Dep. Thesis
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THE CRITERION, 1922-1939

<u>An index to the thought of England between two wars</u>

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By

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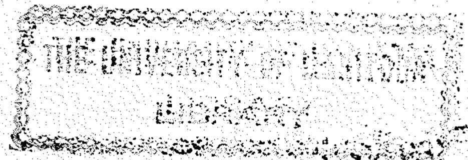
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. . .A humanity which in 1914 had its first common experience, and for which begins first from that point one common history. . . (1)

Thoughtful persons, after the first results of the World War had begun to recede, were coming to believe, as did Dr. Scheler, that what had happened during 1914-18 was the final destruction of an old world. It had been, they thought, a world which had begun with the Renaissance and had long outlived its usefulness; many believed that its very inception had been a tragedy. They welcomed its disappearance, and they welcomed the problems created by its disappearance.

> . . .We must formulate afresh the problem of Man's special metaphysical position within the cosmos, and how this position relates itself to the World-Source, and having formulated the eternal question, we must answer it anew to the full measure of our powers! (Scheler, op. cit., p. 119)
>
> We must have a united European front in which all the great powers in the world of culture can participate. It must be possible to evolve a programme of spiritual sanitation, embracing all the constructive energies of Europe. . . . Reason created valid forms in the 13th and the 17th centuries. Our task is -- not to resuscitate these forms artificially, but to revive the spirit which created them, and so to create a form of Reason proper to the 20th century. Only so will we. . . attain that objective which is the most important of all today: the reconstruction of the European man. (Ernst Robert Curtius, VI, v, pp. 390-6)

They believed that the task they were setting themselves was in the last degree urgent, and they knew it was beyond measure formidable.

(1) Max Scheler, "The Future of Man", The Criterion, VII, ii, 107. Henceforth, reference to The Criterion will be made parenthetically in the text, by volume, number, and page.

But they believed something else: they believed in the possibility of creating a new civilization.

It was in this intellectual climate that The Criterion had its beginnings, and it was to this climate that The Criterion belonged.

> Nine years after the end of the War we are only beginning to distinguish between the characteristics of our own time and those inherited from the previous epoch. . . .One of the ideas which characterizes our age may be called The European Idea. . . .It is a hopeful sign that a small number of intelligent persons are aware of the necessity to harmonize the interests, and therefore to harmonize first the ideas, of the civilized countries of Western Europe. We are beginning to hear mention of the reaffirmation of the European tradition. It will be helpful, certainly, if people will begin by believing that there is a European tradition; for they may then proceed to analyse its constituents in the various nations of Europe; and proceed finally to the further formation of such a tradition. (Commentary, VI, ii, 97-8)

It undertook its share in the task of reconstruction, although it had then no clear idea of what the new civilization was to be. Indeed, had it from the first had such an idea, there would, so to speak, have been no Criterion:

> A literary review cannot be realized at once, and thereafter have no task but to maintain itself: that is the way of death; . . . (Commentary, V, i, 1)

Its entire history is, from this point of view, a record of its search for the idea which should save Europe. From its inception its concern was to find a centre to which it could relate the values created by art and philosophy. This concern led it from aesthetic theory to metaphysical speculation; the epistemological consequences of these investigations were in turn applied to aesthetics: here Mr. Middleton Murry thought he had the centre, but The Criterion found his position false, and moved on. Thinkers were dividing human nature into three planes: that which was natural to all animal life, that which was distinctively human, and that which embodied man's affinity with the super-human. The Humanists of America and France, unable to accredit the super-human, looked for the centre in the inner authority based upon the ethical imagination proper to the purely human plane of life. The Criterion found this human authority unstable and unreliable, and moved on. The Spenglerian idea that civilizations are born, flourish, and die in accordance with an immutable time-rhythm knelled Europe to a mechanistic death: Mr. John Gould Fletcher was an impatient pall-bearer, looking to the yet indeterminate civilization to be produced by America, Russia, and the British Commonwealth of Nations for his centre. The Criterion found Spengler unhistorical, Fletcher barbarous, and moved on. Mr. J. S. Barnes discovered in Fascism the reaffirmation of the European tradition; Mr. Ezra Pound added to Fascism the economic panacea of Major C. H. Douglas. The Criterion saw in Fascism only a system for Italians to manage their domestic affairs, and in Social Credit only sterility; it moved on.

Mr. A. L. Rowse found his centre in Marxism: _The Criterion_ saw in socialism only an insignificant variant of capitalism, and in true Marxism the defeat of the spiritual life; it moved on. Mr. Herbert Read and Mr. Montgomery Butchart looked to the anarchism of Proudhon and Bakunin: _The Criterion_ identified this with the liberalism of the nineteenth century, and moved on.

One thing became more and more apparent as the controversy progressed: for _The Criterion_ the central idea would have to be one which asserted the spiritual nature of life. And so, in the end, it was:

> For myself, a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology -- and right economics to depend upon right ethics. . . ("Last Words", XVIII, lxxi, 272)

The Criterion had found its centre. Its purpose was realized. True to the Editor's early declaration, it would not die "and still go marching on" (V, i, 1). In the same article in which he formulated the idea by which alone Europe could save itself, the Editor announced the cessation of the review's publication. Indeed, in his state of mind, it was, for the Editor, time that the review should come to an end:

> In the present state of public affairs -- which has induced in myself a depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion -- I no longer feel the enthusiasm necessary to make a literary review what it should be. ("Last Words", XVIII, lxxi, 274)

In its early period The Criterion had believed in the value of its work; at the end, when it had diagnosed the nature of the disease which was destroying Europe, it was no longer certain.

> I have wondered whether it would not have been more profitable, instead of trying to maintain literary standards increasingly repudiated in the modern world, to have endeavoured to rally intellectual effort to affirm those principles of life and policy from the lack of which we are suffering disastrous consequences. ("Last Words", XVIII, lxxi, 273)

With the assistance of The Criterion, Eliot found his centre. Many people followed his progress and arrived at his position. But the value of The Criterion is not confined to this service. It was born in what was thought to be a new world. It died when an impending war was about to emphasize the continuity of its epoch with that which had preceded it.

> The period immediately following the war of 1914 is often spoken of as a time of disillusionment: in some ways and for some people it was rather a period of illusions. Only from about the year 1926 did the features of the post-war world begin clearly to emerge -- and not only in the sphere of politics. From about that date one began slowly to realize that the intellectual and artistic out-put of the previous seven years had been rather the last efforts of an old world, than the first struggles of a new. ("Last Words", XVIII, lxxi, 271)

It is the product of a period which is, in a sense, unique in history: its final importance is that it is an index to the thought of England between two wars.

II

The Criterion's sub-title, "A Literary Review", is not an entirely satisfactory one. Unless it is understood in the special sense which the Editor gives to the word 'literary', it is somewhat misleading. It was Eliot's purpose, not to devote the review entirely to literary interests, but to extend its cadre to include matters which were of concern to intelligent people with literary taste.

> A literary review should maintain the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequence also in politics and in private conduct; and it should maintain them without tolerating any confusion of the purposes of pure literature with the purposes of politics or ethics. . . .It is the function of the literary review to maintain the autonomy and disinterestedness of literature, and at the same time to exhibit the relations of literature--not to 'life' as something contrasted to literature, but to all the other activities, which, together with literature, are the components of life. ("Notes", I, iv, 421)

Understood in this way the term "literary", while it suggests a general nature, does not make for very rigid restrictions. It does make for some:

> It is desirable to maintain our designation of a "literary" review, because there is no other label which indicates so briefly the subjects to which this review is indifferent. The term serves to remind us that we are not concerned with matters of passing interest. . . .In the theory of politics, in the largest sense, the Criterion is interested, so far as politics can be dissociated from party politics, from the passions or fantasies of the moment, and from the problems of local and

> temporary importance. . . .In religious controversies, . . . the Criterion can. . .examine the ideas involved, and their implications, their consequences and their relations to the general problems of civilization; but at the point where intellectual analysis stops, and emotional conviction begins, our commission ends. (VII, iv, 3)

But these were restrictions which came to be honoured more in intention than in observation. There were to be political articles and controversies which were not dissociated from party politics, economic arguments whose interest was not primarily in root ideas but in specific plans, religious arguments whose purpose was not to examine the ideas involved but to convert. And the Editor, aware of the gradual but fundamental change which was coming over his Review, felt no desire to prevent this evolution, although, indirectly, he suggested an explanation:

> He [Gosse] was interested in literature for literature's sake; and I think that people whose interests are so strictly limited, people who are not gifted with any restless curiosity and not tormented by the demon of thought, somehow miss the keener emotions which literature can give. And, in our time, both temporary and eternal problems press themselves upon the intelligent mind with an insistence which they did not seem to have in the reign of King Edward the seventh. (X, xli, 716)

If, however, we agree to use "Literary" on the Editor's own terms, there remains "Review". While it is true that The Criterion is at least partly a literary review in that it maintains a constant concern with the general problems fundamental to art, with the maintenance of literary standards, and with the principles and practice of criticism, it might, by virtue of the very considerable

amount of original imaginative literature it published, be better called a magazine. With the growth of specialization during the last century, the title of "review" has greatly increased in dignity and impressiveness, while the term "magazine" has, since _Blackwood's_ and _The Gentleman's_, fallen upon evil days. Nevertheless, there is a distinction which is of enough use to warrant retention. And, were the title still a desirable one, _The Criterion_ might well have laid claim to be called a magazine. A list of the poets whom it published would include the most important then living: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Valery, Edith Sitwell, Gibson, Macleish, Frederic Prokosch, Read, John Gould Fletcher, Richard Church, F. S. Flint, Hugh McDiarmid, Auden, Spender, MacNeice, L. St. Senan, W. J. Turner, some unpublished poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and many others, who have since belied their early promise. It published, from time to time, the richly imaginative letters and diary fragments of Arnold Bennett, Fanny Marlow, Zoe Hawlet, Feiron Morris, and some unpublished extracts from Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, Lionel Johnson, and Hopkins. A partial list of those who contributed short stories, fragments of plays, imaginary dialogues between real but long dead people, would read like a role of the great of England, and indeed of a part of continental Europe; Joyce, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Walter De LeMare, Aldington, Bennett, May Sinclair, Bonamy Dobree, Aldous Huxley, Ernst Wiechert, G. B. Angioletti, Liam O'Flaherty, Karel Kapek, Fanny Marlowe, Valentine Dobree, Orlo Williams, Conrad Aiken,

C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, Karlo Linati, Pantelieman Romanov, Ivan Bunin, G. A. Porterfield.

This is not to say, however, that The Criterion neglected the functions truly germane to a literary review. It was very far from being eclectic, but its facilities were open to any literary critic, regardless of his avenue of approach, whose work was thoughtful and serious. During its eighteen years of publication it carried articles representive of every important critical school. Rene Taupin (X, xli, 614 ff) traces the birth of Imagism from the discovery, by Remy de Gourmont and T. E. Hulme, that the basis of all literary art is vision. He shows that T. S. Eliot, following their lead, goes beyond the problem of style and words to the architecture of poetry, and reaches a position where the end of poetry may be defined as the enjoyment of pure contemplation. An article by T. E. Hulme, edited by Herbert Read, (III, xii, 485 ff) insists upon the importance, in language and style, of the visual analogy. Ezra Pound, Harold Monro, Richard Aldington, and F. S. Flint, all more or less frequent contributors, present, with varying degrees of explication, the Imagist theory. Croce and Barnes advanced the theories of Expressionism. The Psychological school has, among other representatives, I. A. Richards. The cause of more radical psychoanalysis in criticism is advanced by Herbert Read. The Neo-Classicists and Traditionalists are represented by Charles Maurras, Eliot, and some of the regular book

reviewers. Julien Benda exemplifies the approach of the philosophical critic. The historical and scholarly technique finds occasional expression in the book reviews. The Criterion even includes an article entitled "The Romantic Fallacy" (IV, iii, 521 ff) in which Mr. Middleton Murry, from one of the critical positions which he changed so frequently, finds Tolstoy guilty of the final sins of the Romantic.

There is waged throughout a lively controversy between Shakespearean critics. J. M. Robertson, in the manner of all purists, declares deadly war on all theories and theorists not based upon an acceptance of his ruthless "disintegration". J. Dover Wilson and L. C. Knights remain polite to each other, but the politeness does not become kindness. Wilson Knight "interprets" Shakespeare, and is sometimes a little unhappy about Professor Stoll, who, however, never appears in The Criterion. Middleton Murry takes advantage of every opportunity to write about Shakespearean tragedy as the expression of the great human experience upon which a religion superior to Christianity is constructed by Keats and Mr. Middleton Murry.

Although its tone was thoroughly serious throughout, The Criterion is not above its little joke when the appropriate occasion serves. Mr. Pound is a little too direct to be typical of The Criterion's humour:

> This volume (A. E. Housman: <u>The Name and Nature of Poetry</u>) reaches me with a friend's note stating that it has "upset a lot of the Cambridge critics". My first hope was, naturally, that the upset had occurred in the highest possible seas and at furthest possible from any danger of rescue. (XIII, li, 216)

More representative is a piece by Offa E. Freyberg (XVI, lxv, 655 ff). Under title "Poetai Cuiusdam Ignoti: Carmen Singulare", there appears an Horatian ode of forty-eight lines. There follows, under a note reading

> Owing to the obscurity of many of its allusions this ode requires very careful study. An exact and literal translation, without pretension to literary merit, will be of more assistance to the reader than a free rendering.

an English prose translation about twice the length of the original, beginning:

> O thou who formerly hast celebrated hollow men and a wasted land with loosened string of a prophetic lyre (a lyre) abstaining at once from received (metrical) feet and from the frequent turning-point of twice re-echoing syllables, now, from thee, friend, the Muses have demanded due punishments, to thee they present the scourge.

The "Introduction to the Notes", which covers three and a half pages, begins:

> This remarkable composition bristles with difficulty and may be expected to give a new fillip to the dying energies of classical editors. . . .The main questions, apart from points

> of detail, are these: Who wrote the poem? to whom is it addressed? When was it composed? and what was its occasion? Unfortunately the evidence for a comprehensive solution of these four cognate problems is exiguous in the extreme. . . .Internal evidence indicates that the poem itself is addressed to a professional poet, and (moreover) to a poet who took himself seriously (vaticinae lyrae), and who was, or regarded himself as, an innovator in verse-construction. . . .

and argues that the writer of the ode is a contemporary of Virgil and Horace. Thereafter come the "Notes", which, in smaller type, cover something more than four pages. Their character may be indicated by a few examples:

1. soluta. . .chorda. 'Loosened string', i.e. not properly or exactly tuned.
    homines cavos. 'Hollow' or 'concave men'. A poetical expression for empty, hungry men. Evidently refers to a poem about a famine, or perhaps a siege. Püff (Vierteljahrsschrift für lateinische Studien, cxl, 439) thinks that it refers to the men in the hollow interior of the wooden horse--a preposterous suggestion.

5-6. syllabarum bis resonantium frequente meta, 'the frequent turning-point of twice re-echoing syllables'. An evident allusion to the fondness of the Latin poets for assonance. E.g. Horace, Odes I, ii, 1. Iam satis terris nivis. . . Frequente meta is an obscure phrase. It probably means that the poet, using assonance, is (so to speak) always turning round and looking back at what he has said before. Püff will have it that meta means 'goal' (Markpfal), i.e. that the writers in question were aiming at assonance. Not a helpful contribution. Even less to the point is Stiggins's extraordinary suggestion that the whole phrase describes the use of rhyme--meta indicating the turning-point at which rhyme appears, i.e. at the end of a line. Rhyme was, of course, unknown to the ancients.

32. indociles. See Introduction supra. Whether the meaning is to taken as 'unteachable' or 'untaught' does not much matter. Probably the word is meant to carry both meanings at once. The offence, from the Muses's orthodox point of view, is equally great, whether the offending bard invented his own technique, or made such a mess of a derived technique that nobody else could make anything of it.

There is, of course, as has already been suggested, a great deal of explication of critical theory and exemplification of critical technique. It would be idle to present even a partial list, but the recurrent emergence of a concern with fundamental principles might be very sketchily indicated. Read (V, i, 117 ff), in a review, contends that despite its bulk in the scene of modern literature, the novel remains the most indefinite of literary forms, and that the criticism lavished upon it is still the most aimless of all such efforts. He protests that the first aim of all criticism should be to distinguish 'art' from 'beauty', and that while, consciously or unconsciously, this has been done in every other field, it has scarcely been attempted in prose fiction. Sean O'Faolain (X, xxxviii, 147 ff) believes that a distinction once properly made between prose and poetry--that the nature of prose is explicit and direct in comparison with the richer allusiveness of poetry-- is passing away. Prose is being increasingly used for poetic purposes, and he suggests that a more fruitful antinomy will be found between explicit prose and prose mainly suggestive. F. S. Flint (XII, xlviii, 474 ff) believes poetry to be a quality which may be found in both prose and verse, between which there is no fundamental distinction, both being "words in order". If there is a distinction between verse and prose, it is in the stronger rhythmn of the former. Julien Benda (I, iii, 227 ff) discusses the possibility of a philosophical novel which shall be truly philosophical and a true novel. Readers of novels are primarily interested in the life of the characters, but if

the idea is to be the living thing, the characters cannot have any real life. Aside, however, from considerations of popularity, the advantage of a truly philosophical novel would lie in making the idea intelligible and perceptible through incarnation.

Herbert Read (IV, iii, 581 ff) believes that a positive poetry is possible when the aesthetic intuitions of the poet co-operate with the current thought of philosophy, as in the cases of Lucretius and Dante. When a great poet has to work in opposition to the formulations of philosophy, as did Wordsworth, the result is a negative protest. This is, he thinks, the most useful distinction that can be made between classicism and romanticism, and it is a distinction, not of aesthetic values, but between modes of operation. Richard Church (IX, xxxv, 339 ff) holds all art to be the product of complementary moods, in the artist, of romanticism and classicism. T. Sturge Moore (IX, xxxvii, 591 ff), holding that the characteristic expression of classicism is regularity, and of romanticism, irregularity, contends that either of these can be effective only in contrast to the other. Since all the relations which constitute the beauty of a work of art are internal, it follows that every poem must include both regular and irregular elements, conformity to usage and departure from it.

Maritain (V, i, 7 ff) draws a primary antinomy for art between the supreme postulations of the essence taken in itself transcendent-

ally, and the conditions of existence called forth by this essence as it is realized in the finite. There are thus two ways in which art can commit suicide: the effort towards pure art, a concern with making being and in no way with beings, indifference to the conditions of existence--angelist suicide; a too easy resignation to its conditions of existence, the betrayal of the effort towards pure art--the sin of materialism. The Commentator (XII, xIvii, 247 ff) argues that while a work of art depends upon the ideas and the sensibility of its epoch, art must nevertheless aspire to the condition of the timeless, and the demands of the Marxist critics, who would bind art completely to the temporal, are fatal to its essence.

The Criterion's reviews of foreign periodicals represent an extraordinary accomplishment. The sections devoted to this task vary in length from a few pages, in some numbers, to as many as thirty, in others. The most important literary periodicals of France, Germany, Spain, Russia, the United States, Denmark, Italy, Holland, and Latin America are regularly searched for interesting features, which are summarized with great care.

But its most remarkable achievement as a literary review proper is to be found in its Book Reviews. It would be very difficult to name a single important book published or republished in England from 1922 to 1939 which was not reviewed in *The Criterion*. Furthermore, its reviews of American and European books, while certainly not laying any claim to a similar completeness, do represent

a very excellent selection from the total of foreign publications. As important as the selection of books for review was the selection of reviewers. Perhaps more noteworthy than even his procuring the articles of timely but lasting interest which distinguished The Criterion, was the Editor's feat in obtaining the services of easily the best critics in England, and some of the best in Europe and America. Even a very incomplete list would have to contain a very large number of names. In reviewing books whose interests were primarily literary, there were, besides the Editor and his early associate, Richard Aldington, among others I. A. Richards, Herbert Read, Charles Whibley, L. C. Knights, J. Dover Wilson, Edith Sitwell, F. S. Flint, Middleton Murry, Orlo Williams, H. Gordon Porteus, William Empson, Harold Monro, T. Sturge Moore, John Gould Fletcher, Osbert Burdett, Richard Church, Michael Roberts, W. H. Auden, Conrad Aiken, T. O. Beachcroft, Robert Sencourt, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, A. Desmond Hawkins, Michael Sayers, Humbert Wolfe, Mairo Praz, Peter Quennell, Tillotson, Grigson, Davies, Rayner Heppenstahl, George Barker. For books with historical, political and economic interests there were Kenneth Pickthorn, Hoffman Nickerson, A. L. Morton, Bonamy Dobree, A. L. Rowse, Douglas Jerrold, A. J. Penty, Viscount Lymington, G. Kitchen Clark, William King, H. W. J. Edwards, K. de B. Codrington, John Hayward. For religious, metaphysical, epistemological, and scientific works, there were M. C. D'Arcy, Paul Elmer More, Christopher Dawson, F. McEachran, Montgomery

Belgion, Charles Smyth, Alan Porter, Segar Thorold, Charles King, E. W. F. Tomlin.

But, to return to the adequacy of The Criterion's sub-title: however important the work which is properly indicated by 'A Literary Review' -- and, as I have suggested, it is of very great importance -- it can be argued that the real task of the magazine, the performance of which gave it its unique importance, lay in fields not necessarily implied by its caption. The Editor was concerned, not only with problems unique to the artist, but with the problems which were fundamental to the civilization of Europe, and this concern was increasingly reflected in his magazine. As the post-World War I world gradually became the pre-World War II world, the Editor and those of his contributors who were most representative of the 'tendency' of The Criterion came more and more to believe that, in the last analysis, all the problems of civilization resolved themselves into one basic problem: the fundamental dualism between matter and spirit. It is the contention of this paper that it is from the process by which it achieved this realization, and from the uncompromising position in which it embodied its answer to the antinomy of forces, that The Criterion finally derives its real importance.

III

III

In 1924 the problems of the post-War world presented themselves in an aspect very different to the one they assumed in 1930. Nevertheless, so centrally were the contributors to The Criterion concerned with the problems of Western civilization, that a controversy begun unintentionally in 1924 was continued with steadily increasing definitiveness to the end of the decade, and even then the virtual disposal of the contentious issues by The Criterion contributors was far in advance of the attitude taken by most of the rest of the literary world.

In 1924, Herbert Read, in a review of Irving Babbitt's Democracy and Leadership, (III, ix, 129 ff), which advocated the re-establishment of humanistic standards in place of the utilitarian, humanitarian, and romantic confusions everywhere prevalent, and argued the application of this criterion of the general intelligence to the sphere of politics, recognized that to Babbitt the measure of all things remained human, and, without then questioning whether the merely human would suffice, expressed his guarded approval of a method which would increase the possibility of order and continuity in a world driven by irresponsible individualism closer and closer to chaos and confusion. The next year Gorham B. Munson, in "The Socratic Virtues of Irving Babbitt" (IV, iii, 494 ff), argues that the source of the modern chaos is romanticism and its corollary, humanitarianism, and welcomes the opposition offered to this by the centralising influence of the new humanism. The

year before, Raymond Fernandez, in "The Experience of Newman", translated by Richard Aldington, (III, ix, 84 ff) showed that in maintaining the personal nature of thought Newman was in danger of having to reject inherited belief. Brought to the edge of the abyss of individualism, Newman constructed a bridge between rational thought and belief in God by insisting upon that very element which had originally created the danger: the personal nature of thought. Fernandez, after tracing Newman's epistemological adventure with obvious admiration, argues the possibility of the application of this theory of knowledge while excluding the mystical element. From this basis he would construct a valid humanist philosophy which should overcome the dangers of individualism, while not depending any longer upon a mystic faith which he thinks impossible in the contemporary world.

Frederic Manning, in "A French Criticism of Newman" (IV, i, 19 ff),objects to the argument of Fernandez upon the ground that the essential bridge by which Newman connects the rational with the idea of the divine is mystic, and that in consequence Newman's epistemology cannot validly be employed in a system which excludes the supernatural. In the same volume, Yeats, in "Our Need for Religious Sincerity" (IV, ii, 306 ff), pleads for the recognition that dogmatic Christianity offers the only possible solution to the problems that bedevil the modern world. It is interesting to note his anticipation of the controversy between the Christians and the

Humanists which was to follow:

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> Christianity must meet today not the criticism as its ecclesiastics seem to imagine of the School of Voltaire, but of that out of which Christianity itself in part arose, the School of Plato, . . .(p. 311)

Eliot, in a review of books by Middleton Murry, Hilaire Belloc, H. G. Wells, T. A. Lacey and Percy Gardner, (V, ii, 253 ff) is very unkind to such Protestants who, having lost their Christian faith, "cling desperately to the emotions which the old belief aroused-- because they find those emotions pleasant." He then applies this unkindness very directly to Mr. Murry, whose emotions, derived from Christianity, now continue to exist, he argues, without either theology or faith. This action served to give a new direction to the controversy for which the background had been preparing. Eliot had remarked, somewhat ambiguously, that he was "on the side of the intelligence", and had claimed M. Fernandez for the same side. Thus challenged to defend his position, Murry, in "Towards a Synthesis", (V, iii, 294 ff) contends that there are two modes of knowing: intuitive knowledge, which is qualitative, and intellectual knowledge, which is quantitative. Neither can be autonomous, nor can they function properly unless fused. This synthesis is to be achieved by Reason. Mr. Murry, after cursorily examining St. Thomas's thought, pays it the very high compliment of arguing that

only such another synthesis as that of St. Thomas is capable of saving civilization; but the essential element in St. Thomas -- Faith -- is, Mr. Murry argues, no longer possible, and without closely defining what the necessary substitute is to be, he suggests that it is to be found in the "utter loyalty to what is truly natural to the best in man" which emerges from a true reading of Shakespeare's tragedies, and which has since been understood by only Keats and, apparently, Mr. Murry.

It was not long before this invitation to battle was accepted. In "The Thomistic Synthesis and Intelligence", (VI, iii, 210 ff) which seriously questions the validity of Mr Murry's epistemology, and indeed doubts the possibility of arriving at any valid theory of knowledge while rejecting revelation, the Rev. M. C. D'Arcy upholds the possibility of faith even in the modern world, and maintains the lasting usefulness and validity of the Thomistic synthesis. Charles Mauran, in "Concerning Intuition" (VI, iii, 229 ff), attacks the same basic assumptions of Mr. Murry's theory of knowledge. He endorses Mr. Murry's claim for a synthesis as the only solution available, but from the negative postulate that we can know nothing of our relation to reality, and nothing of reality itself, argues that not a rational but a religious synthesis is required. In "A Note on Intelligence and Intuition" (VI, iv, 232 ff), Fernandez reenters the controversy with the acceptance, "through perhaps for reasons which Mr. Eliot would not accept", of Eliot's

classification of him "on the side of what we call the intelligence". The intuition has its function, but its testimony must be taken only in conjunction with the use of the intelligence. Fernandez however is unable to believe that religious faith can, in the modern world, have more than a merely practical and moral value. It should, he thinks, be possible to construct a humanist philosophy of values which should, for the individual, have the moral authority of a religion.

In "Mr. Middleton Murry's Synthesis" (VI, iv, 340 ff), Eliot too allows "that intuition must have its place in a world of discourse; there may be room for intuitions both at the top and at the bottom, . . ." but insists "that intuition must always be tested, and capable of test, in a whole of experience in which intellect plays a large part." He ridicules Murry's division of knowledge into qualitative and quantitative, gained by the intuition and the intelligence respectively. He warns that Mr. Murry is attempting to substitute poetry, which at its highest Mr. Murry regards as the expression of perfect knowledge of reality gained intuitively, for religion and philosophy, and that by so doing he falsifies not only religion and philosophy but also poetry. "Being on the side of intelligence" means, to Eliot, keeping separate the functions of religion, philosophy and poetry, and assigning to each its proper role in human affairs. Without committing himself completely, Eliot looks for a solution to St. Thomas and

Aristotle.

Without engaging directly in this controversy, Herbert Read, in a review of Leone Vivante's Notes on the Originality of Thought (VI, iv, 363 ff), shows that outside the pages of The Criterion there is support for Mr. Murry. Read quotes Vivante in strong support of the intuition:

> Therefore, far from being a particular aspect, or a secondary or subordinate moment of cognitive activity, intuition is the principle of knowing, as regards both political and scientific thought. In fact, the concept of intuition coincides with the concept of original value. (p. 367)

T. Sturge Moore, in an article shrewdly called "Towards Simplicity" (VI, v, 409 ff), argues that neither faith nor wisdom are knowledge. Knowledge must proceed experimentally, and both intuitive perceptions and intellectual conceptions are no more than the data and apparatus for the experimental progress of knowledge. Less mechanistic, but equally intransigent to the claims made for the intuition, Ernst Robert Curtius, in "Restoration of the Reason" (VI, v, 389 ff), laments the disappearance with the Middle Ages of the idea of the "European man", and places as the object of civilization the reconstruction of this idea. The only means by which this can be achieved is the use of the Reason. Neo-classicism, Neo-Thomism, and similar phenomena, are somewhat sweepingly regrrded as means, in themselves unimportant, but capable of great use to this

end. It is curious to observe that although the controversy had by this reached a fairly advanced stage, Herr Curtius did not concern himself explicitly with either the possibility or the desirability of a return to faith.

In "Concerning Intelligence" (VI, vi, 524, ff), Mr. Murry sets out to answer the objections of Father D'Arcy, Mm. Mauran and Fernandez, and Mr. Eliot, and goes very far indeed, although whether he meets their objections is at least doubtful. He lays claim to the sanction of St. Thomas for the intuition, thus interpreting St. Thomas's admission that there are right judgments by "co-naturality" and "inclination". He admits the validity of the function of the intelligence to separate, for purposes of better understanding, the functions of religion, philosophy and poetry, but refuses utterly to agree that there can be any validity in keeping them separate. He believes that they are but different modes of the same thing: the apprehension of reality, and that thus they can have real existence only together. This final fusion is one of the functions of that synthesising force which he has called the Reason. Then he makes for poetry some very large claims. He treats philosophy as the abstract conceptual apprehension of reality, religion as the emotional apprehension of reality, and suggests that poetry, being the consummation of these two modes of apprehension, and thus truly "natural" to man in the highest sense, is more than a substitute for religion and philosophy: it is a superior function to which men--

that is, Shakespeare, Keats and Mr. Murry--have developed, and which contains the possibility of a solution of all evil.

This claim was, it seems,--and understandably,--one which left the other controversialists for some time with nothing which they wanted to say. Instead the argument reverted once more for the time being to an examination of the humanist position. In a review of Clive Bell's Civilization (VIII, xxx, 161 ff), Eliot says that if heresy be taken philosophically as the over-emphasis of part of the truth, Mr. Bell is an heretic. But he goes on to say that if this book makes any converts to Bell's private form of humanism that will be of general advantage. Read, in "Humanism and the Absolute" (VIII, xxxi, 270 ff), analyses the humanism of Mr. Foerster, which is the least religious of the varieties of American humanism, and that of M. Julien Benda, which is a French humanism potentially religious. Both assumed the fundamental dualism of human nature. Foerster does not credit the possibility of super-human reality. In that his rational humanism seeks to create an order and authority, it is in that degree superior to the romantic humanism which leads to unrestricted individualism. Benda's humanism asserts the absolute difference between the finite and the Infinite, and thus leaves room for the entry of a superhuman authority. The absence of this possibility in Foerster's theory is, thinks Read, its final weakness. In "Is Humanism a Religion?" (VIII, xxxii, 382 ff), G. K. Chesterton is sympathetic to American humanism insofar as

it would introduce a principle of order into regnant chaos. But he too sees humanism as an heresy, and cannot believe that the rivalry between humanism and religion is a rivalry of equals:

> I believe it is a rivalry between the pools and the fountain; or between the firebrands and the fire . . . .Though he waved the torch very wildly, though he would have used the torch to burn down half the world, the torch really went out very soon. (p. 391)

He distrusts humanism or any other spiritual experiment outside the central spiritual tradition, because he has no faith in its ability to endure.

Paul Elmer More, in "An Absolute and an Authoritative Church" (VIII, xxxiii 699 ff), complains of the unreality and the disadvantage of offering men a single choice between absolute standards of belief and absolute irresponsibility of belief, and contends that in the light of modern science such a choice must of necessity throw reasonable men into absolute individualism, which is the way of spiritual death. He contends that, as usual, the truth lies in a mediatorial view: in an authoritative Church which, while not necessarily infallible, can yet serve as a principle of spiritual authority and as a refuge.

In a fundamental, if sympathetic, analysis, Allen Tate ("The Falacy of Humanism", (VIII, 33, 661 ff) reveals Foerster to be, in

spite of himself, a naturalist. Babbitt, he argues, is a "sound" man, but his soundness is guaranteed only by his personality. More, it is true, has a "religion", but his religion, being independent and without dogma, must remain incommunicable, and thus necessarily not a true religion. More, like the others, accepts morality for morality's sake, and his position is as much an outrage upon reason as the doctrine of art for art's sake. Tate's assumptions are

> . . .that Humanism is not enough, and that if the values for which the Humanist pleads are to be made rational, even intelligible, the prior condition of an objective religion is necessary . . . .Religion is the sole technique for the validating of values. (p. 678)

The previous year, in an essay published elsewhere ("The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" 1927), Eliot, from the premise that "Humanism is either an alternative to religion, or is ancillary to it", argues that an "humanistic" civilization such as that aimed at by Babbitt is not feasible, and comes

> . . .to the conclusion that the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view. For us, religion is Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church. (2)

Foerster, in "Humanism and Religion" (IX, xxxiv, 23 ff), considers the questions raised by Chesterton, Read and Eliot. He

(2) T.S.Eliot: Selected Essays,1917-32, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1934. P.391

rejects the analogy of the pool and the fountain on the ground that humanism does not derive from Christianity, but, like Christianity, from the culture of Greece.

It is not a religion, although it can, through the use of the "ethical imagination", include, and indeed, raise, the religious function: it is a philosophy of values. With its powers of endurance he is not concerned. To the objection that it possesses no necessary center to which disparates may adhere, he opposes the claim of the "inner authority". In "A Humanist Theory of Value" (IX, xxxv, 228 ff), Fernandez endorses Foerster's assertion that humanism is primarily a philosophy of values, but places greater emphasis than did Foerster upon its critical nature. In a review of Foerster's Humanism and America, Philip S. Richards (IX, xxxvii, 744 ff), welcomes humanism as a great improvement over romanticism, and is especially pleased that this new principle of order should come from America. He treats a little cavalierly the repeated assertions of Foerster and Babbitt that humanism must remain divorced from super-humanism, and anticipates an increasing religious bias. Much more categorical is Chrisopher Dawson ("The End of an Age" IX, xxxvi, 386 ff), who insists that the impulse of the Renaissance is bankrupt, that its humanism has been replaced by mechanism, and that the only healthy humanism is that of St. Francis and Dante.

> The choice that is actually before us is not between an individualistic humanism and some form of collectivism, but between a collectivism which is purely mechanistic and one which is purely spiritual. Spiritual individualism is incapable of standing out against the collectivism and standardization of modern life. It is only by a return to spiritual solidarity that modern civilization can recover the spiritual principle of which it stands so greatly in need. (p. 400)

The examination of humanism having, for the time being, seemed sufficiently exhaustive, it remained for the irrepressible Mr. Murry to re-open the phase of the discussion which had been suspended following his claim that the religious function was better filled by poetry. In a review of H. l'A Fausset's <u>The Proving of Psyche</u> (IX, xxxv, 349 ff), Mr. Murry equates Fausset's mysticism to his own "naturalism". The naturalist is not as tolerant of the intermediary humanist as are the super-naturalists:

> Shoulder your burden, says Mr. Babbitt sternly; trust in the ethical will, the veto-power. But that is all moral bombast, impressive perhaps in a class-room, but singularly futile in the life that is lived. (p. 351)

He is not, however, very specific, either as to the nature of M. Fausset's mysticism or the nature of his own naturalism. Eliot, in a review of Mr. Murry's book <u>God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology</u> (IX, xxxv, 333 ff), defines Mr. Murry's religion of "metabiology" as a slightly disguised transcendantal form of naturalism. Of the "metabiology" itself, he complains that to him it is meaningless. Mr. Murry, while apparently unconcerned

with defining "metabiology", is not averse to showing the implications of his "naturalism". ("The Detachment of Naturalism" IX, xxxvii, 642 ff). Writing of M. Fernandez he says:

> What he calls Humanism . . .we call Naturalism . . . M. Fernandez sees clearly enough that morality must be detached from religion; and he satisfactorily establishes that morality is autonomous. (p. 658)

Mr. Murry then proceeds to assign morality to the spere of politics, and to abstract from religion the purely spiritual, which he calls Naturalism. What is then left of religion--forms, which he thinks empty; worship, which he thinks barbarous; authority, which he thinks usurped and extraneous--Mr. Murry is willing, almost eager, to disregard. Spirituality thus being refined to a quintessence, Mr. Murry shows us what it means for poets to be the true legislators of mankind:

> Spirit is that which does not belong to the flux; it is the eternal and impersonal residue of being which can contemplate the separation of existence from itself, and is itself only when that separation is accomplished. Once separate, it is the true friend of existence, and its only disinterested one. (P. 659)

In an essay published elsewhere ("Second Thoughts on Humanism" 1929), Eliot recapitulates the fundamental objections to humanism which have emerged from the controversy. As in the earlier instance, the most comprehensive of Mr. Murry's claims did not receive

the attention of a direct reply, but are included by implication in the argument which is opposed to humanism. In this essay Eliot bases his position upon Hulme, whom he quotes;

> I hold the religious conception of ultimate values to be right, the humanist wrong. From the nature of things, these categories are not inevitable, like the categories of time and space, but are equally objective. In speaking of religion, it is to this level of abstraction that I wish to refer. I have none of the feelings of nostalgia, the reverence for tradition, the desire to recapture the sentiment of Fra Angelico, which seems to animate most modern defenders of religion. All that seems to me to be bosh. What is important, is what nobody seems to realize—the dogmas like that of Original Sin, which are the closest expression of the categories of the religious attitude. That man is in no sense perfect, but a wretched creature, who can yet apprehend perfection. It is not, then, that I put up with the dogma for the sake of the sentiment, but that I may possibly swallow the sentiment for the sake of dogma. (3)

IV

In 1923, in the section devoted to a review of German periodicals, the reviewer suggested that the death of the German middle classes which was following the post-War depression, would in the long run prove the death of German culture. The implications of this idea were, he thought, the same as the implications to be found in the general dominance of German thought by the Spenglerian idea. Two years later, Henri Massis ("Defense of the West", Part One, IV, ii, 224 ff, Part Two, IV, iii, 476 ff), introduced in a

(3) Selected Essays, p.402

passionate defense of Western civilization, an offensive directed against its two most dangerous enemies: externally, the growing influence of Asia and America; internally, the sapping of European vitality through just such decadence as he represented Spenglerism to be. The vast and impersonal forces inimical to Europe were, he argued, intrenched in Russia and Germany. The essence of Western life is the will to be, that of the East, the search for an escape from being. The central idea for Europe is the integrity of personality; for the East it is Nirvhana, the merging of the personal ego in the All. The mediaeval idea of Christendom must be replaced by another such idea, perhaps of Europe, if civilization is to endure.

It is a powerful, if ruthless, argument, and it sets itself inalterably against the influence of the East. It did not go unanswered. In a very long letter to the Editor (V, i, 100 ff), Vasudeo B. Metta contends that far from being inimical to the civilization of Europe, the East is its very matrix. All that is at the basis of the accomplishment of Europe--Greek and Latin culture, Christianity, the idea of authority--derives eventually from the East. That which is destroying Europe--individualism, mechanism, naturalism, the fatal idea of Progress--is foreign to the East, and is the indigenous, if bastard, produce of Europe.

Now tradition is the soul of the race to which the artist belongs,

> and if the poet or artist discards the soul of his race and wants to create within his own little lifetime another tradition, he is bound to fail: for it is like one cell of a body telling its companion cells that it will separate itself from them and live its own life!...The majority of artists today would consider it a mortal insult if they were told that their work resembled that of someone else. The great truth, therefore, which the East can teach the West is--Individualism lowers, but tradition exalts, art. (p. 105)

Less fundamental and less categorical is an article entitled "The Meeting of the East and the West" (VII, iv, 325 ff), by Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah. He is the conventional apologist, who makes a long and superficial list of the contributions of the East to the West, and minimizes the differences between them. John Gould Fletcher ("East and West", VII, iv, 306 ff), in opposing M. Massis, approaches the problem from a radically different point of view. He argues that the great historic possibility of the mediaeval period in Europe, the spiritual and secular unification of Europe as an entity under a single authority, was destroyed permanently by the failure, on the one hand, of the Papacy during the schism of 1309, and, on the other hand, of the Holy Roman Empire with the defeat of the Ghibbeline cause. Fletcher finds it impossible any longer to believe in Europe. He sees the emergence upon the yet amorphous polity of the world of three crescent forces, America in the West, Russia in the East, and, between these, the still indeterminate British Commonwealth of Nations. These, either severally or collectively, will produce the new civilization. None of them are European, although all of them derive in a measure from Europe.

It is with Spengler's formula and even with Spengler's accent that Mr. Fletcher declares the death of Europe.

These and similar controversialists came to center their opposition to and support of the European Idea upon particular philosophies of history, such as the Spenglerian, Marxist, Christian, and Mediterranian. The answer given to Fletcher's Spenglerism by H. J. Massingham (IX, xxxvii, 731 ff), may be regarded as representative in tone, if not quite representative of the best in content, of the arguments opposed to the idea that European civilization was dying.

> Doctor Spengler's thesis is an extraordinary compound of metaphysic and morphology...To the concept of mechanical progress Spengler stitches on that of mechanical decay....The wise men from Plato through Descartes and Tylor to Spengler have fuddled us with their abstractions. They have fuddled us to such an extent that we can't tell the difference between assumptions bombinating in the void and inferences based upon historical evidences....Spengler's contention, of course, embodies a half truth and so is more deceptive than naked falsehood...To subserve nomad chieftain preceded the settled dynastic ruler, ...This is unquestionably a reversal of the true historical facts. Abraham was of Ur before he went treasure-hunting in Canaan; ...the historical verdict on Spenglerism is that it is contrary to experience; the ethical verdict which relegates all such externalized philosophies to the dust-bin is that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you". (pp. 731-7)

Long before such matters had become the general concern of English intellectual circles, the related problems of Communism and Facism were the concern of <u>The Criterion</u>. At first this concern was

not sufficiently immediate to give rise to open controversy, and was limited to the Commentary of the Editor. Taking as his point of departure Trotsky's Problems of Life, Eliot says:

> A revolution staged on such a vast scale, amongst a picturesque, violent and romantic people; involving such disorder, rapine, assassination, starvation, and plague, should have something to show for the expense: a new culture horrible at the worst, but in any event fascinating ....It is not justified by the dreary picture...Mr. Trotsky proudly presents as the outcome of his revolution;... (III, x, 163) (4)

A year later, with the point of departure being supplied by a speech of Mr. Baldwin, Eliot says:

> ...the Roman Empire does concern us, ...The old Roman Empire is an European idea; the new Roman Empire is an Italian idea, and the two must be kept distinct. ...The general idea is found in the continuity of the impulse of Rome to the present day. It suggests Authority and Tradition, certainly, but Authority and Tradition (especially the latter) do not necessarily suggest Signor Mussolini....It is in fact the European idea — the idea of a common culture of Western Europe. (IV, ii, 22)

And again, two years later, the occasion being the receipt of a publication called The British Lion, the organ of the British Fascists,

(4) It may be observed in passing that this passage contains a striking example of the unfair verbalism which Eliot was sometimes prone to indulge: "It remains only to observe...that his portrait shows a slight resemblance to the face of Mr. Sidney Webb."

> The accusations made by _The British Lion_ against British Communists may all be true, and the aims set forth in the statement of policy are wholly admirable. _The Lion_ wishes to support "His Majesty the King, his heirs and successors, the present Constitution, the British Empire and the Christian Religion." These are cardinal points.
>
> We would only suggest that the British Lion might very well uphold these things without dressing itself up in an Italian collar. It is not our business to criticise Fascism, as an Italian regime for Italians, a product of the Italian mind. But is _The British Lion_ prepared to accept _Le fascisme integral_? What of the Fascist ideas of political representation, which may be excellent, but which hardly square with "the present Constitution" which _The Lion_ is sworn to defend? It seems unfortunate that a nationalist organization should have had to go abroad for its name and its symbol. (VII, i, 98)

On the occasion of the General Election of 1929, Eliot said:

> The extreme of democracy--which we have almost reached--promises greater and greater interference with private liberty; but despotism might be equally despotic. There is a difference between democracy and self-government. In complete democracy, everyone in theory governs everyone else, as a kind of compensation for not being allowed to govern himself ....A rational government would be one which acted for itself in matters concerning which "the people" is too ignorant to be consulted(and would not pretend otherwise); which acted for the people in matters in which the people does not know its own mind; which did as little governing as possible; and which left as large a measure of individual and local liberty as possible....if, as we believe, the indifference to politics as actually conducted is growing, then we must prepare a state of mind toward something other than the facile alternative of communist or fascist dictatorship. (VIII, xxxii, 379-80)

By 1928, the phenomena of fascism and communism had gained a more immediate interest, and their discussion no longer had to be

limited to the Commentary of the Editor. In an article entitled "The Literature of Fascism" (VIII, xxxi, 280 ff), Eliot, who is "interested in political ideas, but not in politics," says:

> What really matters is whether Fascism is the emergence of a new political idea, or the recrudescence of an old one, that may infect the whole of Europe as Parliamentarism infected it in the nineteenth century, or whether it is purely local. (p. 281)

He finds that as practical ways of ordering a nation both Bolshevism and Fascism are of interest, but in their pretence to a kind of supernatural faith they are humbug. A complete democracy, such as communism professes to achieve, must be either monstrous or a delusion. What concepts of real value there are in fascism, exist in a much more palatable form in French Royalism. Between these latter two there are, further, two central differences: The French oppose the idea of consecrated royalty and the continuity of royal succession to the Italian idea of a personal and uninheritable dictatorship; the idea of decentralization and local responsibility to the idea of a centralization modelled upon that of Napoleon. Again, although he does not explicitly say so, it may be inferred that Eliot regards the Christianity of French royalty as necessary, that of Italian fascism as adventitious. Finally,

> The function of politial theory is not to form a working Party,

> but to permeate society and consequently all parties...but sound political thought in one country is not to be built on political facts in another country...Both Russian Communism and Italian Fascism seem to me to have died as political ideas, in becoming political facts. (p. 290)

This essay would seem to have been accompanied by a private invitation to representatives of communist and fascist thought in England to present, in The Criterion, their alternative interpretations. A. L. Rowse, in "The Literature of Communism" (VIII, xxxii, 422 ff), insists that the idea of communism is not dead. He accounts by historical inference for the failure of England to draw the available political and social sustenance from Marxixm, but argues that with the continued decline of the efficiency of capitalist enterprise the relevance of Marxist thought to the English situation will become more apparent. J. S. Barnes, in "Fascism" (VIII, xxxii, 445 ff), is more explicit in his claims for Fascism. To him, it represents a new synthesis based upon the Roman tradition of authority, both political and ecclesiatic. Its central idea is the repudiation of Materialism and of any Naturalist theory of the State. For the liberal idea of the Sovereignty of the People, it substitutes the sovereignty of the State Machine. Liberty becomes not a right, but the complement of Law. Its ends are consequently to be regarded as ideal, but its practice is, of necessity,--and this is a point of pride, --entirely pragmatic. He rejects Eliot's contention that it is sterile by insisting that its truly revolutionary character is to be

found in its change of spiritual evaluation.

In his answer to these last two arguments ("Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" VIII, xxxiii, 682 ff), Eliot repeats that to him fascism and communism seem, as ideas,to be thoroughly sterilized. He defines a revolutionary idea as one which requires a reorganization of the mind, and contends that fascism and communism have become the natural ideas of thoughtless people. This he regards as at least a suggestion that the two doctrines are merely variations of the same doctrine, and even that they are merely variations of the existing state of affairs. Nothing, he says, pleases people more than to go on thinking what they have always thought, and at the same time imagine that they are thinking something new and daring: it combines the advantage of security with the delight of adventure.

It would be interesting to know whether Eliot thought that this essay would end the controversy. If he did, he was to be undeceived. In returning to the attack, Mr. Barnes ("Fascism: A Reply" IX, xxxiv, 70 ff) is particularly concerned to refute the suggestion that fascism and communism are similar. He emphasizes three points of difference: economic, insofar as communism is socialistic, while fascism encourages private enterprise; religious, insofar as communism is materialistic and atheistic, and fascism is Christian; social, insofar as bolshevism would destroy the family, while fascism emphasizes its importance. Mr Rowse ("Marxism: A Reply" IX, xxxiv, 84 ff) is equally indignant at the suggestion

that there is a basic similarity between fascism and his own theory. To him, the basic differences are to be found in that communism aims at transcending the state and at achieving a classless society, while fascism means the glorification of groups and classes; that communism is international and fascism national. He implies a further difference: for his own theory he again makes the claim of a revolutionary character, while it may be inferred that he subscribes to Eliot's opinion that fascism is sterile.

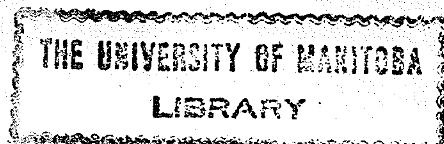
With the rejoinders of Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse, the avowed controversy came to an end. It is thus very curious to find, the next quarter, an article by Mr. Rowse ("The Theory and Practice of Communism" IX, xxxvi, 451 ff) which, while not explicitly polemical, re-states with few differences the contentions already twice presented. He again maintains that communism differs essentially from fascism, and that it is revolutionary: that it is in fact a new Renaissance, capable of producing a new Humanism. Whether the argument here is more fundamental and more convincing than in its earlier contexts is doubtful, but, whether it or another source provided the stimulus, the Commentary for the next quarter (IX, xxxvii, 587 ff) abandons the idea that communism is sterile. Instead, Eliot pays it the very considerable compliment of considering it as a serious alternative to Christianity. His point of departure is an expression of indignation with the Labour Government

for displaying its mastery of the "great British instinct for Compromise" and he observes that it is becoming increasingly evident that there are only two political classes: those who have in common the spirit of compromise and those who have in common the spirit of principle. The danger is thus that public men will be divided into "trimmers" and men of principle, and

> ...that men of principle,...must become either extreme Tories or extreme Communists, with (no doubt) a respect for each other that they cannot feel for the trimmers, and perhaps in consequence a sense of moral relief at having something positive to fight. There is a very practical sense in which it is possible to "Love one's enemies"; and the Tory of tomorrow and the communist of tomorrow will perhaps love each other better than they can love the politicians. (p. 590)

The compliment of serious opposition, however, is not extended to the vegetarian socialism of Mr. Shaw,) the other Fabians, and the Labour Party:

> ...the old contrast between capitalism and socialism is hardly going to suffice for the next forty years. It is not true that everyone will be born into the world either a little Capitalist or a little Socialist; and some persons even suspect that Socialism is merely a variant of Capitalism, or vice versa; and that the combat of Tweedledum and Tweedledee is not likely to lead to any millenium. (X, xli, 714-15)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V

It is not difficult to determine in what direction *The Criterion's* own bias turned. From its inception, for example, one of its chief features had been the historical interpretations published by it with more or less regularity. It would not be true to say that all of these interpretations tended in the same direction; from time to time, but not with any marked frequency, articles or reviews deviated from the main tendency. But they were deviations: the tendency was unmistakable. In the first volume, in a series of two articles, Charles Whibley examined the Whig-history interpretation of Bolingbroke, and declared it false and misleading. To him Bolingbroke was the highest expression of the Age of Anne, and he suggested that in Bolingbroke's view to history modern students might find a fruitful approach. For Bolingbroke, history was primarily a training in private and public morals, and, like all Tories, he was firmly convinced that private morals could not be separated from public morals. To him the two worst forms of government were absolute monarchy, which is tyranny, and absolute democracy, which is tyranny and anarchy both. Whibley draws, points, and underlines the moral: to Bolingbroke, the first was an historical reality, the second only a nightmare; to us, the second is a dismal reality. F. W. Bain ("1789", III, ix, 43 ff), rejects the conventional historical explanation of "The Terror" as an irrelevant, if deplorable, by-product of the French Revolution. Instead, he uses "The Terror" as the only possible explanation of the Revolution itself. His theory is that the cause of Revolution is not

oppression, but, on the contrary, the growing prosperity of one class in the realm in proportion to the whole of the realm, provided that that class is not the governing class. The resulting disproportion between the share of the material wealth of the nation which is controlled by the prospering class and that class's share in the distribution of political power, gives rise to its crescent political ambition. This new ambitious mood, backed by the material potency of the emergent group within the state, is the true cause of revolution. Bain supports his hypothesis by reference to the facts of the French Revolution. The old regime was not, on the eve of the Revolution, oppressive: on the contrary, it was notoriously lax in the first business of government, the maintenance of order. The masses who were incited to revolt were not, except for a single bad winter, suffering unusual privation; they were in better economic circumstances than they had been a decade or even a generation earlier. The cause is to be found in the condition of the urban middle classes. These, carried along by the wave of new industrialism and new methods of finance, were coming into possession of an amount of real wealth totally disproportionate to their share in political influence. In France, the middle classes were not a separate Estate of the Realm. They wished to be, and they wished to be the dominant Estate. The result was "The Terror"--planned, calculated, instigated by the representatives of the middle classes; executed by them through the agency of the mob.

By no means all of the Tory interpretations of history which appeared in The Criterion were formal essays on history as such. Much more of this view may be gathered from the Book Reviews. Charles H. Smyth, in a review of Van Tyne's "England and America: Rivals in the American Revolution" (VII, iv, 426 ff), loses all patience with the Whig apologists for the role played by England in the American Revolution. The Whigs, he says, in their treasonous unsupport of George III, approved the issue of the Revolutionary ways, not because it marked the triumph of the principles of the American Revolution, which, if they had understood, they would have cordially disliked, but because it vindicated the principles of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. The political results which the "Venetian Oligarchy", beaten by the King at their own game of Parliamentary corruption, had hoped to achieve by an extension of the franchise, had been achieved for them by the Continental Army with the assistance of the European powers. They therefore dropped the cause of electoral reform, and did not again take it up until they found themselves once more in opposition. Their attitude was profoundly cynical: Smyth shows that it has been the business of their historians to justify it, and to transform what was merely a practical issue into an essentially moral one. A year later, writing on F. J. C. Harnshaw's "Augustan Age" (VIII, xxxi, 33 ff), he argues that since it is ultimately impossible for an infidel to be a true Tory, and since Bolingbroke was, he says, an infidel, the Tory tradition passed

directly from Anne to George III. He then argues that the tide of Christian Toryism is crescent, and sees, in the Thomism of fashionable French intellectual circles, in the trend from sceptism to credulity the science of Europe and America, in the waning of the recently overweening materialism of the West, significant manifestations of a re-affirmation of the old political philosophy. Later (IX, xxxiv, 134 ff), in arguing the applicability of the Tory philosophy to the modern situation, he maintains that there is nothing so radical as the reactionary, and that nothing less than a radical solution can be helpful to the modern chaos.

In a review of Keith Feiling's "British Foreign Policy, 1670-72" (X, xxxix, 361 ff), Kenneth Pickthorn, the Cambridge historian, sides with Feiling in a new kindness for Charles II. The truth about Charles's motives in the Dutch Wars, far from being, as the Whigs would have it, his own ignorance and cupidity, is to be found, Pickthorn argues, in an attitude towards traditional English policy, and towards England's sea-power, which is evidence of true statesmanship. Michael de la Bedoyere (XV, lx, 535 ff), contends that had there been no George III to fight the unholy Fox-North coalition, and so to break the fall of the "Venetian Oligarchy", the eighteenth century could not have passed into the nineteenth without a catastrophe in England comparable to the French Revolution. Far from agreeing with the Whig verdict of the personal character of George III, Bedoyere insists that had not George, during the wave of popularity that followed his defeat of the Oligarchy, proved to

the nation that a King could be a good man and an example of religion and decency to his people, it would have been impossible for his granddaughter to root the monarchy in the profound and affectionate loyalty of her people.

It is not to be supposed that "the Criterion group" found its Toryism in a naive and inherited orthodoxy. Rather, it arrived at Toryism after a close scrutiny of the general applicability of the principles of a philosophy of history. A. L. Morton (XII, xlix, 703 ff), himself much more fundamentally opposed to the Tory position than were the inheritors of 19th century Whiggism, presents—and accedes to—its minimum claim:

> Tory history, in short, is the product of capitalism in decline, when the decent coverings which hid the antagonism of classes are wearing thin, just as Whig history was the product of capitalism at its most prosperous, when the rapid expansion of the world market and the plunder of the Colonial areas masked these antagonisms, and when it was still, objectively, a progressive force. Of the two, the former view is the more realistic and therefore the more historical, ...The philosophy common to all Tories...is based, ...in a belief that the nature of man is unchanging. That therefore existing authority must be maintained, and that therefore the Revolution must be immediately suppressed whenever it shows itself. (p. 705)

The Criterion's bias emerges also from its characteristic treatment of people who are usually, and with some looseness, called "enlightened"progressives". For example, it held symposia on people like Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. The review was not unfair in its selection of contributors to these symposia. Two of the four who discussed Shaw were H. J. Laski and A. L. Rowse.

Mr. Laski says of Mr. Shaw that he does supremely well his job of criticising society, and that he does well enough his job of arguing that the basis of civilization is moral, but that he fails in his attempt to establish the view that equality of income is in itself a sufficient remedy for all social evils. Mr. Rowse, not concerning himself with whatever inadequacies there may be in Mr. Shaw's work, waxes enthusiastic over "the greatest social critic of his age". Less kind, and obviously more sympathetic to the position of The Criterion itself, are Kenneth Pickthorn and Father D'Arcy. Pickthorn, as becomes a Cambridge gentleman, is very polite to Mr. Shaw, but suggests, and indeed formulates the suggestion,--still very politely,--that Mr. Shaw is intellectually a little dishonest. D'Arcy defines him as a Victorian intellectual totally incapable of transcending unrelieved materialism. D. S. Mirsky and Christopher Dawson write upon Mr. Wells. Mirsky, after establishing Mr. Well's literary incompetence, finds the source of his attitude in three characteristics: a profound philistinism, a self-satisfied ignorance, and a hatred of democracy. Dawson argues that Mr. Wells worships organization which leads to nothing except the heightening of whatever merits and defects already exist: a worship, in short, of organization for its own sake. He declares Mr. Wells's heroes to be the type of the modern economic superman: the Fords and Rockefellers of Mr. Wells's constellation are forgiven their sins because of their "success".

But the bias of The Criterion does not need to be sought in

the highest common denominator of "the Criterion group". The statements of the Editor in his Commentary are explicit enough. When the Labour Party, for the sake of a temporary numerical advantage, proposed to abolish the form in which the Universities were represented in Parliament, Eliot called it amazing stupidity, and urged that far from abolishing this form of representation it ought to be increased, and that more members of Parliament ought to be responsible to genuine interests with which they were intimately acquainted, rather than to mixed constituencies which they hardly knew (X, xl, 481 ff). In commenting upon a proposal by a Tory that a more intensive effort be made to revitalise English agriculture, the Commentator said that the only hope for a solution of the English political and social disease was in a Toryism, which, though not necessarily distinct for Parliamentary purposes, should refuse to identify itself philosophically with that "Conservatism" which has been overrun, first by deserters from Whigism, and later by businessmen. For such a Toryism not only a doctrine of the relation of the temporal and spiritual in matters of Church and State is essential, but even a religious foundation for the whole of its political philosophy (XI, xlii, 65 ff). Like all Tories, Eliot was suspicious of wide-spread emotional enthusiasms which manifest themselves in political activity. In discussing the "Popular Front" movement against Fascism, he warns that

Our Liberal practitioners have so hypnotised themselves with

> the bogey of Fascism that they seem to be, like Tibetan initiates, in a fair way to give it form and activity. These professes realists who so far surrender principles as to join in a "Popular Front" which is meaningless unless it is an extreme Left Front, will have only themselves to thank if they find that they have conjured up a spirit which will not go back intothe bottle, and which will be an Unpopular Front. (XVI, lxxiv, 474)

Again, he says that the fundamental evil is the increasing urbanization of the English mind. It is not enough, he argues, to read Wordsworth and to take an occasional tramp in the country: it is necessary that the greater part of the population, of all classes, should be settled in the country, and dependent upon it.

It is from this angle of approach, and with such a common philosophy of history as has been suggested, that The Criterion interested itself in the new form which the problems besetting European civilization took with the end both of the decade and of the period of unrestricted economic and industrial expansion which followed the War. The first sphere to reflect the effects of Bankruptcy was the economic, and contributors to The Criterion were, from the beginning of the new decade to the cessation of its publication, concerned with an analysis of the disease and an examination of proposed or ppssible remedies. A. J. Penty ("Means and Ends", XI,xlii, 1 ff), attributes the destruction of the balance between production and consumption to the exclusive preoccupation of industrial capitalism with means, to the neglect of ends. The only salvation lies in a re-emphasis upon final ends, a re-emphasis which would be marked by a cessation of the practice of re-investing surplus income in new productive enterprise. Instead, such surplus would be used for final purchase, presumably--and by preference--of works of art and the other amenities of life. The techniques of industrialism must be subjected to control: the use of machinery would be permissible only when it was not accompanied by an injurious effect upon the status of the crafts and the dignity of labor. Leon de Poncins ("France's Fight Against Americanisation", XII, xlviii, 339 ff) sees the rise of two great forces, both foreign to Europe., in Russia and America. With the Russian he is less concerned than with the American, to which he attributes the impulses to conquer Europe. Against this encroaching spirit of vast indust-

rial organization, Europe has no better bulwark than France. The American industrial spirit is foreign both to the physical character of France and to the fundamental nature of her culture, and because of the unconscious perception by Frenchmen of this antinomy, industrialism on the American model has made less progress in France than in the other great powers of Europe. The type of mentality which leads to the acceptance of the abuse of the machine must lead, unless checked, to the destruction of European civilization. Europe must look, for the means by which this mentality is to be checked, to the Middle Ages. Rolf Gardiner, in a review of the Viscount Lymington's "Horn, Hoof and Corn (XII, xlvi, 134ff), agrees that "the survival of Occidental civilization can only be secured by a vigorous policy of restoring rural life and craft."

It must not be imagined that in economic interpretation The Criterion is any more of a closed corporation than in other fields. Ample opportunity is given by it for the exposition of their views by writers who seek the answer in attitudes very foreign to the Tory. Ezra Pound ("Murder by Capital", XII, xlix, 585 ff; "The Individual in his Milieu", XV, lviii, 30 ff; "For a New Paideuma" XVII, lxvii, 205 ff) argues with great vigour, if with a fine disdain of logical consequence, that all of the fundamental evil of social organisms derives from the economic dislocation caused by industrial factories requiring a greater return of purchasing power for their produce than they add to the real wealth

of the community. His remedy is equally uncomplicated: Major C. H. Douglas and Signor Mussolini. F. S. Flint (SVII, lxvi, 1ff) while offering an economic solution to the economic problem, has a grudge to settle with the proffessional economists. His article bristles with formidable diagrams and algebraic equations, although it is to be doubted whether it is calculated to cause any very real discomfiture to the economists whom he attacks. In the end, Mr. Flint's solution has the same encouraging freedom from complexity as Mr. Pound's: public ownership of the means of production and the abolition of profit will solve all problems, although Mr. Flint is, somewhat obscurely, conscious that he is not a socialist. Montgomery Butchart ("Marx and Proudhon," XVII, lxviii, 445 ff) analyses the fundamental difference between communism and anarchism. He sees employer, like employee, crushed ruthlessly under a palaeolithic money system, and in this sees the ultimate invalidity of the Marxist theory of the class struggle. Proudhon, he thinks, was right: only social and economic anarchism is capable of removing the curse of capitalist industrialism. Herbert Read (XVII, lxix, 767 ff) takes the same view as Mr. Butchart. He finds two distint doctrines in the history of socialism, the authoritarian principles of Marx and Engels, and the socialist lebertarianism of Proudhon and Bakunin. Read renounces his early affiliations with Marxism, and looks to anarchism to give birth to a new and enduring civilization.

But <u>the Criterion's</u> admission to its pages of these and similar controversialists, while a tribute to its freedom from provincialism of ideology, does not obscure its own predilections. The Commentator suggests the essence of its own proper attitude when he quotes with approval from Father Demant:

> Christianity repudiates a position which allows an <u>economic system</u> to be a form of government, i.e. to determine what human desires should or should not be satisfied. (XI, xlii, 272)

It is not averse to publishing, with Editorial approval, somewhat erratic aberrations from its norm,--witness the manifesto of Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu: <u>Back to Flesh and Blood: A Political Program ms.</u> (XII, xlvii, 185 ff), which, from the assumption that there are two necessary components of life, the individual and the community, argues that since industrialism pits the one against the other, it is tyranny. From this, on the premise that social happiness depends on these two elements being reconciled, the programmists argue that in the interests of concrete human personality, nations and classes must go. <u>The Criterion</u> in this, merely shows the indulgence of the wise for the overly-enthusiastic youngster of good will. The Commentator is nothing if not serious. Commenting upon the Editorial view of <u>The Times</u> that there is no relation between politics and private morals, he urges that the most immediate need of democracy is a science of economics and politics capable of being reduced to a few moral essentials, upon which the electorate can base its decision. This

he admits would make a moral basis of education an absolute necessity, and indeed he urges that unless popular education is moral education it is very dangerous to the state.

It is this utter seriousness which characterises the most representative discussions of the problem. F. McEachran (XII, xlvi, 144 ff) argues that the twin operating forces of the nineteenth century, liberal individualism and scientific research, have created a situation whose very existence makes further deterioration inevitable. The fundamental problem arises "from the self-assertion of the relative, from the decary, that is, of the older unities,". He sees, as the only practicable solution, the creation of a single European super-national State, governed by an European aristocracy. Hoffman Nickerson ("War, Democracy and Peace," XIV, lvi, 351 ff) predicts the failure of the League of Nations because of its inability to provide any strong centre which can offset the chief moral force of our time, national patriotism. He regards the ideal solution as the religious reunion of Christendom, but fears that the progress of this idea is too slow to prevent the impending catastrophe, and is in consequence despondent almost to the point of despair.

But Nickerson's defeatism is not representative of "<u>The Criterion</u> group". On the contrary, the "group" displays a strong radical Toryism fundamentally agressive. There are, the Commentator contends, two kinds of reformer or revolutionist:

...the coming type of Liberal Reformer, ...and the Reactionary, who at this point feels a stronger sympathy with the communist. (XII, xlix, 643)

...it is sufficiently depressing to live in a world in which views which I dislike are opposed by other views which I dislike so much as I dislike Mr. Krutch's...I object to communism quite as strongly as Mr. Krutch does, but I object equally to those who object to it from any less serious and radical a point of view than its own. (XV, lx, 461-2)

It is this fundamental and radical seriousness which is the "group's" characteristic note. McEachran outlines Christopher Dawson's theory of the making of Europe (Books, XII, xlvii, 290 ff), and agrees that, for the purposes of interpreting history, barbarians are to be defined as men who do not have a feeling for unity. It was this feeling for order in the subject which could create order in the object. Under the corroding influence of the theories of progress and amelioration, this feeling has decayed in the modern world. In their unwillingness to make the necessary preliminary surrender of individuality, the moderns are more barbarious than the Goths and the Franks. He contends that no solution for Europe is possible before this surrender is made, and argues that the only means by which this surrender can be achieved is the restoration of the tragic point of view. Smyth, in reviewing Rowse's Politics and the Younger Generation (XI, xliii, 304 ff), characterises the book as a protest against the error of thinking "that our own particular views or fighting for your own independent hand is more important than a right relation to your effective environment." With such a protest he would agree, if his conception

of "effective environment" were the same as that of Mr. Rowse. But Rowse's environment does not include God, and is therefore "narrow and trivial and untrue".

> The Christian starts from the same premise--the impotence of the individual: but the conclusion that he reaches is not determinism but theorcracy. (p. 311)

From this theological background emerges Toryism, which is an attmept to interpret it and to apply its implications in the world of politics. H. W. J. Edwards, in a review of Douglas Jerrold's The Necessity of Freedom (XVIII, lxx, 143 ff), declares that it is the sign of our age that the only tru revolutionary is on the Right: the Tory. Only the Tory, among all those who would reform the state, really wishes to restore freedom, which he correctly defines as a faculty of the soul whereby it may choose ends. Unprotected, its exercise of choice would be gravely dangerous, and the Tory is ready to accept the only adequate protection: Christian Truth.

The tone of the review continues to grow increasingly religious.

> ...I am inclined to approach public affairs from the point of view of a moralist. (Commentary, XIII, 1, 120)

Douglas Jerrold ("Authority, Mind and Power," XII,xlvii,

223 ff) contends that the doctrine of progress, aided by the theory of evolution, has substituted, for a vertical society,--a natural hierachy of institutions directed to the service of ends held in common by all men,--a horizontal society, for the service of special interests which divide each group from the whole and from the other parts. The result he sees is a world gradually disintegrating into ever smaller and more unrelated groups, a world which has substituted points of view for philosophies, pragmatic criteria for the criterion of values, compromise for justice, and, most injurious of all, impartiality for truth. The State has abdicated its moral, intellectual, and cultural leadership, and has become no more than a vested interest occupied in refereeing the activities of other vested interests. The first step towards the solution of the European problem is the inculcation and diffusion of habits of right and coherent thinking, and the great obstacle is this abdication of its responsibilities by the State. There are only two possible approaches: either education must be made entirely dependent upon the State, which is the solution of the Communist and the Fascitst, or it must be made entirely free of the State, which is the way of the Catholic.

> The real issue is between the secularists--whatever policical or moral philosophy they support--and the anti-secularists: between those who believe only in values realisable in time and on earth, and those who believe also in values realized only out of time. (Commentary, XVI, lxii, 68)

Elliot (Commentary, XIII, li, 270 ff) quotes with approval Penty's contention that since the strength of communism rests finally on the fact that the Communist is a man of principle, persuaded of the absolute truth of the materialist philosophy and conception

of history, Christianity, because it takes its stand on the spiritual nature of man, is the only principle capable of challenging the root assumptions of materialist communism. In another context, he says that the ideas of communism have come almost as a godsend to those young people who would like "to grow up and believe in something":

> Everyone, in a sense, believes in something; for every action involving any moral decision implies a belief; but a formulated belief is better, because more conscious, than an unformulated or informulable one....I have...much sympathy with Communists ...; I would even say that, as it is the faith of the day there are only a small number of people living who have achieved the right not to be Communists. My only objection to it is the same as my objection to the cult of the Golden Calf. It is better to worship a golden calf than to worship nothing; but that, after all, is not, in the circumstances, an adequate excuse. My objection, is that it just happens to be mistaken. (Commentary, XII, xlviii, 472-3)

So marked does the doctrinal Christianity of The Criterion become, that it is possible for its contributors to virtually assume a Christian audience. Christopher Dawson (XIV, liv, 1 ff) is concerned with the right relation of a Christian Church to the idea of a totalitarian state. Since Communism, by offerring a rival way of salvation, challanges Christianity on its own ground, and since Nazism, while not necessarily anti-religious, has its own mystical religion of Race and State, it is impossible for the Church to consider the slightest compromise with them. But a more difficult question arises out of the relation of the Church to a possible totalitarian state in England. Such a state, not at all improbable in the

very near future, would presumably have ideals very different from those of Russia and Germany: it would in all likelihood be hmmanitarian, pacifist, and democratic. But that does not in itself necessarily imply that it would be more consonant with Christian interests. Christianity is concerned, not with tolerated institutions, but with the saving of souls. If excessive toleration is inimical to that interest, Christianity must be intransigent. It is the duty of the Church to assert its way of salvation, so that religious authority may again become the basis of life, and, as a necessary corollary, of statecraft. T. S. Gregory (XVI, Ixiii, 326 ff) reads even more like a theologian writing for theologians:

> The history of religious toleration is a tragedy: how great a tragedy is beginning to appear now that the 20th century requires with interest the debt which Europe evaded in the 17th. Toleration, the word itself, expresses the failure. A strange irony has linked it with the Christian religion. 'Toleration being the daughter not of Amity but if Enmity,' wrote John Corbet in 1660, 'supposeth the party tolerated to be a burden." (p. 326)

Indeed, Eliot's work as the editor of a literary review was drawing to a close. A concern with the problems that beset art had been insensibly transformed into a concern with the problems that beset civilization. These problems had become resolved, for him, into a basic antinomy: materialism, of which Communism was the serious expression, and a spiritual basis for life, of which Christianity was the only form possible for Europe. All other considerations

than the promotion of the Christian idea came to be secondary or irrelevant.

> For myself, a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology—and right economics to depend upon right ethics: leading to emphases which somewhat stretched the original framework of a literary review. ("Last Words", XVIII, lxxi, 272)

The degree to which his acceptance of the Christian idea depended upon its own intrinsic merits, and the degree to which it depended upon a rejection of the only possible alternatives, is difficult to determine. For Eliot, the alternatives were unattractive enough:

> No scheme for a change of society can be made to appear immediately palatable, except by falsehood, until society has become so desperate that it will accept any change. A Christian society only becomes acceptable after you have fairly examined the alternatives. We might, of course, merely sink into apathetic decline: without faith, and therefore without faith in ourselves; without a philosophy of life, either Christian or pagan; and without art. Or we might get a 'totalitarian democracy', different but having much in common with other pagan societies, because we shall have changed step by setp in order to keep pace with them: a state of affairs in which we shall have regimentation and conformity, without respect for the needs of the individual soul; the puritanism of a hygienic morality in the interests of efficiency; uniformity of opinion through propaganda, and art only encouraged when it flatters the official doctrines of the time. To those who can imagine, and are therefore repelled by, such a prospect, one can assert that the only possibility of control and balance is a religious control and balance; that the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline, inconvenience and discomfort: but here as hereafter the alter- to hell is purgatory. (5)

(5) T. S. Eliot: The Idea of a Christian Society, pp. 23-4, Faber & Faber, London, 3d imp., Dec. 1939.

VI

> ...the ideal literary review will depend upon a nice adjustment between editor, collaborators, and occasional contributors. Such an adjustment must issue in a 'tendency' rather than a 'programme'.... A tendency will endure, unless editor and collaborators change not only their minds but their personalities. Editor and collaborators may freely express their individual opinions and ideas, so long as there is a residue of common tendency, in the light of which many occasional contributors, otherwise irrelevant or even antagonistic, may take their place and counteract any narrow sectarianism. (Commentary, IV, i, 3)

The nature of this "residue of common tendency" should, by this, have become apparent, and, as Eliot says in another context, it is better that it should be felt than formulated. Nevertheless, it may be helpful if we consider some of the names which are frequently given this tendency; if we can agree on the greater inadequacy of some than of others, we shall have come as close as is profitable to defining _The Criterion._

The most frequent and least satisfactory appellative is "reactionary". It would be idle to deny that _The Criterion_ is a reaction against much that characterizes our time; nevertheless, to call it reactionary is to misunderstand its nature. There are two things necessarily implicit in the serious use of the word "reactionary": the first is a certain provincialism of time, the second is the acceptance of the doctrine or theory of Progress. If provincialism of space means properly a condition of mind which, while recognizing the existence of a geographically more comprehensive world outside the limits of one's own community, does never-

theless secretly believe in the supreme importance of that particular community, -- (residents, not of some backwoods hamlet but New York, are the most provincial of moderns) -- then provincialism of time means properly a condition of mind recognizing the existence of other ages which, together with its own, make history: but which nevertheless believes its own age to be more important than history. The purpose of The Criterion was so to relate the present to the past as to form a unit which would merge with the future. The doctrine of Progress assumes the steadily increasing goodness of human nature: the Christian assumes the existence of Original Sin. It is for these reasons that one may admit the technical correctness of the term "reactionary" when applied to The Criterion, and at the same time reject such an application as meaningless.

The label "classicist" is equally correct, but almost as fruitless. There is a sense in which "classicism", when applied to the strictly limited field of art and works of art, is a reasonably precise title, and in this sense it is not inapplicable to The Criterion. If however, the term is extended to apply to a way of life, an attitude towards experience and the content of experience, it loses, to the degree of its extension, its precision, and, in consequence, its value as a title.

A more tempting appellation is "orthodox", but it, like "classic", is not enough. In art the word has, properly speaking,

no meaning. In religion and politics it is too static a concept to be of much use. Religious orthodoxy does not lie in the acceptance or rejection of certain dogmas: it is in the Church; in England, to be orthodox means, finally, to be an Anglican. Similarly, political orthodoxy in England is not in the acceptance or rejection of the tenets or practice of Whigs or Tories or Radicals: it is in the Constitution, in the hierarchy of Church, Law, Crown, and the two Houses of Parliament. <u>The Criterion</u> is, certainly, orthodox, but to have said so much is not to have said enough.

We shall, I believe, approach a useful definition if we use the term "traditionalist". But it is not a traditionalism which would erect generalizations once properly derived from past experiences into eternal and inviolable canons, to which new experience must be related, and by which it must be judged. Nor is it a traditionalism which consists in adhering to the habits and beliefs of the generation just dead. It is a traditionalism which believes that

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order,... will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. (6)

(6) T.S.Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent", <u>Selected Essays</u>, p. 5.

It is a tradition which asserts that

> A common inheritance and a common cause unite artists consciously or unconsciously... (7)

and which therefore believes that in life, as in art, there is something outside the individual to which he owes allegiance, "a devotion to which he must surrender" himself, so that in the end he may be both of the community and, in the truest sense, free.

(7) T.S.Eliot, "The Function of Critism", op.cit.,p.13

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