CHAPTER VI
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Another relatively neglected aspect of Eliot's work which needs serious consideration and detailed discussion is his social and political criticism. Like his criticism of novels Eliot's theory and criticism concerning these fields is mostly in the form of reviews published in different journals and periodicals, namely, The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, The Encounter, College English, Saturday Review, The Sewanee Review, The Enemy, The Bookman, Modern Language Quarterly, The Athenaeum, etc. These are, however, only a continuation of his main ideas on criticism which later appeared in collections of critical essays like Selected Essays, The Sacred Wood, On Poetry and Poets, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, To Criticize the Critic, etc.

It may not be wrong to say that much of Eliot's criticism deals with the literature of the seventeenth century, and quite obviously he is at home there, as much with the theologians as with the poets. This period interested him greatly because of its turbulent religious life and spiritual anarchy. Lan
ciö t: Andrewes and John Donne attracted his attention because they were two important representative figures of the period. Besides Eliot felt that through them one could form a critical estimate of seventeenth century life. Therefore, it is important to study this aspect of Eliot's critical output because it reveals another dimension of his critical mind.
At one point he describes three distinctive qualities of Andrewes as "ordannance or arrangement and structure, precision in the use of words and relevant intensity." Against this he sets this judgment on Donne: "About Donne there hangs the shadow of an impure motive and impure motives lend their aid to a facile success. He is a little of the religious spell-binder, the Reverend Billy Sunday of his time the flesh-creeper, the sorcerer of emotional orgy." What Eliot wants to emphasize here is that Donne had a perfect and trained mind but lacked spiritual discipline.

Eliot's approach to a work of art is just one of the many approaches. For instance, the English psychologist and critic I.A. Richards had a perfectly organized mind for making distinctions among literary specimens. He attacked a concept such as that which holds that a poem has an aim and stated that a poem produces through an appropriate communication a mental condition which is the experience of the poem itself. As he observes: "that the one and the only goal of all critical endeavours of all interpretation, appreciation, exhortation, praise or abuse, is improvement in communication may seem an exaggeration. But in practice it is so. The whole apparatus of critical rules and principles is a means to the attainment of finer, more precise, more discriminating communication. There is, it is true, a valuation side to criticism. When we have solved, completely, the communication problem, when we have got perfectly the experience, the mental condition relevant to the poem, we have still to judge it, still to decide upon its worth."¹ The citation indicates the way along which criti-
icism in our day is most likely to advance. Unlike Richards's criticism which is more psychologic, Eliot's criticism is analytical and comparative. Although it was welcomed as a pleasant change after a period of aesthetic and impressionistic criticism it was neither purely psycho-analytical, nor psychological. Paul Bourget had set an example of that kind. Bourget's criticism is regarded as having behind it a catholicity of vision which can absorb every kind of literary experience, but which is not to be experienced in Eliot's criticism.

As Eliot himself notes, the fact of the matter is that a certain dissociation of sensibility had set in the seventeenth century and as T.E. Hulme also argues, everything followed from that. Although when he formulated the concept of dissociation (1921) Eliot viewed poetry as necessarily non-discursive, a statement of events or objects. He did not make any true claims for it, or any assertions that it presented a deeper and more important truth than that of science. In fact, his modest claim that poetry is a "superior amusement" was generally accepted. It was not objected to even by that main proponent of dissociation Thomas Hobbes himself. It is true that Eliot accepted for a time I.A. Richards' idea of poetry as emotional truth, but he does not present this idea as an apology for poetry or as a defense of it, against the incursions of science. After his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism Eliot changed his position and claimed that poetry possesses a discursive truth which is necessarily dissociated from aesthetic quality.
Although Eliot maintains that an amalgamation of disparate experiences is a characteristic of all poetry, he refers to a special integration, which presumably the poets, following the metaphysicals lack - the infusion of intellectual experience, such as the reading of Spinoza, into emotional experience, such as falling in love. This concept of amalgamation is much narrower than what is made conceivable by such a theory as, for instance, Coleridge's theory of the unity of opposites. But it must be noted that Eliot does not apply it to all poetry. He makes a necessary distinction between the intellectual or metaphysical poets (including the Elizabethan and Jacobean) and the witty (Neo-classical), the emotional (Romantic), and the reflective (Victorian) poets.

When he formulated his theory Eliot, unlike Basil Willey, was not concerned with defending religion and poetry - the truth - yielding Image or intuitive way of knowing against the encroachments of science. Nor did he, like T.E. Hulme, blame the presumed separation of ideas from images which symbolised the loss of religious belief. He was interested in establishing a poetic metaphysical, in defending poetry which is both witty and emotional, and the kind of poetry that he was himself writing. The concept of the integrated image is incidental to and dependent on this defense. In Eliot's theoretical view, the sensationalism of Remy de Gourmont is subordinated to a metaphysical poetic.

Eliot, in reviewing Herbert Grierson's "Introduction" to Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1921), closely follows Grierson's idea of "passionate
thinking, of the blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination": "Passionate thinking (Eliot's "felt thought") is always apt to become metaphysical, probing and investigating the experience from which it takes its rise". And again:

With the peace of the Augustans the mood changed, and poetry, ceasing to be witty, became sentimental; but great poetry is always metaphysical, born of men's passionate thinking about life and love and death.

In the second place, while citing Dryden and Milton as furnishing in their poetry examples of dissociation, Eliot argues that these two poets exemplify the separate directions of poetry—wit and magniloquence or levity and loftiness, poetry becoming either witty or emotional. The poetry of neither possesses a unity of the two. Modern poets, Eliot adds, may be ironical or satirical but they "lack wit's internal equilibrium." They may also be "serious" but they were "afraid of acquiring wit, lest they lose intensity."

According to Eliot, Racine and Baudelaire, who exemplify the unity of language and sensibility, are masters of diction and "the most curious explorers of the soul, whereas Milton and Dryden, who were also masters of diction, "triumph with a dazzling disregard of the soul." Thus, the poet's finding of the "verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling" involves not only the "transmuting of ideas into sensations," but also a deep interest in these states of mind, a sophisticated sensibility integrated with language.
The dissociation of sensibility involves, then, a split between wit and emotion, ideas and images, and language and sensibility. But the dissociation with which Eliot is most concerned is that of wit, which is irrelevant to "thought" in Willey's sense of truth or in W.K. Wimsatt Jr.'s sense of "grounds" for emotion: "retreats into the area of feeling and emotion, or into an area of feeling and emotion conceived as pure and prior to, or separate from, the objects of knowledge which had previously been considered their grounds." Wimsatt's argument is that the loss of trust in the "meanings conveyed by poems" drove poetry into pure emotionalism; thus, the rational grounds for emotion were lost. Eliot, however, is not defending the grounds of emotion; he is lamenting the loss of intellectual poetry, the integration of intellectual and emotional experience. The intellectual experience (Eliot cites the reading of Spinoza) does not imply the "grounds" of emotion, but a part of the representation of "states of mind and feeling," conveying "great variety and complexity." Intellectual experience, in Eliot's view, is a part of man's complete experience obtained by the exercise of the "cerebral cortex", as well as the heart, "the nervous system, and the digestive tracts".

Eliot's theory of the integration of wit and emotion seems to have caused some confusion because he equates the combination of wit and seriousness (the play of intellect and emotion) with the reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities, and hence with Coleridge's idea of Imagination. The combination of intellectual and emotional experience (the reading of Spinoza and falling in love) becomes in Eliot's
theory simply the reconciliation of opposites which is a quality of all good poetry. The metaphysical poets, in his view, possess this quality to a greater degree than do other poets. Such a stretching of wit and emotion leaves ample space for thought and emotion, which have been variously interpreted as truth and emotion, as cognitive "grounds" and emotion, and, of course, as idea and image.

Eliot's theory of dissociation has indeed been fundamental to his ideas on poetry and criticism which are now in vogue. His stress on these ideas has been well taken by critics: the non-discursive Image, the equating of wit and emotion with thought and emotion, the creation of the standard of "amalgamation" or "inclusiveness" (involving "irony" or paradox), and the equating of this standard with poetic imagination. If we take this interpretation seriously, then we must say that in the seventeenth century a failure in poetic imagination occurred from which we have never recovered. On the other hand, if Eliot's concept of dissociation is confined to the separation of wit and emotion and not given an evaluative implication, it has validity, for intellectual poetry in the sense of play of intellect combined with emotion practically disappeared in the seventeenth century. In this respect, then, it is necessary to be clear about what Eliot means by dissociation of sensibility. But this concept should not be related to the concept of the separation of ideas and images, for there is no evidence that such a separation occurred. The position rather is that different kinds of images and metaphors were used by poets in that period.
Also, dissociation, if defined as a separation between discursive thought and poetic value, applies to a number of aesthetic theories since the seventeenth century — including Eliot's own theory. Whereas Thomas Hobbes solves the problem of meaning by relegating poetry to pleasant "fancy", Eliot solves it by first expelling discursive thought from poetry, later by relegating poetry to emotion, and still later by setting up a dual standard by which to judge separately thought and literary value. Of all the dissociations — between religious feeling and rational thought, ideas and images, wit and emotion — the most important one in critical theory, as Frank Kermode points out, is the dissociation of discursive thought from poetic value, the substitution of emotion or inner coherence or separate thought value for integrated meaning.

The literary criteria for turning to set the clock back to Donne or Malherbe are not unrelated to more strictly dogmatic criteria — social, moral and religious. To Eliot the age of Romanticism represents also the age of political liberalism, "an age of bustle, programmes, platforms, scientific progress, humanitarianism and revolutions which improved nothing, an age of progressive degradation ..."10 This is the age into which a Baudelaire might have found himself to be a misfit. Eliot's irritation by a Shelley or a Hugo results because such poets not only wrote imprecise, or, as Hulme would have it, damp poetry, but also because the beliefs they held — pantheism, faith in progress, liberalism — are impalatable to him. He prefers not even to discuss these
beliefs, but rather to dismiss these poets as "immature."
"Maturity", like "reality", thus acquires a very special
meaning in the Eliot vocabulary, a meaning which has been
upheld by the New Critics, or put great value upon by F.R.
Leavis and which makes it possible to apply for annexing any
great work of literature. Most of all, however, Eliot discovers
in Romanticism a denial of original sin and views it as a
consequence of eighteenth-century Rationalism. In this
combining of Romanticism with eighteenth-century thought, Eliot
reminds one of his disapproval of the humanism of his masters
Irving Babbit and Charles Maurras, thought finding it difficult
to reconcile it with his debt to and approval of Baudelaire,
whose "Eloge du Maquillage", with its assertion of the
non-naturalness of virtue, he must have perused with a sense of
satisfaction.

G. Rostrevor Hamilton, in a suggestive and ingenious
book, The Tell - tale Article (Heinemann, 1949) blames Eliot
for thinking of man's smallness in the world and constantly
proposing a depressing and unromantic view of humanity. Another
stricture has come from Albert Mordell, who not only considers
Eliot's influence detrimental to culture and literature, which
is not very different from that of such figures as Gifford of
the Quarterly Review, Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, Wilson
and Lockhart of Blackwoods and Robert Southey. But the
harshness of these reactions is partial testimony to Eliot's
success as a critic in promoting a critical view of the
Romantic humanist, liberalist movement in literature, society
and politics. His critical theoretical evaluation of the
Romanticist tradition directly lands him in the arena of social
and political criticism.
It may be said that Eliot's reputation as a social critic has not been quite enviable. There is a great number of those who have been shocked or repelled by his irreverent attitude towards ideals such as liberalism and democracy is greater than the number who have set themselves to discover what, positively, he did believe. Generally, his views on social matters were regarded as thoroughly reactionary, or highly eccentric, or both. Some readers represent him as politically degage, a symbolist claiming reality for a private dream world. Eliot says quite explicitly that it is not his concern either to bring about a religious revival or to indicate or evaluate the means for bringing a Christian Society into existence. He insists that his primary interest is a change in our social attitudes which might perhaps bring about anything worthy to be called a Christian society. Thus it becomes clear that he does not want to advocate any particular political system but favours whatever system a particular Christian society may develop for itself.

It is worth emphasizing from the start that some fine social critics, especially British social critics, take Eliot's major work in this area very seriously. Raymond Williams, for example, devotes a long chapter to Eliot in his *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*. He finds that in his discussion of culture Eliot seems to have raised questions for other critics who must have to answer him politically. But Williams offers a central objection to these views by saying that the basic principles of conservatism seem to contradict the social principles, particularly, the notion of culture. And Burton Raffel
emphasizes that Eliot's standing as "perhaps the most important literary critic in the English-speaking world" - these words recall Edmund Wilson who used almost the same words about Eliot as far back as 1929 - affects but does not determine the respect with which his social criticism has at times been received. According to him Eliot is a serious social critic, and he must be taken seriously, no matter whether one agrees with him or not.

Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society is generally considered as his major statement in the area of social criticism while Notes towards the Definition of Culture, though significant, is commonly taken as a footnote to the earlier book. Eliot's concern in The Idea of a Christian Society finds a fitting expression in his preface to the book. He points out that "the current terms in which we discuss international affairs and political theory may only tend to conceal from us the real issues of contemporary civilization".

Burton Raffel is of the view that the balance of Eliot's small book The Idea of a Christian Society is devoted to an exposition of the fundamentals of a truly Christian state. According to him, Eliot indicates forthrightly that he is not too much concerned with "the great mass of humanity". Eliot seems to be looking backward a good deal harder than he is looking forward. "A great deal of the machinery of modern life", he admits further, "is merely a sanction for un-Christian aims", and he asserts "that it is not only hostile to the conscious pursuit of the Christian life in the world by the few, but to the maintenance of any Christian society of the
world". Burton Raffel considers Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* as a variety of social theology while Roger Kojeczy, the author of a book-length study of T.S. Eliot's *Social Criticism*, uses the term "social philosophy".

Raffel agrees with Allen Austin's view of Eliot's frequent obliviousness to the necessity of evidence or even argument. It is a "dogmatism" which they present in Eliot's later religious and sociological works. He says that he does not mean to raise the issue of Eliot's sincerity or to argue the issues of belief. Instead, he maintains that while this book might be seen as "in the nature of a homily", it must be seen also as not a discussion of matters of belief. According to Raffel, Eliot assumes so neatly closed a stance, indeed, and makes it so superabundantly clear that he is addressing only those who already believe. Kristian Smidt, writing specifically in *Poetry and Belief* in the *Work of T.S. Eliot*, makes only a single, passing, and unimportant reference to *The Idea of a Christian Society*. In Raffel's view, Eliot is "dogmatic, because he no longer seriously concerns himself with finding answers: the answer has been found, and his only imperative is to promulgate it. But he is dry and uninspiring in his promulgations precisely because his belief is not at issue - or, to put it less pleasantly, because, in fact, it is still very much at issue in his own mind and heart, but he simply cannot face or deal with the fact. He could not face or deal with it in his poetry; there ought to be no surprise that he cannot face or deal with it in his social criticism (or religious philosophy)".11
At any rate, Eliot is concerned about the ills of European society which he thinks of as modern society: the decay of religious belief, the vulgarization of culture, the bankruptcy of Protestant theology. He does not appear to be much impressed by the Dialectical Theology of continental neo-Calvinism – the decline in natural piety as this decline shows itself in the commercial exploitation of natural resources and contempt for the past, or in the growing flatness and imprecision of language. It is impossible to go through the files of the Criterion and avoiding to know both the breadth and the particularity of Eliot's interest in the signs of barbarism and cultural decay manifest in this society. Nothing is too small or too trivial for his attention: the protection of wild birds, the preservation of the squares and enclosures of London, the fate of the City churches, etc. Likewise, he has something to say, though his pessimism grows darker throughout the thirties, on the great problems of which the smaller barbarisms are no more than symptoms.

Taking his cue from Christopher Dawson, Eliot believes that religion is a vital element in a culture. He is convinced that an essential matter to be attended to in the consideration of religion is the question of truth and not the question of utility or aesthetic quality. There is, all the same, a problem to be solved. The problem of ambiguity in Eliot's writings on religion and culture for these two factors have ultimately a direct bearing on one central political problem – the relation of Church and State – with which Eliot was concerned as a critic and an intellectual of his time.
One aspect of Eliot's thought on these matters is well represented by his affirmation of Royalism in politics. This is manifest in his Preface to his For Lancelot Andrews, particularly in the essay, "Lancelot Andrewes", included in the same work. Of course, he admitted later that this running together of political views, critical prejudices and religious belief was liable to mislead the reader, adding that "I now see the danger of suggesting to outsiders that the Faith is a political principle or a literary fashion, and the sum of all a dramatic posture".  
17 This sentence has gained notoriety particularly because it suggests a view of the function of Christianity in culture which has certain affinities with the views of the French thinker Charles Maurras. In "Lancelot Andrewes" he tells us that "the Church of England is the creation of the reign of Elizabeth. The via media which is the spirit of Anglicanism was the spirit of Elizabeth in all things". He speaks of the Church of England as "a masterpiece of ecclesiastical statesmanship". It is true but he adds the proviso that "we must not confuse the history of a Church with its spiritual meaning". But he also maintains that "a Church is to be judged by its intellectual fruits, by its influence on the sensibility of the most sensitive and on the intellect of the most intelligent, and it must be made real to the eye by monuments of artistic merit". Again, he says : "No religion can survive the judgment of history unless the best minds of its time have collaborated in its construction ..." It appears that whatever provisos are added, the terms employed are such as to imply what may be called the connoisseur's conception of religion. The criteria of judgment invoked are intellectual and aesthetic; the capacity of a Church to survive "the judgment of
history" depends upon how well it is expounded. Human intelligence and the willingness of "the best minds" must collaborate in interpreting its meaning. Just as Maurras, the unbeliever, commended Catholicism on account of its organic connection with Roman and French history, Eliot appears to suggest that the primary claim to acceptance of the Church of England rests upon its cultural achievements. All this has an air of paradox; for the grounds upon which Eliot here seems to be commending the Church of England are precisely those which have been stressed by the Church's unfriendly critics. These grounds affirm the merely human character of that institution. Eliot's statement here differs radically from the massive indictment brought by Newman against his old communion. Newman countered the arguments of those who urged that the Church of England must in some sense be a part of the Catholic Church by pointing, as evidence of this, to its vitality. He alleges that those critics confused the energy of a great secular and national institution with the life of the spirit. Anglicanism (he writes) is "the religion of gentlemen, of scholars, of men of substance, and of men of no religion at all. If this be life (then) it be life to impart a tone to the court and houses of parliament, to ministers of state, to law and literature, to universities and schools, and to society". Of course, even in "Lancelot Andrewes" Eliot is aware that the "spiritual meaning" - an unhappy phrase, for no institution is quite without spiritual meaning - of the Church of England is separate from, and not to be exhausted by, an account of Anglican history and culture from the reign of Elizabeth down to our own day; but to
give to intellectual and aesthetic fruits such a degree of importance as he wishes to give them. Theologically it may sound extremely odd and may appear as though "one were to commend Catholicism to the French of our own day by pointing to the excellence of Bousset's prose".

The central contention of *The Idea of a Christian Society* is, that "a liberalized or negative condition of society must either proceed into a gradual decline of which we can see no end, or ... reform itself into a positive shape which is likely to be effectively secular"; and the only alternative to decline or secular reform is "a positive Christian society." 19 A Christian society, in the sense in which Eliot wishes to use the term, is a theological and not a sociological category. This is made plain by what he has to say later about the "increasing recognition of the supranational Christian society". He argues that "no one today can defend the idea of a National Church, without balancing it with the idea of the Universal Church, and without keeping in mind that truth is one and that theology has no frontiers". 20 In some fine pages on the need in our society for "a respect for the religious life, for the life of prayer and contemplation" he tells us that "I should not like the 'Community of Christians' of which I have spoken, to be thought of as merely the nicest, most intelligent and public-spirited of the upper middle class - it is not to be conceived on that analogy". 21 Clearly, there is some vagueness in his distinction made between Christian society and the Community of Christians.
There are no doubt gaps or inconsistencies in Eliot's systematisation of his views and principles. But these gaps and ambiguities in his arguments on the questions of religion, culture and politics are understandable. They may also be understood from one standpoint virtues rather than shortcomings. Nothing is so unsatisfactory and nothing wears so badly as that logical rigour which springs from a mania for systematization. In dealing with those "mixed" questions where the problems of religion, culture and politics run together, the method employed by Eliot - the examination of particular questions in the light of general principles which are not too well defined and not too meticulously stated - is certainly the right one. J.M. Cameron aptly endorses Eliot's method which gives him an expertness in its application because his use of this method has steadily progressed with time. He concedes that The Idea of a Christian Society is a notable advance upon After Strange Gods; and Notes towards the Definition of Culture is so much the finest of the works in this vein that its comparison to Culture and Anarchy is irresistible. It is even possible that if such a comparison is seriously worked out it may work out in favour of Eliot. He is rightly commended, for instance, for his fine interpretation of totalitarianism:

According to Eliot, the meaning of the terms religion and culture is altered between two levels - conscious and unconscious. Totalitarianism appeals to the desire to return to the womb. The contrast between religion and culture involves a strain by
reverting to an identity of religion and culture as we seek unconsciousness consciously just like indulging in alcohol as a medicine to give comfort to the mind.\textsuperscript{22}

The following characterization of the English religious situation could verily make his earlier writing on the same topic appear, by contrast, doctrinaire:

There have been more negative aspects of atheism in England as in other Protestant countries. The mind of the people were not clear as if enveloped in dense fog. Culturally there were no unison among the atheists in that country and the type of atheism varied according to the culture of the religious communion. Moreover, the cultural difference between the Anglican and the Protestant sects have not been properly defined.\textsuperscript{23}

An unsympathetic critic of Eliot, Rossell Hope Robbins regards him as a vicious and reactionary bigot. Roger Kojecy counters this view by pointing out that Robbins's account is embellished with an amalgam of piecemeal quotation and adventurous generalization. According to Kojecy, Eliot's "feudal attitudes" assume a "clerico - Fascist" tendency. According to him, The Idea of a Christian Society (which was written against Nazism) is quoted, strangely enough, in an attempt to demonstrate Eliot's pro-Nazi sentiment. The basis
for this unconvincing argument is that Eliot escapes from the real world as seen in *The Waste Land* into the realm of religion and that in all his writings his contempt of human beings is quite evident. From the very face of it, Rossell's charge seems vague and unconvincing.

The charges of Fascist sympathy and anti-Semitism, brought forward by Robbins against Eliot finds repetition in J.R. Harrison's *The Reactionaries*. The Fascist label seems to have been well gummed, for he has tenaciously adhered to a surface of minute size. In 1957 it appeared as an *obiter dictum* in an article on Wyndham Lewis in the *Times Literary Supplement*.

But as Roger Kojcecky convincingly refutes these charges, it is difficult to build up credibly even the opposite case of Eliot's anti-Semitism. In his view, to hold a racial philosophy of this sort, and to permit a few ambiguities are, after all, different things. He underlines one passage in *After Strange Gods* (p.19) which is capable of the interpretation that a community of orthodox Jews would be socially "desirable" because of the strong social bonds established by Jewish solidarity. Eliot put a footnote in the 1962 edition of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (p.70) referring to the value he places upon "culture-contact" between Jews and Christians.

John Peter finds Eliot's philosophy to consist of a mixture of Toryism and Christianity. The mixture is so eccentric that it is intelligible only to those people who
would share his prejudices and predilections. In Peter's view Eliot displays a dogmatic inflexibility. Other critics who may recognise that Eliot's social criticism did adapt to changing historical circumstances also criticize his introduction of religion into social affairs (and in this respect poetry can be seen as a social affair). As editor of The Criterion he undertook to be for many years a close commentator upon his times. He wrote: "In one's prose reflections one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality". 24

In an age when an exaggerated respect for technicians and experts stressing innovations has silenced many voices supporting tradition and universal principles, Eliot has been one of the few outstanding figures who continued to utter bold and simple counsels and draw attention, even in politics, to general principles. Stephen Spender therefore regrets the later development in Eliot to narrow his concept of tradition into a primarily religious concern, and display an anti-progressive outlook upon the world manifest in his refusal to come to terms with contemporary values, claiming that his preoccupation with orthodoxy and the past is escapist and not dealing with the actualities of life.

D.E.S. Maxwell underlines this view in his book Poets of the Thirties. He sees Eliot as intent on preserving a separation between poetry and life, on the one side, and viewing himself as separate from the other thirties' poets -
Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, MacNeice etc. - (who were earlier inspired by his *The Waste Land*) on the other. According to him, these poets were involved in practical social ideals. Roger Kojeccky adds that although Maxwell suggests that Eliot pioneered a breach in the separation between poetry and the language - consciousness of the modern world, a breach through which Auden later brings more specific images and trophies of modernity, he does not point out that by the end of the decade these leaders were directly under the influence of Eliot and were themselves being led by him.

Kojeccky says that Eliot's position in the literary and intellectual history of the thirties is a fairly representative one. According to him, Eliot "condoned" the economy no more than most other literary intellectuals of the time did, as is evidenced in his support of the idea of Social Credit. He took the same stand as the eminent figures such as Aldous Huxley, Edwin Muir, Herbert Read and I.A. Richards. As witnessed in his editorial policy in *The Criterion* and also in his "Experiment in Criticism" (1929), Eliot worked not for promoting the isolation of literature from life but for their integration. He was not a member of that part of the Church which considered the socio-economic situation with complacency, a fact demonstrated by his participation in the 1937 Oxford Conference. Nor was his introduction of "asceticism into Christianity" in the intellectual debate of the thirties such a great eccentricity. John Middleton Murry, sometimes a Communist and sometimes a Pacifist, and editor of the *Athenaeum* and *Adelphi*, was already engaged in advocating an ascetic social
theory, and hovered on the brink of Christian orthodoxy both in the 1920s and in the later 1930s when he was a member of the Moot. He came to accept Eliot's judgment (which in Athenaeum days had shocked him) that he (Murry) was fundamentally and at heart a moralist. Auden adopted Christianity at the end of the thirties, and described his own orientation in "Criticism in a Mass Society". He is of the view that a critic conceives art as a self-discipline rather than as self-expression. Michael Roberts, at one time in the forefront of the Socialist literary movement, also came over to Eliot's side, with his study of T.E. Hulme in 1938, publication of *Recovery of the West* in 1941, and assumption of leadership of the College of St. Mark and St. John in Chelsea.

Further, Eliot's was not the only or the prime influence at work to draw intellectuals in the direction of Christianity during the 'thirties. However, it may be mentioned that he acted as a pole in the literary field. In society in general, with the rise of the totalitarian regimes, larger forces were operating in the same direction. Winston Churchill's political speeches too reflected a religious perspective. He once admitted to a Fabian gathering that even Bertrand Russell was almost persuaded to become a Christian by Hitler's Fascism. With these developing Christian orientations in the background, Eliot's social criticism, like his poetry, began to move nearer to the centre of the modern tradition than has sometimes been taken note of.
F.R. Leavis, who accords classical standing to poetry, entertains a lower opinion of the criticism. In an essay on "T.S. Eliot as a Critic" in 1958 he remarks that one of Eliot's weaknesses was a tendency to pay exaggerated tributes to certain men of letters because he was influenced by the irrelevant factor of their position in a select social-literary world of the 1920s. Examples given are those of W.F. Ker, Charles Whibley, David Garnett and Hugh Walpole. Whether or not there is any substance in this observation it needs to be conceded that Eliot would often take into account men's unwritten services to letters. As a patron Whibley provided substantial help to The Criterion and its contributors. But when Leavis turns his attention to the Bloomsbury circle he makes the graver charge that Eliot's membership of the circle checked that flattering tendency. The most searching of Leavis's criticisms in this essay, however, is his argument that Eliot's criticism is too abstractedly intellectual, and is not that of an engaged and realising mind sharply attentive to the state of things in England and intent on a serious response to the challenge. But Kojecky thinks that Eliot is a good deal more "aware of the state of things" than Leavis suggests he was. He suggests that there is an important distinction to be made between suggesting that he is politically irresponsible, and saying that he is personally disapproving of the mode and colour of his political orientation.

A merit of Raymond Williams's Culture and Society shows awareness of this important distinction. His chapter on Eliot takes his later social criticism seriously for being
representative of the post-war "New Conservatism". Eliot's Notes towards the Definition of Culture, according to Raymond Williams, contains a welcome emphasis on the organic wholeness of a society's culture, together with a less acceptable theory of the necessity for the cultural dominance of a social class. This work exposes the limitations of liberalism. But Williams takes an opposite stand to Eliot's. He wishes to take into consideration the economic aspects of society, and disputes the Conservative concept of a free economy. He believes that by so doing the change can be at once radical, culturally integral and humane.

Roger Kojecky's approach is expository and biographical. He attempts to trace the course of Eliot's social ideas in order to analyse his outlook as far as possible from the inside, and to take account of its relation to the public world Eliot lived in. He admits that Eliot's contribution in the field of social criticism is valuable though he disagrees with some features of his thought as well as with certain particular expressions - for instance, on the question of the extent to which a pessimistic view of human nature limits social confidence. He agrees with Eliot's Christian faith, though not so much with his Catholicism.

Eliot finds that the tenor of Babbit's thought is in keeping with a Christian ethical outlook, and that of the Action Francaise with Catholicism. Consequently, any one sympathetic to some of its aims will look more closely at the new Thomist philosophy which was gaining public support in Paris in the mid nineteen-twenties. This helped him to find an
answer to the problem of authority. He agrees with Hulme that "classicism" summed up an outlook which is valid in literature and even beyond it. But he goes further than Hulme in his personal acceptance of a supernaturally sanctioned system. For a time he was, no doubt, wary of the "heresy" of confusing literature with religion. In his essay "Religion and Literature" (1935), Eliot therefore proposes what has now become a most critical and controversial principle of his theoretical system: "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint." Then literary criticism can be substantive. He further says that in the ages in which there is no such common agreement, it is the more necessary for Christian readers to scrutinize their reading, especially of works of imagination with explicit ethical and theological standards. Clearly, Eliot wants "a literature which should be unconsciously rather than deliberately and defiantly Christian". It is his view that our religion imposes our ethics, our judgment and criticism of ourselves, and our behaviour toward our fellowmen.

At or about the time that classicism was being put forward in The Criterion, a similar movement was launched in America under the banner of "Humanism". The new movement represented a desire on the part of men of letters, who were mostly academics, to extend the values of literature to life. Eliot regarded the American Humanists with some sympathy as he regarded a French writer, Ramón Fernández who also took the humanist title for his own kind of psychological criticism. He made a sort of alliance with the American movement by contributing in 1929 an essay, "Religion without Humanism", to Norman Foerster's volume of essays.
Eliot had, indeed, so much in common with the Humanists that he feels it necessary to explain his points of departure with them. Like himself, the humanists owe a great deal to Babbitt. And now he desires to explain how his new-found faith modified his opinion of his former teacher. His essay "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" does this by setting Babbitt's position against, on the one hand, a romantic individualist, and in tendency anarchic social theory, and on the other, the inner control of the individual by an external sanction afforded by the Catholic religion:

And what [Eliot asks] are all these millions, even these thousands, or the remnant of a few intelligent hundreds, going to control themselves for?²⁶

It seems to him that humanism such as Babbitt's could not go far enough, and it is dependent upon some other attitude, for it is essentially critical - I would even say parasitical ... it is, in fact, a product - a by-product - of Protestant theology in its last agonies.²⁷

Eliot therefore wishes that his friend not only admitted the dependence of his philosophy upon religion, but also realised the necessity of Catholicism.
Babbitt did not oblige. But it was a different matter with a close friend who had studied with Eliot at Harvard, Paul Elmer More. More welcomed Babbitt's fundamental concept of the superiority of the life directed by the active will rather than the impulses of temperament. But, partly through reading of the Greek philosophers and the Fathers he adopted the Christian view of the spirit-flesh antinomy, and joined the Anglican Church. His book Anglicanism, written in collaboration with F.C. Cross in 1935, shows how he favours a via media between on the one hand the Catholic and fundamentalist emphasis on the infallibility of Church or the Bible, and on the other the relativizing tendencies of modern discoveries and analysis. Eliot was closer to Roman Catholicism than More. On occasion he could even bring the latter to task for the "heterodoxy" of his concept of the Real Presence. But More must have been one of Eliot's closest confidants. Their continued exchange of views in correspondence for about nine years until More's death in 1937, together with the visits they paid each other, suggest that they had, as they felt, a great deal in common.

One of the letters to More, written on 3 August 1929, that is, about six months before Norman Foerster's collection of Humanist essays was published - discusses the reservations Eliot had about this school. In the actual humanist position, Eliot says that there is, on the one hand, an admission that in the past Humanism had been allied with religion, and, on the other hand, a faith that it can in the future afford to ignore positive religion. There seems to be something paradoxical at the centre of humanism - on the one hand, the humanists
identify humanism with religion, and, on the other, contrast them. This is seen by Eliot as a serious defect in the Humanist formulation. As Foerster says in his brilliant book *American Criticism*:

This centre to which humanism refers everything, this centrepetal energy which counteracts the multifarious centrifugal impulses, this magnetic ... Unlike religion, it assigns an important place to the instruments of both science and art. Nevertheless it agrees with religion in its perception of the ethical will as a power above the ordinary self, an impersonal reality ... Humanism, no less than religion, enjoins the virtue of humility.28

Humanism, Foerster says, "wishes to use and not annihilate dangerous forces" and adds that it agrees with religion on only one point: in believing in the ethical will. But Eliot is of the view that Foerster's Humanism is too ethical to be true. He says that in spite of all the words (and just) things Babbitt and More have said about Kant, the second generation of humanists adopts for its ethics a basis that is identical to Kant's. To Foerster "the essential reality of experience is ethical". According to Eliot, Foerster's ethics would be much more "reasonable" if they were similar to Bertrand Russell's. However, in their present form they are a form which is quite untenable and meaningless without a religious foundation.
Eliot believes that like most humanists Foerster was trained as a man of letters; and Humanism bears the imprint of the academic man of letters. His approach to every other field of study is through literature. In Eliot's view, such an approach is perfectly proper, based on the reason that we must all approach what we do not know with a limited equipment of the things that we do know. The trouble is that for a modern humanist literature becomes itself merely a means of approach to something else. If we try to make something do for something else, it is likely to become an amateur substitute for that other thing. Eliot agrees with Foerster about the prevalent desiccation of the study of philosophy in universities. Nevertheless, there is a philosophic training, and it is not the literary training; there are rules of the philosophic game about the use and definition of terms, and they are not the literary rules. Eliot's viewpoint is that one may consider the study of philosophy vain, but then one should not philosophize. What one is likely to do is to philosophize badly, because Eliot's objection is not to Humanism but to Foerster for not being humanistic enough; and for playing the games of philosophy and theology without knowing the rules.

According to Eliot, there is another aspect to Foerster's position which might earn him the title of "The Newest Laocoon": the interesting consideration that this trick of making literature do the work of philosophy, ethics and theology tends to vitiate one's judgment and sensibility in literature: Eliot mentions that Foerster, in seeking, as he says, "an ethos which has never existed", looks for guidance to
Greek sculpture, Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Horace, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assissi, Buddha, Confucius, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe.²⁹

Foerster does not entertain a high opinion of Shakespeare because Shakespeare is not a humanist. According to Eliot, Foerster makes neither a literary nor a moral judgment of Shakespeare. To Eliot, he seems to depreciate Shakespeare for the wrong reasons, just as, with all respect, Middleton Murry seems to laud him for the wrong reasons. If, as he says, Shakespeare was concerned with mirroring life rather than with interpreting it, and with submitting "to actuality rather than transcending it", then such a good mirror, if one called it a mirror, might be worth a great many interpretations, and that such submission is worth more than transcendence. To assert his viewpoint Eliot observes:

If you stick to a literary judgment, you cannot say that Shakespeare is inferior to any poet who has ever written, unless you are prepared to substantiate your opinion by detailed analysis; and if you depreciate Shakespeare for his lower view of life, then you have issued out of literary criticism into social criticism; you are criticizing not so much the man but the age. I prefer the culture ... - if humanism chooses Goethe and leaves Shakespeare, then humanism is incapable of distinguishing between the chaff and the wheat.³⁰
Clearly Eliot is conscious of both literary criticism as well as social criticism and one ought to know when one makes a transition into the other. Behind the two criticisms is, then, the perspective of theoretical backgrounds which converge at some point. That point is the creator - critic's mind which at different moments of creative critical thought takes cognizance of different aspects of life. But, Eliot certainly warns against confusing one with the other. Eliot calls Foerster a heretic - that is, a person who seizes upon a truth and pushes it to the point at which it becomes a falsehood. He regrets that in Foerster's hands humanism becomes something else, something more dangerous and something more seductive to the best minds. The modern humanistic value, Eliot says, implies that man is either perfectible, or capable of indefinite improvement. There is therefore only a difference of degree - so that there is always hope of a higher degree of perfection or improvement.

He appreciates Hulme for he found out for himself that there is an absolute to which Man can never attain. For the modern humanist, as for the romantic, "the problem of evil disappears, the conception of sin disappears" which implies faith in the perfectibility and infallibility of man. This is illustrated in Foerster's illusion of the normally or typically human. 31 Eliot says nearly approvingly that Hulme puts the matter into one paragraph:

The categories of religious values and humanism are equally objective like the categories of time and space. Nobody seems to
realise the closest expression of the categories of religious attitude. In no sense man is perfect, but a wretched creature.

Thus, Humanism does not appear to offer a successful co-ordination of thought and feeling. According to Roger Kojeccky, Eliot found he had to turn elsewhere, to Jacques Maritain's exposition of Thomism, for the reconciliation of the intellectual and the devotional elements. Moreover in Maritain he finds someone beside himself who supported his view that the future should owe much to a new species of intellectual Christian.

Eliot holds Babbitt in great regard for being a defender of tradition and continuity, and for considering Christian religion as an essential part of the history of the English, nay European, people. Humanism and religion are thus, as historical facts, by no means parallel; while one has been sporadic, the other (Christianity) has been continuous. He mentions that an idea of the development of the European races could not be formed without taking into adequate account the role played by Christianity. In a sense, the tradition of humanity are equivalent to the actual tradition of Christianity. Christianity had permeated the life of the man and society so deeply.

One could think of building the future only in the light of the materials of the past. Using the past obviously meant giving proper weight to heredity and the religious habits of the race. There is no humanistic habit: humanism is, to Eliot, merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times.
Hulme sets humanism over against the objective status of values and the pessimistic view of human nature. Humanism, in his view, regards personality as the source of good, and life as the measure of values. Eliot feared, according to Kojeccky, that American humanism might further organize and apply itself to society. Already he had hinted that he regarded it as parasitic or derivative, rather in the manner, probably, of Unitarianism. In France he had seen how easily intellectuals could find association with political action with an organized movement. And in England he himself was beginning to look for a cause or group thinking and acting upon what he felt were the right lines. His association with the Chandos Group in the 1930s was a part of his search.

Thus Eliot's social, political and religious views are also coloured by his moralist leanings. As Roger Kojeccky observes in his first essay for the Bookman in November 1929 Eliot elaborated a statement on the moral turn which his own criticism, and that of others in America was taking. But Iris Murdoch diverts the attention to a consideration of the reasons for moral appeal in Eliot's writings and asserts that to appreciate the nature of this appeal it is necessary to see the basis of his opposition to "liberalism". This exercise is the more valuable since it is surely of the greatest importance for any of us in these days to examine what we take this conception to be. According to Murdoch, Eliot sees liberalism as the end product of a line of thought which is to be met with earlier in Stoicism, in the Renaissance, in Puritanism, in the Romantic movement and in nineteenth-century Humanism. This line of
thought exalts human personality and denies any authority external to the individual. Between Dante and Shakespeare a gap had occurred which Eliot considers as a major loss to tradition. The self-dramatization of Shakespeare's heroes is significant for it points to that loss, and to the romanticism of the modern world. The Puritans continued more insidiously to undermine tradition and authority, and with their "thin mythology" inaugurate the age of amateur religions. Inspired by Kant, 32 by Blake, 33 and encouraged by Huxley, Russell, Wells and others, every man may now invent his own religion, and have the pleasures of religious emotion without the burdens of obedience or dogma. Eliot traces much of the materialism of the modern industrial society with its worship of "success" to the Puritan influence. He remembers the age-old moral prescription "that if one was thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, practical and prudent in not violating social conventions, one ought to have a happy and 'successful' life". 34 Romanticism paid scant attention to original sin and upheld its doctrine of human perfectibility. It attacked an organism weakened already by the Puritans and produced a new style of emotional individualism. Though Humanism was an attempt at remedy, yet it only confounds the categories of art and religion by confusing one with the other. The Romantics had at least kept the two distinctly apart though at a more orgiastic level. So tracing the origin of liberalism Murdoch observes that out of Matthew Arnold, out of the "dream world" of late romantic poetry, out of the mid-nineteenth century, that "age of progressive degradation", 35 issues liberalism, the imprecise philosophy of a society of materialistic and irresponsible individuals.
Unlike T.E. Hulme, Eliot is not prophetic but only diagnostic in his analysis of the condition of modern world. But there is no doubt that he presents us with a picture of a humanity "fallen" or "divided" or "alienated" which suggests that in certain respects he has his own positive conception, and one which informs his critical writings, of that unity which has been lost and must be recovered. Art should not be "the expression of personality". Eliot says, "the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality". The sermons of Andrewes are superior to those of Donne because the emotion of Andrewes "is not personal". Donne is a "personality" in the sense in which Andrewes is not: his sermons, one feels, are a means of "self-expression". He is constantly trying to find out an object which shall be adequate to his feelings; Andrewes is wholly absorbed in the object and therefore responds with the adequate emotion. Some time in the seventeenth century poets lost the capacity for "direct sensuous apprehension of thought". They could not feel "their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose". Sensibility was dissociated, emotion parted company with thought and broke loose on its own. Romanticism encouraged its unrestrained imaginative expression, and as men lost their sense of limit, poetry lost its "hardness". Baudelaire, that true blasphemer and believer in sin, was also "the first counter-romantic in poetry" and one of the initiators of the movement, which we connect with Imagism and notably with Eliot, which attempts to reintroduce "precise emotion" and to draw the artist's attention "back to the object". This putting of emotion in its place is at the
same time a putting of poetry in its place. Poetry cannot play the part of religion. The more we realize what literature is, and what it cannot do, the more we return soberly to a sense of our own limitations. Baudelaire, Eliot says, would surely have approved of these words of T.E. Hulme: man

is endowed with original sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect. Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary human action in society follow from this. A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline—ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary.

"Dissociation of sensibility" can be considered as Eliot's symbol of the loss of a unified perception of the world. It can be understood as the loss of a sense of limit and of an understanding of where each thing has its place. That the "liberal individual" is inattentive to the weakness of liberalism. Liberalism, then, destroys tradition through challenging authority. In a society where every man's opinion is equally valuable there is no unity of outlook. This favours over-specialization, the worship of techniques, and the division of one part of society from another. Liberalism is a creed which dissipates and relaxes; and it "prepares the way
for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanized or brutalized control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.⁴¹ We have the choice of a society which is gradually becoming paganistic but which is more positively Christian than our own. Eliot turns to appeal, over the head of the dominant creed of the time, to an older, purer tradition. The historical reality upon which he relies is the Anglican Church, the only instrument through which the conversion of England can be achieved; and he pictures a Christian society, inspired by a Christian elite, and reminded by the Church of standards which lie beyond the individual.

There is a resolution of our time and a "new sensibility" in the creation of which Eliot plays a major part. Before going on to consider his views on morals and politics more closely we may have a short view of this scene of change. G.E. Moore, the father of modern philosophy, and incidentally a thinker hailed with approval by Hume, placed as epigraph to his Principia Ethica the words of Butler: "everything is what it is and not another thing"; and when Eliot himself remarks (a propos of poetry and religion) that "nothing in this world or the next is a substitute for anything else."⁴² He speaks with the voice of the age. There was an increasing self-consciousness about things and language. Similarly, there was also anxiety to delimit categories and prevent the spilling over of one thing into another. Yet, Eliot looks upon the nineteenth century, as an era lacking in clarity in thinking. Hence his disappointment with Arnold's perception of things: "Arnold does not see what poetry is". Science, philosophy,
history, criticism had become specialized and acutely conscious of their own limitations. Eliot, too, is, in this regard, exemplary. Unlike some other poets of the Imagist tradition, he has never lost his respect for words. The desire, as Hulme puts it, has never led Eliot to make war upon language after the manner of Mallarme or Pound. One of the deep characteristics of his poetry is an untiring New Critical concern, in the midst of difficulties, for the referential character of words. As a prose writer equally Eliot has shown an exemplary sense of the limitations of his job. He does not trespass upon the field of technical philosophy, but says what he has to say, as critic and as moralist, precisely and appropriately. He is aware of, and shares this concern with, certain contemporary moral philosophers that a deterioration in morals is an automatic destruction of concepts. If our convictions part company with our vocabulary of justification, our controversies become empty. "We are living at present in a kind of doldrums between opposite winds of doctrine. It is a period of a doctrine in which one political philosophy has its cogency, though it is still the only one in which public speech can be framed. This is very bad for the English language ... Good prose cannot be written by people without convictions". In these ways, Eliot is not alone, but belongs with other makers of his age. He is the great poet critic of the new sensibility.

Eliot seems to be very much a member of our age; but with the zeal of a rationalist he tends to attribute his insights to the Anglo-Catholic Christian tradition. He denounces liberalism which has all the vices of the present
age. In spite of his appreciation of compromise-making Anglicanism Eliot is more fundamentally an anti-Puritan Puritan. In one sense he is influenced by the views of Hawthorne and James who too were against the "decayed Protestantism" of this day. Both of these writers were much too conscious of evil which affected the present-day world by its excessive preoccupation with materialism and superficial pietism. He speaks of those "vast hosts of the dead" of whose presence James Joyce was aware: but the dead whom the political Eliot venerates lie far away. Eliot is not in the English conservative tradition. He is rather an eclectic moralist and one who takes the Indian belief in an action which is one of detachment rather seriously. He is less patient with the English political creed as stated by T.H. Greene and others. He praises Bradley for his wisdom and also for his philosophy which is "catholic, civilized and universal", and for having destroyed, more surely than Arnold did the bases of contemporary Benthamism. But Eliot's own political and philosophical understanding is remote from the flexible and concrete thinking of the Idealists. One finds in him something of the "Jansenism of temperament" which he attributes to Pascal. Eliot, with his dislike of "untidy lives", is perhaps also one "who cannot avoid seeing through human beings and observing the vanity of their thoughts and of their avocations, their dishonesty and self-deception, the insincerity of their emotions, their cowardice, the pettiness of their real ambitions".44 One feels this disillusioned tone in Eliot's political writings, specially in his attitude to "the mob". He makes an alarming pronouncement that he would prefer an illiterate audience to an audience of ill-educated or
half-educated persons. It is significant that he extends no sympathy to the English Non-conformist tradition despite its wide-reaching utilitarian and socialist leanings. When Methodism receives a kind word in the book on "Culture" it is partly because it helped to pave the way for the Oxford Movement.

Eliot rejects the "stuff" which constitutes our world. We cannot deny that he is instructive in his attitude to certain novelists. He gives approval to Jane Austen, Dickens and Thackeray, because with them "personality ... was more nearly in its proper place. The standards by which they criticized their world, if not very lofty ones, were at least not of their own making". But George Eliot unfortunately combined her profounder insights with "the dreary rationalism of the epoch" and might therefore be regarded as being "of the same tribe as all the serious and eccentric moralists we have had since" whom Eliot unhesitatingly deplores. But it is in D.H. Lawrence that the extremity is reached by way of heretical belief and unrestrained and morbid emotionalism. Eliot finds in Lawrence "a lack not so much of information as of the critical faculties which education should give, and an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking".

Eliot rightly points out that it is important to lay down precisely in what terms a justification is framed. (Pagan statesman may be "contained" by the Christian ethos of their people: only certain justifications will serve. He holds
that it was especially important to keep alive such sources of moral response.

It seems that Eliot takes an extremist position when he rejects in toto the moral content of liberalism and appeals instead to a conception of dogma and authority which are not absolutely clear. In 1933 Eliot remarked that "it was better to worship a Golden Calf than to worship nothing". And in 1939 he said that we should object to Fascism because it is pagan. Objections to oppression and cruelty are "objections to means not to ends". In fact, the ordinary person dislikes Fascism "because he is fearful of authority". To argue in this way is to belittle that naked respect for the human person as such which one may connect with Locke and with Kant, and which one hopes has become a part of the English political tradition. It may be asked whether this be set aside as a romantic over-valuation of the individual. It is at least perilous to neglect the remnants of that liberal moral absolutism which, without dogma, holds that there are certain things which cannot be done to human persons. It is not surprising then that one critic should have formed the opinion that John Stuart Mill, an argumentative and undogmatic absolutist, was responsible for making that dry and critical atmosphere in which Eliot among others has flourished.

Eliot repudiates the liberal moral tradition but he may verify reply that morality must be based on truth, and that he is more concerned with the promulgation of truth than with the cultivation of benevolent impulses resting on
sunderstandings. The Christian tradition may bring about the salvation of the West; but one cannot totally ignore the neficent aspects of liberalism. It would amount to overlooking the reality that liberalism is entwined with our Christian tradition. We may agree profoundly with many of Eliot's indictments of present-day society. We should surely have to agree with him, for instance, when he says that the events of September 1938 inspired in him "a doubt of the saliency of civilization".51 There are other events since then which inspire similar doubts. But whatever our religious beliefs, we must hope that the liberal world can regenerate itself out of its own resources - and we must seek the Christian tradition, in its various forms, within that world. R. Leavis, in defending D.H. Lawrence against Eliot, remarks "It is characteristic of the world as it is that health cannot anywhere be found whole"; and adds that "the sense in which Lawrence stands for health is an important one".52 We cannot now afford to squander our "health" which must be sought, with discrimination, in many quarters; and to say this may indeed be adopting a liberal attitude.

Eliot's essay "Experiment in Criticism" underlines various kinds of critical approaches, such as the "practical notes" of creative authors, the abstractions of literary theorists such as Coleridge, and the kind of criticism which takes account of the anthropological work of men like Tylor, Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl or Frazer. As Roger Kojeczy has pointed out, Eliot draws attention to
a valid distinction to be drawn between those modern critics who would make literature a substitute for a definite philosophy and theology, and thus promulgate, in an inverted form, the old gospel of art for art's sake and those who would try to keep the distinctions clear, while admitting that the study of one leads to the other, and that the possession of clear literary standards must imply the possession of clear moral standards. The various attempts to find the fundamental axioms behind both good literature and good life are among the most interesting 'experiments' of criticism of our time.53

Amongst such experimenters Eliot would certainly have counted the American Humanists and the French Ramon Fernandez; in Britain, Herbert Read, and later, probably F.R. Leavis; but most of all P.E. More. Understandably, Eliot does not overlook the dangers of moralistic literary criticism. He seems to be aware that such type of criticism could make the critic too much a servant of his mind and his conscience.

There seems to be no foundation in Eliot's philosophy for a theory of anti-Semitism. He agreed with the Catholics and observed that the Catholic manifesto did not identify Christianity with the maintenance of a particular social and
political regime, or with the hegemony of Europe over the rest of the world. He thus views the manifesto from the political left and finds its laws of justice "analogous to Christian justice". He gives a warning to anyone against according anti-Communism a higher position than Christianity itself. Eliot opposes both Communist and Fascist political theories because he upholds a polity which is in accord with Christian moral principles. He considers that between Christians and Communists there is an unbridgeable gulf. He also holds the view that Fascism and Christianity are incompatible.

Eliot's social criticism always evoked disagreement. It is worth noting here that sometimes the disagreement emerged from quarters which he expected to be fairly sympathetic to his outlook. For instance, in the Modern Churchman for January and February 1935, the Rev. J.C. Hardwick wrote an article in which a general accusation was made against modern intellectuals for abandoning their proper task. He bracketed Eliot with Plato and Christopher Dawson, as a poet with Alfred Noyes, and as a philosopher with Berdiaev and Bergson.

An important seminal element in Eliot's critical analysis in the field of political theory is also present in an early essay in an issue of the Criterion of December 1928. The subject of the essay was Fascism. In it he notes the increasing contemporary interest in Fascism: "It is manifest that any disparagement of 'democracy' is nowadays well received by nearly every class of man". He also notes the general awareness
that "actual power will more and more be concentrated in the hands of a small number of politicians, or perhaps in the Civil Service, or perhaps in the City, or perhaps in a number of cities". He is alert to "the vague sentiment of approval excited by the word Fascism". But he himself stood back:

Order and authority are good: I believe in them as wholeheartedly as I think one should believe any single idea; and much of the demand for them in our time has been soundly based. But behind the increasing popular demands for these things, the parroting of the words, I seem to detect a certain spiritual anaemia, a tendency to collapse, the recurring human desire to escape the burden of life and thought.

He therefore calls for intellectual effort or

books which would examine the nature of political belief; for one thing, the extent to which it is a substitute for religion; and therefore a muddle.

But he would be the last man to share in the then prevalent "vigorou...
A real democracy is always a restricted democracy; and can only flourish with some limitation by hereditary rights and responsibilities. ... The modern question as popularly put is: 'democracy is dead: what is to replace it?' Whereas it should be: 'the frame of democracy has been destroyed: how can we, out of the materials at hand, build a new structure in which democracy can live?'.

It is not fully clear what he means by this frame of democracy. One might interpret it to mean both the hereditary rights and responsibilities and the code which in the past these may have supported among people in general. Eliot's critical view of democracy points to his democratic principles like limited openness, discussion, dialogue as means of arriving at a comprehensive view of things. His Royalist conservatism is present in his political criticism relating to a real democracy as it is present in his elitist, academic New Critical Pronouncement in literary criticism.

Eliot disapproves of the attempt made by an apologist for Fascism, J.S. Barnes, to identify Fascism with the Roman religious and political tradition. The two fields are so very remote from one another. It was some five years later that after examining Mussolini's doctrines he wrote a letter to the Church Times underlining Mussolini's ideas that the State is
absolute and war a social good. He argued that Fascism and Christianity could not be reconciled.

But Eliot continues to adhere to the doctrine of tradition even in religious and political thinking in line with his 1928 essay which was more sympathetic to the Action Francaise because of its royalism, its attachment to hereditary class, and its emphasis on regional loyalties and culture. He takes note of Maurras's "grotesque" nationalism, and criticizes the way he and his friends seemed to consider politics as a science independent of morals. Nevertheless, Eliot considers this kind of movement valuable insofar as it contributed to the evolution of political thought in England:

It is a matter of regret that England has no contemporary and indigenous school of political thought since Fabianism, and as an alternative to it. The function of political theory is not to form a working Party, but to permeate society and consequently all parties: and this, for good or bad, Fabianism has done ... A new school of political thought is needed, which might learn from political thought abroad, but not from political practice. Both Russian communism and Italian Fascism seem to me to have died as political ideas, in becoming political facts.
Understandably, Eliot was for the evolution and formulation of political theory which was not directly to depend upon political practice. Even in matters of political and social thinking, theory has obviously a prior consideration in his mind. This further strengthens my argument that his critical approach is not only comprehensive but also that his views on critical practice have a definite theoretical foundation. It can thus be argued that Eliot wanted not merely serious analytical thought about socio-political matters, but also a theory, a framework of ideas, before anything else. He envisaged a group which would like the Fabians or the Action Francaise act as a major factor in the formation of the political climate. Such a group would cohere with the help of a dominant idea or outlook, but Eliot did not yet feel willing or able to elaborate such an idea. While he named Royalism as his political credo, he was simultaneously referring to the Catholic political tradition in a way that suggests that he regarded the Holy Roman Empire, as an idea capable of supplying at least some moral inspiration to contemporary European politics.

It is tempting to think of Eliot as a social theorist always careful to remain at one remove from specific issues. It is true that he felt that his distinctive contribution was to the discussion of principles. But he could also whenever necessary go down into the arena. This is true of his stand on the question of censorship. As a contributor to Middleton Murry's *Athenaeum*, he wrote in defence of the Phoenix Society an issue that had received much public attention.
In the later years Eliot was acutely conscious of the "lack of any vital political philosophy", particularly in Britain. There was a great need for such a philosophy because in his view a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology. Likewise, right economics depended on right ethics. These interrelationships between politics, theology, economics and ethics were comprehensive. They determined emphases in literature too. Surprisingly, Eliot's discussion of these various aspects is done within the original framework of a literary review and is sufficiently suggestive of an integrated and comprehensive critical approach.

Roger Kojeccky notes that Eliot was much too preoccupied with the discussion of Communism because in these years it attracted a good deal of attention. It "flourished because it grew so easily on the Liberal root". Fascism had no such relation to Toryism, and aroused "no great intellectual interest".

The Criterion had to close as national barriers came down against cultural internationalism. Its last issue appeared during January 1939. By that time it had established special relationships with Continental periodicals, the Nouvelle Revue Francaise, the Journal de Geneve, the Neue Rundschatu, and also the American Dial. Clearly, whatever the reasons for the closure of the journal, Eliot's aim had been "to provide in London a local forum of international thought".
But while the Criterion was alive Eliot kept up his efforts to a search for a vital political philosophy. He delivered the Boutwood lectures in Cambridge in March 1939. These lectures were later published as *The Idea of a Christian Society*. His thinking in this direction was active because he was already a member of the Moot, a group of intellectuals engaged in the field of thinking he desiderated. One may recall that in the earlier years of the decade his religious convictions had brought him some sort of isolation. This was noticed by Michael Roberts in 1938 who edited *New Signatures*. *New Signatures* was a reaction towards social, or more specifically, socialist solidarity. By the end of the decade Eliot's sense of isolation, such as it was, was over; Roberts himself had joined Eliot's cause so much so that if it had been possible for the Criterion to continue Eliot might have offered its editorship to Roberts.

It may however be noted that in Eliot's criticism after about 1921 the discussion of the creative process no longer predominates as it did before that time. He is preoccupied with discussing the actual subjects of poetry. And the eligible subjects are found to cover a wide range of possibilities of deeper interaction of poetry, philosophy, religion, politics. At the start the sordid and ugly were recognised. But now Eliot demonstrates in his essay of 1929 on Dante that not only damnation but purgation and beatitude as well could be regarded as fit subjects for a poet to deal with. In his comments on Dante's *Purgatorio* he goes further and says that "a straightforward philosophical statement can be great poetry". 56
As a result of the general subordination of purely aesthetic interests to metaphysical, political and cultural interests which took place in his criticism after 1921, Eliot attempts more systematically to relate his aesthetic opinions to his main beliefs and attitudes in other fields. He soon comes to treat religion in a less cavalier fashion than at first, to see that it mattered to art more than he had thought, and, now and again, almost to change his ground by viewing art not independently but in the light of dogma. In his Dante essay, Eliot speaks glowingly of "the advantage of a coherent traditional system of dogma and morals like the Catholic".

One might well recall that Eliot had begun by declaring that religion was of no importance to the artist. In a book review of 1916 he admitted that one's enjoyment of art must obviously be coloured by one's philosophy. But around the same time he also asserted that he saw no reason why a man's enjoyment of art "should be atrophied by a naturalistic philosophy or stimulated by a theistic one". But subsequently, he resolves these contradictory statements. "The feeling and the belief", he explains "are different things in different categories of value. We enjoy the feeling, and we cannot rest content unless we can justify it by exhibiting its relation to the other parts of our life. Having made this attempt, we then enjoy the theory we have made". 57 This statement once again establishes the integrated and comprehensive theoretical foundation of Eliot's criticism.
In Eliot’s critical writings we are quite aware of his view that art is independent and supreme in its own sphere. In his essay “The Function of Criticism” he “assumes as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autotelic”. And in one of his Commentaries he observes that “from the point of view of art, ... Christianity was merely a change, a provision of a new world with new material; from the point of view of Communism as of Christianity, art and literature are strictly irrelevant”. And yet in the same article he says Christianity is free to allow for inconsistencies in the affairs of this world, such as the appearance of good art even where there is a bad philosophy. It only shows that Eliot’s provision for the co-existence of these different theoretical principles had not fully matured at that stage.

This is one reason why Eliot points repeatedly to the difference between art and belief. Having read Maritain’s Situation de la Poesie, who incidentally warned poets against the study of aesthetics, he goes on: “I would make a distinction which Maritain has omitted to make: that between the possible interests of the poet at the times when he is not engaged in writing poetry, and the direction of his attention when writing ... certainly, in the effort of composition ... the poet can only properly be occupied with how to say it”.

Eliot rejects the idea of literature "as a means for eliciting truth or acquiring knowledge" or as "the expression of philosophical or religious intuition", preferring to see it as "a means of refined and intellectual pleasure". In a
number of contexts we are told that poetry is essentially entertainment. In general, says Eliot, "a poet wishes to give pleasure, to entertain or divert people". Thus he adopts the conception of the use of poetry attributed by Jacques Riviere to the masters of the seventeenth century, such as Moliere and Racine: "If in the seventeenth century Moliere or Racine had been asked why he wrote, no doubt he would have been able to find but one answer; that he wrote 'for the entertainment of decent people' (pour distraire les honnetes gens)".\textsuperscript{61} And very definitely Eliot tells us in \textit{The Music of Poetry} that "the end of understanding poetry is enjoyment, and ... this enjoyment is gusto disciplined by taste".

Eliot is particularly emphatic in asserting that literature can be no substitute for religion or philosophy, or indeed for anything else, that is not art, "not merely because we need religion, but because we need literature as well as religion".\textsuperscript{62} He says the same thing repeatedly in \textit{The Use of Poetry}, and stresses this point obviously because he finds that it is here that abuses have been most common ("Our literature is a substitute for religion, and so is our religion").\textsuperscript{63} He puts the blame on Matthew Arnold for propagating this heresy by his attitude to poetry, and by his definition of it as "a criticism of life". Arnold had had many followers.

In Eliot's opinion poetry and religion are sovereign and autonomous in their different spheres; and they should be kept apart. A \textit{confusion des genres} results in treating the Mass primarily as art or turning poetry into magic. "You cannot take heaven by magic". With religion may be grouped all beliefs and
philosophies. "I believe," he says, "that for a poet to be also a philosopher he would have to be virtually two men." He declares that even Coleridge was able to do one activity only at the expense of the other.

However, Eliot also admits that there is a necessary connection between religion and philosophy on the one hand and poetry on the other. For one thing, we cannot distinguish, as people sometimes do, between the occasions on which a particular poet is "being a poet" and the occasions on which he is "being a preacher". I.A. Richards thought that The Waste Land effected a complete severance between poetry and all beliefs. Eliot considers this view of Richards wrong. At the same time he seems to suggest that a complete severance between poetry and all beliefs would have been a good thing for poetry if it had been possible: it would do "what all poetry in the past would have been the better for doing". In other words, the connection between poetry and belief is a practical, not an ideal, necessity. Therefore, it should not artificially be made more pronounced than it actually is: "Any theory which relates poetry very closely to a religious or a social scheme of things aims, probably, to explain poetry by discovering its natural laws; but it is in danger of binding poetry by legislation to be observed — and poetry can recognise no such laws".

Looking at these theoretical interconnections further, Eliot stated as early as 1922 in an article on "The Lesson of Baudelaire" that "all first-rate poetry is occupied with morality" and that what matters to a poet is the problem of good and evil. In After Strange Gods he apparently
subjected art to the rule of religion by deliberately applying
the criterion of Christian orthodoxy to a number of writers as
the supreme test of the value of their works. In The Use of
Poetry he sees the deep connection between poetry and theology
in words which may truly come as a great surprise. He states
that aesthetic studies should be "guided by sound theology".67
and his essay on "Religion and Literature" exhorts all
Christians to maintain consciously, in literature, "certain
standards and criteria of criticism over and above those
applied by the rest of the world". This again shows that Eliot
is constantly interested in exploring, emphasising, and
building interconnections between literature and theology at a
theoretical level.

Eliot insists on the close connection between
religion and literature in the very same essay. He says that
most modern literature, especially fiction, has become quite
secularised. He notes that it is a mistake to completely
separate our literary judgments from our religious judgments.
He therefore cautions (somewhat illogically) that "the
separation is not, and never can be complete". He means that
though it may be complete on the conscious plane it remains
incomplete on the unconscious plane - assuming of course that
there is religion. He underlines the existence of a common
ground between religion and fiction - that of behaviour, or
ethics. He examines the moral usefulness or harmfulness of
literature and says that "the fiction that we read affects our
behaviour towards our fellow men affects our patterns of
ourselves". He admits that there will definitely exist a wide
gap between the theory and practice of an author, yet essentially the author does not and cannot maintain the distinction between the two. His views thus point to the essential wholeness of man's mind. As he observes:

And if we, as readers, keep our religious and moral convictions in one compartment, and take our reading merely for entertainment, or on a higher plane, for aesthetic pleasure, I would point out that the author, whatever his conscious intentions in writing, in practice recognizes no such distinctions. The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly, as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not.68

Our reading necessarily affects us as entire human beings; "it affects our moral and religious existence". The term "religious existence" implies that the effects described are independent of the truth or lack of faith of the readers of literature. From Eliot's point of view even unbelievers have a religious existence, a relation in their lives of a positive or negative character to the absolute truths of religion, something that penetrates the entire personality, including the artistic sensibility. It follows that even a poet who on the conscious
plane does away with all "meaning" must nevertheless exercise some subtle influence which touches his own religious existence and that of others.

In his later essays Eliot speaks of art as "one of the essential constituents" of the soil in which religion flourishes; and finds that both aesthetic sensibility and spiritual perception can be so deepened and merged with each other that "in the end, the judgment of a work of art by either religious or aesthetic standard will come to the same thing." The latter, however, is an idea which Eliot does not develop further, though it would be interesting to see how far he could pursue it.

According to Kristian Smidt, great poets transcend the limitations which may indeed restrain lesser craftsmen. They possess a "general awareness", which enables them to move freely and securely, and work upon whatever subject-matter they choose or find. At the same time if their awareness is also informed by Christian belief, then they may become "great Christian religious poets" like Dante and Corneille and Racine even though they do not touch upon Christian themes. Eliot does not place specifically religious themes higher than themes of general significance. He does not think poetry should set forth a belief; what poetry conveys "is what it feels like to hold certain beliefs".

Eliot's interests in fact are purely theoretic; he knew that his life was bound up with the life of his culture, with the life of his literature. He knew that everybody's life
was bound up in that way. Eliot, therefore, visualises the social, political and theological (Christian) functions of poetry or literature. Poetry, then, is capable of unifying the world either for good or for ill. It may evoke in the readers either a feeling towards God or a feeling towards death. As a literary critic and theorist, he realises that

the trouble of the modern age is not merely the inability to believe certain things about God and man which our forefathers believed, but the inability to feel towards God and man as they did ... what I am apprehensive of is death. It is ... possible that the feeling for poetry, and the feelings that are the material of poetry, may disappear everywhere: which might perhaps help to facilitate that unification of the world which some people consider desirable for its own sake. 71

In his statements on religion and aesthetics Eliot speaks as a Christian. It may partly account for the failure of his stand to completely clarify the relationship between or unify the attitudes toward, art and religious belief. Nobody fails to recognise the practical connection between the two. Besides, too many people welcome Eliot's art as a contribution to Christian propaganda. It is quite natural that the poet should react from such partisan attitudes and that his reaction should colour his statements. But it seems that when these
are allowed for, there is a certain discrepancy at times between the beliefs of the man and the attitudes of the poet. But there is no doubt that Eliot as a critic has been trying as far as possible to bring the theoretical framework and practice of criticism in literary as well as social and political concepts as close as possible with a view to promote a comprehensive Theory of Criticism.