CHAPTER -III

Eliot and the Waste Land

Confronted by The Rock and Murder In the Cathedrals¹, it is at once clear, first, that it is Mr. Eliot's technique rather than his subject matter that has grown, and, second, that this technique, new or old, radically limits the number and kind of our expectations. The scope of his poetry, its final magnitude, is a different matter, and the impurity or bloom of the contemporaneous must be rubbed away before it can be determined. What I mean, here is that we get neither the kind nor variety of emotional satisfaction from either of his, plays that we get from Noel Coward or Congreve or Shakespeare, we are not tittivated or stroked; we do not see society brushed with the pure light of its manners' there is no broad display of human passion and purpose; we get the drama of the Church struggling against society towards God, which is something new (for those who like newness) in English drama; we get the way of the Church against the way of the World. And we get the awful harm as well as the good done men and women in the course of the struggle. It is this harm and this good, this sense of irreparable damage and intransigent glory, as it is in contact with this struggle that makes the drama actual. It is not spiritual drama; it is not like Dante the drama of damnation, penance, and beatitude; it is the drama human emotions actualised in the light of spiritual drama.

It is the substance of this (the same utter view of life), that we get in another way in "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" and "The Hippopotamus"-
these the tough anti-clerical way; and in still other ways it is the same substance in “Prufrock, Gerontion,” and *The Waste Land*. The substance is permanent; the flux representive. If we take all the poems together with this substance in mind one charge that has been made against them should disappear—that they present by the present and fly into some paradise of the past. On the contrary, they measure the present living standards, which most people relegate to the past. The distinction is sharp; it is between poetry that would have been a shell of mere disillusion and poetry that is alive, and beyond disillusion. As Mr. Eliot himself remarked. *The Waste Land* only showed certain people their own illusion of disillusionment. It is this fundamental identity of substance which marks the unity of his work; that a variety of subjects and diverse approaches conspire to complete, to develop, a single judgment.

The changes—and no one would confuse or wrongly date two of Mr. Eliot's poems—are in the changes and growth of technique. The deliberate principle of growth has been in the direction of appealing to more levels of response, of reaching, finally, the widest possible audience, by attempting to secure in the poetry a base level of significance to which any mind might be expected to respond, without loss or injury to any other level of significance. It is in the light of this re-interpretation that Mr. Eliot's desire for an illiterate audience should be considered. That it is obvious does not make it any less telling, or any less inspiring to work towards, or-remembering the tacit dogma of difficulty held by so many poets—any less refreshing for the prospective reader. That this direction is
not a guess on my own part and that he meant his notion of levels of significance in Shakespeare to apply to his own poetry, Mr. Eliot provides a candid text to show. It is at the very end of *The Use of Poetry*. With the great model of Shakespeare, the modern poet would like to write plays. “He would like to be something of a popular entertainer, and be able to think his own thoughts behind a tragic, or a comic mask. He would like to convey the pleasures of poetry, not only too. A larger audience, but to larger groups of people collectively; and the theatre is the best place to do it . . .. Furthermore, the theatre, by the technical exactions which it makes and limitations which it imposes upon the author, by the obligation to keep for a definite length of time the sustained interest of a large and unprepared and not wholly perceptive group of people, by its problems which have constantly to be solved, has enough ‘to keep the poet conscious mind fully occupied’.

The best of Mr. Eliot’s paragraph I have omitted: Sentences that give the emotion of being a poet. What I have quoted is that part of his prose reflexions concerned with the ideal behind the two plays. It is extraordinary how much of what we want to know these three Sentences can be made to explain. The only emphasis needed is this:

Eliot has not only the gift of connotation but also a genius for describing a particular situation. In *The Waste Land* he seems, more than in any other poem, and more than any other artist, to describe the contemporary post war situation
of a certain very small class of intellectuals in Europe and America. Here, in expressing the situation of a small class, he goes much further than in any other earlier or later poem. For this longer poem seems to form a climax to all that he has as yet written, and the other poems, on the one side, ascend to that position, and on the other hand fall away from it. What one sees in the earlier, as in the later, poems is the experience of a purely isolated sensibility.

This passage does not objectively present the people it describes; it merely exists in the mind of the reader, who is made of imagine that he is sharing the life of the people. But what he is really seeing and hearing is a part of his own mind. The method of *The Waste Land* is justified in so far as it fulfils the psychological truth observed by Freud. But Eliot's way of doing this is perhaps a little too studied. The poem seems to lean rather too heavily on Sir James Frazer, and *The Golden Bough* tends to form a private poem concealed in the real poem, in the same way as Joyces's private, poem about the Odyssey is enshrined in Ulysses. The work is very slightly tainted by the learning of the Cambridge don. Perhaps the main reason for this is that, although Eliot's attitude is much more objective and generalized in The Waste Land than in any earlier poem, the psychology of his people is just as crude. His ladies, his bank clerks, his Sweeneys, his Mrs. Porters, his pub conversationalists, are all part of the world of things. Psychologically they are far cruder than the Babbitts and other creations of Sinclair Lewis. One of the most astonishing things about Eliot is that a poet with such a strong dramatic style should seem so blinded to the existence
of people out side himself. Yet the effect of his poetry depends very largely on this blindness.

Eliot seems to think, quite rightly, that what makes people living is their beliefs. But to him it seems impossible to accept and belief that is not a religious belief: one either rejects all belief, as I.A. Richarcs finds he has done in The Waste Land, or else one accepts a religious belief in salvation and damnation. Those who do not accept this belief are not even damned, but externally dead. For that reason, the people about whom he writes in his poems are dead, because they are not allowed to hold with any conviction the small private beliefs, which are as many as people’s separate occupations. There is a whole list of such belies in St. J.Perse’s Anabase, a poem which Eliot himself has translated; He who sees his soul reflected in a blade; the man learned in sciences, in anomastic; the well thought of in councils, he who names fountains,’ etc. These are the living; yet they seem to be shut out of Eliot’s poetry, because ‘to see his soul reflected in a blade’ puts a man out side the pale even of the damned.

These two fragments give a final picture of the haunted world of Eliot’s early poetry, and of The Waste Land. The characters, the prostitutes and their American pals, are the dead. Their lives are automatic; their only emotions are fear, and a primitive kind of superstition, which occupies them with dealing and cutting packs of cards. The interruption of the telephone with its repeated ‘Ting a ling ling does not break the jazz rhythm of their talk.
Here Eliot's verse is bare of its beautiful effects, and of all poetry. It is intricate, dramatic and ingenious. Only in its organization is it superior to the thing it parodies. Eventually, in the poetry of disillusion, the parody becomes the thing parodied, in the same way as in Auden's *Dance of Death* the jazz songs are exactly like real jazz songs by Noel Coward. The parody no longer exists in the words, but in the dramatic presentation of the characters who speak the words.

In *After Strange God*, Eliot alludes to the apparent discrepancy, which critics have found between his poetry and his critical prose. It would appear that while I maintain the most correct opinions in 'my criticism,' I do nothing but violate them in my verse; and thus appear in a double, if not a double-faced role.

This, and the alternative view that his poetry is to be admired and his prose lamented, are usual opinions. The assumption always is that his verse and, prose are quite unrelated to each other.

Actually, they are very closely related. If one reads through the whole of the prose and the whole of the verse, one finds than the same process, the same search for a tradition and for orthodox principles, combined with the same sensitivity to contemporary life, is developed through both of them. In the essays there are frequent references (they grow more open as time goes on) to problems in which the writer himself is involved in his creative work. A certain Light relief is provided, if the reader is curious enough to wonder whether there
be any connection between the following two passages. The first is a discussion of the way in which a poet may select his imagery. And this selection probably run through the whole of his sensitive life. There might be the experience of a child of ten, a small boy peering through sea-water in a rock-pool, and finding a sea-anemone for the first time: the simple experience (not so simple, for an exceptional child, as it looks) might be dormant in his mind for twenty years, and reappear transformed in some Verse-context charged with great imaginative pressure.

The second is from the *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*:

I could see nothing behind that child's eye.

I have seen eyes in the street.

Trying to peer through lighted shutters,

And a crab one afternoon in a pool,

An old crab with barnacles on his back,

Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

In its relation to the philosophy, which forms the background of his poetry, some of the criticism is most illuminating. Particularly the essays on Baudelaire and Dante, for Dante is the poet whose writing and attitude fulfill most of the conditions which Eliot, in his last essays, has come to impose on the artist. He is Christian, moral, orthodox and traditional. Without Dante, as the supreme example of an orthodox writer, *After Strange Gods* could hardly have been written. Baudelaire, on the other hand, provides the machinery of the modern *Inferno*: and he is also to Eliot an example of the Christian writer. The
Introduction to Baudelaire's *Intimate Journal* shows how, unless Baudelaire had decided to be damned, it would have been more difficult for Eliot to set out on the path of salvation. Lastly, there are the critical writings of T.E. Hulme. The paragraph, which Eliot quotes at the end of this same introduction, needs no comment.

In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts, which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect. Certain secondary result 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.

Thus in Dante, Baudelaire, T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, the Elizabethans, and a half-dozen other influences, one sees the background of Eliot's poetry in Eliot's prose. The poetry and the prose, together form a whole: the poetry is strengthened and given its ideals by the prose, the prose is illustrated and given 'foundation by the poetry. Perhaps this explains a puzzling sentence in *After Strange Gods*: 'I should say that in one's prose reflexions one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality.'
His prose is not confined to criticism, and perhaps some of the most important parts of his criticism occur in his poetry. For his poetry is literary and full of quotation, and his use of the passages which he quotes implies a critical attitude. We look in the essays for criticism of the Elizabethans, which concerns their ideals: in *Gerontion* and *The Waste Land* for the criticism, which emphasizes their historic actuality.

The pervading weakness of Eliot's writing is a certain fragmentariness: ‘These fragments I have shored against my ruins,’ in *The Waste Land*, and:

> Because I cannot hope to turn again
> Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something
> Upon which to rejoice,

From *Ash Wednesday*, are lines, which, without any weakness, yet ‘give him away,’ because they are so true. In his poetry he is an inhibited writer, exploiting in himself a tendency in his own work to break off just when the reader is expecting him to become most lucid, and making of this tendency a technical device. His prose, in spite of its logical precision, its dryness, and its fine organization, is, in its context, uneven: occasionally there are remarks of brilliant observation of violent prejudice, or whole paragraphs of sententiousness.

The poetry and the prose to some extent bolster each other up, and are interdependent. The thought that has led the poetry on from Stage to stage has been developed in the prose itself, though, man . . . leaving the understanding
dark, the will in dry, the memory empty," The prayer and the section end with a quotation from the Ave Maria of Catholic ritual, words which are for the penitent who has faith.

The purgation continues in Section II, and a State (or station) of the purifying function is expressed by symbolic images, a device which Eliot commends and admires in Dante. In his essay on that poet he says ". Hell is not a place but a state; . . . Hell, though a state, is a state than can only be thought of, and perhaps only experienced, by the projection of sensory images." He also says:

What we should consider is not so much the meaning of the images, but the reverse process, that which led a man having an idea to express it in images. We have to consider the type of mind which by nature and practice tended to express itself in allegory: and for a competent poet, allegory means clear visual images. And clear visual images are given much more intensity by having a meaning-we do not need to know what that meaning is, but in our awareness of the images we must be aware that the meaning is there too.

We may profitably follow Eliot's counsel to consider "not so much the meaning of the images, but the reverse process, that which led a man having an idea to express it in images." The idea is known to be that of purgation. We may know that the images are associated with each other and we may know that they
are associated with a particular idea, but we do not know enough until we have learned upon what ground all the associations occur. When this has been learned the images will become meaningful. We have already noted the connection between the "Lady" of Section II and the lady of Cavalcanti's poem. Mario Praz remarks that the term Lady-"Donna"-"had quite a special connotation in Dante's circle." The ballata gives us an instance of the lady's function in the poetry of that circle. Worshipped with religious adoration, she is a type of the Virgin Mary, one who may bring the grace of salvation to her suitor, from whom she receives a personal devotion involving the natural and the supernatural. The sequence of the sections in Ash Wednesday is in part founded upon this. The Platonic lover of Cavalcanti's poem bids his soul to "worship her/ still in her purity. "Such love his a religious quality and is ironicaly distinct from the sexual formula which describes the performance of the typist and the "young man carbuncular" in The Waste Land. The most minent instance of the love which amount to religious worship is Dante's devotion to stated the idea in his essay on Dante, speaking of the experience in the Vita Nuova.

It is not. I believe, meant as a description of what he consciously felt on his meeting with Beatrice, but rather as a description of what that meant on mature reflection upon it . . . the love of man and woman (or for that matter of man and man) is only explained and made reasonable by the higher love, or else is simply the coupling of animals.
It is probably quite valid to associate the Lady with Beatrice, for their function is similar, although it is not necessary for the reader of *As Wednesday* to recall any particular appearance of Beatrice from the Divine Comedy. Since Eliot’s poem deals with purgation, we may take note of his remark: “it is in these last cantos of the Purgatorio, rather than in the Paradiso, that Beatrice appears most clearly.”

Associations of the Lady also involve the “juniper tree.” *The Juniper Tree*, one of Jakob Grimm’s tales, is an account of a husband and wife who, having no children, but desiring one, finally acquire a boy by supernatural aid. When the wife dies in childbirth the man marries a woman who, having a daughter of her own, Marlinchen, hates the boy, she kills him, makes puddings of his flesh which she gives to her husband for food, and lies about the boy’s absence. Marlinchen carries the boy’s bones to a juniper tree. Then there are mist and flames, and a bird appears, singing

> My mother she killed me,
> My father he ate me,
> My sister little Marlinchen,
> Gathered together all my bones,
> Tied them in a silken handkerchief,
> Laid them beneath the juniper tree;
> Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!

The bird finally causes the death of the stepmother and becomes a boy again.
The Lady, by her benevolence, corresponds to the sister Marlinchen. The juniper and the bones are additional links. Moreover, the story reminds us of Christian resurrection and the eating of the boy’s body parallels the Communion. Eliot’s use of this story agrees with his interest in the Christian elements of anthropology manifested by *The Waste Land*. The boy has passed through death and come to life again. Eliot’s has used devices before to express the idea that life through death comes through death. (*vide* *The Waste Land*, *Journey of the Magi* and *A Song of simeon*). Another source of “under a juniper tree”. Strikes the same note. When Elijah was threatened by Jezebel for having slain the prophets of Baal, he went into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die.” It is possible that the proffering of ”my love/ To... the fruit of the gourd” derives from another biblical passage of the same nature. When Jonah was afflicted by the sun’s heat because " the gourd under, which he sat had withered, "he fainted, and wished in him self to die”.

The bird of Grimm’s story has been carried over into the poem. It is not simply for grotesque effect that the bones happen to chirp and sing. In Section IV of *Ash Wednesday* the bird sings “Redeem the time, redeem the dream.” Elsewhere in Eliot’s poetry the bird and the tree occur together (cf. *The Waste Land*, 1.356; *Burnt Norton*, I;
The bones in the poem reflect the tale, as well as St. John's *Dark Night*:
"the yearnings for God become so great in the soul, that the very bones seem to be dried up by this thirst, and the natural powers to be fading away,"

The book of *Ezekiel* is another source to the bones symbolism. It may be observed that there are in section II several allusions to Chapter 37 of *Ezekiel.* After the Lord has passed damming judgement upon many iniquitous peoples. He promises rehabilitation and reanimation to the Israelites. He shows to the prophet a vision symbolic of renewed vitality. The-hand of the Lord was upon me . . . and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones. They were very dry, and he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? " So I prophesied. . . . and the bones came together . . . and the flesh came up upon them but there was no breath in them. Then Said he unto, me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, Son of man . . . So I prophesied . . . and they lived . . . an exceeding great army.

Then said he unto me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost... Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land....

The chapter Continues with a prophecy of the unity and blessings, which God will bestow upon His people. *Ezekiel* ends with instructions for the dividing of
the land and the negotiation of inheritance. This is the land which ye shall divide
by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance and these are their portions saith the
Lord God.”

It is significant that Eliot’s first note to The Waste Land (1. 20, “son of
man”) refer to Ezekiel (the biblical context of thesis specific reference) has not
much importance unless we consider the entire book of Ezekiel as relative to the
Waste Land makes a reference, that applies also to section II of Ash
Wednesday: “the burden of the grasshopper “ holds the same meaning (but for a
different purpose as “ the cricket no relief,” both deriving from Ecclesiastes

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the
grinding. Is low, and he shall rise up at he voice of the bird, and all the daughters
of music shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is
high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the
grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his
long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

Conspicuous in the words of the waiter, obviously central to the poem, is
the childhood experience. Its potential significance is suggested by the intensity
with which the old waiter is haunted by this experience, so haunted that he must
tell of it to an unsympathetic and complete stranger. That Eliot intended the
experience portrayed here as of the kind discussed in his essay on Dante is, I
believe, beyond any doubt. Its being ascribed to the undignified old man illustrates that its source is basic in human nature and (to follow Eliot) in a nature beyond that. This is further emphasized by the statement of the snobbish patron: "De quel droit payes-tu des experiences comme moi?"

In his fine analysis of *The Waste Land* Mr. Cleanth Brooks has explicated the English version of the passage on the drowned Phoenician, pointing out its symbols and allusions, its several levels of meaning. But we should determine its coherent status in the French poem. To observe that the passage on drowning follows a reference to the waiter's need of a bath seems to me to be more than simply amusing. Here, as else here in Eliot's poetry, water is symbolic of spiritual rebirth- a requisite of return to the obsessive experience. The manner by which the waiter is shown to be in need of water and the shift to the drowned man thus constitute a characteristic irony. And the shift illustrates again the "commonness" of the experience, bringing.

Just as critics have gone wrong in calling Eliot a romanticist, so they have gone amiss in calling him a classicist. Alardyce Nicoll, for instance, commits many an error by grouping Eliot with the English neo-classicists. Without explaining what precisely, he means by imitation, Nicoll writes: "Conscious imitation becomes one of the poet's duties, for by imitation he serves to call into the minds of his readers (as by symbols) some at least of this intellectual inheritance." The term "imitation" was used in an honorific sense
in the neo-classical, period but with Eliot it takes on a pejorative implication. Distinguishing between influence and imitation Eliot writes: “the difference between influence and imitation is that influence can fecundate whereas imitation especially unconscious imitation can only sterilize.” Nicoll again, goes wrong when he says that “ in his critical work Mr. Eliot never tires of emphasizing …. tradition, just as classicists in a previous age had emphasized the glory that was Greece and Rome. “ Nicoll fails to notice that Eliot's attitude to tradition is different from that of the neo-classicists' towards Greece and Rome. In short, Eliot's attitude, towards tradition is highly critical, while the neo-classicists had unqualified praise for “the glory that was Greece and Rome.”

Just as in the classification of romanticism and classicism, so in that of personality and impersonality, the critics of Eliot are sharply divided. And just as critics have pointed out that despite his avowed classicism Eliot is at bottom a romanticist, so they have demonstrated that he is an upholder of the theory of personal expression for all his insistence on impersonality.

The critics of Eliot discussing his impersonal theory can be divided into two categories, namely those who emphasise the invalidity of the theory and those who find the theory basically a personal one. F.R. Leavis is a critic of the first category who does not tire of repeating the untenability of the impersonal theory, John Casey expresses an identical view to Leavis in his belief that "Eliot's
remarks about the impersonality of art form perhaps the most confusing part of his critical theory. There are other critics who are concerned with the simple fact that Eliot’s theory of impersonality is basically a theory of personal expression. In his essay on “T.S. Eliot in his criticism” Stephen Spender, for instance, points out how Eliot’s theory of impersonality formulated in the tradition enay is rooted in the personality of the writer. Allen Austin is not different from Spender in maintaining that Eliot believes in “the indirect expression of personality”. Discussing the dialectical structure of Eliot’s theory of poetry, Fei-pai Lu opines that Eliot’s criticism displays two opposite types of personality and impersonality and emphasizes the balance of personality with impersonality.

The foregoing discussion is an evidence of how divergent are the views expressed about Eliot’s theory of impersonality. The main source of confusion regarding the theory is the sweeping generalizations made by the critics. The critics have failed to discriminate sufficiently between the different types of personality and impersonality in Eliot’s criticism. Let us take, for instance the case of F.R. Leavis who denounces vehemently Eliot’s theory of impersonality and in opposition to it sets forth his own theory of personal expression. But he fails to notice that Eliot himself has set considerable value on personality, specially in The Sacred Wood where he evolves his theory of impersonality. And Lu, who doesn’t fail to notice Eliot’s use of personality in the honorific sense, overlooks the personality that Eliot has criticized in the later essays. He distinguishes
between two types of personality and two types of impersonality when, in fact, Eliot's essays display three types of personality and three type of impersonality.

Before entering upon a detail discussion of the different type of personality and impersonality in Eliot's essays I give a summary account of them in the tabular form.

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I shall begin, with personality (3) and impersonality (3), one appreciated throughout Eliot's criticism and the other depreciated throughout. The personality, which Eliot has exalted throughout his criticism, is the personality that emerges out of the design of experiences in the work, and can be identified with “point of view.” Writing anonymously about pounds' metric and poetry in 1977, he brings out the writer’s “point of view” which is an indication of his maturity. In the reviews contributed to Athenaeum for the year 1919, Eliot stresses time and again the significance of the “point of view” in a work, which reveals the writer's personality. In his review of The Years Between by Rudyard Kipling, Eliot writes, contrasting swinburne and kipling with other writers such as Shakespeare and Dante.
Some poets, like Shakespeare or Dante or Villon, and some novelists like, Mr. Conrad, have in contrast to ideas or concepts *points of views*, or "worlds"-what, are incorrectly called "philosophies…Mr. Conrad has no ideas but he has a point of view, a "world", it can hardly be defined, but it pervades his work’ and is unmistakable. (Italics mine).

The point of view for Eliot will be discernible only in the work of a writer with personality. The personality does not imply holding on to certain ideas and forcing them on the audience (as is done by swinburne and Kipling), but revealing one’s attitude through the organization of experiences in the work. Contrasting the humanist’s personality with the scientist’s or artist’s, Eliot avers that “in the man of scientific or artistic temper the personality is distilled into the work, it loses its incidents, it becomes, as with Montaigne, a permanent point of view, a phase in the history of mind.” It is obvious that the personality of a writer is distilled into a point of view that is to say, the point of view is not personality in the sense of biography with its personal incidents but personality shorn of incidental elements and transformed into an impersonal (or what Eliot calls permanent ) point of view. When we read a work with such a point of view, we feel the presence in it, not of the writer talking to us but only his individuality not expressed in individual utterances but diffused throughout the work.

Eliot frequently applies the criterion of personality in his evaluations. The most emphatic instance of the application of his criterion occurs in his
demonstration of the inferiority of Massinger to writers like Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare.

The inferiority of Massinger to Jonson is an inferiority, not of one type of art to another, but within Jonson's type. It is a simple deficiency. Marlowe's and Jonson's come-dies were a view of life they were, as great literature is, the transformation of a personality into a personal work of art, their lifetime's work, long or short. Massinger is not simply a smaller personality his personality hardly exists. He did not, out of his own personality, build a world of art, as Shakespeare and Marlowe and Jonson built.

Thus Massinger is inferior to Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare because he, as against the latter, has no personality to express. Needless to say, the personality can be transformed into a work of art only when a writer has a personality to express. The transformed personality, which is a work of art, is personal in that it reflects, an individual point of view in the sense explained above.

The personality that I have been discussing Eliot has exalted not only in his early essays but throughout his criticism. In his essay on Ford (1932) he emphasizes the revelation of Shakespeare’s personality uniting all his works into a whole, and then advances the following generalization.
A man might, hypothetically, compose any number of fine passages or even of whole poems which would each give satisfaction, and yet not be a great poet, unless we felt them to be united by one significant, consistent and developing personality.

The revealed personality becomes increasingly important in Eliot's criticism, and the Elizabethan playwrights are repeatedly estimated on this criterion as is evident from his essays on Thomas Middleton (1927), Cyril Tourneur (1930), Thomas Heywood (1931), John Ford (1932) and John Marston (1934). Whereas Middleton, Heywood and Ford are disparaged for lack of personality, Tourneur and Marston are applauded for the personality expressed in their works. Of Middleton, for example, Eliot says that “it is difficult to imagine his personality.” As regards Tourneur, “in no play by any minor Elizabethan is a more positive personality revealed than in *The Revenger's Tragedy*.” The criterion in these essays is the same as the one in the earlier essays on the Elizabethan playwrights such as “Ben Jonson” (1919) and “Philip Massinger” (1920).

Writing on Yeats in 1940 *Eliot reiterated the importance of personality*. What he says in his essay on Yeats is in line with what he had been saying from the very beginning. Hence it is difficult to explain, except in terms of the lapse of memory. Why he thinks that “in giving as a reason for the superiority of Yeats’ later work the greater expression of personality in it. I am contradicting myself”.

The essay on Yeats furnishes me with the starting point to discuss the impersonality disapproved of by Eliot throughout his critical programme. Feeling that in extolling Yeats’ later work he is contradicting his earlier stand on impersonality, he distinguishes between two type of impersonality, one that he depreciates and the other that he acclaims. And the impersonality that he acclaims in the same as the personality discussed above.

There are two forms of impersonality: that which is natural to the mere skillful craftsman, and that which is more and more achieved by the maturing artist. The first is that of what I have called the “anthology piece” of a lyric by Lovelace or Suckling, or of Campion, a finer poet than either. The second impersonality is that of the poet who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol. The impersonality of the first type that Eliot attributes to a mere anthology piece is impersonality without personality. Since there is no personality to express, there is no question of personality being transmuted into impersonality. Eliot has defined what he means by an "anthology piece" in "what is minor Poetry?" In an anthology we find both minor and major poets represented, and a minor poet is one who does not arouse any curiosity in the readers to read beyond the piece (or pieces) in the anthology. The curiosity to go beyond the anthology piece will be aroused only by a poet with personality, which is the first characteristics of a major poet. Eliot’s comment on Campion who is impersonal without personality is significant. "I should say," writes Eliot
“that within his limits there was no more accomplished craftsman in the whole of English poetry than Campion “but still” we do not feel, after reading Campion, that we know the man Campion, as we do feel after reading Herrick.” It is this extraordinary craftsmanship without personality that makes Campion impersonal in the sense that does not make one a major poet.

The impersonality that Eliot disapproves of in the essay on Yeats he had been crying down all along. In "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927) he compares Greek plays with those of Seneca and the differences that he discerns between them are the same as those between the later Yeats and Campion.

Behind the dialogue of Greek drama we are always conscious of a concrete visual actuality, and behind that of a specific emotional actuality. Behind the drama of words is the drama of action, the timbre of voice and voice, the uplifted hand or tense muscle, and the particular emotion. The spoken play, the words which we read, are symbols, a shorthand, and often, as in the best of Shakespeare, a very abbreviated shorthand, indeed, for the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing, . . . In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it. His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it, they recite in turn. The difference between Greek plays and those of Seneca is virtually the difference between the plays reflecting a personality and those not reflecting one. Both the types of plays are impersonal but whereas in the former the impersonality is the transmutation
of personality, in the latter the impersonality is of mere craftsmanship. This is the reason why Eliot says later that "in the tragedies of Seneca the centre of value is shifted from what the personage says to the the way in which he says it.

When a writer is impersonal in a pejorative sense, the way of expression tends to take precedence over what is expressed. What for Eliot is true of Seneca holds also for writers like Philip Massinger and Swinburne. In a passage already adduced Eliot says that Massinger's personality simply does not exist. And this absence of personality is a concomitant of "Massinger's feeling for language… [outstripping] his feeling for things. Swinburne is the extreme instance of an impersonal writer who delights exclusively in word and their sounds. Eliot says unequivocally that the world of Swinburne is impersonal, but it has the impersonality of a mere craftsman. Swinburne's absence of personality goes side by side with his intemperate interest in expression. "It is, in fact the word ," writes Eliot “ that gives him the thrill, not the object.

There remain two other types of personality and impersonality to be discussed. Personality (2) condemned in the later essays and impersonality (2) appreciated in the later essays I shall discuss later. At the moment I concern myself with personality (1), which is decried, and impersonality (1), which is exalted in the early essays.

I have already dwelt at some length upon the impersonality emerging out of the transformation of personality. Eliot's impersonality in the honorific sense
cannot be attained with out personality. In his “Tradition and the Individual Talent” he say emphatically that “only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.” And he reiterates this view in his Introduction to Paul Valrey’s Le Serpent where he writes:

It [Le Serpent] is “impersonal” in the sense that personal emotion, personal experience, is extended and completed in something impersonal not in the sense of something divorced from personal experience and passion.

What a great artist does is to escape, through a process of transmutation, into a work of art, which combines particularity with generality or, to use Eliot’s familiar terms, personality with impersonality. (It is this combination of opposites which, among other things, marks off Eliot from the neo-classicists on the one hand and the romatics on the other). Let us examine now the way personality is transformed into impersonality, or in other words, particularity is generalized and here comes in Eliot’s celebrated critical formula called the objective correlative.

As has been pointed out, there are two types of personality one that stands outside the work and can be identified with the writer’s biography, and the other that emerges from inside the work. It is the objective correlative that plays the most vital role in the transformation of the former into the latter. Since the creative process is mysterious, it is difficult to say what precisely happens in the process of transmutation.
Before the actual transmutation takes place, there are present in the mind of the artist two things first, the experience that has accumulated unconsciously and, secondly, the objective correlative devised consciously. The relation between the two forms the basis of the well-known definition of the objective correlative set forth by Eliot in his essay of Hamlet.

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

Before entering on a discussion of the objective correlative it is worthwhile to examine the term "emotion", C.K. Stead equates "structural emotion" with the objective correlative. The main weakness of Stead is his sweeping generalization. Consequently he fails to distinguish between different types of emotion that Eliot describes. In the table already reproduced Stead has grouped "emotion" with "structure" and in a footnote he identifies Eliot’s distinction between “structural emotion “and “floating feelings” with Ransom’s between “structure “and “texture.” The very fact that stead equates both “emotion” and “structural emotion”, with "structure" in Ransom's sense shows that he does not distinguish between these two types of emotion. If we examine closely the
emotional terms employed by Eliot, we shall find that they are of four different types. And unless we bear in mind the distinction between the four types, we are likely to commit the same error as Stead. There is, without doubt, a type of emotion, which can be identified with Ransom’s structure, but then this is only one of the several types. The following are the extracts from Eliot’s essays containing emotional terms of different types.

It is not in his “personal emotions”, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting (italics mine). This (the balance of the contrasted emotions of beauty and ugliness in an extract adduced) is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feeling, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion (italics mine).

The personal emotion is, Eliot makes it sufficiently clear, the emotion evoked by events in the life of the poet, the structural emotion is the emotion that we find in the poem, and the artistic emotion is the emotion that stems from the work as a whole out of the combination of emotion and feeling. There is a fourth emotion also which is not qualified by any adjective but is used as a synonym for any of the three emotions. When Eliot uses the word “emotion” in the passage where he defines the objective correlative, he uses it as a synonym for the personal emotion. But when the term comes in conjunction with feeling, it is used
in the sense of “structural emotion”. And whenever Eliot talks of “the effect of a work of art” he has at the back of his mind “the artistic emotion”, since the effect is after all the emotional effect.

It should be clear now that only the structural emotion can be identified with Ransom’s structure. And Ransom’s structure can in turn be equated with the objective correlative. But I must hasten to add that the objective correlative as it exists before the actual creative process begins cannot arouse the original emotion: it can become an effective formula for the arousal of emotion only after combining with feeling.

If we have the above creative process in mind, many of Eliot’s statements, which sound enigmatic, stand out clear. In view of the foregoing analysis, it should not be difficult to understand Eliot’s well known utterance in ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent” that “the poet has not a personality” to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Before commenting on this pronouncement I must call attention to the fact the Eliot has taken here an extreme stance, which he modifies later in “four Elizabethan Dramatists,” where he writes:

No artist produces great art by a deliberate attempt to express his personality. He expresses his personality indirectly through concentrating upon a
task, which is a task in the same sense as the making of an efficient engine or the turning of a jug or a table leg.

At first sight one may find a discrepancy between the two utterances of Eliot: in one he says that the poet does not have a personality to express, while in the other he admits that the poet expresses his personality, though indirectly. But the truth of the matter is that there is no discrepancy between the two statements. (The extreme view in the first statement was, I believe, necessary for combating the emphasis that had been laid on personality for over a century.) There is a difference between direct and indirect expression of personality; in the indirect expression of personality what the poet expresses is not personality but an equivalent of it, or, to use Eliot’s term, the objective correlative. Eliot speaks of the task of artistic production and compares its product to objects like engine, jug and table leg. Eliot is right from his own point of view. An artist, he maintains, produces a work of art not by expressing his personality but by designing an objective correlative which, combined with formal elements, brings into being a work of art. The designing of an objective correlative is a task in the same sense as the making of any other object, an efficient engine, for instance.

The medium which is the mind of the poet has an important role to play in Eliot’s theory of impersonality. Eliot has drawn a chemical analogy to describe how the medium operates. He says that when oxygen and sulphur dioxide come into contact with platinum, they form sulphurous acid, though the platinum itself
remains unaffected and the new gas contains no traces of platinum. This is precisely what takes place in the artistic creation. The objective correlative and the formal elements are transformed into a work of art by the operation of the poet's mind.

Eliot’s theory of impersonality is bound up with his own practice. Eliot's two theories-Tradition and impersonality-were formulated in the same essay. In the preceding chapter I dealt with the use of tradition in Eliot’s poetry, and here I must point how tradition is related to impersonality before passing on to demonstrate their co-presence in Eliot’s poetry.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” was originally published in the Egoist in two installments-the first dealing with the theory of tradition and the second with the impersonal theory. Pointing to the link between the two parts of the essay Eliot writes:

I tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. Former talks to us, while that of the later talks to his wife. When the monologue is of the latter type, it comes very close to the actual drama. "Porphyrio's Lover" describes a past experience. While
"Andrca del Sarto" is the actual enactment of experience such as we find in a drama.

When we come to Eliot's early poetry, we find that his dramatic monologues are nearer to "Andrea del Sarto' than to "Porphyrio's Lover." His dramatic monologues are "interior dialogues", since inside their heads the protagonists are in conversation with other personages. As against Browning's monologues, the dialogues of Eliot have listeners not merely whose presence is felt but, who also speak. This is true of such poems as "Prufrock", "Portrait of a Lady" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." In "Prufrock" both the listener and the women speak in the mind of the protagonist. The listener's question we know only from the answer given by the protagonist.

Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"

Let us go and make our visit.

While the speeches of the women are reproduced!

The first two lines clearly indicate that the lady is conversing with the protagonist in his mind. And the long speech of the lady with the protagonist places the two characters in a dramatic situation so much so indeed that the reader watches them precisely as he does characters in a dramatic dialogue.

What we find in the poems discussed above is not the poet talking to us in his own person, but only presenting before us certain characters in certain situations arousing certain emotions through certain images. It is probable that
the emotions aroused are the personal emotions of the poet himself, but we do not know anything about them except through the emotions stemming from the objective correlatives.

Eliseo Vivas seeks to demolish Eliot’s theory of the objective correlative on the ground that the emotion which the objective correlative actually expresses is not that which the poet felt before the poem was written: the original emotion suffers a sea-change in the course of composition.

The objective correlative derived from *From Ritual to Romance* is filled in with the imagistic details so much so indeed that one cannot think of it in isolation. The idea of sterility derived from Miss Weston’s book has been given textural details by the images that come from different literary sources such as Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, Chaucer’s *Prologue to Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Goldsmith’s *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The poet is now here present in the poem, the different components of which are united by Tiresias. When we read the poem, we stand face to face not with the poem but only a set of images presenting characters in different situations. The nature of the objective correlative of *The Waste Land* stands out clear if we compare it with, say, Matthew Arnold’s *The Scholar Gipsy*, which also deals with the malaise of the age. Arnold comes out openly to state the "strange disease of modern life" and contrasts it with the life of the scholar gipsy who embodies the ideal. On the contrary, the poet of *The Waste Land* never appears in the poem and the
disease of the modern life is communicated only through the projection of the objective correlative.

The impersonality in the early essays is different from the one that Eliot postulates in the later essays. Going back to my earlier distinction of personality and impersonality, it is personality (2) and impersonality (2) that are Eliot’s main concern in his later essays. When I make this comment, I certainly do not mean that the other concepts of personality and impersonality, that we have already dealt with, disappear altogether from the later essays. They are very much there, but they combine with the new concepts.

The personality that has been condemned in the early phase exists independently of the literary tradition, while the one that has been attacked in the later essays is personal in the sense that it is not sanctioned by Christian orthodoxy. The writers who are most personal by the later criterion are those who have deviated most from Christian dogmas. For Eliot, Christian orthodoxy constitutes an impersonal background against which a writer operates in literary creations.

In notes towards the Definition of Culture he writes that the artistic sensibility is impoverished by it divorce from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic.
The Christian beliefs and personality in the sense of point of view discussed earlier should not be confused. I have already demonstrated how personality as point of view has been exalted by Eliot throughout his criticism. A writer may have a point of view without being Christian, Shakespeare, for instance.

Helen Gardner's point comes down to this: that Eliot’s religious poetry combines the extremes of impersonality and personality, in other words, it is on the one hand, strictly orthodox and, on the other, highly personal. The impersonality lies in the rigorous acceptance of orthodoxy and personality in giving it an individual form. There are two question that strike one at this stage. First, does what Helen Garder say of Eliot’s poetry hold for metaphysical poetry as well? And, secondly, does Helen Gardner’s generalization apply to the whole of Eliot’s religious poetry or only to part of it? Helen Gardner has referred to Eliot’s “Marina”, but I should like to leave out all the shorter poems and concentrate on the two major poems of the later Eliot, namely “Ash Wednesday” and the Four Quartets. I believe that Helen Gardner’s generalization does not apply to “Ash Wednesday “ which is very much like a metaphysical poem; As against Gardner, I maintain that the language used in the poem is not devoid of “the traditional language and traditional symbols of the Church.” The language of “Ash Wednesday” is, in fact, highly liturgical.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death
Pray for us now and at the hour of our death
Lord, I am not worthy
Lord. I am not worthy
but speak the word only
O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Great poetry is composed out of ‘emotions’ and ‘feelings’, which are like the oxygen and sulphur dioxide. The poet’s mind is a ‘receptacle’ for ‘feelings, phrases, images’, which remain there till ‘all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together’. The ‘mind’ has now become ‘chamber’ as well as platinum, but the analogy still helps: so far from ‘emotions’ and ‘feelings’ generating art by their own power, as crude Romantic doctrines had suggested, they become poetry only when transformed into something other than their original selves by the ‘mind’ which is conscious of ‘the past’ and of ‘tradition’.... ‘It is not the “greatness”, the intensity, of the emotions, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts.’ And what is produced is a ‘a new art emotion’, an ‘experience different in kind from any experience not of art.... The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feeling which are not in actual emotions at all.... Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from presonality.

A poet does not and cannot directly ‘describe’ things or ‘express’ feelings; whatever experience may seem to be his immediate ‘inspiration’, the
language itself, and the poetic forms and genres available, will transform that experience, or rather, provide a new, ‘writing’, experience.

The same for that writer. It is instructive to note what James said in his disagreement with Emile Montegut, for doing so will help us to form a judgment of Eliot's insistence that James is essentially a moralist. (James's remarks on the French critic are particularly relevant to the matter at hand, for they occur shortly before he talks of Hawthorne's "deeper psychology.") James quotes Montegut as saying of Hawthorne: "This marked love of cases of conscience . . . this habit of seeing sin everywhere, and hell always gaping open; this dusky gaze bent always upon a damned world... these lonely conversations of the imagination with the conscience; this pitiless analysis resulting from a perpetual examination of one's self, and from the tortures of a heart closed before men and open to God-all these elements of the Puritan character have passed into Mr. Hawthorne, or, to speak more justly, have filtered into him, through a long succession of generations. Here is James's comment:

This is a very pretty and very vivid account of Hawthorne, superficially considered; and it is just such a view of the case as would commend itself most easily and most naturally to a hasty critic. It is all true indeed, with a difference; Hawthorne was all that M. Montegut says, minus the conviction. The old Puritan moral sense, the consciousness of sin and hell, of the fearful nature of our responsibilities and the savage character of our Taskmaster-these things had
been lodged in the mind of a man of Fancy, whose fancy bad straightway begun
to take liberties and play tricks with them-to judge them (Heaven forgive-him!) from the poetic and aesthetic point of view, the point of view of entertainment and irony. This absence of conviction makes the difference; but .the difference is great.⁸

We observe at once that James is not nearly so hard on Hawthorne's fancy as is Eliot. The latter, in his Little Review essay, deplored the tendency of Hawthorne's "deeper psychology" to modulate into "the fanciful, even the allegorical" (p.116). James too had little use for the allegorical; it was for him "quite one of the lighter exercises, of the imagination." But he did not take so dim a, view of Hawthorne's "fancy" as did Eliot, even though he found in The Scarlet Letter "an abuse of the fanciful element."⁹ James would be the last to criticize Hawthorne's fancy for leading him to take "the point of view of entertainment and irony" toward the anxious, vigilant conscience, for this is precisely the point of view, James himself takes in his creation of such figures, as Mr. Babcock (The American), Charlotte and Mr. Wentworth (The Europeans), Miss Birdseye (The Bostonians), and Mr. Longdon (The Awkward Age). Eliot's solemn observation that the primary interest of James's work is moral ignores the James who created these characters. Of course, the fact that James is having some fun with the Puritan conscience as displayed in these people does not necessarily mean that their interest for us or his interest in them is not moral. But whatever moral interest may be shown by James in such instances is of a different kind from that
implied by Eliot's remarks, being relaxed and humorous. Also, to see the interest of James' work as primarily moral is to ignore one great side of that writer, the side that might be called the "aesthetic" James, the James who was often concerned with conveying the "feel" of a person or place, the "tonality" as Ezra Pound calls it, apart from any moral evaluation. (This aspect of James makes its consummate appearance in *The American Scene.* ) Furthermore, it is hard to say where the moral sense in James leaves off and the aesthetic sense begins, and vice versa. Notice that when James speaks of Hawthorne's "deeper psychology" he refers to "The charm-the great charm" of it. As previously noted, Eliot's French version of this passage does not contain the phrase" the great charm"; perhaps this was just a slip, or perhaps Eliot simply excised it. He may have felt it unfortunate that James was approaching Hawthorne's moral interest too much through his aesthetic sense, whereas James seemed to enjoy Hawthorne's approaching Puritan morality through *his* aesthetic sense. In any event we can say of Eliot's French essay that it offers us a one-sided, an In-complete James.

This is not so much a theory of poetry as an account of how Eliot wrote what he calls poetry of the first voice, which corresponds curiously to the writing of romantic inspirational poetry. It also resembles modern imaginative writers-of fiction as well as poetry. James Joyce (in his scribble Books), D.H. Lawrence, and Virginia Wolf give evidence of having written in much the same way. Eliot is particularly illuminating when he goes on to consider form.
It is misleading, of course, to speak of the material as creating or imposing its own form: what happens is a simultaneous development of form and material; for the form affects the material at every stage; and perhaps all the material does is to repeat ‘not that! Not that! In the face of each unsuccessful attempt at formal organization; and finally the material is identified with its form. 10

He aimed not at that impersonality colored by the personal which one finds in Eliot’s poetry but at the reduction of the poet, body and soul, to the condition of an instrument-violin or gong-played upon by external forces of violence and internal psychic ones.

Of course, the poetry had roots in the poet’s own experiences: his earliest, almost unconscious memories, the rhythms of body and soul, his unconscious as well as his conscious mind. All these are indeed “personal.” But there is a difference between saying that the poetry reveals a uniquely personal aural, visual, and moral sensibility and saying that the poet expresses his personality in it.

Eliot was as we have seen, much concerned with the relationship of the subject and poet. The subject is that of which the poet is aware, as a structure of ideas of experience, before he writes the poem. Throughout his criticism Eliot keeps the subject at a distance, as something to probably happens in the minds of nearly all poets, and it can happen in the minds of people who are not poets
unless, by acting so, they become poetic. But when it is a precise, economical and challenging as this, and in particular when it so strikes fire by a sharp and minute contrast-in-similarity, any supposition that all this was done without an intimate and learned acquaintance with the ancient classics would at least require a lot of proof.

It is not likely to get it. Old possum’s biggest bluff has not waited till now to be called. Indeed, with all his wariness and ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’, he has given himself away more than once. There must surely be some relation between the scholarship of a poet and the poetry of scholarship. Eliot, writing of sermons on the Incarnation by Bishop Lancelot Andrewes,\textsuperscript{11} preached before King James I, says that accordingly ‘his erudition had full play; and his erudition is essential to his originality. He continues—Reading Andrewes on such a theme is like listening to a great Hellenist expounding a text of the posterior Analytics: altering the punctuation, inserting or removing a comma or a semicolon to make an obscure passage suddenly luminous.

The classics must, of course, have a place in Eliot’s important theory of poetic tradition,\textsuperscript{12} which requires each poet to set himself in relation to all the dead poets, from Homer onwards, altering by his life and work the whole length and depth and meaning of total poetry. But I do not know of any passage in which he has discussed the Greek and Latin classics at length as a special part or phase in this living and massive totality.
Eliot observes several meanings of the word ‘classic’, and finds certain qualities, which are necessary to any work deserving to be called ‘a classic’ in the narrowest, but still in a generally intelligible, sense. If Virgil turns out to be such a classic, or indeed the only such ‘classic’, that is partly because he lived and wrote in an age of ‘classical’ Antiquity, and indeed the best age of classical antiquity for such an attainment. Maturity, manners and a certain bi-lingualism are especially wanted, and these requirements are met; but it had to be exactly then, and there, and by Virgil, ‘the Father of the west’.

Mr. Eliot observed that the essential advantage for a poet is not to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom and the horror and the glory.

He has spoken of the poet’s problem of finding a subject, which offers him the deepest and most secret release. Now the release of the deepest tensions and desires is the cause of unaccountable personal preferences for certain works of art.

Its classic formulation is found in ‘Tradition and the individual Talent’ where Eliot makes his famous comparison between the mind of the poet and the catalyst in a chemical reaction. The catalyst is essential in bringing the reaction into being but is itself neutral, unchanged, separated from the chemicals that
actually combine; so too, the mind of the poet operates as a medium, detached from the passions which constitute its materials: “the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates.” 13 Again and again in his essays, Eliot deplores the use of literature as a vehicle for the artist’s “personality,” and cautions both critic and reader against giving too much importance to that personality. Indeed, he once complained that English criticism paid too much attention to the man and not enough to the book. 13

The poet’s mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together. 14

But we might further note the temperamental affinity Eliot must feel with him, an affinity indicated by their mutual interest in the kind of personality which, because of its gentility or finickiest or sense of importance, is unable to accept life’s offerings, while Eliot is more inclined to see his characters as crippled by repression. But this is a difference of degree- for James can see refinement shading off into a failure of being (cf. John Marcher in “The Beast in the Jungle”), while Eliot is at least partly committed to the gentility of a Prufrock, in opposition to the vulgarity of a Sweeney.

Eliot’s assertion that emotions are inseparable from the objects, which accompany them, recalls the unity of Bradley’s immediate experience, and Eliot proceeds to elaborate these remarks made in Royce’s seminar in knowledge and
Experience. The James-Lange theory having its philosophical basis in realism rather than in idealism, cannot explain illusion or hallucination other than to say “the child ‘thinks it sees’ a bear”. Because the world for James and Lange is composed of real objects and subjects perceiving them a person can not be said to perceive an object that does not exist. Their materialism stems from this realist premise since real objects are material objects, they will cause physical changes in the body when a subject perceives them. According to idealism, on the other hand, the world is not a separate entity form the mind experiencing it. For Eliot, therefore, from the child’s point of view he or she actually sees a bear, although the bear, unperceived from any other point of view, lacks sufficient relations to be termed real.

According to Eliot’s idealism, the “aspect of mere existence, in all objects as well as feeling, is what we call immediate experience.” As a single point of view of or finite center, “so far as feelings are merely felt, they are neither subjective nor objective” Yet we continue to believe, Eliot notes that there is ‘something private” about feelings. “That we cannot ‘know’ them from the outsides,” although we must confess that

Frequently an observer understands a feeling better than does the person who experiences it Eliot decides that “my emotions may be better understood by others than by myself.”
Eliot proceeds to argue that, if the mind itself is matter, a part of the body and the physical world, then all of its experience must be the result of this material foundation: when we attempt to consider any mental event, any perceptual “idea,” as an object, it either asserts itself as a part of our experiential reality of “melts back” into the “different” reality of its physical origin.

Eliot concludes of minds and their experience that “their objectivity is continuous with their subjectivity, the mental continuous with the merely mechanistic” the “body is in felt continuity with the spiritual self”. Consequently, the physiological unconscious, consisting of those bodily processes that make our thoughts and feeling possible, is continuous with the psychological, both conscious and unconscious.

Eliot complained that the “influence’ of the “sexual instinct” upon religion and myth was not considered; mysticism was overlooked; and despite extensive material about “religious cults,” “religious feelings” were virtually ignored.

Eliot did not anticipate that Freudian theory, making use of the same anthropology with which he began, would eventually transform religion in to sexual aberration.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


3 The use of Poetry and the use of Criticism, p. 78.

4 This essay is now published in the Volume of selected Essays.

5 T.S. Eliot Theory of Poetry : Impersonality, p. 82.

6 Calder ; Angus Hamester, New Readings, T.S. Eliot Great Britain :

7 PMLA. Vol. 79, No. 4 (1964), T.S. Eliot on the Henry James
by Alan Holder.

8 Ibid., James italics.

9 Ibid., p. 49 and 90.


11 Selected Essays, 1927, p. 337.

