tional derangement is the ability—the more glib, the more suspect—to discern "parallel" plots and structures in two works. Critics do not generally know, as practicing writers do, that most plots are the expression of psychological developments ("beginnings," "middles," "ends") and relate to the individual psyche, rather than to the tradition of literature. In other words, one can make a very strong, convincing case for the influence of any writer on any other writer—the influence, let us say, of Stendhal on Henry Fielding—because the development of plot, the use of a "hero," the introduction of innumerable symbolic factors, are simply common to the experience of writing any novel—and, in fact, of living any life. When a contemporary man falls in love, he may find himself writing love poems expressing the same emotions, even by way of *identical images*, that Renaissance love-poets used—without having read those poems. We are very, very communal people, sharing communal emotions, ideas, and dream-images, and of course literature reflects this.

There were many excellent seminars and discussion groups at the MLA: I know that the majority of teacher-critics in our profession are genuinely involved in the work of art, and in its tradition, and attempt to deal with literature in a nonreductivist, nonpedantic way. But I did notice a tendency, especially in younger people, to focus too narrowly upon a single strain or idea, and I would like to suggest to all who read this, who are involved in graduate work, that we make certain that our graduate students are not being mistrained. I am grateful to Higdon for his meticulous criticism of the Dalloway article; it would be well for us all to imagine a skeptical witness present as we write our papers and teach our classes. We have a responsibility (I am speaking as a professor now, who is involved with graduate students) to train our students to deal with the complexities of both literature and life, and never to encourage in them narrow, unrealistic methods of "criticism" that leave the work of art, as well as the world, untouched.

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Conrad, Wells, and the Two Voices

To the Editor:

In broadening the context of his comparison between H. G. Wells and Conrad ("Conrad, Wells, and the Two Voices," *PMLA*, 88, 1973, 1049–65), Frederick Karl has offered a generally useful comparison between Wells and C. P. Snow. Snow's lectures on "The Two Cultures" are said to show the "breach" in Western culture between humanists, who have "faith in the power of folly," and scientists and logicians, who are dismayed by folly and wish "to order existence so that man's folly does not predominate." Karl's argument is of course praise of Dionysius over Apollo, and as such conventional; but he does Snow's lectures an injustice when he ranges the "two cultures" beside his own "two voices." The issue is worth raising because as poets like Blake and Yeats supplant the likes of Pope and Wordsworth in our pedagogy as representative Creative Men, Snow becomes a too convenient straw man—a spokesman for the outward-looking, optimistic, empirically minded, politically and bureaucratically knowledgeable fellows whom Blake naturally loathed and of whom Yeats complained that "the worst / Are full of passionate intensity," as they liberated Ireland.

But Snow is a dangerous straw man. Compared with Karl's "Two Voices," for instance, his "two cultures" distinction is admirably modest, a good man-of-action's tool. It pretends to little analytic profundity. It accurately describes tensions in our institutions; it names the foolishness we may utter over the third or fourth drink with colleagues; and its validity disappears as we remember ourselves as thinkers. Karl's "voices," on the other hand, positively muffle what is best in his criticism. Thus, he writes impressively that while Wells turned to political liberalism, Conrad tested the "limits of logic and sanity," and finally

> rejected science, rejected, indeed, most of civilization as mere veneer over man's barbarity, sought within individual isolation and loneliness for some code of behavior, some rule of morality that would, at least temporarily, give order to chaos, that would, for a time, cover over anarchy.

How is this magnificent inner voyage summarized? "In brief, he was arriving at a rarefied view of art, while Wells was ready to commit himself to social criticism." Surely Conrad had not arrived at a "rarefied" view, unless as with the medieval heavens that implies a more comprehensive and perfect view; but he had achieved a wisdom inherently personal. Humanism—meaning books—provided his instruments, but scarcely claims proprietary interest, any more than the scientist claims territorial rights over reason. Conrad's wisdom may have been lonely and skeptical, but it is ethically, anthropologically, and psychologically more rigorous than what Wells stood for: Conrad is scientifically better, if you will.

Karl's simplistic division misleads him in his final footnote in the same way. He quotes Joyce, who doubted whether Wells's "attitude toward words and language is as scientific as he himself ought to wish it to be." Joyce's words condemn Wells *on behalf* of scientific knowledge of language: yet Karl substitutes the opposite word, writing that "Joyce puts the argu-

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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 naïvely 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 Revaluation 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."[1]

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

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