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(Jan. 10, 1965)

the New Critics' challenge, he is suggesting another turn in the trend of literary criticism. Of course, what he suggests is not a mere return to the 19th-century critics' vague, general statement of emotional impressions, which is rightly refuted as "a needless duplication or, at most, the translation of one work of art into another, usually inferior." 28)

Daiches fully appreciates the merits of the New Critics. "That is a sufficiently remarkable achievement" 29) — this is the conclusion of his VOA lecture, and he considers himself one of those "who appreciate and have profited from the achievements by the new critics." (*L. E.*, p.168) He is no lover of abstract theory. From his viewpoint, theoretical exactitude is not a matter of vital importance; he does not mind that the literary criticism is fragmentary, indirect or approximate so long as it is practical and useful. (cf. *C. A.*, p.392) He will, therefore, refrain from taking the trouble to formulate his critical principle into a neat and tight theorem. Nevertheless what he suggests and practises in his critical writings will bear no little significance when we ourselves try to gather a rich harvest from the achievements of the brave New Critics.

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28) Wellek & Warren, *op. cit.*, p.3.

29) Spiller (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.110.

ciating its merits. He holds a pluralist or relativist attitude. "There is NO single right method of handling literary problems..." — this is, as you will remember, the beginning words of the "Epilogue," and this manifesto of his is concluded by his remark of the same import: "the total vision [of a work of literature], or something approximating it, comes only to those who learn how to blend the insights yielded by many critical approaches." (C. A., p. 393)

In the final analysis, however, we find that he places himself on the opposite side of the New Critics. When they try to raise criticism up to the level of science, his endeavor is made in the direction of raising it to art. "Art is greater than its interpreters... All criticism is tentative, partial, oblique." (C. A., p. 391) This sort of remark is sometimes found in his writings. To a casual reader it may sound too modest or passive, but what he really means is quite positive and significant. Even when he says that "the function of criticism is to *assist* that experience [of art],"²⁵⁾ he is vying with the New Critics' serious or grim endeavor to make "the function of the critic as central to civilization." (L. E., p. 168) And against such seriousness or grimness of the New Critics he takes up "interestingness" as a criterion (cf. L. E., p. 186) and resolutely dissents from many 20th-century critics' view to regard criticism as a "discipline." (cf. C. A., p. 286)

In his VOA forum lecture, "The New Criticism," Daiches introduces a definition of classical and romantic:

It is classical to believe that the inquiring mind can explain all, and romantic to believe on the other hand that the central truths about art are mysteries which can only be apprehended intuitively.²⁶⁾

And he goes on to say that "the New Criticism is with the inquiring mind all the way."²⁷⁾ It would now be clear to us that he stands on the side of what he terms romantic. If we remember whence came the prevailing critical trend in the 20th century, we shall understand the significance of his attitude. In the middle of the century, to meet

25) *Loc. cit.* (The italics are mine.)

26 & 27) Spiller (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 109.

in a textbook which was welcomed by the teachers and students orientated by the New Critics. Though the great critics and teachers were very cautious in their discussion, the general trend has been to adopt too easily the "scientific" treatment of works of literature.

In direct contrast to this, however, is the position held by Daiches. In the "Epilogue" of his *Critical Approaches* we find his positive statement: "Literary criticism remains an art, not a science..." (C.A., p.392) Considering the general trend of the century, the verb "remains" sounds rather militant and makes us anticipate that he is opposing what he calls "Procrustean method," and indeed he continues here again in the same tenor that "the critic who tries to reduce his practice to the following of a rigid scientific method runs the risk of letting the true vitality of the work of literature elude him and his readers." (C.A., p.392) Daiches' further remark in this point is that "the truth that the critic can know about a work, and precisely communicate is part of the larger truth he can only suggest." (C.A., p.392) Now we could infer that the difference lies in principle itself; Daiches is an antagonist to the scientific or rational approach to literature. Of particular importance, therefore, is his idea that in matters of art and literature the language of metaphor is more effective than the communication of scientific precision. "Something is left over [by analytic discussion]," he says, "which the critic has to try to show his reader by his tactful handling of analogies and suggestions." (C.A., p.392)

This is, of course, noticed by any *great* critic regardless of his label. R. P. Warren, one of the outstanding figures of the New Critics, shows it by a little fable. When he says that "the poem is like the monstrous Orillo in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*"²³⁾ and that "he [the critic] is doomed to failure,"²⁴⁾ nearly the same thing is meant. And Daiches himself admits that "it would be unjust to judge the new criticism by its more ragged camp followers." (L. E., p. 178)

But characteristic to Daiches is his conscious effort to remove the limitations and inadequacies of the New Criticism while highly appre-

23 & 24) William Van O'Connor, *An Age of Criticism*, p.175.

he will tend to develop a technical jargon of his own and to regard himself as a necessary mediator between the creative writer and the ordinary reader. Indeed, in so far as he will be intelligible only to fellow experts, he will not even be a mediator between writer and public, but a barrier indicating the impossibility of non-professional appreciation of good literature. (C. A., p.287)

Here again, what a close correspondence there is! — between his general statement on literary criticism and his specific examination of the New Criticism.

Now, judging from another angle, ours is an age of science. Scientific procedures and methods tend to invade various fields other than science, and literature is not excused. As far as the nature of literature is concerned, almost all the 20th-century critics have been endeavoring to defend it against such invasion of science by showing its distinguishing qualities. Richards differentiated “pseudo-statement” from “statement,” or “emotive meaning” from “referential meaning,” while Ransom made a distinction between “texture” and “structure.” And, in so doing, they were seriously concerned with the menace rendered by the invasion of science. Almost invariably the New Critics advocated the special, unique kind of knowledge bestowed by literature, and by poetry especially, as distinct from scientific knowledge.

As for the job of critics, however, the situation is different. The function of literary criticism is admittedly to demonstrate that unique knowledge and that by rational method. And the literary critics in our century, more or less, have tried to seize the invader’s weapon to arm themselves with. Eliot, in his early essays, tended to that direction. Read once harbored a youthful ambition to “raise literary criticism above the vague level of emotional appreciation through the incorporation of scientific elements,”²¹⁾ René Wellek and Austin Warren urged the student of literature to “translate his experience of literature into intellectual terms, assimilate it to a coherent scheme which must be rational”²²⁾

21) H. Read, *Reason and Romanticism*, p.83.

22) Wellek & Warren, *Theory of Literature*, p.3.

attitude is the second rate followers' narrow and routine adoption of the abstract methodology full of peculiar new terms, which they have reduced in the end to "an elaborate puzzle game of interest only to experts." 18) In his VOA lecture, later collected in *A Time of Harvest*, Daiches counts this the "gravest" of the charges against the New Criticism because it comes from their total neglect of the relation of literature to life. In his earlier essays, "The Criticism of Fiction" as well as "Some Qualifications," we find his words of similar refutation against such use of unfamiliar terms by those critics who are divorced from the non-expert readers. And this sort of barren academicism could be again ascribed to that "puritanism" in America, i.e., "the theory that excellence lies in the perfection of the single functions, and that society should demand that its members be hard specialists." 19)

Of course, self-examinations have been made on the part of the New Critics themselves. Ransom himself is no supporter of such trend; he criticizes it in the realms other than poetry. Blackmur explains the paucity of great criticism by saying that "by and large only second-order minds took it up, or the second-order parts of first-order minds." 20) Daiches, however, has his own reason for the grave lament over the critics' alienation from the non-expert readers. It is a belief in common men concerning civilization in general, which we find thus stated in his *Critical Approaches*:

A civilization is judged by its amateurs, by the degree to which intelligent non-experts can discuss with sense and understanding the phenomena of their culture. (C. A., pp. 286-287)

And this he extends to our specific field of literature:

If the critic becomes too far removed from the reader of literature—not necessarily from the "man in the street," that vague entity, but from the interested and sensitive non-professional—

18) Spiller (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 104.

19) Nostrand (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 284.

20) Blackmur, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

vading through various aspects of civilization, it has come to influence the realm of literature. It would not be far from the truth to think that the dry and hard approach to literature advocated by T. E. Hulme was, in effect, derived from such cultural environment. (His view on strictly religious problem is another matter.) Hulme was supported in Eliot's earlier essays, which were quite naturally welcomed by the critics on the other shore of the Atlantic. And it is with a proper reason that Eliot's later change, or rather an expansion and development of interests, should not be wholly accepted by some New Critics. Puritanism in a narrow sense was originated in Britain, but it was carried to the extreme after it crossed the Atlantic. And so, it seems to me, is the case with the 20th-century criticism. Both may have suffered a *sea-change*, presumably, with those "faults which are definitely transatlantic." ¹⁵⁾

The British are, on the other hand, apparently innate pluralists or relativists. I am reminded of Herbert Read, an English critic, who denied "what we might call 'aesthetic independence,' or 'art for art's sake'" ¹⁶⁾ and confessed: "Personally I would like to be a purist in art... but common sense compels me to a relativist or pragmatist attitude in all these matters (i. e., art, ethics and philosophy). In art I am frankly a pluralist." ¹⁷⁾ This is a good contrast to Ransom's view. And we perceive here a belief in common sense, which is also shared by Daiches.

Read speaks here of "a relativist or pragmatist attitude" and "pragmatist" is an epithet usually associated with the American way of thinking and acting. And there is an argument to view the New Criticism in the light of pragmatism. Putting aside philosophical arguments, we could recognize that the *great* critics, whether their label is old or new, worked in the pragmatist attitude in their direct and concrete handling of the individual works of literature best suited to their characteristic methods. But far from the healthy pragmatic

15) T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (University Paperback), p.39.

16 & 17) H. Read, *The Grass Roots of Art*, p.18.

nothing but 'literature' would have very little to say to us, for his literature would be a pure abstraction,"¹⁰⁾ almost the same thing is meant.

Eliot's earlier emphasis, however, was on reading poetry as poetry and nothing else. And the New Critics manifestly tend to believe in the purely literary work or the purely literary quality of a work of literature as a subject worth to be discussed. What have all the New Critics in common? "They have an ancestry in all that goes by the name of art for art,"¹¹⁾ answers Blackmur. And Ransom, in his essay, "Poets without Laurels,"¹²⁾ defends pure poetry, i. e., "poetry for poetry's sake," rejecting "poetry by mixture." These critics argue about poetry, while Daiches chiefly has in mind works in prose. But it seems to me that more is meant than that. I would suspect an Anglo-American difference of general cultural atmosphere that might be traced at the very bottom.

Critics as well as other writers are necessarily imbued with the spirit of their time and land. And, as far as the distinguishing quality of our time is concerned, I would quite agree to Ransom's view in spite of my objections in some other points. He says:

Our period differs outwardly from other periods because it first differs inwardly. Its spiritual temper is puritanical; that is, it craves to perfect the parts of experience separately or in their purity, and is a series of isolated perfections... The development of modern civilization has been a grand progression in which Puritanism has invaded first one field and then another.¹³⁾

And America is verily and truly "the paradise of Puritanism,"¹⁴⁾ in the extended sense of the word. Beginning with religion and per-

10) Eliot, *op. cit.*, 116.

11) Blackmur, *op. cit.*, p.16.

12) This essay is contained in *Literary Criticism in America*, edited by A. D. Van Nostrand (Forum Book).

13) *Ibid.*, p.279.

14) *Ibid.*, p.281.

applying analytic techniques indiscriminately whether or not they are appropriate to the kind of craftsmanship the artist employed. (*L. E.*, pp.180-189)

By "differences of this kind" he means, among others, the important differences in what he calls the "unit of artifice." In the case of Flaubert, according to him, this unit is so small that the slightest alteration in the form of expression can be disastrous to the effectiveness of the whole work. "But in, say, Hardy's *The Return of the Native*," he explains, "the unit of artifice is large: it is not the individual word or phrase, but the swell of the whole paragraph, and as long as that swell is maintained one could change phrases and even whole sentences without impairing the work in the least." (*L. E.*, p. 189) His further remark is that "it is quite unrealistic to suggest that in Hardy's novels the expression at each point is so perfectly subdued to the total intention that the smallest alteration would be fatal." (*L. E.*, p.189)

Of course, Daiches is far from ignoring the internal consistency of the works of literature. He is just criticizing the meticulous and even blind worshiping of it on the part of the New Critics in general. (cf. *L. E.*, p.173) As, in his opinion, a great deal of English fiction is crowded with boisterous irrelevancies and its glory has little, if any, to do with the craftsmanlike plot or structure (cf. *L. E.*, pp.181-183), we could interpret that what he really intends is rather an over-all than partial reconsideration in applying the New Critics' analysis to the English novels. In this sense, too, there is no single right method of handling literary problems.

Behind this, however, there is his characteristic view of the works of literature on the whole, which of course is particularly relevant to the works in prose. For him, "there is no such thing as a purely literary work of art." (*L. E.*, p.171) In other words, "a work of literary art is necessarily a mixed form." (*L. E.*, p.172) And this is one of the reasons why Daiches asserts diversity of approaches should be taken in dealing with various works of literature. When Eliot recently doubts of a purely literary critic and says that "a critic who was interested in

charge to some American critics' tendency to critical "puritanism" or "their Procrustean method of forcing every literary work into a pattern of complex coherence or ambivalence or paradox or some such criterion." (*L. E.*, p. 178)

It is now a well-known fact that their characteristic methods of verbal analysis do not necessarily work so well in all cases in spite of the brilliant successes in elucidating the charms of a certain kind of poetry. R. P. Blackmur, situating himself at the outer fringe of the New Criticism, comments:

They [Brooks and Warren], for their part, invented terms which we use much too widely — irony and paradox... Actually they slew irony and paradox by making them the universal technical and formal agents of all the poetry which was, to their taste, good. Brooks is more the villain here than Warren and especially so when dealing with the older poets. Even Shakespeare seems singularly thin when gotten at through the irony and paradox of Brooks' essay on *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's technique is not used to being read like *The Waste Land*. Shakespeare put more in. 8)

T. S. Eliot also is of a similar opinion when lately he says, in a lecture referring to the New Criticism, that "it [the criticism of prose fiction] seems to me to require a somewhat different set of weights and measures from poetry." 9)

As early as in 1950, Daiches called our attention to such deficiency of these methods in a lecture delivered at the University of Rochester, "The Criticism of Fiction: Some Second Thoughts," which is now available in his *Literary Essays*. Here is one of the passages which typically represent his idea:

There are more types of artfulness at work in fiction than are dreamed of in our philosophy... and differences of this kind must be noted by the critic if he is not to make a fool of himself by

8) R. P. Blackmur, *New Criticism in the United States*, p. 13.

9) T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 107.

plyagoers had to wait for A. C. Bradley or Professor Heilman before they could understand and enjoy *King Lear*. Appreciation can be independent of critical theory...

(*L. E.* p.169 & *C. A.*, p.391)

Another example:

Art is meant to be experienced, and the function of criticism is to assist that experience.

(*L. E.*, p.174 & *C. A.*, p.392. In the latter, "in the last analysis" is inserted after "and.")

And another:

A poem is an immense complex of meaning which is nevertheless simple and immediate in its impact, and it is impossible to describe that complex and simultaneously to account for its impact. To resolve the poem into mere complexity by analytic discussion is often useful and helpful, but *it hardly begins to explain* the reasons for *its* total impact on *the experienced and sensitive reader*, nor does it necessarily increase appreciation for the inexperienced. (*L. E.*, p. 171)

A work of literature — *a poem, for example* — is an immense complex of meaning which is nevertheless *often* simple and immediate in its impact, and it is impossible (*or at least difficult*) to describe that complex and simultaneously to account for its impact. To resolve a poem into mere complexity by analytic discussion is often useful and helpful, but *such a procedure does not necessarily explain* the reasons for *the poem's* total impact on *the reader*. Nor does it necessarily increase appreciation for the inexperienced. (*C. A.*, p.392)

(In both of these, the italics are mine, and by comparing them the alterations will be observed.)

At the very beginning of the "Epilogue" Daiches asserts in a decided manner: "There is NO single 'right' method of handling literary problems, no single approach to works of literary art that will yield all the significant truths about them." (*C. A.*, p.391) This assertion apparently has no word-for-word counterpart in "Some Qualifications." But it is, in effect, a summing-up of what he says in this essay as a

meanings from this sort of thing. But, in the case of Daiches, we find an interesting fact which is suggestive of the depth of his concern, *pro* or *con*, with the New Criticism. There is a close affinity between the "Epilogue" of his *Critical Approaches to Literature* (1956) and his essay "The 'New Criticism': Some Qualifications" (1950)⁵⁾ which is a critical evaluation of this literary movement. And he acknowledges himself to be one of those "who appreciate and have profited from the achievements of the new critics." (*L. E.*, p.168)

Daiches' *Critical Approaches*⁶⁾ — let me use abbreviations for convenience sake — is a book in which he reveals the fundamental principle of his own after classifying and minutely discussing the representative critical theories so far noted in the history of Western literature. In the "Introduction" to this book, he advises the readers to turn first of all to the last section "Epilogue" before going through the whole volume, for it is in this very last section that the core of his own attitude to literature is presented. In a sense, the "Epilogue" is the manifesto of his fundamental critical belief. One may be surprised, however, to find this manifesto of Daiches' is a summary, a digest version of the above mentioned essay "The 'New Criticism': Some Qualifications," in which he criticizes the limitations and inadequacies of the radical assertions by some New Critics.⁷⁾ In fact, not only the import but also some of its key sentences are transplanted to the "Epilogue" of *Critical Approaches* with a few alterations or improvements. By and large they correspond with each other. To cite an example:

It would be absurd to maintain that no Greek appreciated Sophocles until Aristotle had written the *Poetics*, or that English

5) This is included in Daiches' *Literary Essays*, London, Oliver & Boyd, 1956. My references to this book will be indicated by the abbreviation *L. E.* with page numbers.

6) This will be further abbreviated to *C. A.* with page numbers after the quotations.

7) The term "New Criticism" would have to be, and in Daiches' writings generally is, used for these assertions with shortcomings as distinguished from the genuine achievements by the great critics of new voices.

I. A. Richards, William Empson and also F. R. Leavis in Daiches' enumeration. "What is fascinating to the British reader," he says, "is to note that the American 'New Criticism' was originally born out of influences that came from England, but that, soon developing a full and healthy life of its own, it has recently come back to Britain as a purely American movement and as such is having considerable influence among a new generation."³⁾ In his view, this is an instance of the literary movement that has suffered a *sea-change* into something rich and strange. Here is betrayed a slight British predilection concerning the genealogy of the New Criticism, although he is not blind to the historical or social causes of its rise in the South of the United States.⁴⁾

Daiches went over to the United States in 1937, leaving the fellowship he had held at Balliol College, Oxford. And, although with some short intermissions during the wartime, he remained there most of the time teaching at several universities until 1951 when he was offered his present position at Cambridge. Born in 1912, he spent most of his ripening years from 25 to 39 of age under the reign, as it were, of the New Criticism in America.

The rise of the New Criticism coincided with his first arrival in the United States. Cleanth Brooks and R. P. Warren had founded *The Southern Review* two years before. And in 1937 came out *The Kenyon Review*, which later turned out to be the New Critics' stronghold. And their sway reached its summit during the 40's and then came a gradual decline with the expansion of their horizon and activities.

Spending these years in the several American universities amid this "Sturm und Drang," Daiches was involved in it. But the tide had begun to subside when he left the United States for his new career at home in 1951.

Of course, there is not much significance in the mere chronological correspondence in itself. It is sometimes even dangerous to draw out

3) Daiches, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

4) cf. Spiller (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 95.

A British View of the New Criticism

Hiromi Itofuji

The reign of the "New Criticism" has passed. In a sense it is an *old* criticism now. A series of VOA forum lectures edited by Prof. Spiller, which contains David Daiches' "The New Criticism," is entitled *A Time of Harvest*.¹⁾ Looking at this title, I cannot but feel that the once-powerful movement is captured and made a subject of history.

Not a little, however, is left for us to reap, positively or negatively, from the assertions of this literary movement which is a peculiar product of the American soil. And, in gathering the harvest, we would be profited by the views of a critic in a different cultural climate. It is by this hope that I am encouraged to take up the present theme, which will be focused chiefly on David Daiches, a British critic who has taken a keen and active interest in the New Criticism. With a deep and sympathetic understanding of American literature, he remains British in his critical viewpoint. He values greatly the recognition by the British of the *foreignness* of American literature.²⁾ Some of his opinions may sound trite in our perspective of today, but we have to take into account the general atmosphere in which he offered them.

As is widely known, the term "New Criticism" does not mean anything like a unified theory. Its later degradation into a seemingly unified or stereotyped method of thesis-making is the fault of second-rate followers of the great New Critics, who on their part infused a fresh spirit into the American literary world in their several ways. In general, however, their movement had a kinship with the French *explication de texte* but, more specifically, they were influenced by such British critics as T. E. Hulme, T. S. Eliot (British by naturalization),

1) R. E. Spiller (ed.), *A Time of Harvest*, New York, Hill & Wang, 1962.

2) cf. D. Daiches, *The Present Age*, p.17.