

ment where it belongs, on esthetic grounds, where careful writing prevails over hasty, sloppy prose." Surely this is stacking the deck: if the party of logicians can have nothing else, it ought to be allowed carefulness and rigor.

Snow is probably to blame for his misuse as a cliché in arguments like Karl's, for he wrote with Machiavellian simplicity. Subtler appreciation of his lectures would discern their kinship with more famous assaults on fashionable (though genuinely great) literature, such as the antipoetic part of Plato's *Republic* and Peacock's "The Four Ages of Poetry." Like these authors, Snow argues in a way that seems to preempt the grounds of usual defenses of literature. Plato attacked poetic language as third-hand imitation of the truth; Peacock denied Romantic universality by portraying poets as an outmoded sect; Snow manages to argue for liberal culture and for the basic compassion that derives from our physical nature, implying that the other side can appeal to neither. And like the earlier authors, Snow positively invites the line of rebuttal that the problem, as well as his opinions, demands. Partly because Leavis missed the larger issues, seeing Snow merely as a philistine in novelist's clothing, Snow suggestively praises Dostoevsky while ridiculing Lawrence. Clearly he invites not a defense of the poet's passion but a defense of the great literary creator as a knower, who will not naively reject either half of the culture he inherits.

Whether such a bridging of opposites is really possible I do not know, but it seems clear that a humanism that proclaims its "faith . . . in folly" is as near to cliché as the "life-oriented" optimism ascribed to Snow; and that Thanatos—lonely passion, loss of faith in received culture, and conviction of waste—is scarcely the artist's distinctive mystery in the world of hunger and political slaughter which Snow tried to address.

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### Eliot and Hulme

To the Editor:

Schuchard's "Eliot and Hulme in 1916: Toward a Reevaluation of Eliot's Critical and Spiritual Development" (*PMLA*, 88, 1973, 1083–94) has value in establishing that Eliot in 1916 was familiar with Hulme's philosophy, but I take issue with the thesis that "by 1916 Eliot's classical, royalist, and religious point of view was already formulated" (p. 1083).

The emphasis in Eliot's early poetry is on the "spiritual bankruptcy" of modern life and in the later poetry, on religion; and the emphasis in the early criticism is esthetic and in the later criticism, religious

and social. We do not know completely what the early Eliot believed; we have to contend with his actual works, which do not express the viewpoint Schuchard ascribes to him. His early poetry laments the lack of spiritual sustenance but does not suggest Christianity as a way of salvation. As Oscar Cargill points out, "There is nothing remotely religious in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917)." In *Poems* (1920) Eliot satirizes the Church or Christianity in "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service," in "Intimations of Immortality," and in "The Hippopotamus," in which the Church is interested in profits, not salvation. Cargill argues persuasively that "one of the powerful effects" of *The Waste Land* is its portrayal of the "vacuity and meaninglessness of Christian history" and that the "affirmative resolution" of the poem is Buddhism, the sound of thunder offering the Brahmin code of "Give, Sympathize, and Control."<sup>1</sup>

In his early criticism Eliot's emphasis, as he himself characterizes it, is on the integrity of poetry, the necessity of considering poetry as poetry and not another thing. Schuchard admits that the emphasis in *The Sacred Wood* (1920) is on esthetic problems, but contends that Eliot's reviews in 1916 "strongly reflect specific Hulmean critical principles," that Eliot's "sensibility was religious and Catholic," and that "the moral current continues to run throughout the lesser-known writings" of the period 1917–20 (pp. 1091, 1092). It is true that of the eighteen reviews published by Eliot in 1916, fourteen are essentially philosophical or religious (most of them published in the *International Journal of Ethics* and the *New Statesman*, publications devoted to philosophy and politics). But there is no evidence that Eliot's "sensibility was religious and Catholic."

The general impression that Eliot gives in these reviews is that he is philosophically and politically conservative but not religious. In a review of *Theism and Humanism* by A. J. Balfour, Eliot is more sympathetic to theism than materialism, but on the question of the relationship of these two philosophies to art, he is neutral, saying that if the struggle is "a philosophic materialism against a philosophic theism, then the evidence fails to show any advantage to one side more than the other." He rejects, in a review of *Conscience and Christ*, modern theology as offering hope to man, saying that the Christian conscience is likely to consist of "prejudices of the enlightened middle classes" and that he is "not sure, after reading modern theology that the pale Galilean has conquered."

The two reviews that Schuchard cites as showing that Eliot's "sensibility was religious and Catholic and his primary critical concerns were moral" (reviews of Paul Elmer More's *Aristocracy and Justice* and of Stephen Leacock's *Essays and Literary Studies*) show Eliot's conservatism and his interest in morals but not

a religious and Catholic sensibility. In his review of More, Eliot says that More is not a literary critic, but “one of the most interesting *moralists* of the present time,” an opinion that Eliot repeats in *The Sacred Wood*. The review of Leacock praises conservatism, Eliot saying that Leacock, in opposition to the “cheap and easy utilitarianism of popular education,” believes in “discipline, form, restraint.” In his review of *Group Theories of Religion and the Religion of the Individual* by Clement C. J. Webb, Eliot praises Webb for supporting the “humane tradition” against the “novelties of science,” equating science and materialism with Romanticism, and the humane tradition with Classicism.<sup>2</sup> This attitude, however, does not indicate a religious and Catholic sensibility. Philosophical and political conservatism is not confined to a religious perspective.

Eliot’s critical essays and reviews during the period of *The Sacred Wood* (1917 to 1920), both the well known and the lesser known, are overwhelmingly concerned with literary and esthetic problems. Of 104 essays and reviews published in the years 1917 through 1920, only 22 (3 in 1919 and none in 1920) deal primarily with philosophical, political, or religious subjects. This concentration on literary problems does not mean that Eliot did not have moral concerns, but that his emphasis was literary and esthetic, just as his later emphasis (after about 1930) was social and religious, although he by no means abandoned his literary interests, producing *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* and numerous literary essays. But the contention that he had a consistent religious and esthetic philosophy is not valid. The early Eliot was no doubt conservative, and he may have longed for religious faith, but he had not formulated his Catholic viewpoint.

Eliot’s classicism is philosophical and political, not literary, consisting of such qualities as discipline, restraint, order, and authority, which he later combined with the concept of Original Sin, to which he is indebted to Hulme. Eliot’s literary theory throughout his career is essentially Romantic, based on the concept that poetry is emotional. Although Eliot stresses the idea of the impersonal structure of poetry, his theory is expressionist, for he maintains that the poet expresses his personality indirectly. The major difference between his earlier and later esthetic theory is that in the thirties he advanced the idea that poetry must be judged by both its literary and philosophical qualities, whereas he had previously maintained that it should be judged by literary qualities alone.

This shift in esthetic viewpoint, the poet’s philosophy becoming relevant to the evaluation of poetry, corresponds to Eliot’s conversion and commitment to Anglo-Catholicism. There is no doubt that Eliot’s emphasis changes from an esthetic to a social and

religious interest. Not only did he publicly announce his religious conversion (he was baptized on 29 June 1927), but his religious interest begins to manifest itself in both his poetry and his prose—Eliot becoming, in fact, a religious spokesman. Eliot in 1916 may have sympathized with Hulme’s conservatism, but he did not formulate his religious philosophy until the middle or late twenties, for which he is not primarily indebted to Hulme, who was much more interested in politics than religion.

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<sup>1</sup> *Criticism*, 11 (1969), 286, 290, 292.

<sup>2</sup> The 5 reviews referred to are listed in Donald Gallup’s *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1969), p. 197.

*Mr. Schuchard replies:*

The demonstration of Eliot’s debt to Hulme’s philosophy in 1916 was the first step toward establishing my working thesis that by that year Eliot’s classical, royalist, and “religious” point of view was already formulated. I realize that mine is a heterodox position in traditional Eliot criticism, and as I have a thesis to prove rather than preserve I welcome evidence-supported refutations. But I find in the objections of Allen Austin, whose “T. S. Eliot’s Theory of Personal Expression” (*PMLA*, 81, 1966, 303–12) opened for reevaluation our previous misunderstanding of Eliot’s theory of impersonality, a disappointing restatement of the critical attitudes that have long kept the progress of Eliot studies closed. Austin opposes my position more than my argument, and except for his brief survey of Eliot’s early reviews he disregards the primary factual evidence and the established definitions with which my assertions are made. As it is fruitless for me to now reiterate that evidence, I can but in frustration respond to some of his specific statements, interpretations, and judgments.

Most of Austin’s cross-purpose arguments stem from his misinterpretation of what is meant by Eliot’s “religious and Catholic” sensibility. He interprets “religious” in the restricted sense of faith or belief in Christianity, and “Catholic” as Anglo-Catholic, whereas in the essay the meaning is clearly associated with Hulme’s “religious attitude,” a philosophical position based on a belief in the imperfect nature of man and in a Catholic conception of the human soul and absolute value. Eliot’s sensibility is also “religious” in the sense that it is guided by a deep-seated spiritual impulse and desire for faith, and the central experience of much of the early poetry is located in the paralysis of will resulting from the conflict between this impulse and the limits of the skeptical, rational mind. It