets of impressions parallel and connected like railroad tracks laid on ties. The mead hall and that particular kind of pilgrimage and that brand of humanism and long speeches replacing scenery and twisted metaphors and frozen lyrics and rampant reason and liberated imagination and a time for choice and a time after choice constitute a concatenation of presents, at once interesting and important, accidental and non-essential. On the other hand, all of the above named works are art objects made of words by men; all express man's reactions to reality, all express classifiable emotions; all are things of beauty, all are capable of causing an aesthetic pleasure in a rational perceiver who has what it takes to support such a pleasure; in short, each contains essential elements which when abstracted by man are the essential notes of the idea, literature.<sup>1</sup> The feeling of literature which Eliot says a writer must have in his bones is neither an intellectual grasp of the essential notes of literature nor is it anything like a definition of literature. It is far rather an awareness of two effects which proceed from the real nature of literature. These effects Eliot terms the "simultaneous existence" and the "simultaneous order" of literature. These concepts are very far from the mysterious

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1. For a more complete treatment of the nature of literature, see the second sub-section of the first chapter of this thesis.

or even the occult. As a matter of fact, when they are prepared for intellectual consumption - as in this context - they are so simple, uncomplicated and obvious that they are almost disappointing, certainly completely unspectacular. (Incidentally, herein lies one of the virtues of Eliot's style of writing criticism. He somehow manages to convey the impression that he is dealing with an extremely difficult concept. The reader musters his attention and his faculties for the struggle. He is not disappointed for a real struggle usually ensues. Suddenly, however, it is all over. The concept is grasped. It fits in. It is often remembered as something previously seen, but not appreciated; as someone passed on the street, but not recognized.) The first effect is the fact that all works of literature exist at the same time. A dynamic appreciation of this fact is more important to a writer than the ability to define literature in words. All authors do not exist at the same time. Some are dead and some are alive. Some have been dead a hundred years and some have been dead for five hundred years. And to be forgotten is not the same thing as to be dead or to be non-existent. A forgotten author remembered is still an author who lived during the Romantic or the Neo-Classical or some other period. A forgotten piece of literature remembered exists at the same time as all other pieces of literature and that time is the everlasting, unchanging and unchangeable

now. All of this is, of course, not to say that literature cannot be dated - it is to say, however, that literature can and is dated by virtue of its accidental notes and not by virtue of its essential notes. It is interesting to remark that the converse is equally true, that those elements of a work which allow a critic to date it are accidental, while those elements which do not allow a critic to date it are essential. Consequently, Eliot's insistence that an author should be praised for those elements which he has in common with other authors rather than for those elements of his work in which he least resembles other authors makes excellent sense. The second effect - and its understanding depends upon an understanding of the first effect - is the fact that the works of literature form an order peculiar in that it is always complete, yet always changing. Whenever a new work of literature is created the whole order simultaneously changes, since the new work exists and hence forth shall always exist at the same time as all the other works. The order was complete before and is complete after because the words "before" and "after" have meaning à propos to the accidental elements of works of literature and have no meaning à propos to their essential elements.

The third element of the above quotation answers the question that has spontaneously arisen out of this

discussion: What effect has an awareness of these two effects upon a writer? Eliot's assertion is that a writer who possesses this historical sense shall produce literature that is traditional. Traditional literature is literature that is of the present in two senses: first, it is of that present that is everlasting, unchanging and unchangeable; and second, it is of that present that becomes yesterday with the passage of a day and Pre-Romantic with the maturity of the Romantics and Romantic with the coming of Victoria and Victorian with the coming of the Decadents, and et cetera and et cetera. The fourth and last element of the quotation completes the answer to this question. An awareness of these two effects makes a writer acutely aware of his own time. Therefore, it may be recapitulated that according to Mr. Eliot's thought "anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year" must be aware of several things: first, that there are elements in literature that are timeless in the sense of being of all times; second, that there are elements in literature that are temporal in the sense of being peculiar to a certain specified time; third, that the elements peculiar to his own present are more important to his own work than elements peculiar to some past present; and fourth, that his own work must contain elements that are discernible in the works of masters selected from many different ages out

of the past for such elements are probably the essential elements of literature and as such must be part of any work that would be really literature. Eliot's thought is quite explicit and quite correct when it insists that a writer cannot inherit an awareness of these things. Neither can they be taught to him as so many principles that must be kept if he is to make literature. Eliot says that they can only be acquired "by great labour" and the great labour is the real experience of literature.

Before proceeding to a brief examination of a corollary or two to Eliot's thoughts about "tradition", there is a concept presented by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in his book, Philosophy of Religion which juxtaposed with what has been developed above seems to render it a great deal more palpable. Bishop Sheen argues as follows:

There is such a thing as a Zeitgeist, or a Spirit of the Times, varying with the times and overflowing into all the disciplines of the human mind. The spirit of one age is not clearly demarcated from another, for history is not rigid in its divisions. The fringe of one age touches that of another and sometimes is even woven through a succeeding age. A study of these various Zeitgeists reveals that what one generation believes to be true, the next generation believes to be false. Rationalism was true for one age, but the Romanticism of the next age believed it to be false. Scientism refused in the next age to accept Romanticism, and in our day Temporalism repudiates Scientism.

Lyricism always accompanies this Spirit of the Age. Lyricism is the interpretation of philosophy, politics, religion, literature, art and God, in terms of the particular Spirit of the Age enjoying popularity at the moment. The progress from one

Spirit of the Age to another is not vital like the growth of cell from cell, but mechanical like the swing of a pendulum. The thought of the Spirit of the Age grows by contradictions, rather than by intussusception and assimilation.

A spiritual decline has been operative since the sixteenth century. One by one the spiritual realities have been rejected - the sixteenth century, for example, demanded a new Church, the eighteenth a new Christ, the nineteenth a new God, and the twentieth a new religion. There is rarely any spiritual recuperation from the loss of these great and tremendous realities, spiritual recuperation being oftentimes more difficult than physical recuperation. Instead of working towards an ideal, each Spirit of the Age changes its ideal and this changing of the ideal is frequently called Progress. Classical philosophy and traditional Christian religion, which remain outside the Zeitgeist, are generally regarded by the particular Zeitgeist as obscurantist and reactionary.<sup>1</sup>

The least violent kind of paraphrase will reduce this long quotation to a form in which its analogy with what Eliot is striving to express shall become clearer. Each age has its own Zeitgeist, its own peculiar spirit, typical of the age, its own bundle of characteristics by which it is described and named, and each age has in common with every other age a permanent stratum of thought, "the common sense tradition of humanity", the Christian Tradition. For example, the twentieth century is an age of Temporalism - according to Bishop Sheen. This is its Zeitgeist. Co-existing, nevertheless, is the Christian Tradition. This is that which is common to all ages. It might be objected that the Christian

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1. Fulton J. Sheen, Philosophy of Religion, pp. 3-4.

Tradition is something relatively new in the history of man. The comprehension of the term is wider than that implied in the objection. In the beginning there was the Word and then there was man and then Original Sin and then a Redeemer promised and then a Redeemer sent and then the Church and today there is still the Church and the Church shall stand until the end of time which shall be the beginning. In a relatively recent book,<sup>1</sup> Jacques Maritain utilized a method quite happy for the illustration and the explanation of difficult passages and concepts. His method, a simple one, was to introduce "Texts without Comment". Actually the "without comment" means without comment by himself. The texts themselves are comments upon the passage or concept being exposed. The above quotation and paraphrase have been introduced in that spirit in this place.

Returning to the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, Eliot infers from his concepts of tradition and the historical sense that a poet must form himself on literature viewed as an organic whole. It is quite probable that thoughts more fully developed in What Is a Classic?, "an address delivered before the Virgil Society on the sixteenth of October 1944" and subsequently published in book form, are being conceived or, at least, gestated at this time. This hypothesis is introduced not to explain

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<sup>1</sup>. The book in question is, of course, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry and was copyrighted in 1953.

error but to explain the appearance unmistakable of a man endeavouring to express ideas substantially valid yet simultaneously lacking the precision that comes of sufficient rumination. A poet is formed not by the acquisition of an encyclopedic knowledge of literature but by the acquisition of essential literature. (The connotation of the word essential, used to modify literature in the previous sentence, is the same as its connotation in Eliot's own sentence: "Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum".<sup>1</sup>) He, the poet is shaped by the very thing that shall ultimately judge him by judging his work. Thus the creative and the critical processes are associated and their association is quite intimate but definitely not identical.<sup>2</sup> Eliot has already insisted that what is most significant in the works of the masters is often what they have in common. What they have in common is what makes their work literature. That which differentiates some authors from others is that in accordance with which they are placed in schools or periods or ages of literature; and, of course, ultimately it is that which justifies the term "eccentric" but too often elicits

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 17. Italics mine.

2. The thought behind this sentence is presented by Mr. Eliot in "The Function of Criticism" essay, Selected Essays, pp. 23-34.

the term "original" for this or that particular author. The trend of these remarks, apparently still somewhat disjointed, is actually quite direct and culminates with the development of the concept of taste. Taste has already been defined as the peculiar condition of man's faculties, both sense and intellectual, which makes pleasure or pain a necessary result of the perception of an art object.<sup>1</sup>

The burden of the first section of the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay can now be presented in a clear, concise manner. All men by virtue of the fact that they are men, rational animals, have what it takes to develop taste. The only way of actualizing their potentiality in this direction is by experiencing literature - not all of literature, not any particular works of literature (there is no precise formula that can be given for the acquisition of taste), but sufficient literature and those particular works of literature which ultimately bring about the desired condition of the faculties involved.<sup>2</sup> A point is reached at which a man begins to experience pleasure or pain when he comes in contact with a new piece of work, that

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1. For the discussion of the development of this concept of taste, see the first sub-section, "The Premises of Criticism" of Chapter One of the present work above.

2. For Eliot's views on the development of taste see The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, "Note to Chapter I", entitled "The Development of Taste in Poetry", pp. 32-36.

is, a piece of work that is new to him. At this point, he is capable of criticism, of judging a piece of work to be literature or not. This experience together with certain other non-artistic factors which are assumed as given here may conspire to incline him to express himself in words. The critical power which he has developed is then turned upon his own "creations" and upon his own mode of "creating". Every man who succeeds in making literature possesses this power whether or not he reflects upon it, recognizes it, analyses it or writes about it and whether or not he writes criticism as such. (Incidentally, it has become fashionable for writers to be preoccupied with artistic self-analysis only in relatively recent times.) In short, Eliot holds that for a man to make literature, his faculties must be conditioned in a way peculiar in that it can be brought about only by the experience of "essential literature". When Eliot insists that the "poet" must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations",<sup>1</sup> he is being interestingly redundant. However, when he says that a poet "must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past",<sup>2</sup> he is actually agreeing with Aristotle who long ago realized that the ultimate criterion of literature is the man whose faculties have been actualized adequately,

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 16.

2. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 15.

the man of taste. No one who knows Aristotle or the Greek mind could ever see a subjective concept of the beautiful in this teaching. The man of taste is the man of taste because he has experienced the beauty of the monuments of the literature of the past. (The word past is utilized here according to its common dictionary definition - not according to the special meaning developed above.)

Therefore, it can be validly said that the literature of the past forms the taste that forms the judgments of the works of the present. When Eliot remarks that what happens to the poet is "a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable",<sup>1</sup> he is simply affirming that the man of taste is more a man than the man of no taste or that the man who is an artist is more perfected than the man who is not and to say this thing is little more than to enunciate a truism. "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."<sup>2</sup> The word "artist" has been italicized in order to unmask the source of the difficulty inherent in the foregoing sentence. Eliot is not there speaking about the progress of a man, but of the progress of

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1. Ibid., p. 17.

2. Ibid., p. 17. Italics mine.

an artist.<sup>1</sup> The development of an artist is the development of taste and the development of taste implies a movement away from the accidental or the eccentric and towards the essential and the traditional. An example will make all of this clearer. In so far as Alexander Pope and William Wordsworth have artistic taste, that is, in so far as their faculties have been conditioned by and to the beautiful, they are artists and as such indistinguishable; however, in so far as they possess artistic personalities, they are easily distinguishable as Pope the Neo-Classicist and Wordsworth the Romantic. A point to be kept clearly in mind is that at the same time that Pope and Wordsworth are artists and as such similar, and at the same time that they possess artistic personalities and as such are distinguishable, they also possess personalities as men. In order to distinguish among the artistic personalities of writers recourse must be had to their writings; in order to distinguish among their personalities as men recourse must be had to their biographies or public records or some other similar historical source. The question being approached here is, of course, that of "depersonalization" and that

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1. This is not simply an inferred distinction. Eliot himself makes it quite explicit: "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates...." (Ibid., p. 18.)

problem and the by now famous analogy which formally introduces it belong properly to the second part of Eliot's essay and therefore to the second part of this chapter.

(There is, however, one point incidental to the present chapter, but germane to another part of this thesis, that is brought out by Eliot in this place. It is the fact that what was termed artifactistic criticism above seems as if it might correspond to what Eliot terms aesthetic criticism. "I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not historical, criticism."<sup>1</sup> The context renders ridiculous the identification of aesthetic with impressionistic criticism.) And thus with the incidental incidentally dispatched, the problem of "depersonalization" and the second part of the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay can now be undertaken.

#### Part Two

The theory of poetry which Eliot is presenting he terms "Impersonal". It is actually a theory dealing with the "creation" or making of poetry and the experiencing or appreciation of poetry. (Incidentally, to say that it deals with the reading of poetry would be to tell only part of the story. The experiencing of poetry involves the reading of poetry and a good deal more. The terms are not convertible.)

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<sup>1</sup>. Ibid., p. 15.

Its material object includes the relationship of one poem with other poems and the relationship between poem and poet and between poem and experiencer. The last two relationships are analogous. It involves the premise that both the conditioning of a poet's faculties and the "honest criticism and sensitive appreciation" of poetry are the result of attention being directed upon poetry not poets. The burden of the second part of Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay and consequently of the present part of this chapter is the analysis of the relationship between the poet and his poem and an appreciable portion of the job has already been done.

It has already been established that taste distinguishes the man who is an artist from the man who is not though, of course, it is understood that not every man who has taste is an artist. "The sphere of Making is the sphere of Art, in the most universal meaning of the word."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if a man of taste does not make he is obviously not an artist. The validity of the definition of taste given above and the truth of the necessary attribution of taste to the poet is demonstrated by simply juxtaposing it with the following quotation from Eliot:

And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of 'personality',

1. Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, p. 6.

not being necessarily more interesting, or having 'more to say', but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.<sup>1</sup>

Since Eliot introduces the above quotation with the "And I hinted, by an analogy", any preoccupation with the analogy per se is unnecessary for he proceeds immediately to explain what he was trying to convey by the use of analogy.<sup>2</sup> Eliot says that the mind of the artist is "a more finely perfected medium"; taste was defined as a peculiar condition of man's faculties, both sense and intellectual, et cetera. These two concepts are very near together. Indeed, they are identical, amounting as they do to two different ways of expressing the same thing. Therefore, the above explanation of the genesis of taste may be validly accepted as the explanation of the genesis of the mind of the artist as Eliot envisions it.

In the next paragraph - a paragraph still concerned with the exegesis of his analogy - Eliot makes explicit the already implied distinction between "the man who suffers and the mind which creates". He points out that the material

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 18.

2. The analogy in question is, of course, Eliot's celebrated and desecrated analogy of the catalyst: "I therefore invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide". (Ibid., p. 17.)

out of which the mind makes poems is passions. The following paragraph divides the material out of which poems are made by the mind or passions into two kinds: emotions and feelings. This distinction is vital for it is the ultimate source of the concepts of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" which comprise the essence of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics and as such the matter of Chapters ~~four~~ and Five below. The transition from this source to the concepts is greatly facilitated if it is realized that the word mind corresponds to faculties and implies sense as well as intellectual faculties. The emotions and the feelings are transformed by the mind of the poet into a new form, an intellectual-sensuous form which is what is ultimately externalized as a work of art. This transformation is effected by the function of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination". (The how and the detail and the validity of this transformation are appropriately treated where these concepts are analysed as such.) Therefore, it is to be expected that the "effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art".<sup>1</sup> For example, it is not the experience of emotions and feelings; but, far rather, of emotions and feelings transformed into something new,

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1. Ibid., p. 18.

something different from emotions and feelings though, of course, something related to emotions and feelings as an effect is related to its intrinsic causation. As shall become increasingly obvious, when Eliot used the word "enjoys", unless he used it as a synonym for "experiences", he had already predicated the proper effect of a work of art upon an experienter. The proper effect is aesthetic pleasure. When one considers that aesthetic pleasure is that delightful stirring of the emotions which is produced when a man is in contact with a thing of beauty and that it is the experience of beautiful things that brings about that condition of the faculties which has been termed taste and that that condition of the faculties which has been termed taste is what enables a man to make beautiful things and that taste is also what enables a man to experience beautiful things, the cohesiveness and the tremendous significance of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics begin to become scintillatingly obvious. And, when all of these things are considered, the conformity between the aesthetic-poetics of Mr. Eliot and the aesthetic-poetics presented in the first chapter of the present thesis, the aesthetic-poetics implicit in the writings of the Schoolmen, the critique, also begins to emerge. However, when Mr. Eliot adds that the poet's mind "is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases,

images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together",<sup>1</sup> he is really predicating nothing that is peculiar to the mind of the poet. Every man's mind is a receptacle for the seizing and storing up of such things. The point is that unless a man's faculties have been properly conditioned the emotions and feelings et cetera shall remain there ununited forever. Consequently, this statement adds nothing to what Eliot has already said; if anything, it tends to detract from the clarity of his thought by introducing what amounts, at least, to a non-essential detail, if not to a positive misconception. It corroborates, however, what has already been alleged against the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, namely that some of the thoughts expressed there were not sufficiently ruminated.

The second part of the essay being discussed ends with a series of paradoxes scattered generously throughout the first and third of the last three paragraphs. These paradoxes are "heavy" paradoxes when compared with the paradoxes so successfully spun by Chesterton. They are heavy in the sense that a sonnet by Hopkins is heavy if compared with a sonnet by Spenser or Sidney or even Shakespeare or certainly Rossetti. They deal particularly with a distinction which Eliot is striving hard to make

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1. Ibid., p. 19.

palpable for his readers and perhaps even to some extent for himself; a distinction between the feelings and emotions which are important to the artist in the way that feelings and emotions are important to a man who is not an artist and the feelings and emotions which are transformed by the mind of the artist and in their transformed form appear in his poetry. Ultimately, however, the distinction which Eliot is endeavouring to approach is that which exists between the classifiable emotions and aesthetic emotion; or, in his own terms, between the particular emotions and significant emotion. When Eliot "admits" that the "point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul",<sup>1</sup> he is leading the reader down a path that leads into the forest and not out of it. The point is that the artist possesses both taste and a personality and these two things are metaphysically compatible even though they usually tend in different directions and though they measure the value of emotions and feelings by different norms. When an artist makes a poem, he must overcome the inclination of his personality and harken unto the dictates of taste. The former tends towards the expression of self and self is particular, sentimental, commonplace or eccentric, and is always principally preoccupied with truth - though seldom

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1. Ibid., p. 19.

with telling the truth. The latter tends towards the beautiful and nothing else. "Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality."<sup>1</sup> Precisely, and this is true simply because impressions and experiences are important in the poetry and "in the man" for entirely different reasons. At least four similarly provocative quotations from this part of Eliot's essay might be included and superficially affirmed. However, their real depths cannot be explored apart from a complete discussion of the concepts of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" and such is the task of Chapter Four and Five respectively. Jacques Maritain commenting on the context of which these quotations comprise the essential parts concludes that: "All this deals with emotion as material, with brute or merely subjective emotion."<sup>2</sup> And so it does, at least, for anyone who would wish Eliot to render explicit what - in fairness to Eliot - he is certainly implying concerning the significant emotion. In the shockingly abbreviated third part of the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, he is explicit - but only for a moment.

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1. Ibid., p. 20.

2. Jacques Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry, p. 120.

## Part Three

The third part of Mr. Eliot's essay is comprised of only one paragraph. In it Eliot reaffirms himself an artifactualistic, or, in his terms an "aesthetic" critic. He makes a distinction between people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse and those who go beyond this and appreciate the expression of significant emotion in addition.

There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is an expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet.<sup>1</sup>

These lines delight Jacques Maritain:

At last! At last we are told of the significant emotion, the intentional and creative emotion, without which there is no poetry. It deserved better than to be only alluded to in passing.<sup>2</sup>

However, Maritain's comment cannot delight the critic who knows the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay. For while such a critic can readily agree that the significant emotion deserved better, he realizes that it received the very best that Eliot had to give it, at least, at that time and in that place and that this best was better than Maritain supposed. The present chapter demonstrates the

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., p. 22.

2. Jacques Maritain, op.cit., p. 121.

matter, for analysing Eliot's essay part by part as it does, it, long before reaching the third part, detected the concept of significant emotion and proceeded to examine it as far as was possible apart from concepts properly introduceable elsewhere in this thesis. Consequently, any further remarks concerning significant emotion made in this place must prove either redundant or out of place.

The next chapter shall endeavour to present a critical analysis of "the relation of a poem to its origin" as this, the creative process, is envisioned by Mr. Eliot. That done, the way shall have been prepared for a critical analysis of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination", the two concepts so obviously essential to a well rounded understanding of some of the matter introduced in the present chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

## MR. ELIOT'S MANNER OF MAKING

The formal object of this chapter is a critical presentation of Mr. Eliot's answer to a single question: What is the genesis of a poem?

Mr. Eliot deals with this question incidentally in many places. The "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, an essay that has already been discussed, represents one of the more formal approaches to this problem. However, that essay was written in 1919 and as has already been established is unripe or premature in its dealings with several subjects. Thirty-four years after the publication of that essay, Eliot published another, "The Three Voices of Poetry". It is this pithy volume that shall be the material object of the present study - not all of it, but those parts which touch upon the efficient cause (that by which something is made) of a poem. The appropriateness of this selection of text is validated by the words which Eliot wrote upon rereading what he had just written on the heart of this matter: "I don't believe that the relation of a poem to its origins is capable of being more clearly traced".<sup>1</sup> While this quotation proves the point for which it was evinced, its intrinsic contention must not be allowed

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, The Three Voices of Poetry, pp. 18-19.

to beg the principal question about to be discussed.

"The Three Voices of Poetry"

Mr. Eliot proceeds directly to explain what he means by the "three voices" of poetry:

I shall explain at once what I mean by the "three voices". The first is the voice of the poet talking to himself - or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately following the explicit presentation of this tripartite distinction, he enters upon an extended discussion which devotes itself to a consideration of the problems<sup>2</sup> suggested by and the objections raised against this distinction. However, these things though interesting and revealing do not directly contribute to the subject being treated in this chapter and therefore must be passed over in silence. As a matter of fact the distinction itself does

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1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. The two principal problems which Mr. Eliot considers are the "problem of poetic communication" which he feels is indicated by the distinction between the first and second voice; and the "problem of the difference between dramatic, quasi-dramatic, and non-dramatic verse" which he feels is indicated by the distinction between the first and second voice on the one hand and the third voice on the other.

not contribute to the elucidation of the genesis of a poem. On the contrary, it actually introduces a possible misconception and it is to afford an opportunity of answering this important misconception that the distinction has been given place here.

The source of the difficulty is this. When Mr. Eliot discusses the relationship of a poem with its origins, he does so with first voice poetry exclusively. Immediately the implication arises that what he says is therefore only valid in connection with what he has termed first voice poetry. The further implication arises that second and third voice poetry are made in an essentially different manner. And the point is that they are not. Admittedly, there is a difference; but it does not amount to an essential one but only to an accidental one. However, before this can be demonstrated, it is necessary to analyse what he does say concerning the genesis of a first voice poem and before doing this it is necessary to analyse what Gottfried Benn has to say on the subject and this because Eliot himself develops his theory upon a foundation furnished by his recapitulation of Benn's theory.

#### Herr Benn's Theory

Mr. Eliot has already explained that first voice poetry is the poet talking to himself or to nobody.

Herr Benn's theory begins with a rhetorical question: What does the maker of such a poem start with? A poet about to speak in the second voice may start with a story that he wishes to tell (narrative poetry) or with a lesson that he wishes to teach (didactic poetry) or with something that he wishes to make fun of (satiric poetry) or et cetera. A poet about to speak in the third voice may start with a plot which he wishes to exploit or with a character or characters which interest him or et cetera. (It must be made quite clear even at this early stage that all of these things are such as what a poet who is about to speak in the second or third voice may have to start with, in the sense that, if he were asked, after his poem or poetic-drama was completed, to reflect and say what it was that he started with, these are possible answers that he might make. There are others, many others, some much nearer the significant truth. How close to this truth a poet reflecting and answering might come depends upon two factors: first, how great his participation is in the coeval trend which makes it fashionable for poets to be preoccupied with themselves as efficient causes of the poems which they make; and second, how accurate his reflection and his expression of such reflection may be. Incidentally, it may be that such reflection is a habit more proper to the philosopher than to the poet and such expression may be of a kind more

proper to the scientific writer than to the poet.) A poet about to speak in the first voice cannot make any such answer. Benn's theory argues that he begins with two things: first, "an inert embryo or creative germ (ein dumpfer schöpferischer Keim)"; and second, with "the language, the resources of the words at the poet's command".<sup>1</sup> It is immediately obvious that the second thing is not significant, that is, not peculiar to him, for the poet about to speak in either the second or the third voice also has the language, the resources of the words which are at his command. Benn realizes this, for it is the "inert embryo" or "creative germ" and its relationship with language which receive his attention. Eliot recapitulates Benn's theory as follows:

He [the poet] has something germinating in him for which he must find words; but he cannot know what words he wants until he has found the words; he cannot identify this embryo until it has been transformed into an arrangement of the right words in the right order. When you have the words for it, the "thing" for which the words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by a poem. What you start from is nothing so definite as an emotion, in any ordinary sense; it is still more certainly not an idea; it is - to adapt two lines of Beddoes to a different meaning - a

bodiless childful of life in the gloom,  
Crying with frog voice, "what shall I be?"<sup>2</sup>

To read this quotation carefully is to immediately realize

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 17.
  2. Ibid., p. 17. Brackets mine.

that it is the very beginning and the very end of the making of a poem that is being described. It is either not concerned with several important intermediate steps or it is a sorry oversimplification of a much more complicated process.

Benn begins by answering his rhetorical question. A poet about to speak in the first voice starts with an inert embryo. In the space of a paragraph this inert embryo is referred to as a "creative germ", as "something", as "the 'thing'", and it is negatively qualified as being "nothing so definite as an emotion, in any ordinary sense" and as not being "an idea" and finally - in the two verses quoted - as a being asking what shall it be. No sense can be made of all of this if it be assumed that Benn is endeavouring to describe the first presence within the poet of that which ultimately becomes a poem. But if it be understood that he is far rather describing the effect of the first presence of such a thing within the poet, some sense begins to emerge. This effect is not a thing. It is a tendency or an inclination or an urge towards the making of a thing. It had to have been caused by a new presence within the poet and things newly present within a man have to have come from without either directly or indirectly. The vital point to stress at this juncture is that the thing that is eventually made, the poem, is not

simply the product of the new presence plus words. It will probably contain a great many "fragments" and the new presence may or may not be one of these. The new presence is necessarily an item of experience, a feeling, an emotion, a passion or some other similar thing. This new thing clashes with the self of the poet viewed as the sum-total of all his previous experiences. The effect of this clash is an awakening of his potentiality to make a thing of beauty. However, the subject experiencing such an awakening is aware only of a tendency to make and he is aware that the tendency amounts to a necessity. The "thing of beauty" qualification proceeds from the fact that when he does make, the artifact is measured by the condition of his faculties which has already been termed taste. It must please these faculties; and in order to do this, it must be beautiful. All of this might be termed the initial movement of art.

The poet is an artist who makes with words. However, the poet is not always aware of a strong tendency to make present within himself. Consequently, Benn is quite right in pointing out that this initial movement of art has disappeared as soon as the poem has been made. "When you have the words for it, the 'thing' for which the words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by a poem."<sup>1</sup> Precisely, provided it is clearly understood that words had to be found not to

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1. Ibid., p. 17.

express the initial movement of art per se because the initial movement of art is not the thing eventually expressed,<sup>1</sup> but because words are that out of which poems are made. This distinction is a vital one and it is the one which Benn has failed to render sufficiently clear. When the intermediary steps are introduced, this distinction shall become much clearer still.

The initial movement of art, as has been shown is itself an effect of a clash between a poet and this piece or these pieces of his environment. This clash is present within the poet as knowledge, a peculiar union between a subject and an object or objects. This knowledge is what Jacques Maritain calls poetic knowledge and describes as follows:

Poetic knowledge is a knowledge by affective connaturality of the operative type, or tending to express itself in a work. It is not a knowledge "by mode of knowledge", it is a knowledge by mode of instinct or inclination, by mode of resonance in the subject, and which proceeds toward creating a work.

In such a knowledge it is the created object, the work made, the poem, the picture, the symphony, which plays the role of the mental word and of the judgment in speculative knowledge.

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1. Since a poem can be viewed both as a sign and as a thing, the possibility of an exception to this statement must be allowed. It could happen that that of which the poem is a sign would be the initial movement of art.

It follows from this that poetic knowledge is not fully conscious except in the work made; it does not completely attain consciousness except in the work - in the work which in other ways materializes it and disperses it in some way in order to bring it back into a new unity, that of the thing posed in being.<sup>1</sup>

Within the poet this poetic knowledge may be viewed as an "artistic ideal". An artistic ideal "is the exemplary cause which directs the action of the efficient cause"<sup>2</sup> in his making of the artifact. The manner in which the poetic knowledge serves as the artistic ideal requires exposition. The poet is aware of its presence within him and he is aware of the initial movement of art. A series of situations, objects or events, one by one, become conscious and after a time fade away until one of these persists and by its presence seems to render what has been termed the poetic knowledge more palpable. Of course, the situation or the object or the event which remains is what Eliot terms the "objective correlative". (A complete analysis of the "objective correlative" is presented in Chapter Four.) The poet is aware not of possessing the poetic knowledge and an "objective correlative", but far rather he is aware of possessing the poetic knowledge more palpably because it has "identified" itself with the "objective correlative".

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1. Jacques Maritain, The Situation of Poetry, pp. 64-65.

2. Maurice De Wulf, Art and Beauty, p. 21.

This more palpable poetic knowledge may still be viewed as the artistic ideal. The poet is at this point aware of a need to find words. He is aware that the meanings of words enable him to express the poetic knowledge in its present stage of development, that is, since an "objective correlative" was discovered. The meanings of words usually do not render the poetic knowledge more conscious or more palpable and yet as words are being arranged the poetic knowledge is becoming clearer. The poet is aware that this effect is being produced by virtue of the syllable sound and rhythmic quality of the words. (In Eliot's terms, the poet's "auditory imagination" is functioning. A complete analysis of the "auditory imagination" is presented in Chapter Five.) A point is reached at which certain words have been accepted as the best words that the poet can find and these words have been arranged in an order upon which the poet cannot seem to improve. It is at this point that the poet experiences either extreme frustration or what was termed creative pleasure in the first chapter above. If the former, he has not succeeded in making a thing of beauty; if the latter, he has been successful. Usually in the former, and always in the latter instance, the initial movement of art has disappeared. And finally, it is at this point that for the first time, the poet is fully conscious of, or, in other words, it is at this point that

the poet fully possesses, this poetic knowledge. Incidentally, it is now quite obvious that words had to be found to complete the poetic knowledge and not to express the initial movement of art. Another important point reiterated by this discussion is the fact that a poem is a thing and not the sign of something other than itself.

This exposition of the genesis of a poem implicitly, at least, touches upon three problems often particularly associated with Eliot. They are: first, the problem of communication; second, the problem of the conscious versus the unconscious; and third, the problem of the impersonal or depersonalization. The first thing that must be insisted upon is that these problems are not peculiar to Eliot. Another thing to insist upon is that these things are not problems per se, but appear to be problems because of a number of popular beliefs which are not based upon any real theory of aesthetic-poetics. As a matter of fact, these "beliefs" are to aesthetic-poetics what superstitions are to religions. Of course, a formal unmasking of these things cannot be undertaken in this thesis; though here and there, in passing, a few have been and a few more shall be exploded. For example, it will have been noticed that at no time during the creative process is the poet at all concerned with the question of communicating. He is an artist concerned with making. He is a man of taste and

therefore makes a thing of beauty; though, this is an effect which is brought about by the condition of his faculties and not by any actual intention. When the creative process is held at arm's length, a distinct impression is given. The poet appears to be dealing with an object, trying to "know" it better by transforming it into a form more easily known by the man which he is. That which he is trying to know is an object. He is not trying to express himself. If personality seems to be forming the object, it is not because the poet's individual personality is being reflected in the object ; but, far rather, because the object is being transformed into an intellectual-sensuous form. In other words, the object is being transformed into a form which is more knowable by man - not this man, but the species man; or, in accordance with Maritain's thought, the poetic knowledge is becoming more conscious during the creative process and is fully conscious only when the work has been made. Thus, it is clear that there is a very real sense in which poetry is impersonal.

Still holding the exposition of the creative process at arm's length, another distinct impression arranges itself; and, incidentally, it seems to be this impression which Herr Benn sees most clearly. The effect of the initial clash, the new presence, the poetic knowledge at that early stage, seems to be possessed of its own entelechy, that is,

it seems to have within itself a vital drive towards the work that is eventually made, the poem. The initial clash seems like conception. The mind of the poet (both his intellectual and sense faculties) seems like the womb. The entelechy seems like the soul which God infuses. The earliest stage of the poetic knowledge seems like the egg and sperm cells united. The creative process seems like the period of gestation. And finally, the poem that is eventually made, seems like the child that is eventually born. When the question of conscious versus unconscious "making" or "creating" is viewed beside this analogy, it seems to become little more than an academic question of the meaning of the words conscious and unconscious. For certainly there are connotations of these two words which allow that either or both be applied to the role of a pregnant woman. Note, too, how, Eliot's words slightly altered apply: "In fact, the bad mother is usually unconscious where she ought to be conscious, and conscious where she ought to be unconscious". While no analogy can be pushed too far, the present analogy can be pushed a lot further. If the detailed exposition of the genesis of a poem as presented above be compared with a detailed account of the genesis of a child from just prior to conception to just after birth with the question of consciousness versus unconsciousness fixed firmly in mind many interesting and

revealing conclusions are reached. It must be remembered that an efficient cause makes consciously when he is aware of making or when he makes by design and that he makes by design when he makes in accordance with a plan or blueprint. It must also be realized that an efficient cause makes consciously when he withstands the temptation of allowing an ulterior motive to interfere with the genesis of the work being made. Incidentally, this analogy also casts additional light on the nature of the question of the personal versus the impersonal method of making. Certainly Chaucer would say that this analogy is, "a truly worthy thing withal".

#### Mr. Eliot's Theory

"I agree with Gottfried Benn, and I would go a little further."<sup>1</sup> The exposition of the genesis of a poem presented in the immediately preceding sub-section has taken into consideration the "little further" which Mr. Eliot goes and for the simple reason that it was implied in Mr. Benn's theory. Consequently, no long exposition is necessary here. Nevertheless, a few points deserve attention and shall be quoted below for the additional weight that they are capable of lending to some of the more obtuse elements in the exposition already presented. First,

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

paralleling Jacques Maritain's description of poetic knowledge, Mr. Eliot says that the poet trying to speak in the first voice "does not know what he has to say until he has said it".<sup>1</sup> Second, concerning the question of communication, Mr. Eliot says that the poet trying to speak in the first voice,

...is not concerned with making other people understand anything. He is not concerned, at this stage, with other people at all: only with finding the right words or, anyhow, the least wrong words. He is not concerned whether anybody else will ever listen to them or not, or whether anybody else will ever understand them if he does.<sup>2</sup>

Third, concerning the motivation or the final cause, Mr. Eliot says that a poet trying to speak in the first voice makes because:

He is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth in order to obtain relief. Or, to change the figure of speech, he is haunted by a demon, a demon against which he feels powerless, because in its first manifestation it has no face, no name, nothing; and the words, the poem he makes, are a kind of exorcism of this demon. In other words again, he is going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort....<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, concerning the aesthetic emotion, or the significant emotion, or the creative emotion, Mr. Eliot describes it -

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1. Ibid., p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

3. Ibid., p. 18.

and it is a description and not a definition - as follows:

...when the words are finally arranged in the right way - or in what he comes to accept as the best arrangement he can find - he may experience a moment of exhaustion, of appeasement, of absolution, and of something very near annihilation, which is in itself indescribable. And then he can say to the poem: "Go away! Find a place for yourself in a book - and don't expect me to take any further interest in you".<sup>1</sup>

There is one further consideration that was perhaps not rendered sufficiently explicit above and that is the question of the form which a poem of the first voice type eventually takes. When it was stated that the poet ultimately accepted a particular arrangement of words, an arrangement that enhanced the palpableness of the poetic knowledge, this question was answered. For verse or stanzaic forms are at bottom nothing more than formulas which are abstracted from actual poems. The point which Eliot makes quite explicit is that, in first voice poetry, such forms are indicated by the poetic knowledge per se. It may even be - and Eliot seems to maintain as much - that, if the variations of set forms are considered, each first voice poem possesses its own form, a form peculiar to itself, though sufficiently similar to the forms of other poems to permit of the classification of poems as sonnets, ballads, et cetera.

Now that the genesis of a first voice poem has been analysed and presented, all that remains to be demonstrated

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<sup>1</sup>. Ibid., p. 18.

is that second and third voice poems are not essentially different from first voice poems and such is precisely the task of the last formal sub-section of the present chapter.

#### The Misconception

The misconception that must be dealt with here can be viewed from many different standpoints. It is a misconception which amounts to a false premise from which flow many errors. Only the principal one shall be explicitly treated here.

It is thought - or, at least, critics often speak in a way which seems to indicate that they think - that a satiric poet or a didactic poet or a narrative poet makes a poem in order to make fun of some person or thing or in order to teach a lesson or in order to tell a story. It is thought that these things are the final causes of such poems. However, they cannot be; for each of these things is an end and consequently the works made would serve a useful purpose and so should have to be classified as useful art. Literature has already been defined as fine art. Logically, therefore, an absurdity is reached, such poems are not literature. Obviously, poets do sit down to make with such motives in mind. Obviously, also, some of the works thus made are literature.

This paradox is easily solved. A man can walk a quarter of a mile to a store to buy a package of cigarettes. While walking, the sheer pleasure of the exercise becomes

his motive and he decides to walk further. This homely analogy points to the solution. While a poet may take pen in hand to make for one of the reasons above indicated, as he makes he becomes aware of, or, at least, becomes, more interested in the work that he is making than in the end which he originally intended it to achieve. In other words, he is more preoccupied with the work as a thing than with the work as a sign of something other than itself. His original motivation has been relegated to the category of ulterior motives. He finds himself, or, he is found to be, preoccupied with the making of a thing of beauty of words, and such is the very definition of literature. Of course, the artifact made may actually serve the purpose for which it was originally begun; but this matters not at all, for if the thing made is a thing of beauty made of words it is literature. And what a thing is matters more than what it does. Surely, no one would presume to argue that a Rembrandt or a Titian hung to hide cracks on a dilettante's drawing room wall is less fine art because it serves a practical purpose; or, that Hogarth's "Marriage À La Mode" and his "The Rake's Progress" are less fine art because they are satirical. When the poet becomes more interested in the work being made than in the ulterior motive which prompted him to begin it, he "creates" exactly as was described above. It may be that the ulterior motive provides him with his "objective correlative";

it may even be that the ulterior motive suddenly appeared to him as an "objective correlative" thus providing him with the poetic knowledge which became as suddenly his artistic ideal. When, in the next chapter, the "objective correlative" is analysed, these possibilities shall instantly become more palpable.

It may be set forth, that, in order to make a poem which is a poem and not simply something else versified, sometime during the period of gestation, whether consciously or unconsciously, and in a deeper sense always consciously, a maker must become more concerned with the thing that he is making than with the reasons why he thinks he is making it. In other words, a poem is a thing of beauty, and the exigencies of the story that it tells, or the lesson that it teaches, or the person or thing that it makes fun of, must be sacrificed to the exigencies of the beautiful. Eliot himself says that, "I have been speaking, for the sake of simplicity, of the three voices as if they were mutually exclusive...but for me the voices are most often found together".<sup>1</sup> It would have been well, if he had added that no matter which voice a poet is about to speak in or is in the process of speaking in, he makes in essentially the same way though certain accidental variations do intrude themselves. Such a statement would have rendered

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<sup>1</sup>. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

unnecessary the answering of the misconception just discussed.

A number of concepts of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics thus far introduced, could be only partly presented because their full significance was found to be dependent upon what amount to the two principal concepts of his thought. These two concepts are the concept of the "objective correlative" and the concept of the "auditory imagination". It shall, therefore, be the task of the two chapters which follow to analyse these core concepts completely. Though these twin concepts are intimately interrelated, for the sake of clarity, they shall be critically presented as separately as possible. Much of what has already been presented shall take on additional meaning by virtue of these studies.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## MR. ELIOT'S "OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE"

The present chapter shall be sub-divided into three principal parts: the first shall deal with the "Hamlet" essay, the essay in which Eliot's description-like definition of the "objective correlative" may be found; the second shall devote itself to a careful analysis of the intrinsic nature of the "objective correlative" per se; the third shall deal with a few extrinsic or semi-extrinsic considerations relevant to the concept of the "objective correlative".

## The "Hamlet" Essay

According to T.S. Eliot, there is such a thing as the "objective correlative". Perhaps the most penetrating pertinent passage dealing directly with this concept is to be found in his "Hamlet" essay, an essay first published in 1919. This passage deserves to be quoted at length:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.<sup>1</sup>

At once, a seemingly irrelevant question comes to mind. Why

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<sup>1</sup>. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 145.

does Eliot introduce this concept into an essay in which his formal object is obviously to judge William Shakespeare's most baffling play? The answer to this question may prove more relevant than one might expect - at any rate the brevity of the essay encourages paragraph by paragraph commentary.

The first paragraph is rewarding in that it positively demonstrates Eliot's attitude towards impressionistic criticism. He tells us that a critic's first business is to study a work of art. The impressionist studies and comments upon his reaction to a work of art. Eliot condemns the impressionistic critic as "the most dangerous type of critic" and his criticism as "the most misleading kind possible". Eliot's sense of humour is evinced in the paragraph-ending sentence, "We should be thankful that Walter Pater did not fix his attention on this play".<sup>1</sup> The two most significant points made by Eliot thus far are: first, that the impressionistic critic is one whose mind is of the creative kind, but for some reason exercises itself in criticism rather than creation; and, second, that Hamlet the play is the primary problem - not Hamlet the character.

In the short second paragraph, by virtue of the instrumentality of a quotation, Eliot reveals what is at

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1. Ibid., p. 141.

once interesting, important and pleasant, his realization of how far professional psychologists and psychiatrists who are also amateur literary critics miss the mark. Though no names are mentioned, surely Ernest Jones, M.D., F.R.C.P., President of the International Psycho-Analytical Association and author of a too well known book entitled Hamlet and Oedipus is a somewhat later model of the kind of offender Eliot and Professor Stoll - the author of the quotation - had in mind. Incidentally, the first and second chapters of Dr. Jones' book are classic reading for anyone interested in writing some old fashioned satire on the extreme trends unmistakable in much coeval criticism.

The third paragraph reveals a more positive Eliot, an Eliot already thinking in terms of "The Function of Criticism" essay, an essay that he was to publish four years later. He points out that a work of art as a work of art cannot be interpreted: "there is nothing to interpret; we can only criticize it according to standards, in comparison to other works of art; and for 'interpretation' the chief task is the presentation of relevant historical facts which the reader is not assumed to know".<sup>1</sup> Obviously, the quotation marks are placed around the word interpretation to indicate a peculiar or unique or special use of the word - this is not at all an uncommon device discoverable among

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1. Ibid., p. 142.

Eliot's prose writings. However, the obviousness of this device is sometimes far less obvious and the careful reader should seek it out. It might appear that Eliot has refuted impressionistic criticism in favour of historical criticism. Credit for codifying traditional historicism is generally accorded to the Frenchman Hippolyte Taine, a second half of the nineteenth century disciple of Sainte-Beuve and Hegel. Taine advocated that critics should study a writer's race, milieu, and moment. Such are not the facts that Eliot would have an interpreter put in the reader's way. When he speaks of a sense of fact in "The Function of Criticism" essay as an indispensable quality for the critic, it is a "simpler kind of facts" that he has in mind, facts about the work being considered - "its conditions, its setting, its genesis". This is not traditional historicism though the two will often be very near together, perhaps the two will even sometimes overlap. It is well to remember that historicism viewed as a kind of criticism is a fallacy far less dangerous than impressionism, and that the tools of historicism in the hands of real critics - critics who deal directly with works of art, artifacts would be a good name for real critics - are tools capable of accomplishing rewarding and necessary jobs. The fact which Eliot believes the true "interpreter" should render quite clear is

that Hamlet is a stratification, that it represents the efforts of a series of men, each making what he could out of the work of his predecessors. The Hamlet of Shakespeare will appear to us very differently if, instead of treating the whole action of the play as due to Shakespeare's design, we perceive his Hamlet to be superposed upon much cruder material which persists even in the final form.<sup>1</sup>

In the fourth paragraph, Eliot discusses, very briefly, Thomas Kyd's now lost play, Hamlet. He concludes, by virtue of a study of related works, that the motive of Kyd's Hamlet was simply revenge. The motive of Shakespeare's Hamlet is not simply revenge - it is a more important motive than revenge. Eliot, following Mr. Robertson's examination of Shakespeare's play, argues that Shakespeare's Hamlet deals with "the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son, and that Shakespeare was unable to impose this motive successfully upon the 'intractable' material of the old play".<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, it is interesting to note to how great an extent Eliot bases his opinions upon either a direct study of texts or upon men who have obviously based their own opinions upon a close examination of texts. In the latter instance, the implication is that Eliot has substantiated the opinions with which he agrees by personal recourse to the works in question. Notice his preoccupation with the evidence to be gleaned from an examination of

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1. Ibid., p. 142.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

versification and similar elements of so-called internal evidence. Eliot appears to be an artifactualistic critic.

In the fifth paragraph, we come upon one of Eliot's great condemnations. "So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the play[ Hamlet] is most certainly an artistic failure."<sup>1</sup> One must have a monumental reason for such an iconoclastic judgment. Eliot alleges that the play is undoubtedly perverse, unruly, and ungovernable; it is puzzling and disquieting; it contains superfluous and inconsistent scenes; the versification is unequal - all of these are, however, it may be suspected, simply symptoms of something far deeper. The paragraph comes to an end - without diagnosing the disease - by making a distinction between two qualities which plays sometimes enjoy, a distinction between the artistic success of a play and the "interesting"-ness of a play. Once again, the tell-tale quotation marks are placed around a key word. A work is not art because it is "interesting" - a work is interesting because it is art. Such is what Eliot is saying. For the moment, it must remain an interesting paradox, a minor mystery - but only for the moment.

In the sixth paragraph, Eliot reaffirms his agreement with Mr. Robertson's conclusion concerning the essential emotion of the play, it is "the feeling of a son towards a

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<sup>1</sup>. Ibid., p. 143. Brackets mine.

guilty mother". Eliot also makes explicit what has already been implicitly indicated, that "the grounds of Hamlet's failure are not immediately obvious".

In the seventh paragraph, Eliot approaches very near to the heart of the matter. He parts company with Mr. Robertson when he plunges deeper into the problem. It is not - as might be suspected at this point - that the guilt of a mother theme cannot be handled in poetic drama. Eliot insists that it can; for viewed as a theme, it is essentially the same as the pride theme or the infatuation theme or the suspicion theme so beautifully manipulated by Shakespeare upon other occasions. Proceeding, he compares Hamlet with the sonnets, suggesting that both contain "stuff" that Shakespeare could not, or, at least, did not, transform into art. By virtue of an implied apposition, the "stuff" is identified as some kind of feeling; and this feeling, Eliot warns, is difficult to "localize". This feeling is not discernible in the speeches or in the action or in the quotations. This feeling is communicated to the careful experiencer by virtue of the "tone" of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The important thing to note is that this "tone" is different from the tone audible in any of the earlier plays above indicated. Juxtapose this observation with another, equally important, and an extremely significant inference is possible. The other observation is the fact that a study of Shakespeare's

Hamlet proves the originality and the difference of Shakespeare's versification. When it is remembered that neither the action nor the speeches nor the quotations of Shakespeare's Hamlet are very original, and when it is realized that the "tone" of his play is different, and when attention is drawn to the fact that the only original element in Shakespeare's Hamlet is the versification, it becomes interestingly obvious, that the difference in "tone" must be an effect of the difference in versification. At this juncture, it is well to make a review-like recapitulation of the material that has been derived thus far. Shakespeare's Hamlet has been compared with its possible sources and it has been analysed in the light emanating from this comparison and from analysis of these possible sources. The essential emotion of the possible sources is revenge. The essential emotion of Shakespeare's Hamlet is what has been called the "guilt of a mother" complex. It must be allowed that these emotions are hardly one and the same emotion. However, it has been also shown that the actions and the speeches and the quotations of both the sources and of Shakespeare's Hamlet have, indeed, a very great deal in common. Further analysis and comparison have shown that Shakespeare's versification is different, it is the one differing intrinsic device. Experience of the works in question, that is artistic experience of the works in question, has uncovered the fact

that Shakespeare's Hamlet is different in "tone" from the possible sources and this difference has been attributed to the difference of versification. "Tone" was shown to be feeling. However, feeling is not emotion. Consequently, Shakespeare cannot be credited with successful artistic communication of the "guilt of a mother" emotion because he succeeded in communicating a new and different tone or feeling - new and different from the tone or feeling communicated by the possible sources, when the possible sources were works of art. Of course, the tones and feelings of works of art, poetic dramas, "dealing with" different emotions should be different. The fact the Shakespeare's Hamlet differs in this respect is certainly not why Eliot has branded this work a failure. Eliot would agree that the tone difference is the respect in which Shakespeare was artistically successful. Where Shakespeare failed - in Eliot's eyes - was in artistically communicating the essential emotion, the "guilt of a mother" complex. It might be objected that Shakespeare was not trying to communicate any such thing. It might be insisted that Shakespeare was after all really dealing with the revenge emotion. Of course, as is obvious, such objectors, at least, agree with Eliot in his condemnation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, though they would differ from Eliot when mustering reasons for their evaluation. They would, perforce, argue that Shakespeare failed artistically,

inasmuch as his versification was wrong, the tone, the feeling which it communicated being inappropriate. Nor is all of this a series of conclusions based upon the assumption that the possible sources that were also works of art were artistically right and could consequently serve as an infallible criterion. This approach, incidentally, would be a valid one provided that the criterion was validated by analysis - however, this was not the criterion utilized by Eliot. His experience of Shakespeare's Hamlet, viewed as a work of art, and viewed as no other thing, convinced him that there was a dichotomy between the apparent revenge emotion as theme and the quality of the tone or feeling which the versification communicated to his "auditory imagination". In other words, the impression communicated by the function of the syllable sound and the rhythmic quality of the words - in the "Hamlet" essay, the versification - was not verified by the fuller knowledge communicated by the connotation of the words. In point of fact, the impression was far rather contradicted by the connotation of words; it might be loosely said that the "guilt of a mother" emotion was contradicted by the revenge emotion. This, and no other less intrinsic element, is Eliot's justification and explanation for his judgment of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Incidentally, the vast amount of controversial criticism that has been written concerning this

play tends to bolster rather than undermine Eliot's conclusions. Eliot has said in "The Function of Criticism" essay that the chief tools of criticism are analysis and comparison. It is certainly worth the trouble to notice, in passing, how effectively he utilizes these tools in the essay presently being discussed.

The eighth paragraph begins with the description-like definition of the "objective correlative" quoted at the very beginning of this chapter. Further on, Eliot states, without the slightest tinge of equivocation, precisely what deficiency in Shakespeare's Hamlet accounts for his terming the play an artistic failure. It is the inadequacy of the "objective correlative". In presenting his view, Eliot introduces what he calls artistic "inevitability". The first thing noticed is the quotation marks around the word inevitability. The contiguous preceding phrases exemplify what Eliot means by this concept. Artistic "inevitability" is achieved when the series of sensory impressions selected by the author is completely adequate to communicate the state of mind which he is endeavouring to communicate. Artistic "inevitability" is the equivalence of external facts and particular emotion. Eliot applies all of this to Shakespeare's Hamlet as follows:

Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear. And the supposed identity of

Hamlet with his author is genuine to this point: that Hamlet's bafflement at the absence of objective equivalent to his feelings is a prolongation of the bafflement of his creator in the face of his artistic problem. Hamlet is up against the difficulty that his disgust is occasioned by his mother, but that his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it; his disgust envelops and exceeds her. It is thus a feeling which he cannot understand; he cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action. . . None of the possible actions can satisfy it; and nothing that Shakespeare can do with the plot can express Hamlet for him. And it must be noticed that the very nature of the données of the problem precludes objective equivalence. To have heightened the criminality of Gertrude would have been to provide the formula for a totally different emotion in Hamlet; it is just because her character is so negative and insignificant that she arouses in Hamlet the feeling which she is incapable of representing.<sup>1</sup>

This long quotation has been included for an ulterior motive, that is, so as to afford continuity in the shortest way possible. This is assuredly not the place to discuss Hamlet, or even Eliot's views on Hamlet, except in so far as they reveal something of the nature of the "objective correlative". Eliot's reasoning, however, is interesting, and it sets off echoes of John Masefield. The problem seems to arise from the fact that Shakespeare wanted to deal with the "guilt of a mother" emotion. Now, in order to communicate this emotion, he had to discover or invent a suitable "objective correlative". He hit upon the Hamlet story. However, the Hamlet story, viewed as an "objective correlative" was the formula for the revenge emotion. The versification which Shakespeare employed succeeded in

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1. Ibid., pp. 145-146.

communicating an impression which was correct inasmuch as it was in accord with his artistic intentions. Consequently, the feelings communicated by the function of the "auditory imagination" were not happily married with the emotion which the "objective correlative" was communicating. And according to Eliot, the facts of the plot did not lend themselves to the necessary changes - what changes were possible tended towards the communication of some emotion entirely different from either the revenge emotion or the "guilt of a mother" emotion. The critical conclusion seems to be that, given Shakespeare's artistic intention, the Hamlet story was not and could not have been made into an adequate "objective correlative". Thus, the role of the "objective correlative" in artistic creation is revealed and, in addition, an important critical principle is implied. What is implied is the truth that the mere presence of an "objective correlative" does not guarantee the artistic success of a work. An "objective correlative" can be inadequate or it can be wrong. An "objective correlative" is inadequate when an author has failed to make alterations in it that could have been made, alterations which would have fit it better to the emotion in question. An "objective correlative" is wrong when no possible alterations made by the author would have made it fit the emotion in question. There is a third possibility, that no

"objective correlative" is present at all. In such cases the poet is tending towards the condition of music. Such work is, strictly speaking, not poetry at all. Incidentally, the connotation of words makes it extremely difficult to make a poem that has no "objective correlative" of any kind. Of course, Swinburne comes into mind whenever such a question is approached. And when Swinburne comes into the mind of a writer dealing with a poetic problem - other than the problem of the music of poetry - he knows that he is in danger of going off on a tangent. However, before proceeding to the next paragraph, it must be made quite explicit that the following sentence has not been overlooked: "It is thus a feeling which he [Hamlet] cannot understand; he [Hamlet] cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action". It is fully appreciated that the ardent defender of the artistic impeccability of Shakespeare may move for a new trial on the basis of this evidence and that such request might well be granted. Nevertheless, since Shakespeare's artistic impeccability is not on trial, and since, even if it were, Eliot the prosecutor should probably be able to prove him guilty in spite of this compromising sentence, the new trial would cast no new light on the nature or the function of the "objective correlative", the topic of the present chapter and, therefore, it can have no place here.

In the ninth and last paragraph, Eliot plays about with Hamlet's madness. While much of what he has to say there is anti-climatic when viewed from the standpoint of this chapter, there are a couple of relevant elements. For example, what the precise particular emotion that Shakespeare wanted to express may have been. Naturally, this cannot be known clearly. The function of the "auditory imagination" - above merely sketched - may have succeeded in conveying an impression of it. Eliot's hypothesis argues that it is the function of the "objective correlative" to communicate the particular emotion. If the "objective correlative" was wrong, it follows that the particular emotion was not communicated. Logically, of course, Eliot cannot be certain that the "guilt of a mother" emotion was the one with which Shakespeare was dealing. Obviously not, for he himself has said that the impression conveyed by the function of the "auditory imagination" can be verified by the fuller knowledge conveyed by the function of the "objective correlative". The very fact that the fuller knowledge conveyed by the function of the "objective correlative" failed to verify the impression conveyed by the function of the "auditory imagination" verifies Eliot's condemnation of Shakespeare's Hamlet as an artistic failure; and this, whether or not, the impression conveyed was valid or invalid. It should be noted that not only does the

fuller knowledge verify the impression, but in verifying the impression it verifies itself. When this mutual verification is present, the work in question is an artistic success. When this mutual verification is absent, the work in question is an artistic failure. When a work is an artistic failure, it cannot always be established with certainty whether it was the "auditory imagination" or the "objective correlative" that was at fault. Both may have been at fault or only one. Absolutely speaking - and the critic can, seldom, though sometimes, speak absolutely when speaking of a particular work, unless the particular work be his own - an artistic work that is a failure is always a failure because one or the other or both the "objective correlative" and/or the music of poetry happened to be inadequate or wrong. The criterion of this inadequacy or wrongness is what the artist wanted, or thought he wanted to do - something which the experiencer cannot know if the work which the artist made was a failure. (Remember that part of what the artist wants to do has to do with feelings that cannot be intellectually grasped; therefore, even the artist cannot know intellectually precisely what it is that he wants to make or, even, has succeeded in making. Consequently, it must be understood that a work of art can never be completely known intellectually; it is an intellectual-sensuous form and requires sense knowledge as

well as intellectual knowledge to constitute a real cognitive experience of it.)

Another question which Eliot raises in this paragraph is why Shakespeare wanted to do whatever it was that he wanted to do. Once again, of course, a question is raised which cannot be answered and Eliot says so. The interesting thing is that he says that we should need "a great many facts in his biography" in order to even attempt an answer. Now, a very great deal has been said concerning "depersonalization", or the "impersonal", and the poetry of T.S. Eliot, and a very great misunderstanding is current and traceable to much of what has been said concerning these misrepresented and mis-applied concepts. It must suffice here to suggest, after the manner of a helpful hint, that these concepts have to do with the name and nature and function of the "objective correlative" most properly. They do not imply - and they have been interpreted as implying - that Eliot's poetry is something completely apart from and independent of, anything at all, that might, in any way be connected, however remotely, with the personal life of Eliot. Such is nonsense and even this passing reference made by Eliot to Shakespeare's biography shows it up for what it is. More, much more, has been said elsewhere in this thesis concerning the problem of "depersonalization" and the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot.

The "Hamlet" essay has been analysed paragraph by paragraph. A number of problems relevant to the nature and function of the "objective correlative" have been introduced and sometimes briefly discussed. It has been shown that in Eliot's critical view Shakespeare's Hamlet is a failure because the "objective correlative" is wrong. Before proceeding to a more penetrating analysis of the "objective correlative" per se, and thence to the consideration of a few relevant concepts, however, there is one statement, already uncovered, which requires further exposition. Enough has now been said to have provided sufficient knowledge so that what had previously appeared an interesting paradox can now be resolved. Here is the statement as formulated above: A work is not art because it is "interesting" - a work is interesting because it is art.

To strike directly at the heart of the matter is to strike directly at the word art. What does Mr. Eliot signify by the word art in this place? Obviously, art does not here simply mean man-made, for certainly Hamlet is as much man-made as is Coriolanus which Eliot calls more artistic. The word art seems to imply successful, the successful execution of something, the successful achievement of some object, or of some effect. Shakespeare's Hamlet is not in Eliot's view successful, as has been shown above, and this, because the "objective correlative" is wrong. The "objective correlative"

and the "auditory imagination" functioned unharmoniously together. Coriolanus and Antony and Cleopatra were more successful presumably, at least in part, because the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" functioned harmoniously together. Therefore, the set of objects, the situation, the chain of events, utilized by Shakespeare in the making of his Hamlet was somehow inferior to its counterpart in Coriolanus. Eliot recognizes the truth of the fact that the story - as here utilized, a less technical synonym for the "objective correlative" - of Hamlet was more interesting than its counterpart in Coriolanus. The non-technical word story is valuable here because its connotation, its common ordinary connotation, achieves the desired point. The experiencer who terms Hamlet more interesting than Coriolanus does so by viewing each as a simple story, the one is a more interesting story than the other. However, to judge an "objective correlative" as if it were a story is to neglect the essence of an "objective correlative", which is to be the formula for some particular emotion, the particular emotion which the poet is endeavouring to express in the form of art. Therefore, "objective correlatives" have two properties, the first is the expression of a particular emotion and the second is to tell a story. In art the first property is the essential one, the second is the accidental one. The paradox is

resolved and the solution has rendered quite palpable a heretofore neglected aspect of the "objective correlative" and it has relegated this story-telling aspect into its proper place, a quite subordinate, accidental place. A restatement of the paradox, in paraphrase shall make unmistakably clear all that has been said: An "objective correlative" is not successful because it is an interesting story, an "objective correlative" is interesting because it has successfully expressed some particular emotion. This would seem to end the affair except to make explicit what has been implied all through the discussion of this so-called paradox and that is the implication that it is the job of poetry - poetic-drama in the example - to express emotion. Such is certainly implied and such an implication is certainly interesting, revealing and especially provocative within this context. And now, with the circumstances surrounding the description-like definition of the "objective correlative" examined, and with a few random inferences made and evaluated, the stage is set for the second part of this chapter, which shall consist of a penetrating analysis of the "objective correlative" per se.

#### Intrinsically Viewed

If Mr. Eliot's description-like definition of the "objective correlative" be read over several times, what

Robert Wooster Stallman, in his sometimes interesting book, The Critic's Notebook has termed "the threefold aspects of the concept" becomes obviously evident. Stallman's recapitulation is worth quoting:

Three aspects of the work of art are predicated in the concept of the "objective correlative": the poem in relation to the poet (the creative process); the poem as a thing in itself (the work of art as an objectified autonomous creation); and the poem in relation to the critic or reader (poetic appreciation).<sup>1</sup>

There is, perhaps, no fact quite so imperative to the student of Eliot who wishes to grasp the comprehension of the idea of the "objective correlative" than this one. Any reference to this concept, whether in the writings of Eliot himself or in the writings of Eliot critics, must always be evaluated or understood in the light of one of these three aspects. The scholar who has interested himself with the concepts of scape and inscape in the thought of Gerard Manley Hopkins will be familiar with such manipulation for precisely the same tripartite situation applies there. Small doubt can be entertained that difficulties engulfing an appreciation of such concepts - and the concept of Eliot's "auditory imagination" is of the same kind - spring from, or, at least, are complicated by this fact. Neither Eliot himself, nor Eliot critics, will be explicit concerning which aspect of the work of art is being considered. Usually, however, the

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1. Robert Wooster Stallman, The Critic's Notebook, p. 120.

context will imply its author's particular preoccupation - though this preoccupation may alter from paragraph to paragraph and sometimes even within the same paragraph.

In the creative process, the "objective correlative" is at the beginning an unknown. Some particular emotion is present within the poet, some particular emotion which he wishes to express. In order to do so, according to Eliot's theory, he, that is the poet, must discover some "objective correlative", some set of objects, some situation, some chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion.

In the work of art viewed as an objectified autonomous creation, the "objective correlative" is the set of objects, the situation, the chain of events which is the formula for some particular emotion. The "objective correlative" in the work of art is what the words, viewed as signs, say. It is the picture painted by the connotation of words. It is not the particular emotion per se. It is the formula for the particular emotion. It is often described as the story that a poem or a poetic drama tells. While this is true, the converse is not necessarily true, a story is not always an "objective correlative"; that is to say, a story is not always the formula for some particular emotion and this is the essence of an "objective correlative".

In poetic appreciation, the "objective correlative" is a given factor, either at once or, at least, as soon as the connotation of the words of which the poem is composed succeeds in signifying the set of objects, the situation, the chain of events which is the formula for the particular emotion to the experiencer. According to Eliot's theory, as soon as the "objective correlative" is experienced the particular emotion is immediately evoked. The "objective correlative" is not the particular emotion evoked, it is far rather that which evokes the particular emotion. And that which evokes the particular emotion is knowledge. The "objective correlative", within the experiencer, is a phantasm from which the intellect can abstract an idea. The idea is the mind's grasp of the essence of the particular emotion. Therefore, there is a sense in which Eliot's assertion that the "objective correlative" must "terminate in sensory experience" - the phantasm - is true. (However, something more is said concerning this point in the chapter dealing with the "auditory imagination".) Admittedly, there is an apparent implication, at once, too simple and far too automatic, inherent in both Eliot's description-like definition and in the present elucidation of the "objective correlative" viewed as an aspect of poetic appreciation. It seems to be implied

that as soon as the "objective correlative" is perceived by any experiencer, the particular emotion is evoked and this, of course, is apparently contrary to fact. In so far as any experiencer is implied, the implication seems invalid, unless it be understood that by experiencer is meant, one who has what it takes to experience an "objective correlative" as an "objective correlative" and not only as a story. Such ability is a virtue and, therefore, a habit, acquired as the result of a great deal of reading of poetry. In other words, to discuss poetic appreciation, the existence of able appreciators is simply assumed, and no implication concerning their actual frequency is intended. Incidentally, it should be made quite clear that an experiencer has experienced an "objective correlative" as an "objective correlative" only when it is two things to him: first, a formula for a particular emotion; second, a story or a picture; and the experiencer of an "objective correlative" as an "objective correlative" today may be only the appreciator of the story of an equally good "objective correlative" tomorrow, even when the two poems in question have been made by the same poet. In order to experience any poem, the experience of poetry is necessary; in order to experience many and diverse poems, the experience of life is also necessary.

If Mr. Eliot's description-like definition be analysed, it is found to be composed of three elements. These elements are separated one from another by means of semi-colons, and these elements correspond respectively with the three aspects of the concept above presented. Consequently, the first element, "the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'", pertains most particularly to the poet; the second element, "in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion", pertains most particularly to the poem; and the third element, "such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked", pertains most particularly to the experiencer of the poem. Notice that it is asserted that each of these elements corresponds most particularly - it is not asserted that each corresponds exclusively - to the poet or to the poem or to the experiencer of the poem. Each element contains a most essential word: the first, expressing; the second, formula; and the third, evoked. And each essential word is related intimately with emotion: expressing emotion, formula of that particular emotion and the emotion is immediately evoked. Now, since, emotions are "movements of the sensory appetites, following upon conscious recognition of some stimulus, and characterized by definite

modifications in the regulated activities of the body",<sup>1</sup> the dimension and peculiar nature of the function of the "objective correlative", and this in its various aspects, begins, at least, in a vague way, to emerge. However, this vague way must be rendered less vague, and the place to begin is with the creative process.

In the creative process, Eliot insists, the poet wishes to express emotion. Notice that the first element of Eliot's description-like definition of the "objective correlative" in no wise commits him to the position of asserting that the poet wishes to communicate emotion. To express and to communicate are far from being or even implying precisely the same thing. In the former instance, for example, the poet is not at all concerned with experiencers; in the latter, the poet must be concerned with, at least, a single experiencer. This is a significant distinction in view of the coeval problem and preoccupation with what is sometimes termed, "difficult poetry". Of course, poetry can be difficult for a great variety of reasons, only one of which is pertinent in the present context, and that is poetry which is difficult because its "objective correlative" is difficult. However, "objective correlatives" themselves can be difficult for almost an equally great variety of reasons. Therefore, it becomes

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1. Robert Edward Brenman, General Psychology, p. 264.

obviously clear that the poet who wishes to communicate an emotion must select his "objective correlative" from far fewer possible correlatives than the poet who wishes only to express an emotion. In other words, the poet who wishes only to express an emotion has a much better chance of discovering the most nearly perfect correlative, since his choice is not restricted by any extrinsic motives. (That there is one perfect "objective correlative" for a given emotion is an ideal. It is an ideal towards which all poets strive and it is an ideal which Eliot has not overlooked. Other factors being granted, it is one of the essential notes of the comprehension of Eliot's idea of a classic.) In order for a poet to express an emotion, he must experience the emotion or he must have experienced the emotion sometime in the past. No poet can find an "objective correlative" for an emotion that he has never experienced. At least, no poet can consciously do so. When a poet decides upon an "objective correlative" he makes a judgment, he affirms it as adequate for the particular emotion in question. Therefore, the two things which he compares - and judgment is a comparison of two things - are the emotion in question and the possible "objective correlative". On the contrary, however, it matters very little, if at all, whether or not the set of objects, the situation, the chain of events, which the poet chooses as

his "objective correlative" has been personally experienced by himself. For example, it cannot be thought that Shakespeare had actually murdered a king out of ambition nurtured by an overly ambitious wife any more than that he had murdered another king for the love of his queen or for his own ambition. Macbeth was not a more successful play than Hamlet because Shakespeare had personally experienced the chain of events of the former more than the chain of events of the latter. Some sets of objects, some chains of events, some situations are - so to speak - emotionally negative. Others are emotionally positive. The poet's task is to find among the emotionally positive "objective correlatives" the one which is most nearly charged with the particular emotion which he wishes to express. A tripartite distinction is here implied among that which a poet knows, that which a poet lives and that which a poet is moved by. The three labels here utilized are quite arbitrary, but the three "states of mind" are quite real. By that which a poet knows is meant all those sets of objects, et cetera with which the poet is related after the manner of cognition and with which he associates no emotional value. By that which a poet lives is meant all those sets of objects, et cetera in which the man who is also a poet has participated and by which he has been emotionally aroused. By that which the poet is moved by is meant all

those sets of objects, et cetera, in which the man who is also a poet has not participated, but with which he is related after the manner of cognition and with which he associates an emotional value. The first category is not a source of "objective correlatives"; the second and third categories are. Incidentally, the phrase, emotionally positive "objective correlatives" is not redundant, because there is such a thing as an emotionally negative "objective correlative". Thus, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which is the formula for no emotion is the formula for no emotion. If the poet wishes to express a lack of emotion, he must find just such an "objective correlative" and such a correlative is especially hard to find and almost impossible to find for any poet interested in communicating rather than only expressing a lack of emotion. The proof of the pudding - and a revealing proof it is - is the fact that an "objective correlative" for no emotion cannot come from the first of the three categories above distinguished. It must be realized that there are many kinds of no emotion and there are many lacks of emotion. Therefore, there are many "objective correlatives" for these "emotions" and no one all-purpose "objective correlative" for the various absences of emotion possible. This problem of the absence of emotion is perhaps a peculiarly twentieth century problem for poets. Eliot - and this is not to imply

that he is a poet of an age and not, at least, potentially a poet of all ages - is therefore somewhat preoccupied with it. While the problem is only incidental in this place, it should be pointed out that absence of emotion can be either negative or privative. It is negative when it is the mere absence of some kind of emotion. It is privative when it is the absence of some kind of emotion which ought to be present. If there were such a thing as the absolute absence of emotion - strictly speaking, the privative absolute absence of emotion - "objective correlatives" for that condition might be found in Eliot's "The Waste Land".

When the work of art per se is approached, the first thing that must be made quite clear is the fact that a poem is more than an "objective correlative". In The Spirit of Romance, published in 1910, Ezra Pound said that poetry is "a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions"<sup>1</sup>. This is not the place to enter into anything like an evaluation of even a single theory of Pound's. It, however, will advance the present purpose to accept this quotation at face value and apart from its local and its panoramic contexts. As it stands, it seems to imply that a poem is an equation for a human emotion, and such, with one qualification, may

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Wooster Stallman, The Critic's Notebook, p. 127.

be allowed. The qualification is that a poem is in part an equation for a human emotion. It is, in other words, that a poem is more than an equation for a human emotion. In still other words, it is that an equation for a human emotion is only one part of a poem. Eliot's "objective correlative" is an equation - strictly speaking, it is one term of an equation, the whole equation being: human emotion, x<sup>2</sup> equals "objective correlative", xx. Eliot's "objective correlative" is the formula of a particular emotion just as H<sub>2</sub>O is the formula of water. H<sub>2</sub>O is not water, it is the chemical symbol for water. Similarly, an "objective correlative" in a poem is not the emotion within the poet, it is the emotion within the poet expressed symbolically, It is no more or less the emotion within the poet than H<sub>2</sub>O is water. And this is true, even though, there is a sense in which it can be said that the "objective correlative" - perhaps, however, only when it is viewed as part of a whole poem - may serve as a mirror in which the poet sees the emotion clearly for the first time. Consequently, an "objective correlative" in a poem is a formula for a particular emotion and like a formula in chemistry or anywhere else, it possesses a peculiar kind of appeal for the intellect. It is the source of the fuller knowledge which Eliot speaks of in his "Dante" essay and which shall be more particularly analysed in the following chapter.

An "objective correlative" in a poem is a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events presented by virtue of the connotation of words. "Objective correlatives" are not peculiar to poetry. They are utilized by all artists as the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art. An "objective correlative" may be a set of objects, or a situation or a chain of events provided that each is the formula for a particular emotion. These kinds of "objective correlatives" are not the same though they are sometimes very near together. The effort to distinguish among them is made in order to render more palpable the nature of an "objective correlative" as it appears in a poem. In the "Windhover" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, a set of objects serves as the "objective correlative": a bird is presented in flight and in glide, a plow plowing and embers falling and galling themselves are precisely pictured. In "My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning, a situation serves as the "objective correlative": the Duke conversing with a messenger sent by an unidentified Count concerning the arrangement of a marriage between said Duke and the Count's daughter. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge a chain of events serves as the "objective correlative": an ancient mariner tells a wedding guest of his last voyage, how his ship sailed southward, how it was

driven by a storm to the south pole, how an Albatross appeared, how he killed the Albatross, et cetera. These examples are, of course, merely the sketchiest of indications of the kinds of "objective correlatives". However, they demonstrate quite adequately - for anyone who is familiar with the poems in question - that the "objective correlative" is not the whole poem. They also tend to show that a given poem may actually include more than one "objective correlative"; and what is even less obvious, they tend to show that one poem may appear - from different points of view - to possess one or more than one "objective correlative". Eliot has not rendered these facts explicit though they are, of course, implicit in his description-like definition. For example, a number of separate situations may be linked together to form a chain of events. The chain of events may be an "objective correlative" for some particular emotion. Yet each situation may be an "objective correlative" for some different particular emotion. Conceivably, a poet may desire - especially in a long poem - to express a number of particular emotions as well as one particular emotion. He may even express the many in order to more effectively express the one. Alfred Lord Tennyson's "In memoriam" might be cited as an instance of this complex design. Another example, of the same design, might be Eliot's own "The Waste Land". Obviously, the inherent danger in such

a practice - and it has been more than once urged against both of these poems - is the violation of the unity of the work of art in question. In other words, that the work in question is in fact, and at best, not one poem, but a number of poems collected beneath one title, in the manner of a sonnet sequence. Often, the impression communicated by the "auditory imagination" will serve as a criterion whereby "objective correlatives" are set in their proper places. Often too, the confusion is only apparent initially and as more and more of the work is experienced it seems to fade away of its own accord. Nevertheless, the fact remains that within a given poem there may be found what might be regarded either as one complex "objective correlative" or a number of simple "objective correlatives" and consequently one particular emotion or a number of particular emotions may have been expressed by the poet and may be evoked in the experiencer of the poem. When a number of "objective correlatives" are found in a poem, its unity demands that the emotions thereby expressed be related and, in the greatest of such poems, that ultimately one particular emotion dominates all others.

In poetic appreciation, the "objective correlative" is the thing which the experiencer comes to know. The experiencer comes to know a set of objects, a situation, or a chain of events. The connotation of the words of which

the poem was made were signs of these things. There is a sense in which it might be said that the maker of the poem communicated the "objective correlative" to the experiencer of the poem by virtue of the connotation of the words. Such is the proper, non-poetic function of words. To say that the "objective correlative" was communicated is not to say that the particular emotion was communicated for it was not. According to the third element of Eliot's description-like definition of the "objective correlative", the emotion was evoked when the "objective correlative" was known by the experiencer. However, this is not precisely correct. The emotion is evoked only when the experiencer recognizes an "objective correlative" as an "objective correlative". Simple knowledge of a set of objects, or a situation, or a chain of events is far from the sufficient cause of the production of a particular emotion within the experiencer. If it were, then, no one who is capable of reading a language could fail to have the particular emotion evoked within himself, the particular emotion of which the "objective correlative" is the formula, as soon as he perceived the set of objects, the situation, the chain of events utilized by the author. In other words, an "objective correlative" that is an "objective correlative" could not fail to evoke an emotion in any rational perceiver. And experience proves that such a conclusion is false for often the same poem will

evoke an emotion in one perceiver and fail to evoke anything in another perceiver. If to evoke means to call forth, then it is obvious that Eliot's third element assumes that the experiencer has what it takes to have the particular emotion of which the "objective correlative" is the formula immediately evoked within said experiencer. An assumption such as this one either conveys magical powers to the "objective correlative" which it does not possess, or it ignores the fact that all of the potential rational perceivers are not capable of having innumerable particular emotions summoned up within themselves. However, in pursuing the implications of the word evoke to their logical conclusions no disparagement of Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" is intended. On the contrary, the real virtue of his concept is brought to light and that is the fact that poetry does not communicate emotion from the author to the experiencer by the instrumentality of the poem. An "objective correlative" is not a cargo vessel, whose main hole is loaded with an emotion by the author and unloaded by the experiencer - such a view while superficially intelligible falls to pieces beneath the pressure of analysis. The matter is far from that simple. What is suggested is that the third element of Eliot's description-like definition have the words, "in anyone capable of such emotion" appended to it. By this device no violence is done to the essence

of this third element, and a possible objection to it is removed. Most important of all is the fact that such an appendage is certainly justified by many relevant comments in other parts of Eliot's prose-criticism.

Another phrase in this third element that requires some comment is "the external facts". At first sight, external facts seems to imply internal facts from which the external facts are being differentiated. Certainly, there is an internal and an external extension to the thought of Eliot. However, the implied internal refers to the emotion within the poet in its most proper reference and even perhaps in a secondary sense to the emotion within the experiencer. It does not refer to emotion within the poem and this for the very good reason that there is no emotion within the poem. That the external facts is being related to the emotion is brought out by a clause included in the same paragraph with the description-like definition, "the artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion".<sup>1</sup> The external facts, then, is the set of objects, or the situation, or the chain of events, that is, the "objective correlative" which is the formula for the particular emotion in question. In the experiencer of a poem the external facts manifest themselves in the phantasm produced as a consequence of the perception of the data presented by the connotation of the words of which the

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 145.

poem is made. The nature of this sense knowledge is such that the intellect is able to abstract an idea from it. Such knowledge on each level, the sense level and the intellectual level, is the fuller knowledge of which Eliot speaks in his "Dante" essay. Fuller knowledge implies less full knowledge and the less full knowledge implied shall be discussed in its proper place which is the next chapter, where Eliot's concept of the "auditory imagination" shall be analysed. There remains one further qualification in this third element and that is, that the external facts "must terminate in sensory experience". The elucidation of this qualification requires the introduction of material more proper to the next chapter, and so shall be treated there.

#### Other Considerations

Now that Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" has been analysed, a semi-extrinsic consideration or two concerning it shall be in order. This concept suggests a possible solution to an age old problem of criticism. Two experiencers approach the same poem. They expend whatever time and effort the poem seems to require. Each has a different particular emotion "evoked" within himself in addition to the aesthetic emotion. (The concept of aesthetic emotion, what Eliot would term significant emotion, is assumed for the moment to be different from the

particular emotion. This assumption shall be analysed and validated in the following chapter.) An additional fact hypothetically assumed here is that the particular emotion evoked within one of the experiencers is the same as that which in part provoked the poet to make the poem in the first instance. The problem is to explain how the second experiencer could have experienced the significant emotion, an aesthetic pleasure, without having had the right particular emotion evoked within himself. As was demonstrated in the first chapter, aesthetic pleasure can be sub-divided into creative pleasure and the pleasure of appreciation.

Essentially these pleasures are identical though they are produced differently. In a sense, one, the creative pleasure, is in part an effect of discovering the right "objective correlative" for some particular emotion; the second, the pleasure of appreciation, is in part an effect of having the right particular emotion evoked by the "objective correlative". Even though this distinction is stated loosely, so that it will serve the present purpose, its mere statement points to the solution of the problem. The second experiencer is in fact no experiencer at all. He is a creator. He has not had an emotion evoked in him by the "objective correlative"; he has instead recognized the presented external facts as an "objective correlative" for some particular emotion already stirring within himself,

evoked perhaps by some clash of his own with reality. Naturally, of course, this situation is made possible by the fact that a perfect "objective correlative", like a perfect poem or the perfect syllable sound and rhythmic quality of words, is an ideal, something constantly striven after, something constantly fallen short of - except, perhaps, when a "classic", in Eliot's special sense of the term, has been achieved. It must be pointed out that the above discussion is only a logical one in so far as it takes into account only the "objective correlative". In reality, other principles of poetry would come to attention so that if the second experiencer was also a critic, he would soon become aware of what he was doing; for example, by noting the dichotomy between the particular emotion within himself and the impression conveyed by the syllable sound and rhythmic quality of the words of which the poem in question was composed. Perhaps he would be able to re-approach the work freed of the emotion which was his own and have the "objective correlative" evoke the particular emotion which the author had initially wanted to express. If such actually occurred the experiencer-critic would be able to compare the adequacy of the one "objective correlative" to the two particular emotions which he had associated with it. On the basis of such a comparison judgment could be pronounced and worthwhile criticism

written.

Another semi-extrinsic consideration is the source of "objective correlatives". All that has been said thus far concerning the nature of this concept implies quite clearly that the source of "objective correlatives" is actually limited by the experience of the poet and potentially limited only by the poet's ability to know. The basis of this apparently over-reaching statement is the premise that anything knowable, any set of objects, any situation, any chain of events, et cetera is, at least, potentially a formula for some particular emotion. (For aesthetic purposes a particular emotion is very near synonymous with the far more often employed reaction of a man to reality. The reaction of a man to reality is always what a maker of works of art wishes to express and this whether or not psychologists have been able or shall be able to classify such reactions.) An interesting speculation suggests itself. Poetry could be classified on the basis of the sources of its "objective correlatives". For example, the poets traditionally known as Romantics, most of the time, found their "objective correlatives" in nature. The poets known traditionally as the Metaphysicals fetched farther for their formulae often, for example, going as far as curious facts culled from the physical sciences. More recently, there is a trend developed, in accordance with which poets

select their "objective correlatives" from their immediate and daily environments - though some of these same poets will upon occasion travel centuries back into the history and among the monuments of literatures, both their own and foreign, for a required "objective correlative". Incidentally, all of this seems to suggest that there is such a thing as the naturalness of "objective correlatives". Experience and tradition argues the obviousness of this suggestion. Through the centuries certain objects have been so often associated with certain particular emotions that they have become inseparable. Paradoxically, the naturalness of "objective correlatives" does not ensure their adequacy and actually detracts from their effectiveness and from their freshness. Consequently, there is really no such thing as an artificial "objective correlative". There are, in the final analysis, only good old "objective correlatives" and better new "objective correlatives"; and part of the complex task of the poet is perennially to find the best and newest "objective correlatives" for the ancient and modern particular emotions possible to human nature at the present time.

Another consideration, this one completely extrinsic, yet of cardinal importance, is the fact that the concept of the "objective correlative" is not a poetic device original with T.S. Eliot. The exact wording, the nuances, the degree

of development are peculiar to Eliot, but the general concept is essential to poetry and consequently existed as long as there was such an art as the art of poetry.

Mr. Eliot did not even forge the term "objective correlative" himself - he stole it. Washington Allston in his Lectures on Art, edited by R.H. Dana, and copyrighted in 1850 by Baker and Scribner, employs this term in the following quotation:

So, too, is the external world to the mind; which needs, also, as the condition of its manifestation, its objective correlative. Hence the pressure of some outward object, predetermined to correspond to the preexisting idea in its living power, is essential to the evolution of its proper end, - the pleasurable emotion.<sup>1</sup>

These sentences from Allston's Lectures on Art have been introduced in order to give, at least, one concrete example of the fact that the term, "objective correlative" was used and that the manner in which it was used was analogous to Eliot's usage long before he actually employed it. There is absolutely no implication of a debt on the part of Eliot to Allston intended by this inclusion for the present thesis is in no way committed to the tracing of possible sources of Eliot's aesthetic-poetics, but only to a critical presentation of the principles of his aesthetic-poetics. However, there are two interesting differences included in this quotation that should be, at least, pointed out. The

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Wooster Stallman, op. cit., p. 116. *Italics mine.*

first is the fact that idea corresponds to particular emotion; consequently, the "objective correlative" is the formula for an idea rather than for a particular emotion. Perhaps not a very significant difference in view of the tremendous amount of attention that psychology and psychiatry have directed towards distinctions among such things as a man's reaction to reality, particular emotions, and ideas in the intervening century. (Incidentally, the person interested in aesthetics and poetics must acquire a bipartite habit. He must learn to define any terms he utilizes when writing or speaking slavishly and precisely; while at the same time, he must learn to be something of a latitudenarian when approaching undefined or poorly described terms utilized by poets or critics writing about aesthetics or poetics especially when such writers are pre-twentieth century. In advocating such a sympathetic approach neither naiveté nor gullibility is comforted. On the contrary, reflection will prove that the mark is as widely missed by the critic who approaches such matters with pre-conceived meanings for words and forces such meanings upon words encountered indiscriminately as the critic who has no aesthetic-poetics of his own. Each is doomed to fail and, worse still, each is destined to spread confusion and make even more occult the already sufficiently occult.) The second is the fact that the pleasurable emotion is spoken of

in close conjunction with the concept of the "objective correlative". Such juxtaposition is significant, significantly dangerous, especially in view of the fact that the antecedent of the last its is ambiguous. The pleasurable emotion probably connotes the significant emotion, aesthetic pleasure, and if so is not - in Eliot's thought or in what has been presented as the critique in the first chapter - the proper end of the function of the "objective correlative". The proper end of the functioning of the "objective correlative" is far rather the expression of particular emotion or in Allston's terms, the expression of the idea. The pleasurable emotion meanwhile is the proper end of the whole poem and as was pointed out above the poem and the "objective correlative" are not the same thing, the latter being only an essential element of the former.

The present chapter has attempted as complete and as penetrating an analysis of Mr. Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" as was possible within the limits allowed by the scope of this thesis. A few problems were encountered whose solutions depend upon matter more proper to the following chapter, Chapter Five, "Mr. Eliot's 'Auditory Imagination'". In each instance, the reader's attention was drawn to this fact. As a result, there is a

necessary interdependence which exists between these chapters, they are Siamese twin-like. However, in so far as correctness and clarity permitted the concept of the "auditory imagination" was prevented from intruding into this chapter in the belief that such exclusion enhanced comprehension of the material object of this chapter, the concept of the "objective correlative". A similar effort shall govern the succeeding chapter which perforce, shall be immeasurably more difficult to rule. All of which, of course, has the happy result of rendering obviously palpable the true intimacy of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" absolutely imperative to genuine poetry.

CHAPTER FIVE

MR. ELIOT'S "AUDITORY IMAGINATION"

The present chapter shall not be sub-divided.

According to T.S. Eliot, there is such a thing as the "auditory imagination". F.O. Matthiessen singles out the following passage from The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism as "the most searching passage" that Eliot has written concerning this concept:

What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality.<sup>1</sup>

That this is the principal text in Eliot pertaining to the concept in question must be admitted; but its meaning can best be extracted by juxtaposing it with other germane quotations; analysing each in the light of the other; and finally by seeking a passage from Eliot's poetry which shall exemplify the conclusions reached by such analysis and comparison. Such shall be the method of this chapter.

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, pp. 118-119.

In an essay entitled "Dante", written in 1929, Eliot argues that, "It is a test (a positive test, I do not assert that it is always valid negatively), that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood."<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the ambiguities that are supposed to surround the problem of "communication" when viewed in relation with the work of Mr. Eliot, this quotation read in the light of the definition of the "auditory imagination", above quoted, is clear. Genuine poetry communicates by virtue of the feeling for syllable and rhythm possessed by the poet and evinced in that part of his poetry which is "genuine". Whether this virtue is an essential part of genuine poetry or whether it is merely a quality of some genuine poetry is not, at this juncture, a question to be considered. On the other hand, a thing to be considered is the implication of this conclusion in so far as it touches on the question of communication. It would be invalid to believe that poetry communicates by virtue of the function of the "auditory imagination" only. It would be to misunderstand Eliot grossly. He terms that which is communicated by poetry, before it is understood, an impression. It is quite revealing to note that this impression - by implication, at least - is further qualified, it is knowledge. That what is communicated is an impression and that this impression is knowledge is derived from an

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 238.

analysis of the first clause of the first sentence immediately following the quotation taken from the "Dante" essay. Here is the pregnant clause, "The impression can be verified on fuller knowledge".<sup>1</sup> Nor has this clause yet given up its complete meaning. What does Eliot mean by "fuller knowledge"? How shall this fuller knowledge verify what is in some sense less full knowledge? And finally, what is the nature of this less full knowledge?

An explanation suggests itself. The fuller knowledge is intellectual knowledge. The less full knowledge is sense knowledge. The intellectual knowledge verifies the sense knowledge simply by agreeing or disagreeing with it. The sentence immediately preceding may be made more palpable by introducing an example and by commenting on it. The example is chosen simply on the basis of its conciseness. It is taken from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". It is the following two - very well known - verses:

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 238.

2. These verses are included in this poem in two places. For the present purpose there is no need to distinguish between them. However, it ought not to be assumed that the same words, arranged in the same order and producing the same rhythm necessarily constitutes an identity within any poem and especially within a poem written by T.S. Eliot. It must be remembered that there is such a thing as juxtaposition and that juxtaposition may alter the shade of meaning of the element in question. Nor is even this the entire story.

The "feeling for syllable and rhythm" which has been put into these verses and which is so evident in these verses is surely part of their essence. From the context, it is obvious that the room is Prufrock's destination. Here Eliot exemplifies one of his favorite devices, that of describing a place by having something happen there. George Williamson, commenting upon this, says: "his [Prufrock's] destination is a room in which women talk of the sculptor of heroic figures - no doubt trivial talk, but none the less of Michelangelo".<sup>1</sup> But, how does Williamson know that the talk is "no doubt trivial"? There are two ways possible. Each contributes to the other; yet each is quite capable of standing alone though thereby constituting inferior poetry. The first is the syllable sound of the words and the quality of the rhythm. Notice the perfect rhyme, go with lo unproportionally consummated, go with Michelangelo. Such seeming awkwardness sometimes argues high art. Notice with what haste the talking comes to an end by virtue of the intrinsic speed-to-an-end composition of the word Michelangelo - surprising and terribly revealing when it is Michelangelo that is the topic of the talking. The name Sappho would have served, but not nearly so nicely. The word, Michelangelo, at first, apparently so ridiculous in

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1. George Williamson, A Reader's Guide to T.S. Eliot, p. 60. Brackets mine.

this "couplet" emerges the right word or, anyhow, the least wrong word. Notice the anapaest, "In the room" and contrast it with the trochee, "Talking" which respectively begin these verses. Notice the of - about would have been disastrous. Notice finally the lightness of the "come and go". All of this is the syllable sound of the words and the rhythm analysed and all of this analysis is posterior to the effect which is obtained by that which has been analysed viewed as an instrument. In other words, the experiencer feels that the talk is no doubt trivial simply by virtue of the effect of these lines upon his senses. This feeling is conveyed independent of the above analysis.

The second way by which Williamson may have come to know that the talk was no doubt trivial was by virtue of the words, "come and go" - not by virtue of the syllable sound of these words; not by virtue of the rhythm which arises from their having been juxtaposed as they have. But, far rather, by virtue of the connotation of these words. Here Williamson would have utilized his reason. He would have concluded that the talk could not have been very serious if the participants in the conversation were constantly entering and leaving the room in question. How can women speak seriously of Michelangelo in this restless manner? A judgment is made, they cannot. The experiencer is here thinking not feeling, he is involved with intellectual

knowledge not sense knowledge. This is the fuller knowledge of which Eliot has spoken and this is that by which the "impression" is verified. The important thing to realize is how very much more exact the shade of meaning communicated by the function of the "auditory imagination" is than that communicated by the connotation of the words. To say that the shade of meaning is more exact is not the same thing as to say the meaning is clearer. The meaning is clearer by virtue of the connotation of the words, the shade of meaning is fixed by virtue of the syllable sound of the words and the rhythm of the verses. This distinction is of cardinal importance. Poetic communication is complete when both elements are experienced. It may be recapitulated then that for Eliot, genuine poetry is poetry capable of communicating both sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge. Of course, this conclusion must be qualified because of Eliot's own parenthetical qualification.

This parenthetical qualification is far too significant to pass over in silence. What does it mean? Upon first reading it appears simple and innocent enough: Poetry that can communicate before it is understood is genuine poetry. Poetry that cannot communicate before it is understood may or may not be genuine poetry. Such is its apparent meaning. However, part of the wording is interesting and perhaps revealing, "I do not assert that it

[the test] is always valid negatively". Does Eliot thus assert that it is sometimes valid negatively? Or, does Eliot feel that it may be always valid negatively - but fears to assert as much? Probably no valid, certainly no dogmatic, answer can be derived from the parenthetical qualification itself. Yet, even this, no answer is a much more rewarding, because solid, conclusion than the easy assumption that Eliot means that poetry that cannot communicate before it is understood may or may not be genuine poetry. Final judgment must be reserved until further evidence has been deduced à propos to this question. However, one item of further evidence is immediately at hand. Re-examine the quotation in question leaving out the parenthetical qualification. It reads, "It is a test that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood". Much of Swinburne's "poetry" is never understood. Much of Swinburne's same "poetry" communicates, that is, communicates to the experiencer an impression. Is it correct to infer that this "poetry" of Swinburne's is genuine poetry? The answer to this rhetorical question is not a matter of opinion. Eliot has written an essay, "Swinburne As Poet"<sup>1</sup> in which Swinburne's contribution to poetry is evaluated. Swinburne's poetry is not genuine poetry according to the meaning of this term developed above. Mark the tell-tale title, "Swinburne

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Essays, pp.323-327.

As Poet". All of this is further evidence in the sense that the apparent meaning and the real meaning of the sentence can be proved incongruous. It is, therefore, at the very least, suggested that the apparent meaning and the real meaning of the parenthetical qualification are similarly incongruous. Such may be demonstrated - to a high degree of probability - as the discussion proceeds.

One more observation must be made before proceeding to the next point. It pertains to Mr. Williamson's exegesis of these verses from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". He says that the women in the room were talking of "the sculptor of heroic figures". How does he know that this was the aspect of Michelangelo that they were discussing? No amount of attention directed upon the verses in question justifies the precision of this conclusion. Nor does Mr. Williamson evince reasons for it any more than he had evinced reasons for the correct conclusion, that the talk was no doubt trivial. This species of interpretation is hardly a guide to the reader. The serious reader is far more interested in learning how to interpret the poetry of Eliot than he is in the interpretation of this or that particular poem. The careful reader of Williamson stands an excellent chance of having an inferiority complex engendered within himself. He sees conclusions paraded - some of which he can validate, some of which he cannot. Far

too few readers realize that some of the conclusions which they cannot validate cannot be validated. However, there is, at least, one virtue in this aspect of Williamson's method, it leaves the reader totally dependent upon Williamson for an interpretation of each of Eliot's poems and this no matter how many such interpretations the reader has studied. This vice is a far more dangerous one than another practiced by Williamson, that of finding that he is regrettably limited by time and space and this especially when he encounters "difficult passages". Actually, it may well be, that this second vice has the good effect of counteracting the tendency towards inferiority complex already described. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that Williamson has made a contribution to studies-in-Eliot. He has provoked not a few of his readers to dive deeply, where he himself has skimmed the surface, in search of principles by which Eliot can be better experienced.

Though, admittedly, restrictions of time and space are hard and heartless taskmasters, often, in the course of writing criticism, they must be resisted. One such instance is at hand. There is grave danger of a misconception arising in connection with a sentence included in the "Dante" essay, a sentence touching upon the impression conveyed by the "auditory imagination". Eliot says, "The impression was new,

and of, I believe, the objective 'poetic emotion'".<sup>1</sup> The first noteworthy element contained in this sentence is the "I believe". Whenever this phrase, or any other equivalent phrase, appears in the prose writings of Mr. Eliot, it is usually symptomatic of contiguous ambiguities. In this case the ambiguity is truly contiguous, being part of the very same sentence. It is the "objective 'poetic emotion'" that is the heart of the matter. If this reference to emotion were the only one found in the writings of Eliot, it would present little difficulty. But, there are others. One, especially, comes immediately to mind:

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

And another follows hard upon it, "But very few know when there is an expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet".<sup>3</sup> To know the contexts from which these quotations have been culled is to know that "objective 'poetic emotion'", "particular emotion", and "significant emotion"

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 238.
  2. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 145.
  3. Thomas Stearns Eliot, op. cit., p. 22.

are not univocal terms. They may actually be equivocal and are, at least, analogous terms. To successfully distinguish among (Eliot would have said between, as he always distinguishes between three or more objects - never among them) even these three inclusions of the obtuse concept of emotion - and there are many more in the writings of Eliot - would constitute a topic separate unto itself. It would be completely disproportionate to its relevant importance in this place.

What must be attempted here is to make quite clear the fact that the "objective 'poetic emotion'" is neither the "significant emotion" of the "Tradition and the Individual Talent" essay, nor the "particular emotion" of the "Hamlet" essay. Certainly it is much nearer to the latter than it is to the former. It is, in fact, part of the latter. It is related to the former, but, nevertheless essentially different from it. Though, it can only be alleged here, the significant emotion is the aesthetic emotion. If this be allowed, then it follows, conclusively, that significant emotion cannot be communicated - more accurately caused - by the "auditory imagination" since, as has been demonstrated, the "auditory imagination" communicates an impression, an impression which is sense knowledge. The aesthetic emotion surely assumes in addition to the involvement of sense faculties, the involvement of

super-organic, non-material, spiritual faculties, of the soul.

As suggested above, the "objective 'poetic emotion'" is part of the "particular emotion" of the "Hamlet" essay and, therefore, to distinguish between these two is to formulate a very nice distinction indeed. However, on the other hand, the problem is greatly facilitated by what has already been written. Another means of facilitation is to reconstruct the sentence that is being considered, "The impression was new, and of, I believe, the objective 'poetic emotion'". If reduced to, "The impression was the objective 'poetic emotion'" and if the tense be ignored - as it well may, being what it is solely because of the context - and, finally, if the quotation marks around poetic emotion be explained, a great deal seems to find its place almost automatically. The quotation marks placed around poetic emotion indicate an unusual use of the term. Most grammar books (grammar books are texts which were once studied very widely by students, but are now studied very "narrowly" by teachers) include this as a standard use of quotation marks. The unusualness of the term, "poetic emotion" springs from the fact that the "auditory imagination" communicates an impression of poetic emotion - not poetic emotion. An impression of anything is not the thing. The impression made by a ring in wax is not the ring. Consequently, the

"auditory imagination" communicates an impression of the poetic emotion that is properly communicated by the "objective correlative". The "objective correlative", the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art, communicates that fuller knowledge, intellectual knowledge by virtue of which the impression may be verified. While the concept of the "objective correlative" per se is not under discussion here, it must be pointed out - though it is already quite implied - that the "auditory imagination" and the "objective correlative" are concepts intimately connected in the thought of T.S. Eliot. Incidentally, the significant emotion, above alluded to, may be easily fitted into the scheme of things at this point. It is the effect which follows when the "auditory imagination" and the "objective correlative" have functioned well together. The word, follows as utilized in the previous sentence does not necessarily imply a time lapse, the effect, the significant emotion, the aesthetic pleasure may be simultaneous or very nearly so with the happy functioning of the "auditory imagination" and the "objective correlative".

Notwithstanding the fact that something like a recapitulation was possible in the previous paragraph, there yet remain several means of elucidating the concept of the "auditory imagination". Some of these shall be exploited below. There is, however, also an important and troublesome

problem to be solved. Its solution shall shed much light on the topic of this chapter and some additional light on the topic of the previous chapter.

It became necessary to quote, in full, Eliot's "definition" of the "objective correlative" a few paragraphs ago. One of the clauses in that "definition" contains an element which apparently ill fits the scheme of things as recapitulated. As indicated above no full treatment of the "objective correlative" is being attempted within the limits of this chapter. Nevertheless, anything introduced to help develop the concept of the "auditory imagination" must not be permitted to convey any impression that tends to detract from the clear understanding of the particular subject being considered. Therefore, when Eliot says, that a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events are the formula of a particular emotion only the qualifications already made are necessary. However, when he continues, "such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked", an implication arises and distinctions above formulated seem to fade. The italics within this quotation have been supplied to indicate the offending phrase. The incorrect implication is that the function of the "objective correlative" terminates with the communication of sense knowledge. The distinction above made between fuller knowledge and the less

full knowledge more than fades, it collapses, in the wake of this implication. Obviously, then, this implication is the thing which must be closely scrutinized.

In the shadow of this qualification, it would appear that, for Eliot, the distinction between the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" is simply the distinction between visual and auditory imagery. It would appear, again in the shadow of this qualification, as if, for him, both kinds of imagery terminate in sense knowledge. There is, of course, a sense and a point up to which, this is absolutely true and valid. However, to go beyond the point in question - an arbitrary and therefore an artificial point - is to have transcended the limited ground on which this truth is based. The difficulty presently being encountered is very probably due to a shortcoming in Eliot. He does not distinguish nicely between phantasms and ideas. Another shortcoming, though quite closely related, perhaps merely a somewhat more subtle variation of the same one, probably even more to the point here, is his inability or perhaps his unwillingness - in either case undoubtedly due to lack of attention - to distinguish between auditory sensations that are capable of giving rise to phantasms from which ideas can be abstracted by the intellect and auditory sensations that are not capable of giving rise to phantasms from which ideas can be abstracted by the intellect. Music, notwithstanding

the patriotic autisms of its more autistic, less intellectual subjects, cannot communicate ideas. Similarly, the syllable sound and rhythm of words, the music of poetry, the "auditory imagination" cannot communicate ideas.

Eliot's awareness of this sometimes seems vague, not because his actual awareness of this is vague, for it is not vague, but because his explicit statements concerning this are few and his implicit statements are often ambiguous because but vaguely implying. Cartesianism envisaged as a brain disease seems to have infected Eliot not enough to amount to anything like a psychosis but perhaps only enough to amount to a mild and only sometimes evinced neurosis.

The real may be parted from the apparent. The "auditory imagination" which is the feeling for syllable sound and rhythm communicates an impression which has been identified as an objective "poetic emotion". However, Eliot has said that the "auditory imagination" works "through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense". Strictly speaking, then, the function of the "auditory imagination" terminates with sensory experience, with the imparting of an impression from which no idea can be abstracted, because the impression does not amount to a phantasm, though it may well contribute elements capable of coalescing with other elements from other sources to form a phantasm. The first of these so-called other elements

are immediately at hand, they are the meanings of the words which had been chosen for their syllable sound and rhythm by the "auditory imagination". It must be remembered that no genuine poet, no poet who makes genuine poetry, ever chooses a word or a group of words merely for their syllable sounds or rhythmic qualities. The genuine poet chooses them for this and something more. This "something more" introduces the concept of the "objective correlative" though perhaps in a somewhat ultimate manner. The genuine poet chooses them because they are capable of expressing a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of the particular emotion with which he is concerned. Now, in so far as these words are capable of communicating clear visual images they have what it takes to produce a phantasm and when the phantasm is produced the point is reached at which the "objective correlative" has terminated in sensory experience. Of course, the phantasm produced is composed of elements communicated by both the function of the "objective correlative" and the function of the "auditory imagination". The point of really vital importance, the point to be grasped, is that it is by virtue of the elements communicated by the function of the "objective correlative" and not by virtue of the elements communicated by the function of the "auditory imagination" that the phantasm can be brought to that stage of

completeness which will enable the intellect to abstract an idea from it.

On the basis of this elucidation the bothersome implication is unmasked as a misleading paradox. The concept of fuller knowledge and the relationship of this fuller knowledge with the less full knowledge takes on additional meaning, or is, at least, rendered more palpable by all of this further qualification. Mario Praz, in an article, "T.S. Eliot and Dante", originally appearing in the Southern Review (Winter 1937), far less perturbed by the disturbing word, terminate, and in a much more superficial, much less searching manner, arrives at somewhat similar conclusions:

Clear visual images [and] a concise and luminous language: these are the two qualities of Dante Eliot has in mind. The former is the "objective correlative" of the emotions they intend to suggest, the latter appeals to the auditory imagination: there is an element of extreme precision and an element of vagueness in both; for the mind of the reader is stirred by the symbolical import of the precise images, whereas - in contrast with the apparent terseness of the vocabulary - "the feeling for syllable and rhythm penetrates far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorates every word; sinks to the most primitive and forgotten, returns to the origin and brings something back, seeks the beginning and the end" (essay on Arnold).<sup>1</sup>

An extremely interesting comment is the one stating that, "there is an element of extreme precision and an element of

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1. Mario Praz, "T.S. Eliot and Dante", Southern Review, 2 (Winter 1937), p. 539.

vagueness in both". The "both" refers, of course, to the function of the "objective correlative" and to the function of the "auditory imagination", to the clear visual images and to the concise and luminous language. The exactness of the apposition is certainly somewhat questionable. It is, at least, guilty of over-simplification, an over-simplification that could be dangerous apart from the involved qualification and explanation above introduced and developed. However, it is far rather the perspicacity of the remark à propos to the element of extreme precision and the element of extreme vagueness which commands attention. In this place, it is the extreme precision and the vagueness of the "auditory imagination" that must be elucidated. When a poet utilizes words not primarily for their connotations, but for their syllable sound and for their rhythmic quality, he is not accepting some and rejecting others on the basis of their ability or inability to communicate a classifiable emotion. If such were his object, he would be preoccupied with meanings. The object of the function of the "auditory imagination" is to communicate the precise shade of this non-classifiable emotion - non-classifiable, because differentiated to near uniqueness. When emotions, or anything else for that matter, are classified, the scientist - for such is the function of the scientist - is seeking their essential notes and ignoring their accidental notes.

To communicate the precise shade of this emotion - or, to be more accurate still, to communicate this precise shade of this emotion - the poet must direct his attention upon not only accidents, but upon the one, right, last accident that serves to differentiate this precise shade of this emotion from all other shades of the same emotion. (At this point, reverberations of the concept of inscape, as developed in the aesthetic theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins, intrude themselves. Certainly, the concepts of "auditory imagination" and inscape on the one hand, and the concepts of the "objective correlative" and scape on the other, have a very great deal in common.) It may be that a long concatenation of words - words chosen for their connotations alone - appears to approach the communication of the desired effect. But the connotations, the meanings of words tend, far rather, to communicate ideas, thoughts. For example, to say that love is the movement of the will towards its proper object; or, to say that love is the affective consciousness of a favorable stimulus may acutally communicate the idea of love. However, the person to whom such knowledge is communicated does not "feel" the "thought as immediately as the odour of a rose". The knower knows what love, viewed as an emotion, is; he does not experience the emotion of love, much less this precise shade of the emotion of love. The knower is purely an intellectual

knower. In this cognitive process his senses are in no sense a terminus. They are a channel completely unaffected by what passes through and comes to rest beyond their "length". It is already made quite clear, then, that when the intellect grasps the essence of a thing, for example love, the knower knows precisely what love is; but only vaguely this or that concrete instance of love. However, a long time ago, Aristotle formulated a maxim: "There is nothing in the intellect which has not been, in some manner, in the senses". Therefore, there had to have been a phantasm. There is no real being capable of being sensually perceived that could have given rise to a phantasm from which the intellect could have abstracted the idea of love. Therefore, there must have been a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which was the equation of that particular emotion. Obviously, there was none such supplied by the above stated definitions. Where did the "objective correlative" - for such amounts to an "objective correlative" - come from? Experience and reflection give the answer, "there is the general tendency of mind to adduce palpable examples in an effort to clarify its understanding"; and there is the "familiar experience of trying to visualize things that are actually invisible, such as substance, power, immaterial energy",<sup>1</sup> and, it might well be added, love. Such

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Edward Brennan, General Psychology, p. 329.

adduction and such visualization is not pleasurable. It requires effort and sometimes the required effort is actually painful. When an experiencer of a piece of work made of words discovers that he must supply the "objective correlatives" for himself, he knows that he is not in the presence of an artifact. When an experiencer of a piece of work made of words discovers that he need not supply the "objective correlatives" for himself, that they are already supplied for him by the work, he knows that he is in the presence of an artifact. This distinction, though perhaps only a by-product here, is, from a limited point of view, analogous to the celebrated distinction made by Thomas DeQuincy between "literature of knowledge" and "literature of power" and to the equally celebrated distinction made by Cardinal Newman between "science" and "literature" both viewed as kinds of writing. This distinction also provides a solid stepping stone to the concept of "beauty". Consequently, it is established - to return to an earlier point - that an element of extreme precision and an element of vagueness are properties of the "objective correlative" and this whether the "objective correlative" is furnished by the work or by the experiencer. Quite similarly, the "auditory imagination" possesses these properties. By virtue of the syllable sound and rhythmic quality of words the phantasm is enriched. More accidental notes are represented.

These may enhance, but they do not make possible, the intellect's abstraction, for that was already possible. They serve to stimulate the sensory appetites to movement. And not simply to indiscriminate movement, but to a kind of movement that is in peculiar sympathy with the thought already perceived intellectually. In a very exact sense these sense perceptions are the principle by virtue of which the idea is individuated. And this argues the substantial unity of man. And finally - as is already obvious - this is the precise element of the function of the "auditory imagination". Its vague element is that which everyone has experienced while listening to music. It is that which Eliot has uppermost in mind in the "Dante" essay, where he says, "that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood" and where he speaks of impressions that "can be verified on fuller knowledge". If there is one extrinsic element - and there are a number of more or less extrinsic elements included - that has been made quite palpable by this long paragraph, it is the Janus-like quality of the concepts of "auditory imagination" and "objective correlative". They are the opposite faces of the one door that opens into the realm of poetry.

If with the previous paragraph be juxtaposed St. Thomas' definition of emotions - as this definition is rendered in almost any fundamental Thomistic psychology text

- the paragraph and the text will tend to comment one upon the other. "Emotions are movements of the sensory appetites, following upon conscious recognition of some stimulus, and characterized by definite modifications in the regulated activities of the body."<sup>1</sup> From the above, it is obvious, that there is a distinction between the communication of emotion as knowledge and the communication of emotion as emotion. Emotion as emotion cannot be communicated by the separate functioning of either the "auditory imagination" or the "objective correlative"- and this, no matter how effective such functioning may be. Emotion as emotion is communicated by the cooperative and successful operation of each and by the two functioning harmoniously together. This is not to gainsay Eliot's claim à propos to the function of the "objective correlative". The "objective correlative" is capable of communicating emotion as knowledge; it is capable of communicating the whatness of the emotion and what grasps this whatness is the intellect of the experiencer and - on the basis of a logical distinction - not the "whole man". Perhaps it would not be altogether an unwarranted forcing of the issue to claim that what is communicated by the "auditory imagination" is feeling. Thomists have defined feeling as "consciously pleasant or unpleasant movement of the sensory appetite".<sup>2</sup> In short then, it is argued that,

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1. Ibid., p. 264.

2. Ibid., p. 263.

the function of Eliot's concept of "auditory imagination" transforms the knowledge of an emotion communicated by the function of the "objective correlative" into the experiencing of not only a particular emotion, but into the experiencing of a particular shade of a particular emotion. (This is not to beg the question of temporal priority for the question of temporal priority is a separate question not being considered here.) Therefore, it may be said that these two things functioning harmoniously together accomplish in the form of art what certain experiences can accomplish in real life. This is an important observation when it is considered that such real life experience as is implied here does not cause aesthetic pleasure in the experiencer. Thus is successfully circumvented the absurdity that "beauty" is the expression of emotion. Where does the rose get the emotion that its beauty expresses? Let the implicit be made explicit here if anywhere. Because a poem succeeds in communicating this particular emotion so that it is experienced by the perceiver, it cannot validly be concluded - and it is often invalidly concluded - that the experienced particular emotion is the aesthetic emotion. It is not. Nevertheless, the aesthetic emotion - as shown above - is an effect which follows when the "auditory imagination" and the "objective correlative" have functioned well together. Contrary to first impressions, this is not even a man-size paradox. It is simply a question of two effects following

from one act and this whether the act being considered is the creative act on the part of the poet or the appreciative act on the part of the experiencer. When the poet succeeds in finding the right "objective correlative" with which to express the particular emotion that was his initial stimulus and also the right words, right because their syllable sound and rhythmic qualities express the exact shade of this particular emotion, the particular emotion leaves the poet - so to speak - and exists in the poem. The poet has escaped from the particular emotion. The particular emotion is "going" or is "gone" when the aesthetic emotion, the significant emotion wells up within the poet. Obviously, then, the particular emotion is not the aesthetic emotion experienced by the creator. In order to avoid a great deal of detail inappropriate here, let it suffice to say that the aesthetic emotion is the peculiar pleasure that stirs within the poet when he "realizes" that he has imparted a new mode of existence to the particular emotion. It is the pleasure that he feels when he "realizes" that his work is done. It is not the fact that he has managed to express emotion that matters nearly so much as the fact that he has made a new thing of beauty. The new thing of beauty that he has made upon analysis shall be found to be an intellectual-sensuous form sometimes capable of causing a particular emotion within its experiencer and also capable of causing a disinterested emotional pleasure within any experiencer who has what it

takes to appreciate the beauty of the artifact. This disinterested emotional pleasure is the aesthetic emotion. Consequently, it is seen that within the perceiver analogously as within the creator a double effect is produced. This is hardly the place to delve more deeply into either the concept of beauty or into the concept of the significant emotion, aesthetic pleasure.

On November 21, 1950, Eliot delivered the first of the lectures to be given annually in the name of Theodore Spencer. His topic upon that occasion was "Poetry and Drama". That lecture was published in a small book the following year under the same title. In the last two or three pages of his book, Eliot attempts to set before himself and before the reader "in dim outline, the ideal towards which...poetic drama should strive". Some elements of what Eliot said there are quite pertinent to the present discussion. For example:

It seems to me that beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action - the part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express - there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment from action.<sup>1</sup>

Eliot has more than made a distinction between prose drama and poetic drama, he has made, or perhaps merely reiterated

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poetry and Drama, p. 42.

from a somewhat different starting point, the real distinction between prose and poetry. Notice that there is implied here a good deal more than the anemic distinction between prose and verse. -Prose transformed into verse falls far below poetry. Eliot's distinction is based upon subject matter, what the writer is writing about - but it is based upon subject matter in a unique way. There are classifiable emotions and there are feelings, the former can be focused, the latter can be glimpsed only out of the corner of the eye. Prose utilizes the meanings of words - it does not consistently utilize either the syllable sound of words or the rhythmic quality of words. (Of course, there is such a thing as poetic prose. However, it is probable that poetic prose is ultimately susceptible to reduction to the category of prose or poetry on the basis of this same principle.) The classifiable emotions can be expressed without recourse to assistance from the syllable sound and/or the rhythmic quality of words - classifiable emotions are, after all, nameable. Both prose writers and poets make use of "objective correlatives". Only poets consistently make use of the "auditory imagination". Consequently, once again Eliot is discovered harping upon what is by now becoming a familiar theme. However, upon this occasion he is quite obvious - probably because his attention is primarily upon a particular application of the distinction rather than upon the

distinction per se. Therefore, it may be unequivocally alleged that for Eliot the nameable, classifiable emotions are communicated by the function of the "objective correlative"; the fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus is communicated by the function of the "auditory imagination". Eliot obligingly proceeds directly to substantiate what has been alleged, at least, in so far as what has been alleged touches upon the "auditory imagination": "This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express".<sup>1</sup> "Auditory imagination" is the feeling for syllable and rhythm. It is the feeling for the music of poetry. The music of poetry is not the music of music. There is analogy. There is no identity. It must be remembered that the "auditory imagination" works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense. This qualification is the saving difference, for Eliot hastens to caution that, "We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry...."<sup>2</sup> All of which leads quite naturally to Eliot's essay, "The

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1. Ibid., p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

Music of Poetry". It was originally the third W.R. Ker Memorial Lecture. It was delivered at Glasgow University on the twenty-fourth of February, 1942.

There are a number of elements contained in this essay which, encountered out of the light of the above discussion and conclusions, could prove quite bothersome. It might fairly be said that Eliot's writing is an organic whole. This is not entirely a compliment free from liabilities. Many of the comments that he makes in his critical essays, for example, are somewhat like dependent clauses. If that upon which they depend be unknown, the element being considered is either unfathomable, or worse still, utterly misleading. The validity of this judgment shall be immediately put to the test as a few of the more relevant elements of this essay are explicitly analysed and explicitly or implicitly compared with the conclusions already achieved. It follows from what has been said here that the student of the poetic-aesthetic theories of T.S. Eliot - and this is true of many another giant of literature - must come to mastery of this or that element only after encompassing the whole. This is a truism, but should not be treated as such. It deserves a great deal more respect than most truisms. It is in very large measure the answer to much of the impatience with which this or that essay or book or poem of Eliot's is dismissed. Nor is this

sufficient reason for despair - after all Eliot is still alive and may yet add to the "whole". It is not a question of having nothing, having nothing, and suddenly after tremendous effort and time expended, having the whole explode into meaning. The experience is far rather one of continuously ripening knowledge. Each obtuse element mastered renders the next obtuse element easier of mastery. Thus, to the first contingent element.

Commenting on the "Blue Closet" by William Morris, Eliot observes that, "It is a delightful poem, though I cannot explain what it means and I doubt whether the author could have explained it".<sup>1</sup> At first sight, this appears to be a good example of what people who don't know Eliot would term, "a typical Eliot phrase" - said with obvious animosity. In reality, in the light of all that has been said, it is far from a conceit-like criticism. It is simply the statement of a very obvious fact. The significant words in it are "explain" and "explained". The exact meaning of a poem is not alone what is expressed by the function of the "objective correlative". It is this plus what is expressed by the function of the "auditory imagination". What is expressed is one thing. The one thing that is expressed in the poem could not have been expressed by the meanings of words alone. Therefore, the syllable sound and the rhythmic

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1. Thomas Stearns Eliot, Selected Prose, p. 56.

quality of words was utilized by the poet. If the poet could have expressed the feeling that he saw out of the corner of his eye by the meanings of words, he would not have had to make the poem in the first instance. Hence, Eliot's remark is clear and in no wise mysterious or perverse. A few sentences further along, he confirms our exegesis when he adds that, "It is a commonplace to observe that the meaning of a poem may wholly escape paraphrase".<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that a poem, a genuine poem, has no meaning. Nor is this to say that the meaning of some genuine poetry may be incommunicable. It is to say, using the example in question here, that neither William Morris nor Eliot, nor anyone else, could have explained the meaning of the "Blue Closet" because to explain is to utilize the meanings of words alone and the meanings of words alone are incapable of explaining that part of a poem which can be communicated, if at all, only by the music of words. When it is remembered that the music of a word is,

so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association,<sup>2</sup>

it is clear that prose cannot hope to follow poetry far along

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

the primrose path poetry paces.

Perhaps, so as not to tarnish his reputation, Eliot continues, "It is not quite so commonplace to observe that the meaning of a poem may be something larger than its author's conscious purpose, and something remote from its origins".<sup>1</sup> There are two separate assertions here. The first is that a poem may be something larger than its author's conscious purpose. In a sense, every poem that is a poem is a thing of beauty made of words and, therefore, except when a poet's conscious purpose is to make a thing of beauty - which is, indeed, quite seldom - the poem is something larger than its author's conscious purpose. However, even when a poem be viewed as if it were simply a vehicle capable of containing the emotions and the feelings of its maker, there is sense, good sense, in Eliot's statement. When a man experiences strong feeling - and this whether he be a poet or not - he is quite conscious of it, but he is incapable of conceptualizing the feeling. Intellectually, it might be said, he is "unconscious" of it. "Conscious" and "unconscious" are two of the most difficult words encountered in the writings of Eliot. They often appear vague and ambiguous. It is here suggested that by "conscious" Eliot sometimes means that which can be grasped intellectually; and by "unconscious" Eliot sometimes means

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

that which cannot be grasped intellectually. Since feelings cannot be grasped intellectually, and since feelings are a part of the meaning of poems, then it follows that the meaning of a poem is something larger than its author's conscious purpose. The second assertion is that the meaning of a poem may be something remote from its origins. By origin here, Eliot means the occasion of a poem. The occasion of a poem is that element or those elements of external reality, that is environment, which provokes a peculiar reaction within the poet. The reaction within the poet is the emotion and the feeling that are stimulated by the occasion. The meaning of the poem would be the reaction externalized. The "objective correlative" chosen by the poet as the formula for the emotion, for example, may be quite different from the occasion to which he initially reacted. Therefore, the meaning may be something remote from its origin. However, sometimes the poet will utilize the occasion as the "objective correlative". Consequently, even the "may be" of Eliot's statement is meaningful and valid.

Notice how precise Mr. Eliot sometimes is. In illustration: "If, as we are aware, only a part of the meaning can be conveyed by paraphrase, that is because the poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which

words fail, though meanings still exist".<sup>1</sup> That part of the meaning which can be communicated by paraphrase is, of course, that part of the meaning which is communicated by the function of the "objective correlative". Words as words do not fail when they are called upon to communicate that which is conscious in the above defined sense. That part of the meaning which cannot be communicated by paraphrase is that part of the meaning which is communicated by the function of the "auditory imagination". Words as words fail when they are called upon to communicate that which is unconscious in the above defined sense. However, where words as words fail, words as music may succeed. The meaning which exists beyond the frontiers of consciousness is expressed by the music of poetry. Eliot insists that, "the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning".<sup>2</sup> Obviously not, especially since it is the function of the music of poetry to express that part of the meaning which cannot be expressed by virtue of the connotation of words.

There are two extremely controversial statements in this essay, the second following hard upon the first, that cannot be passed over in silence. First, "A poem may appear to mean very different things to different readers, and all

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

of these meanings may be different from what the author thought he meant".<sup>1</sup> Second, "The reader's interpretation may differ from the author's and be equally valid - it may even be better. There may be much more in a poem than the author was aware of".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, a poem may appear to mean very different things to different readers. However, an insight-giving question may be asked. How does one know what a poem means to a given reader? There is only one way possible and that is to have the reader tell us what it means to him. He can either write or speak, but in either case he must use words. However, it has already been demonstrated that a poem may not be susceptible to complete interpretation. Only part of a poem can be paraphrased. That which was expressed by the function of the "auditory imagination" cannot be paraphrased. Therefore, unless the interpretation be itself a poem, unless it be, in fact, the same poem, it must be an approximation. Since any number of approximations are possible, there well may be a variety of apparent meanings. And these approximations may differ from what the author thought he meant, because, as has been demonstrated above, the author himself was expressing something, at least, partially beyond the limits, outside the realm, of things which can be reduced to thoughts or ideas. Consequently, the

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 58.

author himself expressed what he had to say as well as he could in the poem that he made of words, utilizing their connotation, their syllable sound and their rhythmic quality. Now, when he tries to tell us what he meant, he utilizes the connotation of words alone. His own exegesis, his own approximation could quite conceivably be inferior to someone else's because both author and "critics", that is interpreters, are trying to do something which cannot be done. They are all trying to express something by virtue of the connotation of words which cannot be expressed unless the music of words be utilized as well. They are all "Prophets Who Cannot Sing" as Coventry Patmore would surely say. In the second statement, if the "aware of" be understood to mean intellectually conscious of, it is a truism that there may have been much more in the poem than the author was aware of. That "the reader's interpretation may differ from the author's", that it may "be equally valid", and that "it may even be better" are three paradoxes by now despoiled of the paradoxical. They are simply three assertions readily acceptable in the light of an adequate understanding of the nature of the function of Mr. Eliot's "auditory imagination".

Though other quotations pertinent to the concept of the "auditory imagination" could be evinced, their analysis would continue a tendency already developing, a kind of

dangerous, because easy, repetitiousness; their comparison with conclusions concerning the "auditory imagination" would add few notes to the comprehension of the idea beyond those that have been already achieved. Therefore, to continue would be tedious and redundant. And tediousness and redundancy are the chief vices of analysis and comparison, viewed as the chief tools of criticism, which manifest themselves when these tools are over-utilized.

In a letter to Richard Watson Dixon, Gerard Manley Hopkins has referred to inscape as "the very soul of art". If there is one over-all impression implicit in the above considerations, it would seem to be, that for Mr. Eliot, "auditory imagination" is the very soul of poetry!

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

No work of any significant scope is absolutely definitive. It is when a writer tries to make an end that he most appreciates this. It is not so much the fact that he then realizes how little he knows; it is far rather the fact that he then realizes how much more there is that he might know. Such is both a tribute to man's capacity for knowledge and a testimonial to the fertility of analytical research. However, a single ending can be conceived as a double beginning: as a beginning of something new by the man who is ending something which now seems to him very old; and as a beginning of new works by other men who shall depart from the point at which he has just arrived. And this is more real than ideal and this is what encourages men to make the endings which periodically must be made.

The nature of the present work was such that it was possible to state its Material Object and its Formal Object at the very beginning, in the Introduction. Its Material Object was bipartite in composition, being essentially a composite of matter from which the concepts of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics could be inferred and of matter from which the concepts of Scholastic aesthetic-poetics could be inferred. This bipartite Material Object was absolutely imperative if the Formal Object was to be achieved. The

Formal Object was to evince a critical presentation of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot. Since criticism is judgment and since judgment implies comparison, it would have been impossible to judge the concepts which together are Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics without a criterion. The fact that this precise essentially impossible task had been attempted by others and the fact that they had "accomplished" it and the devastating results of their conclusions provided the principal motivation and justification for the present work. To embrace the oxymoronic conclusion that Mr. Eliot is essentially different from other poets was even more intolerable than the weird critical methods that Eliot opponents and proponents employed to arrive at it. Consequently, this work was conceived and was born and grew and is now quite old.

The first chapter presented some principles of Scholastic aesthetic-poetics. It presented those principles and only those principles which were needed to evaluate the essential concepts of Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics which were then presented, analysed and evaluated in the remaining four chapters. Long before the end of Chapter Five, it was becoming increasingly obvious that Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics were substantially in accord with Scholastic aesthetic-poetics. Not only were his concepts made more palpable as a result of the comparisons, but the critique

itself was polished in the process. As a matter of fact, each aesthetic-poetics commented upon the other and each supplemented the other in a most encouraging manner.

It has been demonstrated that Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics provides an answer to each of the following questions: (1) What is the genesis of a poem? (2) What is the nature of a poem? (3) What is the end of a poem? When it is noticed that the first question treats of efficient causality and that the second question treats of material and formal causality and that the third question treats of final causality, the comprehensiveness of his theory must be acknowledged. Since the answers to these questions have been inferred from his prose writings and not from his poetry and since these answers which are his aesthetic-poetics have been validated by comparing them with the answers which are Scholastic aesthetic-poetics, it follows that they constitute a critique whereby Mr. Eliot the poet can be judged. Since a poet can never be directly judged, this must be accomplished by comparing Mr. Eliot's poetry and the appropriate principles of the already validated critique. If these things are found to be in substantial agreement, then the insidious attitude - described in the Introduction - which views Mr. Eliot the poet as a unique curiosity essentially different from the rest of poets is exploded. Such a task, however, did not belong to the present

thesis; but the present thesis, by critically presenting the aesthetic-poetics of Mr. Eliot and by finding it valid prepared the way for another critic to undertake this task. Thus, the end that is being made has already explicitly suggested, at least, one new beginning and myriad others are implicitly suggested; for a valid critique can be used to judge the poetry of other poets whether coeval or ancient.

The present thesis has presented the aesthetic-poetics of Scholasticism by inferring these from several sources and sometimes by introducing original concepts. (It must be clearly understood, however, that these "original concepts" are original in the sense in which, for example, Jacques Maritain's concept of poetic knowledge is original.) It has presented the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot by inferring these from his prose writings. It has criticized the latter by comparing the two. It has cast additional light on each by virtue of this comparison. It has found the two systems of aesthetic-poetics essentially one. It has consequently predicated the essential validity of the latter and by so doing it has exploded the attitude which sees Mr. Eliot as a unique curiosity essentially different from other poets by showing that, at least, his aesthetic-poetics essentially explains poetry and therefore other poets. It has not, however, assumed that since his aesthetic-poetics is essentially valid that he has practiced

what he preached and thus produced works that are essentially poetry though it believes that he did. It has suggested that several of Mr. Eliot's concepts be amalgamated with several concepts of Scholastic aesthetic-poetics to form a New Critique. And finally it has made recommendations touching upon further research which its conclusions have made possible.

Incidentally, it is hoped that the present thesis has struck a token blow against historicists and impressionists, against psychologists who would prostitute literary criticism as they have already prostituted education to the perverted lust of their tests and measurements, and against socialists who would reduce fine art to useful art by substituting state for God and its "truths" for His "beauties".

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This book is both a provocative and a sometimes provoking poem-by-poem analysis of the works of Eliot. Too often the author finds himself short of either time or space when confronted by difficult passages in Eliot; however, many interesting and useful allusions are traced and adequately explained - the obvious is seldom overlooked.

## ABSTRACT

T.S. Eliot is assuredly one of the greatest literary men of the first half of the twentieth century. Accordingly, a tremendous amount has been written about him. A number of attitudes have developed and become distinct. Chief among these perhaps is the attitude which views Mr. Eliot as a unique curiosity essentially different from the rest of poets. This attitude was undoubtedly the effect of the "strangeness" which is encountered upon first looking into the works of Eliot, whether prose or verse but especially verse. Certainly Mr. Eliot is different from other poets; however, he cannot be a unique curiosity essentially different from other poets, for to be essentially different from other poets would be to be no poet at all. Therefore, when Eliot commentators allege implicitly or explicitly that Mr. Eliot is essentially different from other poets, they are denying him the poet's laurels and this though, of course, they do not realize it.

The present thesis does not completely annihilate this attitude. It merely takes one step towards its ultimate annihilation and the step which it takes is to show that Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics are a valid explanation of poetry and not of some unique curiosity essentially different from poetry.

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Every thesis has a Material Object and a Formal Object. The Material Object of a thesis is the subject-matter with which it deals. The Formal Object of a thesis is the special way or the special aim or the special point of view that it utilizes in approaching and dealing with its Material Object. Depending upon the particular nature of the thesis these objects are easy or difficult to enunciate.

Now the present thesis had to deal with two distinct yet related spheres of subject-matter. It had to deal with the writings of a number of men engaged in the task of inferring the aesthetic-poetics which Jacques Maritain insists is implicit in the writings of the Schoolmen. Jacques Maritain himself, his wife Raïssa, Maurice De Wulf, and Victor M. Hamm were the principal sources comprising this first sphere. It also had to deal with that part of the prose writings of T.S. Eliot in which the essential concepts of his aesthetic-poetics were to be discovered. Consequently, the Material Object of this thesis was bipartite and it was bipartite because of the precise nature of its Formal Object. Its Formal Object was to make a critical presentation of the aesthetic-poetics of T.S. Eliot.

With these objects before it, the thesis unfolded as follows. Chapter One presented the essential concepts of the aesthetic-poetics implicit in the writings of the Schoolmen. This was done so that there would be a critique

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by which Mr. Eliot's concepts could be evaluated. Incidentally, while this was being done, Mr. Eliot was given an opportunity to comment upon them. Certain elements of his own thought were introduced and these generally tended to show that he accepted the principles by which his aesthetic-poetics was ultimately to be judged. In the four remaining chapters, the essential concepts of Mr. Eliot's own aesthetic-poetics were analytically presented. Chapter Two was principally concerned with his concepts of "tradition" and what may be termed "the individual's talent"; Chapter Three, with his concept of the "creative process"; and Chapter Four and Chapter Five with the two principal concepts of his thought, the concepts of the "objective correlative" and the "auditory imagination" respectively. When these concepts had been analytically presented, they were compared with their appropriate counterparts previously presented in Chapter One. These comparisons were made and their results noted in the same chapters in which the concepts were analytically presented. This practice eliminated a great deal of unnecessary repetition that would have been unavoidable if these comparisons or judgments had been relegated to a separate chapter.

When all of this was accomplished, it was obvious that Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics was substantially in accord with Scholastic aesthetic-poetics. It was also

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obvious that the comparison of the concepts of the former with the concepts of the latter had rendered the concepts of each more palpable. And finally, it was obvious that Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics provided a valid explanation of poetry and not of some unique curiosity essentially different from poetry.

In the Summary and Conclusions it was pointed out that it could not be assumed that because Mr. Eliot's aesthetic-poetics is a valid explanation of poetry that what he made himself was essentially poetry. It was pointed out that this would be to assume that he practiced what he preached. Therefore, it was suggested that to annihilate the attitude above described it would be necessary to compare Mr. Eliot's poetry with his aesthetic-poetics, now validated, or with the aesthetic-poetics inferred from the writings of the Schoolmen or perhaps with an aesthetic-poetics composed of concepts derived from each of these systems and viewed as a New Critique. If, as would most probably happen, this comparison revealed substantial agreement, then, and only then, would the attitude which views Mr. Eliot as a unique curiosity essentially different from other poets be completely exploded.

And the thesis ended with the hope that a New Critique composed of concepts derived from the aesthetic-poetics of Mr. Eliot and of concepts derived from the

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writings of the Schoolmen might be refined and thence serve as a critique by which the aesthetic-poetics and/or the poetry of other men might be objectively judged. If such were done many of the adverse effects of impressionistic and historic criticism would be permanently undermined, if not wholly eclipsed. Consequently, once again a piece of research found what all pieces of research find, that there is more to know and more to do and more to make!