

English Criticism, 1900-1950:

Notes from René Wellek's *History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950*

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Notes from René Wellek's *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950. Vol. 5. English Criticism, 1900-1950* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986). Handwritten notes taken by José Angel García Landa, c. 1995.

Preface to vols. 5&6

vii- Minimal interchange in the 20th century. The Americans and English are ignored (by Continental European critics). But Marx and Freud influence them, even if "actual literary critics from the Continent remained virtually unknown." Except Croce for Spingarn and Collingwood. Contacts between England and America are close, with interchange of scholars. But criticism develops quite separately: Bloomsbury group vs. leftists and muckrakers.

Introduction to volumes 5 and 6. Method and scope

xvi- History without a thesis is impossible (vs. Crane and Saintsbury). Cf. Hegel's history of philosophy, vs. previous doxographies: for Hegel, "the history of a subject depends closely on the concept one has of the subject".

xvii- Criticism is an isolatable subject (vs. Croce & Auerbach); "criticism is any discourse on literature. It is thus closely circumscribed by its theme." A causal conception of ideology is not applicable, as an element of freedom remains;

xviii- a work is the necessary condition of another, but does not cause it. There is a seamless relationship between criticism and related activities: aesthetics, literature, etc.

xix- But criticism is bracketable. There are persistent questions all through the history of criticism, which always have to be thought anew.

xx- We need to assume that an understanding of previous ages is possible (with Dilthey, etc.). "We have to find a way of thinking of an internal history of criticism."

xxi- The History of Criticism is not the same as cultural history; it does not merely place critics as representatives of a period or a trend; it has a point of view.

xxii- An evolutionary history of criticism is impossible. But Wellek opposes Kuhn's paradigms: an Aristotelian model replaced by Kant & Herder and then by Eliot...? Wellek rejects this incommensurability. There is a continuity, a growing core of agreement.

1 - SYMBOLISM IN ENGLISH

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

1- Yeats developed a Symbolist theory of his own. A weird system of the world, but a striking unity in his theory of poetry.

2- Romantic definition of art as "a traditional statement of a certain heroic and religious truths, passed on from age to age, modified by individual genius but never abandones." Cf. *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), folk traditions, vs. England and industrialism,

3- —and vs. the "muddy torrent of shallow realism" (Yeats). He edits Blake and tries to make sense of his symbolism. "Art is not a 'criticism of life' but a 'revelation of hidden life'." He moves between Neoplatonism, Emerson, and Jung. Or: "our minds giving a little, creating or revealing for a moment what I must call a supernatural artist"; macrocosm mirrored in the microcosm of the poet's minor creation.

4- The poet as a priest celebrating a ritual. Yeats's symbolism is at times apocalyptic. He is little interested in criticism of resources, and is often vague. "A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence", inherent or arbitrary and emotional / intellectual (contemporaries are hopelessly intellectual); he opposes allegory.

5- Are symbols created or discovered? This is ambiguous. Sometimes a humbler assumption: the symbol as an invocation or suggestion.

6- Three levels: suggestion, arbitrary construction, and genuine symbolism as vision. He bridges the gap between the sensuous and the spiritual.

7- Art turns from the mirror to the lamp (Yeats's expression). He favours impersonality, and opposes plot and naturalistic scenery; pro lyricism, vs. comedy and character types. Yeats: "tragedy is passion alone, and rejecting character it gets form from motives, from the wandering of passion, while comedy is the clash of character."

8-11: Yeats embraces extremes and finds they are compatible. A Hegelian, pro unity of being in traditional cultures, forfeited by modern

civilization, Specialization of man as a deterioration. Literature is grounded on Freedom, God, Immortality. The fading of these leads to the fading of literature.

12- Yeats never fully accepted modernism; he is anchored in an earlier conception of poetry.

Arthur Symons (1865-1945)

13- *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1900), an influential book but not high criticism. Poetry is always symbolist, but today consciously so.

14-15: "Symbolism is 'a revolt against exteriority, against rhetoric, against a materialistic tradition'; it is 'an endeavor to disengage the ultimate essence, the soul, of whatever exists.' It is 'a kind of religion.' There are omissions, errors.... Symons uses few critical tools, and often surrenders the critical task: it is impossible to analyze a good poem. At first he was pro "decadence" as "an intense self-consciousness". Yeats converted him to symbolism, and learnt about the French in turn. Symons is OK as a critic of English poetry (*The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, 1909).

16- He values the "visionary" aspect of Romanticism and (not seeing any contradiction) "art for art's sake";

17- "the book is the last prominent display of metaphorical criticism dominated by a concept of poetry as the intense moment." (Wellek opposes impressionism). Symons's later criticism is scrappy and marred by pathological obscurantist obsessions.

George Moore (1852-1933)

18- *Impressions and Opinions* (1891); Moore knew the Symbolists before Symons. Sketchy and poorly informed.

19- "An Irishman must fly from Ireland if he would be himself" (*Hail and Farewell*), but he participated in the Irish literary renaissance. Criticism in his late works. Pro pure poetry, as poetry free from thought, ideas, morality, propaganda: it is free from personal emotion, a poetry of things and not of feelings. "The poet creates outside of his own personality". Vs. blighting, the subjective taint. (*An Anthology of Pure Poetry*, 1924). "Moore wants not descriptions but images, pictorial clarity, the visual world he was seeking as a novelist and critic of novels."

20- From Zola he turned to Balzac and Turgenev. *Avowals & Conversation in Ebury Street*, critical dialogues. Violent prejudices and contradictions, easy dismissals.

21- Vs. Fielding, but pro Sterne; vs. Thackeray, pro Dickens, in spite of his 'waste'. Vs. Charlotte Brontë & Hardy, vs. James, "lost in trifles."

22- Moore is insensitive to what smacks of romanticism.

Impressionistic, he trusts only his sensibility. Criticism is only "the story of the critic's soul" (*Confessions of a Young Man*, 1888; 367-8).

2. ACADEMIC CRITICS

23- "In the early twentieth century criticism found a home in the universities", differentiating itself from journalism. The 'man of letters' who combines both of them disappears. Academic criticism already in Blair and Wharton. "But none of the important critics of the early nineteenth century taught in the university." Arnold became Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857. The teaching of literature expands through the 19th c.,

24- but "the teaching of English literature either meant antiquarian factual literary history . . . or was an unsystematic, often preachy or gusty commentary on men and books." "Oxford and Cambridge hold out longest." John Churton Collins pro divorcing literature and philology, and vs. the upholders of classical education: hope in imitating their methods and standards.

Walter Raleigh (1861-1922) and Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863-1944)

Q-C and Raleigh pro appreciation and praise, vs. technical scholarship. They created a type. Vs. pedantry and novelty. "Walter Raleigh's *Letters* reveal a crudity of feeling and expression one would not have expected from the erstwhile aesthete who wrote a precious little book on *Style* (1899). Ashamed of being a critic. Coarse and flippant judgements. Amateurishness, but learning (e.g. *The English Novel*, 1894). *Milton* (1900) finds him of the devil's party; *Wordsworth* (1903) is "a true visionary", etc. *Shakespeare* (1907) stresses Sh's irony and detachment.

Quiller-Couch is gentler but he shares Raleigh's distaste for criticism. Vs. "all general definitions and theories" (*On the Art of Writing* 18), vs. German scholarship, vs. Croce and Spingarn; "All critical discernment, or taste, is relative" (*Studies in Literature*, 1919, 22, 29; 3:208). "No

book can mean the same to any two men" (SL 3:211). Vague ideas of poetry approaching to the Platonic harmony of nature, etc.

28- They set a tone, but are of little critical worth. At least they are tolerant. Their influence waned in front of I.A. Richards.

A.C. Bradley (1851-1935)

Shakespearean Tragedy (1904), great and influential (except in the 30s); Leavis vs. Bradley. Bradley is indebted to Hegel and other Germans, e.g. Freytag. German discussion of the tragic was unknown at the time in England. England was Aristotelian (catharsis);

29 - Schelling "was the first to break with this tradition and to look for the tragic in the dialectic of freedom and necessity." Bradley a monist: the finite is a partial manifestation of the infinite; metaphysics informs his aesthetics. Evil is inevitable (an attempt at isolating finitude) since all part is an imperfect image of the whole. "Tragedy is an image of the world drama . . . a defense of the world order." A collision of forces, of the tragic hero vs. the order of the universe; ultimately he perishes. "We feel that this spirit, even in the error and defeat, rises sublimely into ideal union with the power that overwhelms it" (Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 1909: 292);

30- "mere passive suffering cannot be tragic"; the hero must be responsible, free. "Pure chance would destroy tragedy"; madness too, Bradley favours a "strict connection between act and consequence." The hero need not be moral, but *sublime*, he becomes infinite. Catastrophe as a mysterious justice. He diminishes death as unimportant, the world is all spirit (idealism). Souls vs. the infinite —> character.

32- Bradley on reconstructing hidden aspects in character (cf. Stanislavski); OK, but he sometimes confuses art and life; ridiculed in L. C. Knights's malicious *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* (1933). Bradley does rather "whimsical mental experiments,

33- . . . rhetorical devices to make us realize the different characters and situations more clearly." He is not unaware of the stage, as is often argued.

34- "Still, Bradley does belong, after all, to the tribe of Lamb, who would rather read Shakespeare than hear him performed." He accepts, though, things effective on stage but not necessarily for the plot, unperceived inconsistencies, etc. He emphasized he criticized from the *tragic* point of view, not the psychological one. He was the first to appreciate the 'spatial' qualities of Shakespeare's plays (G. Wilson

Knight). His interest is wider than character: imagery, language... A poetry of life ("Poetry for Poetry's Sake"); he refutes in advance these accusations.

Empson (verbal interest) agrees with Bradley's emphasis on the need of coherence of character and action; interest in motivation, not merely metaphor. Bradley does not seek a "spatial pattern" like G. Wilson Knight. He defines tragedy as "a story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high estate" (*Shakespearean Tragedy* 11-12); analysis using Aristotle through "Freytag's streamlined modernization."

36- "On the whole B. was wary of finding symbolism and allegory in Shakespeare." He is more interested in "a description of the presumed emotional reaction of the audience, which, when Bradley seems uncertain of its universality, is stated often bluntly as his own personal reaction."

38- Shakespeare's blemishes are (as Samuel Johnson found) unimportant. Tragic emotions are "stirred only when such beauty or nobility of character is displayed as commands unreserved admiration or love; or when, in default of this, the forces which move the agents, and the conflicts which result from these forces, attain terrifying and overwhelming power." Shakespeare was unable to dethrone Falstaff: "There is truth in this." Lear's cosmic pessimism is caused by reasons "outside the dramatic nexus"; —an aesthetic flaw? No, there is redemption at the end ("vs. Kott"). "Religion denies that real life . . . is the whole and final truth; and this is just what poetry, which asserts nothing, nevertheless suggests (Bradley, *The Uses of Poetry*, 1912).

30- Bradley pro the infinite suggestion of poetry; tragedy "forces the mystery on us." Touching infinity —> importance of Wordsworth as a mystic, sublime and visionary. Visionary feeling as "The intimation of something illimitable, over-arching or breaking into the customary 'reality' . . . At its touch the soul, suddenly conscious of its own infinity, melts in rapture into the infinite being" (134).

Wordsworth equivalent to Hegel in his treatment of infinity (in fact with the idealists). Nature is not the mere "outward world" in Wordsworth and Shelley. Bradley opposes Arnold in this respect. Romanticism as "the great ideal movement" parallel to German philosophy (both are the roots of Bradley).

The stated ambition of Bradley's criticism is to make us share the author's imaginative conception of his work [*equivalent to intention?* JAGL]. Bradley raises what Wellek calls "the most burning question of

recent criticism: is there or is there not a correct interpretation? There are, indubitably, many incorrect ones."

Bradley influenced Middleton Murry's *Keats and Shakespeare*, 1925.

Elton, Ker, Grierson and Garrod

Ranging from 1855 to 1960.

Elton (1861-1945), "The Meaning of Literary History"; *Modern Studies* (1907). Pro comparative literature and international knowledge.

Criticism as a fine art, "like friendship". Vs. analysis of impersonal forces.

A Survey of English Literature (1730-1880), 1912-32. Expository, OK. Emphatic, unabashed comparisons between writers.

44- "a tempered, subdued romantic, basically Victorian taste". He notes the ebb and decadence of English literature after praising the "intensely ethical, exalted and didactic temper" of the Victorian age.

The English Muse (1935), *A Sheaf of Papers* (1922), *Essays and Addresses* (1939).

In "The Nature of Literary Criticism" he argues the independence of all works, "inner harmony" as the only canon of value, but he admits "a harmony between discords". Pro ranks and values in literature, and pro "defining once more the virtue of the classics."

Ker

45- *Epic and Romance* (1896), Teutonic epic vs. Romance romance. Ways of telling, feudal vs. courtly. Also an idealized theorist.

46- "On the Philosophy of Art" (1883). Art is an end in itself, creates independent and inexhaustible objects, which remain indifferent to change and history. Ker assumes nevertheless a Hegelian succession of periods. Art is historic, but alive forever. Elsewhere:

46-47- "Art and literature are living things which assert themselves against the historian and cannot be made into a mere matter of narrative" (of a methodological literary history). Wellek: "This view has not, to my mind, been refuted."

47- Ker: "The poem as an individual thing is all form; and what is not form is not poetry" —Crocean, but he recognizes the need for a history of forms. The study of literature is a compromise between emphasizing the work or its belonging to a school. "He remained a historian in spite of his ambition to become a critic . . . Ker did not develop any analytical tools to satisfy his own ambition" of studying the work itself;

"he could not emancipate himself from the basically eclectic, indiscriminately tolerant Victorian taste, its basic historicism."

Grierson (1866-1960)

He edited the metaphysicals, he sees in them a "peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination" (Eliot reviewed him in his essay on 'The Metaphysical Poets'). He deals above all in the history of ideas. *Critical History of English Poetry* (with J. C. Smith, 1946) is bad, with an unfair estimate of the moderns. Wellek: "Bad poetry is bad poetry as great poetry is great poetry, whatever its age and whatever our particular sensibility" (Wellek vs. literary history).

Garrod (1878-1960)

A Raleighian, his criterion is liking, vs. transcendental questions. But rigorous in textual scholarship. He also appreciates organic unity in the work, and the verdict of ages as proof of genius.

52- Garrod favours an eclectic approach, accepts all methods, and opposes criticism as the self-expression of the critic. He emphasizes the communal participation in art and criticism. Garrod: "The public acts the play, and in a sense it writes it." He thinks of poetry as atemporal. He accepts universality (and he dismisses Jane Austen as narrow); vs. "realism"; but: poetry shows the object in its individuality—he can't decide on a final answer.

3 - THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP

55- Vanessa and Virginia Stephen, Leonard Woolf, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, J.M. Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Desmond MacCarthy, E.M. Forster, Vita Sackville-West. Basis: G. F. Moore's *Principia Ethica*: "by far the most valuable things which we know or can imagine are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasure of human intercourse, and the enjoyment of beautiful objects." Timeless states of contemplation, aesthetic approach to life. But also social compromise and individual emancipation.

56- Vs. scientism. Vs. anti-romanticism, A& vs. impersonality and moralism"; a "cliquish self-conscious superiority", but separate figures.

Roger Fry (1866-1934) and Clive Bell (1881-1964)

Fry: View of art as communication, a communal product, but subjective reaction. Art is in the main self-contained and has internal principles of development.

57- Art has no connection with morals or sex. He advocated post-Impressionism, "constantly argued for the rejection of both realistic and impressionistic art, accepting even the logical conclusion in abstract or non-representational art." Frye: "All the essential aesthetic quality has to do with pure form"; "as poetry becomes more intense the content is entirely remade by the form and has no separate value at all." Special art-emotion exists, but no pure art: "The aesthetic emotion has greater value in highly complicated components than in the pure state." Frye educated the public in the new art, and developed a new vocabulary for painting (from Wölfflin) - *Vision and Design*, 1920.

58- Bell (*Art*, 1913) had greater impact; invents "significant form" —Not form that means something beyond formal relations, points to a reality, expresses or conveys an emotion—rather mere aesthetic exaltation—Vs. representation. We become aware of the universal in the particular. Vs. historicism. Art is appreciated in itself, emphasis on the present moment. Opposed by Shaw.

Lytton Strachey (1880-1932)

Biographies; *Eminent Victorians* (1918). As a critic, after Pater; tolerant historicism, skeptical of theory, neoclassical in spirit. *Landmarks in French Art* (1912), pro 18th-c. in England and France; he accepts the conventions of the couplet, or of Restoration comedy, as preconditions. —"In vacuo" - praises Boswell's absurdity as the condition of his consummate art. Pro detachment in critic, "the antithesis of the bestial". He introduces the stock market image in literature (rising and falling reputations, etc.). He recognizes several critical standards; too tolerant for Wellek: "Strachey is thinking in terms of a history of sentiment (...) His criticism can be thought of as the exemplification of such a historical scheme."

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

65-66- Impressionist? No: Personal, metaphorical and whimsical criticism, but a Moorean realist, rather aims at grasping an object. Although she thinks criticism must share "the excitement, the adventure, the turmoil of creation". In favour of poet-critics, but nevertheless assigns a limited and even humble mission to criticism, it teaches how to read.

67- Pro interest in works apart from their author. Art is rooted in its age even if it transcends it. Vs. *Art pour l'art*. Woolf on the readers of Sidney's *Arcadia*: "Each has to read differently, with the insight and the blindness of his own generation. Our reading will be equally partial";

"Writing is a method of communication" — "To know whom to write for is to know how to write" (Woolf). Alliance between writers and readers.

68- Woolf "Sketches a story of the economic support of English literature" but "She is rather concerned with the writer's declared or implied attitude to his reader." Obscurity is seen as despising the public. She shows different reactions to the same work But Wellek argues that "There is ... a structure of determination which prevents arbitrariness." Woolf rejects judging a novelist with simple morality.

69- "She wants to master the 'perspective', understand 'how the novelist orders his world'" — his "vision." Sidney has forgotten his relationship to his characters in *Arcadia*, who speaks.

70- On Sterne: obsessed with his own mind, not an analyst of other people (the simple, eccentric, erratic); Woolf: "In no other book are the characters so closely dependent on the author. In no other book are the writer and the reader so involved together."

71- Woolf is warm to Jane Austen in spite of her narrowness and her fear of passion; cool to Scott, critical of George Eliot and Meredith. George Eliot's heroines "bring out the worst in her, lead her into difficult places, make her self-conscious, didactic and occasionally vulgar" (Woolf). She underrates George Eliot and overrates Emily Brontë's mysticism.

73- (Wellek is impatient with her metaphorical criticism): "She forgives all the shortcomings and failures of Hardy, 'the greatest tragic writer among English novelists.'" Similar sympathy for Conrad. Woolf has a preference for the universally human, for the power of generalizing, for characters who have

74- "something symbolical about them which is common to us all"; "Imagination is at its freest when it is most generalized." (Cf. Johnson and Wordsworth). Moore and Gissing write only about themselves. On James she is curiously divided: "The horror of *The Turn of the Screw* is tame and conventional" (Woolf); in *Maisie*, characters live in a vacuum. She appreciates his rendering of the past and his sanity, but he is "vulgar, a snob, an American".

75- But she admires him for his design (not for plot or character); "She seems to be describing her own procedures". She rejects Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy, encumbered by "bushels of fact" (she overshoots her mark); Vs. their conventional use of conventions & conventional characters; she advocates a new novel.

76- "Virginia Woolf proclaims the end of realism and prophesies the age of a novel of sensibility." She is not satisfied with Dorothy

Richardson; we are inside another mind, OK, but "distressingly near the surface ... never, or only for a tantalizing second, in the reality which underlies these appearances."

77- Woolf: "We read Mr. Lawrence as one reads Mr. Bennett—for the facts and for the story"; but actually he disturbed her, "Rapture of physical being" is OK, but Lawrence is too moralistic; Woolf pro ridding art of preaching. Joyce's *Ulysses*: a failure, diffuse, tricky, stunted, pretentious, egotistic.

78- Woolf eventually thought that the new novel had failed to keep its promise. She classifies novelists: 'Truth-tellers', 'Character-mongers', 'Poets', 'Psychologists', 'Romantics', 'Satirists and Fantasists'.

Inevitability of mimesis: balance between "the power of bringing us into close touch with life" and "style, arrangement, construction." She does not care for the term 'form'—pro "emotion" and "process of reading."

79- —> the containing principle she calls "art." This balance is at the root of many of her critical judgements of novelists. On Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*: He neglects language, distrusts beauty. Fiction is parasitic from life... His concepts are too traditional. Woolf: "If the English critic were less domestic, less assiduous to protect the rights of what it pleases him to call life, the novelist might be bolder too. He must cut adrift from the eternal tea-table ... The story might wobble, the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters. The novel, in short, might become a work of art" (*The Moment and Other Essays*). But she insists on coherence—no ambiguity—one type of reality—> but see her own fiction! Another criterion: the contrast of national types and traditions; she is acutely aware of the class character of 19th-c. fiction.

80- Remedy vs. the limits of English fiction: the Russian novel—large, sane, sincere and profound ("The Russian Point of View")—She is unfair to the English, unreal about the Russians; sweeping generalizations; she is best on the criticism of particular Russian authors.

81- Turgenev, for Woolf, wrote and rewrote to clear the truth of the unessential, But Dostoevsky would say that everything matters. Pro Turgenev's fiction organized around one central Character. She defends inconclusive endings in Chekhov.

Male vs. Female is another source of preoccupation for Woolf—and the condition of women writers.

82- Sometimes she wants a feminine literature, or attacks the "sentence made by men" as pompous. On Dorothy Richardson: "She has invented, or, if she has not invented, developed and applied to her

own use a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender." But ultimately Woolf can contradict herself and say "a writer has no sex", a writer does not lay stress on sex, or that stress upon the sex of a writer is irritating and superfluous. Like Coleridge, she favours the androgynous mind.

She is mainly interested in the novel and in biography. Rhyme is "childish" and dishonest. "Modern poetry shirks contest with life and is absorbed by the self"—pro poets going out of themselves. Modern poetry is vulgar, coarse, ugly, and obscure.

83- "Again and again she voices her preference for the novel and the drama because they require the writer to enter into other people's minds." Advice to critics, too: "Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice." There are no laws in art, no conventions. Vs. moral criticism: pro Lamb, Pater... "The essay should give pleasure", no facts, no dogmas. Some fierce attachment to an idea as backbone.

84- As in Coleridge, the critic must seem to bring to light what was there beforehand, not imposing anything extraneous. Criticism is not creation but "an interpretation."

Not an important contribution—but she singles out her author and stamps his personality.

E.M. Forster (1879-1970)

Aspects of the Novel (1927), *Abinger Harvest* (1936), *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951).

85- He upholds aestheticism even more extremely than the rest at Bloomsbury. "I believe in art for art's sake ... A work of art—whatever else it may be—is a self-contained entity, with a life of its own imposed on it by its creator. It has internal order. It may have external form." "A poem points to nothing but to itself." Self-supportive universe, expressly contrasted to the disorder of society. Criticism's aim: 1st, to consider the object in itself; 2nd, in its relations (cf. in phenomenology: the work of art vs. the art object). He unnecessarily rejects the historicity of the work of art in *Aspects*. Pro seeing literature beyond time (Eliot). Life in time is inferior to life in values, etc. A preference for space in the simple geographical sense—uncritical, irrelevant view. On his "aspects":

86- "He loosely mixes an analysis of the strata of a novel with an attempt at a typology of the novel." He minimizes story and plot; interested above all in characters (his best pages), our knowledge, and

the illusion of power. "Forster's metaphor of 'flat' versus 'round' has deservedly become established as a fortunate formulation" (Huxley before him). He endorses James's 'exit author', though half-heartedly; for Wellek it is not clear why a writer can't speak about his characters. Forster is oddly silent on language, and gives an unsatisfactory typology of novels. Disappointing, though occasionally OK. He appreciates Woolf: she and Joyce are the only innovators on form; and sympathizes with her rejection of naturalism.

88- "Ultimately we must conclude that Forster, in spite of the apparent advocacy of 'art for art's sake', applies standards of realism to literature and to his own novels. He cannot get away from them as a novelist." Woolf is "a poet" for him, but did not wholly avoid the pitfall of aestheticism, boring to read... "a central deficiency of Forster's criticism, his refusal to think clearly about the creative process, the status of the work of art and its function." "As a good empiricist he disparages theory and criticism. Aesthetic theories are 'beds of Procrustes'." Forster: "The claim of criticism to take us to the heart of the Arts must be disallowed." Criticism is not creation. Forster gestures towards love or affection as standards of criticism—or 'bouncing'! He is enclosed in the tradition of the critical realist, he is narrower and has less force than Lytton Strachey or Virginia Woolf.

Desmond MacCarthy (1878-1952)

Criticism (1932).

89- "the most conservative critic of the group." Arnoldian, moralistic; the aim of the writer is to "create or suggest a rational coherent ideal" of life. Pro Santayana. Critic as a "creature without a spiritual home" (Sainte-Beuve); his "first obligation is to permit himself to be absorbed in the vision of a writer" (MacCarthy). The psychology of the reader is a part of the critic's subject: the critic must replace the historical perspective, etc. Even impressionism is accepted at times—making us feel what he felt. MacCarthy vs. Leslie Stephen as "the least aesthetic" of critics. "But in most of his writings, MacCarthy is himself a moralist who judges from an ideal of a sane but somewhat gloomy and disillusioned view of life." Pro Proust, who attempts to turn aesthetic into religious experience; "probably a vain hope" (MacCarthy). MacCarthy rejects obscurity, mysticism and Catholicism. Vs. irrationalism and experiment in Modernism.

90- D.H. Lawrence is "a religious prophet who was mistaken for a pornographer"—but his mysticism is nonsense to those who believe in

civilization for the sake of sanity (i.e. MacCarthy himself). There is some truth in Lawrence's criticism of modern civilization, though. MacCarthy vs. psychoanalysis, vs. stream-of-consciousness, etc. Virginia Woolf is criticized as impressionistic. Joyce is a prodigious talent but also "a frightened enslaved mind. Much of *Ulysses* is cold, nasty, small and over-serious" (MacC). Stream-of-consciousness is a new convention, artificial as any other. Vs. G. Stein, vs. "patterns of words" like coloured pebbles—pro what makes literature valuable to man.

MacCarthy is vague on poetry: he can't discuss technique. He uses comparison to achieve his effects—one writer vs. another. As a theatre critic, Ibsen and Chekhov are best for him: realism and symbolism.

91- "poetry can help us do one thing which religion helps us to do, to live life spiritually, that is, intelligently and disinterestedly" —but it is not a complete substitute.

MacCarthy is a minor, appealing figure.

4. THE NEW ROMANTICS

92- John Middleton Murry, D.H. Lawrence and G. Wilson Knight "restore romantic or at least irrationalist attitudes which are still with us today."

John Middleton Murry (1889-1957)

92- "Murry revives the romantic concept of poetry as implying 'some sort of Pantheism'" ... a belief in the unity of the world he often calls 'organic'.

93- Struggle for 'soul-making' as every man's task —to apprehend and accept the universe. Art, poetry, convey a truth inexpressible in rational terms —emphatically not thought. "A test of authenticity is an affirmative answer to the question whether its meaning 'could be conveyed to us by no other means'." The root is in emotion; the quality depends on that of the emotion. But he mistrusts 'sincerity' as a standard. Poetry is incommensurable with biography.

94- "Emotions must be 'symbolized in the objects which aroused them'"; cf. the objective correlative. Metaphor as a 'mode of apprehension', not a comparison. The poet must construct a whole, guided by a predominant passion —he gestures at Transcendentalism.

95- MM aims at a metaphysics of poetry, the play particularity/universality —a universal accessible only through the particular. The poem shows a perfection, a unity we must apprehend in the world; "Religion and literature are branches of the same everlasting root."

96- Criticism is a part of poetic activity, it must justify it, an exalted view. Poetry must give an ideal of the good life (cf. Aristotle) but an ideal which has to be aesthetic; MM (Middleton Murry): "Art is autonomous, and to be pursued for its own sake, precisely because it comprehends the whole of human life" (*Aspects of Literature*, 1920). Criticism is "a personal affair", but the critic "must seek laws for his own impressions." An ideal of communion as method. The critic: "the more he can lose himself, in the object, the more himself he is" (MM, *Discoveries*, 1924). The critic is the instrument through which the objective pattern of the book declares itself.

97- "He (MM) aims at a synthesis of objective and subjective criticism, of self-assertion and submission, of the personal and the impersonal." English literature is always romantic, it relies on an "inner voice" —but Murry wants to be something more than intuitive, and attempts to reconcile in an individual being intuition and intelligence. Attacked by many.

He likes Eliot but rejects many of his views (on the critic as a poet, etc.). But he does not see in Eliot a true classic in his poetry, and as a critic he effects (MM) "a prodigious intellectual subtlety to produce the effect of a final futility."

100- "Eliot and Murry disagreed on the issues of religion, society, and sex but they were not so far apart in criticism as the disagreement may indicate."

101- MM vs. Wilson Knight, who imposes "a dangerous, because empty, schematism on Shakespeare"; pro Coleridge & Bradley. Vs. Richards' concern with the nervous system, which leaves the work out of reckoning. Vs. Empson, who, who sees parts instead of wholes, and obscures rather than explain. Leavis is for MM an honest but obtuse dogmatist, hidebound by his theories. MM vs. New Critics, who focus (MM) on "complexity, intensity, scholasticism and concentration as a narrow range of subject-matter".

MM's reputation rests on his monographic studies. *F. Dostoevsky* (1916) sees D. as a visionary, disregards realism, is wholly spiritual. Russian literature as the fulfilment of English Romanticism's spiritualism.

105- *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925). MM pro 'negative capability', impersonality as a road to personality. Keats is greater than his achievement, and MM overdoes the transcendental & mystical element in Keats (over the aesthetic).

106- *Shakespeare* (1931) also on negative capability.

107- "Ultimately Murry can only point to what he considers poetry", vs. Milton, outside of English tradition. Vs. Wordsworth; fails to describe Coleridge's disintegration. Pro Hardy & Clare.

Cool or hard on his contemporaries. Favorite poet: Baudelaire. Vs. Flaubert: "The invention of 'Art' has done no good to art" (*Countries of the Mind*, 1922).

111- Pro Proust: *La Recherche* "is essentially the story of its own creation" (a forecast). *Ulysses* is both "a work of genius" and "a gigantic aberration, the last extravagance of romanticism"

112 - "curse of nimety, of too-muchness that hangs over the whole" — Comic talent.

MM on Lawrence: he distrusts his tone and doctrine, but is "incomparably the most important writer of his generation". MM refuses to share his anti-intellectualism, and judges him with the standard of serenity and good sense. He is revolted by Lawrence's "intensity of loathing for woman in the sexual relation".

114- *Son of Woman* (1931) emphasizes MM's two shortcomings as a critic: his excessive involvement with the man and the doctrine behind the books which distorts his usually sound literary judgment".

115- MM's "Belief in the cognitive value of literature and in criticism as valued judgment" (Wellek pro both —he decries their absence in present-day criticism).

D. H. Lawrence (1885- 1930)

116- Lawrence, "the most extreme irrationalist", "releases us from the horrid grip of the evil-smelling old Logos"; he favours (L) "phallic consciousness" or "dark gods", which are for Wellek "so many metaphors for the subconscious, the instinctive, the utterly spontaneous and intuitive." A radical critic of society now. Pro impressionistic criticism—the critic must be

117- "emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally very honest." Pro *knowing* and *admitting* what we feel. The novelist is a total man, unlike the scientist or the poet. "The novel can help us 'to live as nothing else can'" (*Phoenix*, 1972). "The novel is the highest example of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered" . Vs. overt moralizing, which is as if "the novelist put his thumb on the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection." L wants conscious purpose, but is against unconscious predilection: "every work of art adheres to some system

of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres." Vs. pornography. Vs.

"craving for form", pro a loose organic form.

118- "We need an apparent formlessness, definite form is mechanical". Every work has its own form which "has no relationships with any other form"; vs. old ego in character, pro interminability.

119- Lawrence rejects the absorbed self-consciousness of Joyce and other modernists. It is the old masquerading as new. Characters must be "quick", have a relatedness to everything else in the novel; he favours the instinctual man or woman. Writers are "phallic worshippers" who think they are Jesuses. "This sense of the double bottom, of the subtext, the latent meaning, pervades all of Lawrence's criticism. He is one of the unmaskers, convinced that the conscious intention of the artist may run counter to his deep-felt allegiances" (cf. Schlegel, or Engels). Lawrence: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it" (*Studies in Classic American Literature*, 1923); "The artist who writes as a somnambulist in the spell of pure truth as in a dream is contravened and contradicted by the wakeful man and moralist who sits at the desk" (*The Symbolic Meaning*, 1964).

120- Symbol as a complex of emotional experience —vs. allegory.

Symbols can't be invented, they are based on accumulated experience and the hidden self. Another version of the "dissociation of sensibility" —Lawrence sets his primeval wholeness in Atlantis, in Mexico, Etruria, the English countryside before industrialization. There has been a decay of wholesome sexuality; it is already morbid in Shakespeare. Lawrence: "Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, the Brontës are all post-mortem poets". Swinburne and Wilde tried "to start a revival from the mental field" (*Phoenix*). Lawrence sees himself as destined to restore the original unity of man; mind/body or male/female are poles within the individual (an idea from Otto Weininger).

121- Lawrence allegorizes books, discusses the adequacy of characters in themselves... —a breakdown of literary art for Wellek. He rejects Dostoevsky's angelism and his pure introversion (Lawrence is wrong-headed here for Wellek).

122- Lawrence on Hardy: He is not tragic, Lawrence rejects his stance: "There is a lack of sternness, there is hesitating between life and public opinion which diminishes the Wessex novels from the rank of pure tragedy".

But tragedy is too introverted for Lawrence anyway, too mental.

Hamlet: terror of sex.

123- "In spite of all of Lawrence's revulsion against his time, he remained a Utopian, full of messianic hope, and disapproved of tragedy." He reduces the discussion of Hardy's characters to his own schematic sexual typology. Vs. Sue & pro Arabella in *Jude the Obscure*. Lawrence confuses fiction and reality, and uses fiction to illustrate a theory.

124- Preposterous national generalizations. Lawrence: "The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer". Monster beasts. An intellectual impulse to annihilate life in Americans. Pro the society of the true man in Cooper, deeper than sex, a germ of the future.

125- Lawrence opposes in American literature "love" as spiritual love, without sex: vs. Poe, Dante, and Petrarch.

126 - *The Scarlet Letter* as legendary myth, based on human archetypes (Mother goddess-devil, and a Dostoevskian Dimmesdale). He detects a perverse allegorization in Melville. Vs. Whitman:

127- "The rejection of romantic merging with nature and the universe is an old theme of Lawrence." His *American Literature* "had an impact far beyond its claim to literary criticism". It appealed because of its anti-Idealism and its anti-Puritanism, but it is distorted and subjective as criticism, it ignores critical standards. His criticism is directed to his own work.

6. G. Wilson Knight (1897-1985)

128 - Coming from the whole tradition which interprets literature as myth, ritual and symbol; from Fraser's *Golden Bough*, "though Fraser himself was a good positivist who refused to read Freud" —and the classicist Gilbert Murray Also in line with Colin Still and Caroline Spurgeon on Shakespeare. Wilson Knight separates interpretation from criticism.

120- The "spatial approach" sees the work as a pattern; pro identifying the book's "atmospheric quality", "the omnipresent and mysterious reality brooding motionless over and within the plays movement" (Wilson Knight). "The spatial, that is, the spiritual, quality uses the temporal, that is, the story, lending it dominance in order to express itself more clearly." Wilson Knight rejects concern for intentions, sources or character (vs. ethical criticism) —pro an artistic ethic (*The Wheel of Fire*, 1930).

130- Universal symbols in Shakespeare —with a basic opposition *tempest/music*. Wilson Knight's interpretation is not verbal but spatial "Its first interest is the structure, the pattern, the body of the work in question almost irrespective of the exact language used" (Wilson Knight, "The New Interpretation", 1953) —vs. judgement, vs. criticism.

131- "Knight does not understand that even the simple selection of his symbols is an act of value judgement and that, in practice, he himself has constantly judged and ranked." He ranks plays, and Spiritualism as the center of literature (he believes in ghosts).

132- He accepts that poetry is temporal; interpretation develops space (unlike Wyndham Lewis's atemporality). Unhistorical; he aims at an eternal world of art, of symbols and myths. A conception that the world is divided in dualisms which are abolished in immortality, mystery, etc. But "Knight has done pioneering work in making us read Shakespeare's plays as poems, rejecting the realistic prejudices of the time and stage and seeing the work, the whole row of plays, as a totality which shows an inner evolution."

Often perverse and extravagant in detail; e.g. for him Hamlet is evil, vs. a healthy court; also in Othello & Macbeth....

A taste for metaphoric criticism. The story is not only realistic, but mythic; lands of romance are achieved, paradisaic visions, quests of love...

136- Wilson Knight collects words of special significance which give the atmosphere of a play. He was a pro-Crown, royalist patriot during World War II.

The Starlit Dome: Studies in the Poetry of Vision (1941). 3 books on Byron —a Promethean, Shakespearean figure, sex + politics. Wilson Knight's later works are eccentric, the early ones are influential on critics such as L.C. Knights, R. Heilman, and Northrop Frye.

Herbert Read (1894-1968)

138- Read was a "romanticist in literature, an anarchist in politics and an agnostic in religion" (vs. T.S. Eliot). Eclectic and productive. Sincerity.

139- Best: *The True Voice of Feeling* (1953), on Romanticism. Art as an expression of personality (≠ character). Irrational: Creation is unconscious (he used Freud, Jung). Earlier: a feeble psychoanalytic defense of Wordsworth and Shelley. Later: an organic aesthetic, derive from Coleridge.

140- "At times Read replaces the classical + romantic dichotomy with the imagistic versus metaphorical"—which cuts across. Pro obscurity in poetry: "A poem has a necessary and eternal existence: it is impervious to reason, and if it has no discoverable meaning it has unmeasurable power" (Read, *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*, 1938). But he is not an obscurantist in practical criticism. Not technical: he looks for mind and rhetoric. Reads *Tristram Shandy* as psychological fiction.

141- Social aim of literature: The integration of man, in both Freud and Marx. Vs. Lessing, there is "only one imagination"; vs. Descartes' dualism, pro Kierkegaard.

142- Utopian schemes to make art an essential part of human happiness.

Christopher Caudwell (1907-1937)

Pseudonym of St. John Sprigg, killed in Madrid. "*Illusion and Reality* (1937) is considered the first important document of English Marxism." Marxist frame and rhetoric, but an irrational core - he follows Richards. Art as primitive ritual. "In the collective festival where poetry is born, the phantastic world of poetry anticipates the harvest and, by so doing, makes possible the real harvest." Necessity to bring that reality into being, to give strength. Wellek: "Poetry and production, illusion and reality, are united as they would be again in the Socialist Utopia."

142- "Caudwell's attempts to draw parallels between the stages of economic development (primitive accumulation, the industrial revolution) and the phases of English poetry are crude and insensitive", e.g. Keats "is the first great poet to feel the strain of the poet's position in this state of the bourgeois illusion, as a producer for the free market."

Romance and Realism (1970): more literary criticism, less ideology. Not successful, not sophisticated; he doesn't synthesize his influences of physics (Einstein, Heisenberg), psychology, sociology, economics & literary history.

5. THE INNOVATORS

144- "The great change in the theory and practice of English criticism was accomplished by T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, and their disciples F.R. Leavis and William Empson in the twenties and thirties."- "The doctrines of the innovators were prepared, at least as polemical

pronouncements and slogans, before the First World War by T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, and Wyndham Lewis." All outsiders, "They should not be called an avant-garde, as only Ezra Pound was an organizer." Reaction vs. late Victorian tradition (vs. Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites). Georgians too.

145- "'Imagism' was the new slogan in 1912 and 'vorticism' in 1914." Theory is trite: the poet is to create visual images without rhetoric; precision of observation. "But an effect can be achieved only by metaphor and analogy. Free verse is recommended as a break with tradition." Vorticism is analogous to German expressionism. These are literary coteries, not theories. "Modernist" was never used by them, this comes later. Derived from "modo," Latin for 'today'. Cf. ancient disputes of the ancients and moderns, or classical vs. romantic. Baudelaire pro "modernity"; the "ephemeral and fleeting beauty of modern life". Also, the Naturalists or Darío call themselves modernists. Etc. "I can only guess that Eliot avoided the term because of the danger of confusion".
146- Wellek vs. "modern/postmodern" ("What is after 'today'?").

T. E. Hulme (1883-1917)

Speculations (1924), hailed by Eliot, and *Further Speculations* (1955 - earlier papers).

146- An obscure role in the origins of Imagism. Hulme accepts Bergson *in toto*, he translated and published his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Vs. Russell's pacifism. He influences Eliot & Pound, though they minimize him, perhaps rightly. Hulme's renown is "totally out of proportion to the quality and originality of his writings on literary matters."

147- He was aware of anti-Romanticism in France and of phenomenology in Germany: Dilthey, Husserl, Lipps...

148- "Superior reportage." "His adherence to the philosophy of Bergson cannot be reconciled with the abstract classicism Hulme's taste demanded."

149- The paper "Modern Art and Its Philosophy" (1914) is an "abstract" of Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction und Einfühlung* (1908).

Incompatible with Bergsonism. Emphatic, organic, vitalistic art vs. abstracting, geometrical, perfectivist art. Hulme pro abstraction: Greek Renaissance & German classics.

150- "Romanticism and Classicism": "Romanticism is conceived to be simply optimistic liberalism, belief in progress, and so on, just the theories that the great Romantics hated most." Spilt religion. He

recommends fancy in a simplistic way. Pro finite and dry beauty; visual, concrete language. "But then suddenly an astonishing attempt is made to recruit Coleridge and Bergson into the camp of this 'classicism'."

Superficial interpretation of Coleridge's "organic" (he does not consider imagination). This is a manifesto, not literary history.

151- "Lecture on Modern Poetry". "I have a reverence for tradition", he says—a personal taste, vs. the metaphysical claims of poetry. "What poetry is after is the precise image", something like impressionism in painting. Wellek: "The differentia between poetry and prose is not meter but imagery". Hulme: "Regular meter to this impressionistic poetry is cramping, jangling, meaningless, and out of place. Into the delicate pattern of images and colour, it introduces the heavy, crude pattern of rhetorical verse." Images live in poetry, are dead in prose, "in journalistic English." Sincerity is measured by the number of images (!).

"Notes on Language and Style." - "Poetry is neither more nor less than a mosaic of words, so great is exactness required for each one." It must be metaphorical: "Never, never, a simple statement. It has no effect." Analogy, Romantic correspondences and symbolism. Hulme is similar to the 19th-c. aestheticists: poetry for the poet, "all theories are toys." As in Eliot, in Hulme taste is for the image, "the classicism only an ideological superstructure." And "that is not incompatible with Bergson".

Ezra Pound (1885-1972)

152- Praised by Eliot. Repudiation of the past and appeal to a new selective tradition. Aim of criticism: to reject what is not worth reading, to counsel the reader and draw attention to the best.

153- Criticism to be based on personal judgment. Vs. repeating accepted opinions. Vs. Sainte-Beuve and vs. the biographical approach to criticism. He admires Remy de Gourmont: cosmopolitanism,

154- vs. national literatures, vs. American "learneries"; pro "A universal standard, which pays no attention to time or country—a

Weltliteraturstandard" (*Letters*); the history of English poetry as "a history of successful steals from the French" (In *Future 2* (1917)). He emphasizes the role of translators in history; unearths them in the Elizabethan age. Poetry is "always the same, the changes are superficial" (*Egoist 2* (1915)), "all ages are contemporaneous" (*The Spirit of Romance*, 1910). He minimizes criticism when not by poets and directed to creation. Pro *manifestos*:

155- "Don't"; "direct treatment of the thing", "composing in the sequence of the musical phrase". "Imagism": Image ≠ visual picture: "An 'image' presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Not clear. Changed to 'Vorticism' (= English Expressionism) —which breaks with the visual completely; but both 'image' and 'vortex' are slogans (or ideograms). All defend the technique of montage, e.g. in the *Cantos*. Wellek vs. a transcendent interpretation of Pound's criticism. "Pound is obviously a totally unphilosophical and untheoretical mind: he never pretends to such knowledge".

156- Vs. Aristotle as a 'director' (!). - Pound as a naive realist, even sensualist. Vs. formalism, 'cuisine', but he was very careful himself, at risk of hypostatizing form. But at times he relates emotion & form: "poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions" (*The Spirit of Romance*; cf. Eliot's 'objective correlative' (*Prose*)). Pro 'accurate art' as moral art, pro Naturalists. At times he favours Art for Art's Sake, with no immediate value, which just exists.

157- But this is abandoned when considering the broad linguistic, moral, and social effects of literature. Insistence on colloquial, living language, directness; vs. emotion: pro objectivity.

158- Kinds of poetry: melopoeia (sounds), phanopoeia (images), logopoeia (thoughts, intellectual dance). Wellek: "the distinctions do roughly correspond to the main strata of a work of art." Pound's amateurish metrics. He plays down the role of structure at large in favour of texture (cf. *Cantos*). His 'theory' justifies "a very dogmatic taste which cannot be argued about, since Pound lacks analytical skill and critical vocabulary."

159- Elementary, simplistic; unexplained divisions into good/bad poems; simplicity, vs. rhetoric, clarity vs. Foggiess. Vs. Virgil. *How to Read* (1931), *ABC of Reading* (1934). Pro Cavalcanti; pro *Cid*, *Seafarer*, *Beowulf*, Villon, vs. Elizabethans; pro Chaucer (vs. bombastic embroidery of language).

160- Vs. Milton, his pet aversion. Vs. his language and religion. Eliot argues vs. Milton, while Pound merely asserts his case, vs. 18th c., vs. the Romantics. Insults and nicknames given to poets he doesn't like. Pro Landor & Browning & Whitman.

Pound was estranged from Eliot later, vs. his caution, "the method of increasingly guarded abstract statement", and vs. his religion. Pro the

"hardness of outline" in Gautier and the later Yeats (Pound was his secretary).

166- Less interested in prose. Vs. passions; pro Henry James and James Joyce. Vs. the late James too, but he appreciates his opposition of cultures and his 'feel' of character and place. Pro James Joyce as "free from sloppiness", a definer, non-Irish, a classic, he admires his range. But vs. the Odyssey parallel in *Ulysses* and hidden meanings. Versus *Finnegans Wake*, a "diarrhea of consciousness".

Winters: Pound as "a barbarian on the loose in a museum". *Guide to Kulcher* (1938), cranky. Cocksurenness, managed to achieve his intention, "a revolution in taste" (Wellek). Pound was a generous supporter of new writing. Vs. English provincialism, through an erratic selection of other literatures.

169- "Pound (and T. S. Eliot) broke resolutely with the rhetorical tradition and defined a new taste: in the novel, for the objective novel of Flaubert, James, and Joyce; in poetry, for direct, simple, often visual, prosaic, or apparently prosaic verse."

Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957)

169- Similar to Hulme, Eliot, Pound, Joyce... He shared their French type of anti-Romanticism; vs. Rousseau and Bergson, vs. progress and history. Pro classical art: severe, hard, even coarse; Cubism, Vorticism. He founded *Blast* (1914-15). Manifestoes, wild generalizations; vs. Marinetti, pro "Primitive Mercenaries in the Modern World".

170- *The Lion and the Fox*, 1927, a Machiavellian interpretation of Shakespeare (the prince combines the lion + the fox). Impassibility of Shakespeare, like a "public executioner", an adversary of life (!). Lewis himself was always self-destructive, and made enemies of his friends. "All of Lewis's later criticism of his contemporaries can be described as invective, satire, and even personal abuse".

Time and Western Man (1927): Decline of the West through its concern with time and introspection. Versus the 'internal method': "the eye is supreme"; pro satire. He attacks all his contemporaries as decadent.

Lewis vs. irrationalism, primitivism, vs. sentimentality. E.g., vs. Joyce as culmination of both naturalism and psychological fluidity. Lewis favours the independence and freedom of the artist; a distaste of the present. Pro satire, pro the visual and concrete, vs. psychology.

174- *Men without Art* (1933): vs. Eliot's idea of classical impersonality and vs. Richards's 'disbelief' and 'pseudo-statements'. Lewis sees

Richards as a new Art for Art's sake. Pro Orwell's *Animal Farm*, 1984, and Camus. In Lewis, dreary polemics hide sharp formulations. He quarrelled with everyone save Eliot.

6. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

176- "T. S. Eliot is by far the most important critic of the twentieth century in the English-speaking world." He effects a shift in taste. His theory of poetry "is much more coherent and systematic than most commentators and Eliot himself have allowed." *Impersonal poetry; unified sensibility* required in creation culminates in *objective correlative*; there is a historical *dissociation of sensibility*; a *defense of tradition and common speech*, concept of *belief / ideas* in poetry - "all these are crucial critical matters for which Eliot found memorable formulas, if not always convincing solutions." He denies having an aesthetic theory.

177- A genuine conviction that ultimate questions are beyond the reach of the intellect and that attempts to define poetry must fail. But "essentially his theories can be treated as having a clear, coherent pattern, though some internal contradictions periss." Eliot: "The true critic is a scrupulous avoider of formulae: he refrains from statements which pretend to be literally true. He finds fact nowhere and approximation always. His truths are the truths of experience rather than calculation" (*Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, 1963).

178- He holds his criticism is "a by-product of my private poetic workshop" (*On Poetry and Poets*, 1957), that his theorizing is "epiphenomenal of [his] taste" (*To Criticise the Critic*, 1965). Not true: "Eliot's taste is often in little relation to his theory." He promotes distinguishing what we like and what we ought to like (*Essays Ancient and Modern*, 1936). He opposes the scholar to the practical critic: interpreting the work in its context vs. what use it is for us (poets) now. "But making criticism serve only temporary ends while scholarship serves the permanent seems a specious conclusion based on a false dichotomy. It pervades Eliot's reflection in criticism."

179- Three kinds of criticism for Eliot: *creative criticism* (Symonds and Pater); it does not count, they are "incomplete artists"; *historical criticism*, OK (but limited?); it is not lit. crit.; "the only genuine criticism is that of the poet-critic who is "criticising poetry in order to create poetry" (*The Sacred Wood*, 1920). "Later he merely asked the critic to have some experience in writing poetry." The only exception is Aristotle.

For Eliot, "The important critic is the person who is absorbed in the present problem of art: and who wishes to bring the forces of the past to bear on these problems" (*The Sacred Wood*) - This is unduly restrictive. He rejects both interpretation and judicial criticism. Interpretations: "instead of insight, you get a fiction." Instead he favors merely supplying the reader with facts he would have missed (*Selected Essays*):

180- "qua work of art, the work of art cannot be interpreted; there is nothing to interpret... for interpretation the chief task is the presentation of individual facts which the reader is not assumed to know" (*Selected Essays*). Skepticism about the possibility of a single or permanent interpretation: "every interpretation, along perhaps with some utterly contradictory interpretation, has to be taken up and reinterpreted by any thinking mind and by every civilization" (*Knowledge & Experience...*). Interpretation is "a necessary evil, a makeshift, a compensation for an imperfection" Judgment is forbidden: "The critic must not coerce, and he must not make judgments of worse and better" (*The Sacred Wood*). The critic "must simply elucidate; the reader will form the correct judgement for himself." Not literal: he seeks rather "to protest against subjective and arbitrary interpretation and against the dogmatic ranking of authors." The aim of criticism is also "The return to the work of art with improved perception and intensified, because more conscious enjoyment" (*The Sacred Wood*). For Wellek, "The interdiction of judgment and ranking is completely belied by Eliot's practice. Ranking, judging, was the secret of his success and appeal as a critic" (e.g. the Elizabethan dramatists in *Selected Essays*).

181- Eliot subordinates criticism to creation. Vs. autotelic, creative criticism; all "implies a concept of the meaning of the work of art as something left to the reader, something indeterminate and even loose" (Wellek). Eliot: "A poem may appear to mean different things to different readers, and all of these meanings may be different from what the author thought he meant"; "The reader's interpretation may differ from the author's and be equally valid—it may even be better" (*On Poetry and Poets*, 1957). Cf. the doctrines of impersonality, the opposition to the intentional fallacy, etc. "Eliot is right in not wanting to lose this accrual of meaning", but the problem of correctness remains; Wellek warns against shirking it.

182- He runs vs. his own theory of a tradition of Judgment Day to poets [!!], of an "absolute poetic hierarchy" (Eliot) that we must assume. Cf. *Garland for John Donne*, ed. T. Spenser, 1930). Eliot does not define his

actual critical practice—changes of taste, definition of classics, description of creative process. The work for art is for Eliot "something between the writer and the reader; it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to 'express' or of his experience of writing it, or the experience of the reader or the writer as reader" (Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 1933). The poem "in some sense, has its own life . . . the feeling, or emotion, or vision resulting from the poem is something different from the feeling or emotion or vision in the mind of the poet" (*The Sacred Wood*, 1928). Poetry is not to be evaluated by reference to the poet's experience. The origin of the poem "has no relation to the poem and throws no light upon it" (*On Poetry and Poets*). Creation cannot be explained by anything before it: biographical criticism is irrelevant. Poetry is not necessarily related to the poet's feelings, it may be remote from them.

183- Poetry is for Eliot an escape from personality, a transmutation of material; the poet is a mere catalyst, totally passive. Wellek opposes these extreme formulations: there is always a personal element in poetry: "in practice, Eliot's criticism uses often a standard of personality" with the pattern emerging from the work itself, e.g. in the case of Shakespeare.

184- He uses personality (unifying) as a criterion of value! At times, he gives a cathartic interpretation of the creative process, etc. In general, he favours a kind of impersonality; the poet "out of intense personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol" (*On Poetry and Poets*). Poetical emotion is complex and general, concrete and precise; Eliot vs. irrational, vague and indistinct "feeling".

185- Creation in art and in life. Often contradictory passages on this in Eliot, obscure. Is poetry purely emotional? Cf. Eliot's "behavioristic" modification of Bradley: "In this dissertation Eliot rejects psychology and epistemology completely and dissolves the *cogito*, awareness, self-consciousness", pro undissociated sensibility, pro "immediate experience", vs. division subject/object.

186- "The poet becomes the man who returns to this original immediate experience, to a unified sensibility, by objectifying his feeling". Feeling = object. Sensibility split up at the start of decadence of English poetry, and it can be restituted. But feeling in poetry is not personal feeling.

187- Emotion seizes an object to express *itself*, not to express the poet. Ideas must become feeling: "actually Eliot ... exploits the ambiguity of

the term 'sensitivity' and conceives this fusion of thought and feeling as equivalent to a fusion of thought and sensation". "The metaphysical poets represent this fusion to perfection" . . . "The poet is must both feel and sense his thought" Emphasis on perception, on vision: Dante renders his idea "in terms of something *perceived*" (*The Sacred Wood*). The poetry of unified sensitivity satisfies Eliot's and man's yearning for wholeness and integrity.

188- "Dissociation of sensitivity" is suggested by De Gourmont's analysis of Laforgue's mind in *Promenades littéraires*. The Metaphysicals think and feel; in the 18th c. poets think; Romantics, by reaction, only feel. Confusion of thought and feeling in the late 19th c.; now Eliot calls for a reintegration. Wellek doubts as to all this process. There are precedents in the 18th or 19th century, etc. Eliot vs. poetry being knowledge. The poet is not a philosopher.

189- The better poet uses ideas which are not his own. Truth is seen as static and impersonal; the poet can't feel his own ideas. The truest philosophy is the best material. (?). "Art with the later Eliot is considered a preparation for religion", like Virgil guiding Dante (*On Poetry and Poets*). Earlier, Eliot stood for the autonomy of art; late Eliot advocates a double standard of criticism: artistic on the one hand, and moral-philosophical-theological on the other. "In an age like our own ... it is the more necessary ... to scrutinize works of imagination with explicit ethical and theological standards. The 'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards, though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards" (*Essays, Ancient and Modern*) —>

190 - Wellek, critical: "as if morality and theology were ingredients merely added to minimal aesthetic value". Truth means for Eliot the Catholic tradition, he rates philosophies; "To accept Eliot's dichotomy of 'greatness' and 'artness' means giving up an organic point of view establishing a new divorce of form and content." Early Eliot accepted not having to believe a poet's ideas to enjoy him: "You are not called to believe in Dante's philosophical and theological views", for there is a difference between philosophical belief and poetic assent (*Selected Essays*). For Wellek, "a modest and sound generalization from the empirical fact that we are not always able to reach the state of disinterested contemplation that poetry demands." Later, vs. Shelley: (Eliot:) "When the doctrine, belief or 'view of life' presented in the poem is one which the mind of the reader can accept as coherent, mature and founded on the facts of experience, it interposes an obstacle to the

reader's enjoyment whether it be one that he can accept or deny, decry or deprecate" (*On Poetry and Poets*).

191- But for Wellek "coherence is an aesthetic as well as a logical criterion ... the maturity of a work of art is its inclusiveness, its awareness of complexity, and the correspondence to reality is registered in the work itself. An incoherent, immature, 'unreal' poem is a bad poem aesthetically." Eliot pro "wisdom", union of form and content, feeling and intellect (—vague). The problem of belief depends on the reader "It is not susceptible of a theoretical solution" (Wellek). "Sincerity" is linked to this. Eliot sees that it can reflect our enjoyment; for Wellek, "a standard of sincerity seems quite beyond investigation, proof, or use". Later, Eliot divorces the beliefs of the man and beliefs as poet, and prefers "genuineness" (*On Poetry and Poets*), not psychological.

192- For Wellek "Strength of belief has no relation to successful art"; "Eliot is a mucho more satisfactory critic when he forgets about sincerity, the mare's nest of 'belief' and the mysterious creative process, and turns his attention resolutely to the work of art as a describable object, a symbolic world which is amenable to analysis and judgment." "He found the the term 'objective correlative' for this symbolic world which he thought as continuous with the feelings of the poet, objectifying and patterning them"—only appears in "Hamlet" literally. Cf. Santayana's definition of 'correlative objects' (*Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900). Eliot's discussion of *Hamlet* is obsucre: excessive emotion forces the objective correlative for Hamlet? Inexpressible? How do we know then? Why is his mother's marriage not a sufficient motivation? Why does Eliot oppose the excessive reaction of a tragic hero? The application to Shakespeare of the problem seems perverse.

193- Wellek pro Vivas: We cannot determine the emotions of a playwright from the play. But Wellek finds the notion of objective correlative useful: "the right kind of devices, situations, plots, and objects which motivate the emotion of a character in a play or a novel or even, as Eliot used it more broadly, simply as the 'equivalent' of the author's emotion, the successful objectivation of emotion in a work of art" [*Lots of emotion still in Eliot's use - JAGL*]; "Eliot in approaching a work of poetry thinks of it, first of all, as language"; the poet preserves and develops language (*On Poetry and Poets*). The language of poetry must not "stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear" (*On Poetry and Poets*).

194- Eliot pro Dryden, Dante, but pro "some standard of correct poetic diction, neither identical with, nor too remote from current speech" (*On Poetry and Poets*). Versus Milton: "Milton writes English like a dead language" (*OPP*). Language must be an observed object; —vs.

"language dissociated from things, assuming an independent existence". Pro Joyce, but vs. *Finnegans Wake*. Eliot is bothered by the relation prose/poetry: "he wants to defend prosaic style in poetry and yet rejects poetic prose à la Pater".

195- Eliot vs. identification poetry&verse. We lack a word to qualify good prose as "poetry" qualifies some good verse (preface to St. John Perse's *Anabasis*, 1930). He defends both a poetry of images and a poetry of statement, precise, close to the object.

196- In long works, pro movement from greater to lesser (prosaic) poetic "intensity". A vague word. Eliot pro the "innate idea of poetry" we have (!?) —a result of "Eliot's refusal to discuss poetry either in terms of fictionality or in terms of its sound-structure." He refuses metre and sound as an essential distinction and is vague on metrics: "rhythm", "music"...

197- —a "musical pattern of sounds and a musical pattern of secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and these two patterns are indissoluble and one" (*On Poetry and Poets*). Music of a word: "It is at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of the context; and from another relation, that of the immediate meaning to that context to all the other meanings which it has in other contexts, to its greater or less verbal wealth of association" (*OPP*). Ok, but this is semantics, not "music"! Poetry aspires to music, but sense is essential. Eliot vs. "unconscious symbols" in Read. "If we are unconscious that a symbol is a symbol, then is it a symbol at all? And the moment we become conscious that it is a symbol, is it any longer a symbol?" (*Criterion* 4, 1926).

198- Symbolism as the tendency of poetry to make the word work as much as possible, to unite the disparate in the concrete, more than in other writings. Wellek: "Symbol is simply the rightly charged word and not a pointing to the supernatural". For Eliot, poetry is related to ritual, but he rejects primitivism: he recommends myth as a method, a technique, "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (on *Ulysses*, in *Dial* 75, 1923). The artist is not a myth-maker, "The artist is more primitive, as well as more civilized than

his contemporaries" (*Egoist* 5, 1918). View of history: each period is unified, Hegelian-wise? The poet cannot help writing his time? "In the defense against Paul Elmer More's accusation that there is a cleavage between Eliot's correctly classical criticism and his perversely modernist poetry, Eliot endorses the strange view that in a chaotic age poetry must be chaotic" (*After Strange Gods*, 1934).

199- The poet may oppose a particular social situation or power, but not challenge the deep-seated assumptions of his culture. But he also affirms an eternal standard of classicism and tradition. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot is not a "historical critic" —literature is beyond time.

200- "As Eliot was to say in 'Little Gidding', 'History is a pattern of timeless moments'". Wellek sees a distrust of mere personality, novelty and originality. "The poem which is absolutely original is absolutely bad" (Preface to Pound's *Selected Poems*, 1928); "True originality is merely a development". In *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928) Eliot declared himself "classicist", "royalist" and "Anglican": a concrete tradition.

201- But he does not value Antiquity in a special way: it prepares Christianity; nor French or English neo-classicism: "we have no classic age and no classic poet in English". Pro Dryden, but he is commonplace and lacks profundity; pro Johnson—who has not a classical taste. But classics are a source ("What is a Classic", 1944).

202- Rome is an indispensable link of the tradition from Greece—Eliot pro Virgil. Need for a cultural union of Europe, based on Christianity and classical languages (*To Criticise the Critic*). "Eliot's classicism is a matter of cultural politics rather than of literary criticism"; derived from Maurras (*L'Avenir de l'intelligence*, 1905), Babbitt...

203- Maurras vs. Romanticism as exporter of revolution, of moral and aesthetic anarchy. Eliot opposes classical/romantic as "the complete and the fragmentary, the orderly and the chaotic" (*Selected Essays*), he later said they are not so important terms. Vs. *Kubla Khan* and the Immortality Ode; Coleridge's *Biographia literaria* is historically crucial, "one of the silliest, the most exciting and most exasperating books of criticism ever written" (...) "He brought out clearly the relation of literary criticism to that branch of philosophy which has flourished amazingly under the name of esthetics" ("Experiment in Criticism", 1929); Wellek sees it as a novelty only for the English-speaking world. Imagination as an integration of opposites is OK for Eliot (e.g. in metaphysical wit), but versus the notions of the opposition fancy/imagination and "willing suspension of disbelief",

204- —"apparently not understanding that Coleridge speaks of theatrical illusion and not of Eliot's belief in a poet's doctrine". Pro Byron, but vs. his uninteresting and disorderly mind. Pro Keats's Benjamin Bailey letter on imagination.

205- Vs. Shelley, ideological objections; also a confused and obscure poet. Later he will find him OK. His rejection of romanticism takes him vs. Victorians and Georgians and Whitman, "spurious in pretending that his prose was a new kind of verse".

206- "In spite of this ideological superstructure of classicism, Eliot's taste belongs to a line which could be called medieval-baroque-symbolist". Dante is the greatest poet, "the most European, the least provincial" (*To Criticize the Critic*). Eliot is not interested in the Renaissance, he "argues persuasively that the weakness of Elizabethan drama is 'not its convention but its lack of conventions'." But his particular readings of Elizabethan dramatists are often erratic.

207- Influential in restoring Jacobean and Caroline dramatists, and the Metaphysicals: poets in our civilization, he says, "must be difficult. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning. It is not sufficient to 'look into our hearts and write'. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts" (*Selected Essays*) - "The Metaphysical Poets", 1921: In Donne, "a direct apprehension of thought, or a recreation, of thought into feeling (...) A thought for Donne was an experience: it modified his sensibility".

208- Later, vs. Donne: he plays with ideas without believing anything, Eliot finds in him "a manifest fissure between thought and sensibility" (!!!).

209- Pro Herbert, Marvell, Crashaw and Cowley. His "wit" is analogous to the New Critics' "irony", not cynicism, but a "constant inspection and criticism of experience. It involves, probably, a recognition, implicit in the expression of every experience, of other kinds of experience which are possible" (*Selected Essays*). The reconstitution of the dissociation of sensibility was attempted by French symbolists, "and, Eliot hopes, by his own work, by Pound, Joyce and Marianne Moore"... But vs. the mysticism of Symbolists. Baudelaire is the greatest, but it was Laforgue who influenced Eliot.

210- "Laforgue and Baudelaire are seen as the first poets who reject the problem of Good and Evil and thus succeed in recombining thought and feeling an establishing a moral order." But they remain divided.

211- Baudelaire a Christian and a classic in due time. Pro Mallarmé on language (but cf. Eliot's criterion of the colloquial!)

212- Eliot vs. Valéry's art for art's sake and his opposition prose-poetry; vs. his tower of ivory, pro his classicism and his work on language.

213- Some reservations on Yeats's mysticism and crudity, but pro his clear, simple, direct poetry (!). Pro Pound's definiteness and concreteness, his learned use of the past, expressing himself through historical masks,

214- Pound as a master of verse form; the meaning of the Cantos is unimportant: "I confess that I am seldom interested in what he is saying, but only in the way he says it." Later he sees in him "an increasing defect of communication" (!!!!). Eliot recognizes the greatness of Pound as a critic; he is responsible for 20th-cent. revolution in poetry, the revolution of the image and colloquial speech, favored by Eliot. Pro Kipling too.

215- Eliot includes drama under poetry, he tried to revive poetic drama as "a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and musical order" (*On Poetry and Poets*). Genre theory: Lyric as 1st person voice, overheard by the reader. Dramatic monologue: the author speaking through a mask (2nd voice); drama: characters speaking (third voice). All three are present in drama. "The novel seems to have remained outside his critical interests", though.

216- Eliot pro Stendhal and Flaubert, who "suggest unmistakably the the awful separation between potential passion and any actualization possible in life. They indicate also the indestructible barriers between one human being and another" (*Athenaeum* 30/5/19). Pro James and Joyce, vs. James as literary critic: "he had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it" (*Egoist* 5, 1918); vs. abstract ideas divorced from sensibility and particularity.

217- Joyce as the model of the fiercely independent artist. *Ulysses* is great, it becomes part of the tradition: "Such a book not only realises untried possibilities in a language, but revivifies the whole fo the past" (*Vanity Fair*, Nov. 1923). Joyce as a religious artist, vs. the heretic, irresponsible, unconscientious Lawrence—a great artist too, with profound intuition but with the wrong conclusions, a demoniac with a gospel.

218- Later, Eliot sees Lawrence as a religious writer who never made a work of art (!!): "At most he could sympathize with his own criticism of modern civilization."

219- Eliot's theory, his criticism, and his poetic work do not form a coherent whole.

220- "On some points, Eliot recognized the conflict himself and modified his theories accordingly." His total skepticism enables him to embrace Catholicism "boldly and literally". Vs. Arnold and Richards: poetry is not equivalent to religion, and cannot replace it. "He looked complacently upon those who refuse to choose between Rome and Canterbury on the one hand and Moscow on the other (Communism was for him a religion) and who refuse to applaud his glorification of an earlier stage of British culture." But he did not decline as critic after his conversion. "But his interests shifted away from literary criticism and thus he was apt to use literature as documents for his Jeremiads on the modern world. He embraced a double standard which dissolves the unity of the work of art as well as the sensibility which goes into its making and the critical act itself. He thus weakened (on behalf of what he felt to be higher interests) the impact of his achievement as a literary critic. Taken in its early purity his literary criticism seems to be very good indeed."

7. I. A. Richards (1893-1979)

221- Wellek defines himself as structuralist and has reservations on Richards. OK on the causes of misreading and his attention to poetic language; but he rejects Richards's psychology and his account of the mode of existence of the literary work of art. Ransom: "Discussion of the new criticism must start with Mr. Richards. The new criticism very nearly began with him" (*The New Criticism*, 1941).

222- Vs. aesthetic emotion: "Total abolition of the difference between art and life" —The affective theory of art is traceable back to Aristotle's catharsis, immediately in psychological aesthetics in Germany. Ethel D. Puffer's *Psychology of Beauty* (1905) speaks of "equilibrium of impulses". Derived from Lipps, Vernon Lee, Dilthey...

223- But Richards uses it for a modern defense of poetry and applies it more concretely to criticism. But no clear description of how it works in literature. He follows Wordsworth, Shelley: poetry awakens, enlarges the mind, "all defensible and sensible claims"; but extravagant in the role he gives it in life and in the world in "The Future of Poetry" (1960); cf. Shelley on poets as legislators. But, Wellek says, "Poetry loses its identity completely in a loose synthesis of philosophy, morality and art."

What can be ascribed to all three together or to any one of the other two will not be seriously credited to poetry alone".

224- Richards gives to it the role of a secularized religion, revising Shelley and Arnold; for Wellek, an "impossible and undesirable goal" to give up philosophy, ideology and religion. Wellek: pro beneficial effect of poetry as a whole, but not in particular cases: "Richards's view of poetry as an ordering of the mind and as the making of a perfect human being is false; there were madmen, suicides, scoundrelas, and many horribly unhappy and disorganised men even among the great poets." —"Richards can arrive at such extravagant hopes for poetry because he holds an optimistic, individualistic view of man and his ideals."

225- Richards pro Basic English, pro pedagogy, the United Nations... but "in terms of utilitarianism, with little feeling for tragic experience or sense of history, and with only a slight interest in social conflict and none in anything which could be transcendental." Emphasis on psychology puts him off from the poem. "The psychologism embraced by Richards simply denies the objective structure of the work of art." Emphasis on subjectivity: words are free to waltz, poetic language is plurisignificant, open to many interpretations (cf. his pupil Empson). Through meter we become patterned, the pattern is not outside! Images and metaphors imply no compulsion; tragedy is also in our mind.

226- Response is for Richards more important than the object; poetry is reduced to mental therapy. Richards pro using even bad poetry to order our minds. "The door is open to complete anarchy in criticism (...). No greater aberration and abdication can be conceived." Kantian aesthetics + science fiction psychology of "distorted impulses" and "convulsions". *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923): referential vs. emotive uses of language; poetry is radically cut off from philosophy, ideology, doctrine, knowledge of any kind. "A poem has no concern with limited and directed reference. It tells, or should tell us, nothing" (*The Meaning of Meaning*).

227 - Against a need of the writer's doctrine and our belief in them, OK, but Richards "exaggerates the justified distrust of intellectual doctrine in poetry to a complete rejection of any implied world-view." Pro *The Waste Land*, poetry without any ideological commitments (!). Sometimes he speaks of giving emotional belief and withholding intellectual belief. "The whole mare's nest seems due to Coleridge's striking phrase on 'the willing suspension of disbelief', a formula

originally derived from Moses Mendelssohn's discussion of theatrical illusion."

228- Vs. Richards's sharp dichotomy of intellect & feeling, object & subject. Psychologism makes his theory of valuation problematic. Wellek says that unsuccessful experience and successful communication are not so different.

229- Definition of a poem: a class of experiences, etc. —how can he recognize the degree of deviation from the poet's experience? "The attempt to find the mode of existence of a work of art in the inaccessible psychic state of its author, whether during the act of creation or during the act of contemplating the finished composition, or even in the anarchic variety of any number of readers' response, leads to potentially absurd conclusions." "It remains unclear why a more complex organization of impulses should be better than a less complex one and how a system of balances can be said to contribute to the growth of the mind." Wellek vs. conceiving of poetry as a reproduction or communication of feeling. Richards enters the maze of "sincerity"; feelings may be imaginary: vs. Rousseau's romantic fiction of spontaneity, but still pro some idea of sincerity.

230- A secular version of Loyolan meditation—cf. T. S. Eliot; Richards "tries to preserve emotions without the beliefs in us which their history has been involved" with. Richards's metaphysical subjects concern religion, not literary criticism. Richards is not a behaviourist: "His point of view is rather that of British empiricism: his psychology comes from James Ward and G. F. Stout rather than from J. B. Watson." Wellek vs. his biologism, a naive and scientific theory of knowledge.

231- Richards is not a scientist because he does not believe in the universality of the scientific method (*Speculative Instruments*, 1953), but he always tries to reduce value to science. He hopes for an ultimate victory of science over the mysteries of poetic language and emotion. In *Speculative Instruments* he abandons his neurological terminology, adopts information theory, but vs. a package theory of communication in poetry. Richards tries to bridge the gulf between science and poetry, myth, religion. A vague notion of poetry: value judgement, not verse.

233- "But genre questions hardly interest him nor is he concerned with historical types, movements, or traditions. In practice, all the emphasis is on the analysis of lyric poetry and on attempts to discriminate among English poems and poets." An effective analyst, he disregards his own psychological machinery. "Even the somewhat comic diagram with the wiggly nerves can be translated into a fruitful analysis of the strata of a

poem." "Richards is particularly effective in arguing against the divorce of sound and meaning, meter and sense." Richards vs. the "visualization" of metaphor, OK: Metaphors, he argues, constitute meaning, a verbal device. Tenor and vehicle (terms introduced by Richards to avoid the ambiguity of 'image') interact and cannot be confined to their resemblances. "The disparities between tenor and vehicle 'are as much operative as the similarities' " (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1936). Coleridge's pair *fancy/imagination* turns out to be a typology of metaphors rather than a distinction between faculties of the mind (!): a quantitative difference, "a copunting of relations" (*Coleridge on Imagination*, 1934). Richards derives from Santayana an opposition between poetry of exclusion / poetry of inclusion.

234- "The distinction between these two types of which Richards makes little became central in the theory of Cleanth Brooks:—the test of irony: exclusive or simple poetry cannot bear 'an ironic contemplation' (*Principles of Literary Criticism* 250). Thus in spite of the psychological vocabulary about impulses, attitudes and appetencies, Richards stimulated the analysis of poetic texts in terms of the interaction of words and the functions of imagery. From this comes his impact on the New Criticism, which, though often adhering to his psychological vocabulary, showed little interest in psychological speculations." The greatest and most beneficial influence was through *Practical Criticism* (1929), though Wellek vs. his claim as a scientific experiment. "But in spite of uncontrolled documentation, the book manages to analyze the sources of misreading and, convincingly, to prove the disorientation which affects students as soon as they are deprived of the prop of names, their authority, and their anchorage in history."

235- Several causes of misreading for Wellek, in two main groups: deviation into the too general "stock responses" or toward the too individual, arbitrarily personal. "The whole book assumes something which Richards's theory had started: the correctness and validity of a specific interpretation, the objectivity of a structure of determination given by a poem"

236- Occasionally Richards seems driven to recognize objective standards of meaning and structure, and the hermeneutic circle, but he uses organic metaphors. Wellek prefers semantic and normative description.

237- Richards vs. historicism and vs. Freudian and Marxist reductions; continuity and convergence of mankind and tradition. A Quixotic faith

in the future analysis of mind by science. What is radically new in him is wrong: psychologism and antiaestheticism, denial of both value and of the emotive definition of the effect of poetry.

238- Richards is not a great critic: a specialist obsessed with a central idea. Uninterested in stylistics, he widened the gulf with European critics. But the emphasis on language was positive and influential.

8. F. R. Leavis (1895-1978) and the *Scrutiny* Group

239- Leavis / Snow controversy, 1962-63, "Leavis was right in dismissing Sir Charles's contrast between an old bad literary and a new good scientific culture." But vs. his tone. Leavis did not represent English teaching at Cambridge—in opposition to ruling group.

240- *Scrutiny*: dogmatic and authoritarian tone for Tillyard. *Pelican Guide to English Literature* written along the lines of Leavis: Boris Ford, L. C. Knights, Derek Traversi, Martin Turnell, Marius Bewley. "Leavis's own view of his utter failure and isolation is a case of grossly misplaced self-pity."

241- Leavis vs. Christians, Marxists and cultural mass-media; distance from New Critics & F. W. Bateson. Leavis is "the most influential English critic of this century after Eliot". Early Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), close to Eliot + Arnold.

242- "The love for Hopkins distinguishes Leavis from Eliot, and the last chapter shows Leavis's social concern—for the process of standardization, mass production, and leveling-down in literature, which became one of the major preoccupations of his periodical." *Revaluation* (1936): "an application of Eliot's methods and insights to the history of English poetry." First attempt at a history of poetry from the 20th-century point of view. Concerned with establishing continuities: from the Metaphysicals to Pope, from 18th-c. georgics to Wordsworth. Pro Pope, Wordsworth & Keats, Hopkins, Eliot, Yeats.

243- *The Great Tradition* (1948) in fiction: Austen-Eliot - James - Conrad. Perverse on Dickens's *Hard Times*. Pro Lawrence; Leavis sees Joyce as a dead-end. Revalues Eliot; erratic on Lawrence.

244- *The Common Pursuit* (1952). Miscellaneous. Later he includes Dickens in his Great Tradition. Often erratic essays. "Leavis ... emphasizes his lack of interest in philosophical theory, in systematic defense and argument about principles, and recommends always a purely empirical approach to literary criticism."

245- Leavis vs. Wellek's structuralism. Literary criticism is not philosophy; the ideal critic is the ideal reader. Discussion of critical

principles must not be philosophical, they are defined only in the actual process. Pro concrete response, and critic interrogating it.
246- Criticism seen in terms of pedagogy. Emphasis on the linguistic quality of literature; literature as "arrangement of words on the page" (*Education and the University*, 1943). Emphasis on the textual makes him reject literary history and scholarship—worthless for the student, who can't make a personal approach.

247- Leavis pro criticising criticism: we must approach method with our own apparatus in order to benefit from it. Johnson admired for his empiricism: "Johnson's recourse to experience is so constant and uncompromising and so subversive of Neo-classic authority that it is misleading to bring him under the Neo-classic head" (in *Scrutiny*). Pro Arnold's plea for critical intelligence and standards, vs. Art for Art's sake. Even pro Arnold's touchstones. Leavis: a central concern for the preservation of a tradition—which is literary and social, not religious (vs. T. S. Eliot).

248- Literary criticism must be secular humanist in approach (but Leavis is not anti-religious); emphatically not aestheticism. Leavis vs. "any 'unique literary values' or an 'realm of the exclusively aesthetic'". But there is, for a critic, a problem of relevance, an understanding of the resources of language, the nature of convention, a specially developed sensibility" (*The Common Pursuit*). Leavis vs. Bateson's sociological criticism: "The poem is a determinate thing; it is *there*; but there is nothing to correspond—nothing answering to Mr. Bateson's 'social context' that can be set over against the poem, or induced to re-establish itself round it as a kind of framework or completion, and there never *was* anything" ("The Responsible Critic", *Scrutiny* 19, 1953).

Leavis "constantly returns to the moral, social and vital implications of literature" Vs. didacticism, but the critical act implies moral discrimination. Literary criticism becomes a diagnosis of "spiritual malady" and of the sound tradition of a good society. "In a little book written with Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment* (1932),

249- and in Mrs. Q.D. Leavis's *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), this thesis is pursued in sociological terms. It is a concern for the effect of mass production, standardization leveling-down, advertising and its effects, the whole development of modern urban and industrial civilization which is contrasted with the organic community of the English countryside and the communal life of earlier ages." Leavis complains of the decay of standards, but with an exclusive regard for high-brow; he underrates the social mission of modest art. Leavis

deplores the lack of central authority in criticism, the anarchy of values... Pro creating at least a small critical minority. Leavis uses constantly the criterion of integration in a healthy society. The social function of the poet: "The poet is at the most conscious point of the race in his time" (*New Bearings in English Poetry*); literature is the "consciousness of the age." Pro "centrality", "maturity", "sanity", "discipline"...

250- And vs. emotionalism, afflatus, rhetoric; vs. Shelley (& pro objective correlative). Conservatism? Modified and contradicted by a concern for life and vitality. At times, this equals realisk, empiricism, vs.aestheticism. The great tradition of novelists (George Eliot, James & Conrad) "are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral integrity" (*The Great Tradition*). Pro Lawrence: "He has an unfailingly sure sense of the difference between that which makes for life and that which tends away from health. It is this that makes him a so much better critic than Eliot" . Leavis pro concrete images, & diction related to them; pro common speech, vs. incantatory poetry, & vs. Milton. Language leads to things, to reality.

251- "The linguistic interest in Leavis is strictly subordinated to his interest in what he would call life. Thus the emphasis on the text is somewhat deceptive." Vague, imprecise, and punctual on language; not interested in technical analysis of any kind; "pressure behind words", etc., gestures toward indistinct feeling. "Like Croce, he is primarily interested in 'sentiment' and hence soon becomes a moral a social critic." Emphasis on words and then on feeling through them equals emphasis on a civilized tradition and an advocacy of life for life's sake. In Leavis, Life is an ambiguous term which shifts from meaning reality and truth to sincerity and even to a sense of community and oneness. Sometimes a kind of religious responsibility often "simply courage, devotion, and finally optimism."

252- Leavis vs. catharsis (Wellek): "Tragedy rather has an exalting, exhilarating effect; it enhances our sense of life, frees us from the limitations of ourselves, makes us recognize value as in some way defined and vindicated by 'death'" (*The Common Pursuit*). Vs. artists who "do dirt on life" (Eliot, Flaubert...). Ambiguity, shiftiness and vagueness of 'life' as a criterion. Limitations of Leavis's taste: vs. conventionalized, stylized art, Ortega's art, vs. mere playfulnesss. Standard: 19th-c. realism + some of Eliot of Lawrence, vs. the avant-garde. "He clings, as I suppose we all do, to the discoveries of his

youth: Conrad, Lawrence, Hopkins, the early Eliot." Concerned with English rural tradition: Shakespeare, Bunyan, Austen, George Eliot, Lawrence. (...) Provinciality of Leavis, not interested in foreign literatures. Hatred of theory, his main failing. Empiricism.

253- For Leavis, "Poetry must be in serious relation to actuality, it must have a firm grasp of the actual, of the object, it must be in relation to life, it must not be cut off from direct vulgar living, it should not be personal in the sense of indulgent in personal dreams and fantasies, there should be no emotion for its own sake in it, no afflatus, no mere generous emotionality, no luxury in pain or joy, but also no sensuous poverty, but a sharp concrete realization, a sensuous particularity. The language of poetry must not be cut off from speech, should not flatter the singing voice, should not be merely mellifluous, should not give, e.g., a mere general sense of motion." Refusal to theorize has a paralyzing effect in Leavis, he does not describe the effect he observes, gropes for terms; style has 'body', 'generalizing weight'. "The struggle for expression, the entanglement in favourite words is painfully obvious in many passages of Leavis's tortuous and tortured writing, which, in its fierce clinging to the immediate, seems often to deny the life and light of reason".

254- Wellek vs. "the obscurantist vitalism preached by Lawrence and accepted by Leavis with uncritical adoration." But Leavis has imposed his judgement, as he wished: like Arnold, he is a molder of taste.

The later Leavis:

Anna Karenina and Other Essays (1967), *Lectures in America* (1969), *English Literature in Our Time and the University* (1969), *Dickens: The Novelist* (1970), *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope* (1972), *The Living Principle: 'English' as a Discipline of Thought* (1975), *Thought, Words, and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (1976).

255- Q. D. Leavis (1907-1981), pro Englishness of English novel, social critical realism, vs. 'technicians' such as Virginia Woolf. The later Leavis: vs. return to the old order (no Luddite), but the memory of the old order must be chief incitement towards a new one.

256- But in older times literature had a vital contact with popular speech and culture which it has lost. Literary culture is now a minority culture. Pro maintaining an 'educated public'.

257- Leavis pro studying culture as a whole, not only literature. The literary critic makes judgments about life, not literature. "I think of myself as an anti-philosopher, which is what a literary critic ought to be

... 'Aesthetics' is a word I have little use for" (*Thought, Words, and Creativity*). In his analysis of the novel, no concern with aesthetic response or judgment; he merely pays attention to the author's discrimination, and judgments about his characters." Vs. linguistic analysis of literature; this prevents him from dealing seriously with meaning. Criteria can be defined only "in the actual process of criticism"; and defining them with precision would be "intolerably clumsy and ineffective" (*Letters in Criticism*). Pro Richards's anti-aestheticism, but vs. his undeveloped interest in literature, and vs. his "pseudo-scientific and pseudo-psychological" theory.

258- Eliot later rejected by Leavis: "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is pretentious and unilluminating, "null as thought", "confused and ambiguous". A need for interplay of criticism and theory is advocated (e.g. Coleridge), but not followed by Leavis himself. Leavis pro assuming standards, shown in practice. In later writings Leavis abandons his terms and uses instead "realization", "enactment", "convincingness" and "inevitability", "sincerity", "the sincerity that is of the whole being, and not merely of conscious intention" (*Lectures in America*).

259- Aesthetic criticism of integration of language and images with meaning, "Yet often he passes quickly to a criticism of the world view propounded by the poet."

260- Pro Lawrence and Blake, etc. A religious tone, but he avoids God or any specific creed.

261- Dickens second only to Shakespeare now. *Little Dorrit* is his best. An odd tradition Blake-Dickens-Lawrence is based on an all-inclusive concept of 'Life'.

262- American tradition: vs. Whitman on America, vs. America, Leavis disparages American scholarship. Also vs. the European Common Market and vs. immigrants. Doctrinaire, vs. pluralism.

263- But also vs. personal standards: criticism is a "common pursuit"—but in a narrow circle. He is silent on moderns, obsessed with the Eliot / Lawrence "debate". He makes over Lawrence in his own image, glossing over his scandals, obtuseness and crudity. A primacy of valuation in reading.

264- Leavis not a rebel, he has become an orthodoxy. Eccentric but energetic, and an example of shift to a new romanticism after Eliot's influence. Wellek pro his humanism.

265- **F. W. Bateson** (1901-1978)

English poetry and the English language (1934), Bateson pro subordinating the history of literature to that of language completely, idea that social influences affect poetry only through language —vs. classical literary history, close to Formalists, and erroneous. Wellek now vs. intrinsic history of literature.

266- Later (in "Linguistics and Literary Criticism", 1968) Bateson recants: linguistics is irrelevant to literary criticism.

In *English Poetry: A Critical Introduction* (1950) he foreshadows *Rezeptionästhetik*— theories of implied readers: (Bateson): "in the poet-reader *relationship* lies the essence of poetry ... without the reader's cooperation the poem might as well not exist." The ideal reader is "one of the more intelligent of the poet's original readers." "The ultimate criterion ... is what the poet meant to his contemporaries"; "the meaning of a poem is the meaning that it had for the ideal representative of those contemporaries of the poet to whom the poem explicitly or explicitly was originally addressed" —a radical view he calls "historical reconstructionism." Audiences of different periods as standards. 6 periods, with stylistics related to the dominant social class: lawyers's feudalism, the local democracy of yeomanry, the centralized absolutism of the prince's servants, the oligarchy of the landed interests, and the present-day managerial state; pro critic relying on the historical-sociological method. Bateson: "poetry is the particular social order at its point of maximum consciousness"; it is "the expression in language of the sense of social solidarity".

268- Bateson vs. "soliloquy" idea of poetry and poets; the poem must be addressed to someone. "Consistently Bateson almost completely ignores the adversary relationship of many poets to their society, the whole problem of 'alienation, and rather accepts the contrary romantic dictum: the Grimms' *das Volk dichtet*." Vs. genius and inspiration theories, vs. pure poetry, pro collectivist historicism —but he is not a Marxist: emphasis on audience, not the economic base of society; and no prescriptivism. "Bateson had to defend his view against F. R. Leavis, who argued that reconstruction is impossible and undesirable and that the critic cannot help judging by present-day criteria." Bateson opposes Leavis's criticism to literary historical propositions, as opinions vs. facts. "Leavis had little trouble in demolishing the difference between supposed fact and opinion. 'Dependence', derivation, is not a fact, it requires 'critical judgments of a most complex and deliberate order'" — Bateson vs. rigid boundary between both, and turns the tables: "a

strong case can be made for incorporating 'criticism' in 'history'" (*English Poetry: A Critical Introduction*).

269- Later he recanted: Leavis was right, "literary criticism and literary scholarship are complementary disciplines" ("The Scholar-Critic", 1972). Literary history is concerned with the art of literature, criticism with life (!). More sensible when he follows Hirsch on "meaning" vs. "significance" ("The Scholar-Critic"). Meaning as "then-meaning".

"Bateson is convinced that it is possible and valuable to recapture the original meaning of a work of art. He accepts the criterion of authorial 'intention' and, in many contexts, rejects the 'intentional fallacy' formulated by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, which Bateson, I think, misinterprets to 'forbid any attention to an author's other writings, his biography or the social order to which he belonged', an interdiction that Bateson labeled 'obvious nonsense' (*Essays in Critical Dissent*, 1972); he demonstrates the fallacy of the Intentional fallacy there and in *Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation* (1954); the private conflicts of the poet have nevertheless a 'representative quality'.

270- Bateson vs. Empson's fanciful, unhistorical readings (but Wimsatt too); "Bateson constantly looked for constraints on the arbitrariness of interpretation in the literary tradition, in the convention of genres, and ultimately in intellectual and social contexts". Bateson: "As a result of the series of limitations imposed upon word-meanings, and word-associations at the various contextual levels, a final meaning begins to emerge. It can be called the correct meaning, the object as in itself it really is" ("The Function of Criticism"); "The final criterion of correctness is the awareness of the appropriate context." Later, in "Linguistics and Literary Criticism", the importance of linguistics is played down; he modifies historicism: (Bateson) "to become accessible to us critically, the literature of the past must in fact be translatable into the present tense", a degree of "antihistoricism is the price that has to be paid for the continuing vitality of an English literary tradition". Language is only a remote originating factor in critical response [*meaning understood as constructed beforehand, a simplistic use of Saussure* - JAGL].

271- A complete divorce between style and language. Later, Bateson OK on his claims vs. stylistics, but he forgets that the work is a verbal construct. The novel is for him an inferior art form: the novel's convention is to minimize the distance art/life, to do away with convention (*Essays in Critical Dissent*). Here words do not attract attention to themselves, which confirms Bateson's view for him. Vs. the

Formalist fallacy of the New Critics: to treat parole as *langue*, to freeze the speech act into an object; the work of art is accessed only as a process, not as a structure in space.

272- For Wellek, both are not incompatible: pro *Sukzessivegestalt* ("successive form"), pro Joseph Frank and Wellek and Warren's own *Theory of Literature*; "Bateson misunderstands the phenomenological method when he considers the ontological states a synonym for 'aesthetic'" (Wellek pro seeing the work as "An assembly of values, social, political, intellectual, moral, and what not, with the proviso that the dominance of the aesthetic function makes it a *literary* work of art", recognizing a "structure of determination" which includes any interpretive constraints imposed by the text). Bateson holds on to a communication theory of literature, he fears the hypostatization of the work, the organic metaphor, etc.

273- "Bateson remained in the empirical and finally psychological tradition. He constantly thinks of the inner processes in the mind of author and reader", but trying to socialize it by making them into the spokesmen of groups. Pro judicial criticism, not different from interpretation: "Value is also fact" ("The Scholar-Critic"). A preconception of what constitutes a good society in the critic's view. Vs. the dogmatism in Eliot and Leavis; *Essays in Criticism* as a more democratic *Scrutiny* for Bateson. Bateson: "the trained reader must understand contemporary social processes better than his neighbours"; pro English as "the educational centre of the university". A vain hope, but OK as ideal.

10. William Empson (1906-1984)

275- Disciple of Richards. Empson's method derived from Robert Graves' and Laura Riding's analysis of Shakespeare sonnet,

276- but merely linguistic there: Empson rather steeped in Richards's value theory and psychology, "and his theory of meaning which allows and encourages multiple definitions as language is conceived as fluid and poetic language appreciated for being fluid", + Eliot's ideas on complex poetry & dissociation of sensibility. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930): not a systematic division. Passages from poetry are interpreted by the technique of loose associations, inspired however on the Oxford English Dictionary or on commentaries.

277- Some associations are historical, some modern, some are peculiar to the poet: "It is an all-inclusive play of fancy, uncontrolled

and uncontrollable, flaunting the critic's ingenuity. It has been often attacked as irresponsible." [*Empson as a Stanley Fish forerunner; Fish was to undergo a similar reception one generation later - JAGL*].

278- "he ignores the problem of relevance, of the correctness of interpretation Here he goes completely astray." There is some order in his ambiguities, numbered "in order of increasing distance from simple statement and logical exposition. Two other scales: "the degree to which the apprehension of the ambiguity must be conscious, and the degree of psychological complexity involved." Vs. Wimsatt's 'intentional fallacy': Empson uses psychological motives to poets, often in a gratuitously positive way:

279- "arbitrary depth psychology" in his readings, but often illuminating when he sticks to explication. Ideal of poetry as tension. "The more immanent the contradiction, the greater tension" - Empson buys Eliot's story of the decline of English poetry. Wellek is negative on *Seven Types of Ambiguity*.

280- *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935). Theme: loss of community, cf. Eliot's concept of history.

1) Pastoral as proletarian art - inherent contradiction for Empson the artist is never at one with his public.

281-

2) Pastoral as comic subplot parodies heroic main plot.

3) Assigns to Shakespeare Empson's own view of life: the feeling that life is insufficient but must be celebrated as if it were Utopian.

282- Fanciful analyses, wild Freudianism, etc., etc.. Constant misinterpretation by Empson should not distract attention from his main argument.

283- Empson considered a classic, etc. *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951), his sanest and clearest book. Half lexicography, half literary criticism. Key words in works ('wit', 'fool', 'honest...') in Pope's *Essay on Man*, in *King Lear*, *Othello*... Empson vs. Richards's 'emotive meaning': cannot be divorced from referential meaning. The problem of belief is got rid of: we imagine a person who holds beliefs, and get a kind of experience of the consequences.

284- Ambiguity (local) vs. "equation" (public, collective). Vs. the idea that ambiguity must be based on equations to be effective. For Wellek, "Equations may be, after all, due to individual invention." There is no "key word" in every work. Empson studies the whole work, his "method" is not necessary.

285- Empson moved away from his early preoccupation with the meanings of words. *Milton's God* (1961), vs. the idea of eternal damnation and Christianity (for Wellek, this is "irrelevant to any concern with criticism", but there is also literary criticism of the poem). Vs. Milton's personal theology too; but pro his cutting away from Christianity torture-horror and sex-horror, in spite of his "downright horrible conception of God."

286- Empson refuses here to take a historical point of view, no sinking in the world of the author. the critic has to use his moral judgement; in Empson, a Benthamist morality of the mere satisfaction of impulses. "Empson treats a work of imaginative grandeur as a treatise, as a versified *De Doctrina Christiana*." He regards the work as an alien wonder; he sides with Satan, but does not see Milton as being of the Devil's party. Empson sees Satan's degradation; he defends Eve and Dalila, and appreciates Milton's style and visual imagination (Empson however vs. Imagism's 'nonsense'). But literary criticism is secondary here: "Empson has become an amateur theologian, suprisingly upset by issues a good atheist should not and need not worry about". His last book; thereafter he wrote papers, collected in *Using Biography* (1984).

287- Empson vs. "the Wimsatt law which says that no reader can ever grasp the intention of an author" —which for Wellek is a gross disortion of the meaning of the Intentional Fallacy. Wimsatt never dreamed of forbidding the use of biography and history and used them all the time himself" (on *Tom Jones*). *Using Biography* has little or no interest for literary criticism.

288- The theory of 'double irony' reasserts moral ambiguity, and even relativity; the ironist lets both his addressees realize that he understands both their positions. Vs. Hugh Kenner on the supposed irony of Joyce vs. Stephen & Bloom.

289- Erratic on the supposed continuation of *Ulysses*. He identifies the action of the novel with Joyce's experiences—an odd confusion of fiction and reality in Empson's late criticism.

290- Fundamentally rationalistic, for Empson, poetry, "shares the fundamental logic with prose discourse". Vs. the Christian allegories in the "Old Mariner".

291- Empson unconventional and OK on Jonson admiring villains in *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. Empson increases our understanding of difficult poetry and of the devices of Metaphysical poetry. But Wellek is against his wide conceptions of the fluidity of language and of

"undecidability": "They ultimately lead to complete skepticism and hence to the destruction of scholarship and rational enquiry."

292- An Eliotic view of history couched in Marxist terms. *The Structure of Complex Words* breaks away from Richards; from emotionalism to a rationalistic and utilitarian view of language; interest in greater structures than words. Not much theory: closer to ordinary language philosophy, not to Husserl as he claims. He remains a practical critic and a shrewd commentary. But he rarely discusses the whole work and aesthetic value. "Basically he is a very secular moralist."

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