

From Philosopher to Critic/Poet: Quest for the Soul in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot

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I. Introduction: Definition of the Soul

What does "the soul" mean for T.S. Eliot and why is it most important to make out the process of "soul-making" in order to understand his poetry? It is not possible to answer these questions without the knowledge of Eliot's "Impersonal theory of poetry" and his philosophical thought of our knowledge and experience in the world. It is famous that Eliot requested of the poet escape from personality. By depersonalizing his personal experiences into something impersonal the poet is said to unite himself with tradition. Eliot's sense of tradition, his definition of poetry as "organic wholes", and what he thought the true poet to do ultimately come from his understanding of the world. But my object in this writing is not to introduce those old philosophical arguments around Eliot's doctrine about impersonality.¹⁾ In this essay I will try to understand the relationship of Eliot's philosophical thoughts and his early literary thoughts. Even though Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F.H. Bradley was published in 1964, the fact is that it was written in 1915 and 1916, and his first important literary writing, *The Sacred Wood* (1920), was published several years later. Thus it is my assumption that there be a close link between the two works, in that *The Sacred Wood* is largely the early literary expression of Eliot's philosophical thoughts. Reading the dissertation, I thought that I can give the original philosophical backgrounds for Eliot's important critical phrases such as

1) Roughly speaking, there have been two conflicting arguments about Eliot's philosophical position. The negative opinion that Eliot's doctrine of impersonality is mystical (represented by Herbert Howarth, Northrop Frye, John D. Margolis, Kristian Smidt, and Grover Smith) had prevailed until challenged by Anne Bolgan's strikingly positive opinion.

“objective correlative,” “dissociation of sensibility,” and “depersonalization” in his early criticism. Rather my first impression was a kind of shocking that there had been a very comprehensive, but systematic construction of philosophy behind Eliot’s poetry and critical thoughts. And I think understanding this philosophical basis ultimately leads me to make out Eliot’s ‘soul,’ which is I think the most important theme of his poetry from the early *Prufrock* poems (1917) to the later *Four Quartets* (1935-1942).²⁾ In this essay I will treat mainly Eliot’s early writings in *The Sacred Wood* and *Selected Essays* (1932), with his Harvard PhD dissertation, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley* (1964), leaving other critical works for the future investigation. It is beyond my intention in this essay to analyze Eliot’s early poetry in detail according to his philosophy.

As the first step towards the understanding of the relation between Eliot’s philosophical thoughts and his literary theories, I may start with a question: Why are the process of depersonalization in the creation of a work of art and the precise use of language the utmost important for him?

The main point of Eliot’s philosophical dissertation is against the dualistic thinking spread in Europe since the seventeenth century, for he thought this dualistic thinking accelerated the split between thought and feeling, subject and object, mind and body, the ideal and the real, finally producing “a dissociation of sensibility”:

The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. ... In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. (*SE* 287-8)*

2) I must make it clear that I do distinguish Eliot’s concept of ‘soul’ from that in Keats’ “vale of soul-making” and that in Yeats’ “Now shall I make my soul”, neither of which is not relevant to my argument. I hope Eliot’s definition of ‘soul’ comes of itself in my discussion of his philosophical thesis.

* Refer to ‘Abbreviations’ at the end of this writing.

According to Eliot, the two kinds of influence of Milton and Dryden are these: on the one hand the poets became too "ratiocinative" and "descriptive," so "while the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude," and on the other hand the poets of the sentimental age "thought and felt by fits, unbalanced, while they revolted against the ratiocinative, the descriptive" (SE 288). The root of this thinking that feeling and thought should be one is found in Eliot's understanding of experience. Eliot's dissertation begins with a discussion of our knowledge of "immediate experience".

According to Eliot, in our experience of the world there are three stages, immediate experience, the dissociated experience, and the final experience of the united sensibility or the new form of immediate experience. Our initial experience of the world of the objects is not dissociated. As soon as we feel the world *self-consciously*, our experience of the world becomes dissociated. Still there is a relation and a felt continuity between the object and the self. And the self which is *related* and *objectified* is continuous with the subject self. In our observation of other's act we feel that there is a ceaseless transmutation of points of view, for other's act as a psychic event is not purely actual, but always involves the reference from the subject. So from the event/object through the subject to the poet/the reader there is a continuous readjustment of points of view. In this sense the object of imagination is only possible from the third or higher point of view.

Out of the three stages, what is the most important to Eliot as a poet and a human being, is the third stage. It is only approachable from the ceaseless transmutation of points of view by which our immediate experience is recovered into a new form of unity. Eliot said that the third stage of our experience comes not spontaneously but only by achieving a new form of unity which recovers the unified sensibility of our immediate experience. Regrettably our history of literature is that of dissociation since the seventeenth century. The task of the true poet is to recover the unified sensibility, to feel the thought as we smell the rose.

Regrettably our history of literature is that of dissociation since the seventeenth century. We have not felt the thought as we smell the rose. The true poet must aim at the recovery of unified sensibility through the work of

art as the object of imagination. To reach the wholeness of our experience, the work of art must be something that is the wholeness of the poet's experience and then enables the reader to retrace it without any invention of the poet. First, the work of art should be autotelic, which requires the poet to escape from his personality. Second, both the making and the evaluating of the work of art must be the process of "soul-making". Eliot's request of the poet escape from his personality comes from these demands: The work of art is something, whose creation on the part of the poet and evaluation on the part of the reader as well should be the act of "soul-making". For Eliot the soul is what enables us to know what a particular event is.

"Soul-making" is the continuous process towards the re-creation of the unified sensibility, the soul being the transcendent self, which enables us to know what a particular event is. It is "*the whole world of its experience of the self at any moment while both soul and event transcend that moment*", i.e. the future as implied in the present as well as the past as implied in the present (KE 78, My italics). It does not aim to restore the immediate experience but to create the unified sensibility at higher stage, which is accomplished through the continuous transubstantiation of points of view. The final objective of "soul-making" is to transcend the state of our dissociate sensibility in this world, by transubstantiating (relating and unifying) the previous points of view or objectified selves, where there is the continuity between the object and the subject self, the world and the experiences of the self. Eliot's famous literary theories, "Impersonal theory of poetry", his sense of tradition, the dissociation of sensibility, objective correlative, a logic of the imagination, and the mythical method, may be said to be the literary version of his philosophical thought.

Therefore, though it should be the ultimate ambition to investigate in what way Eliot's individual poem succeeded in this pursuit and in what way it failed, in this essay I will focus on the definition and the philosophical foundation of Eliot's Impersonal theory of poetry and "soul-making". Also there shall be a detailed discussion of the point of view, which is crucial to understand the process of "soul-making". Finally, out of his literary practices for "soul-making", such as the speaker(s) in the poem, a logic of the

imagination, the mythical method, objective correlative, and so on, I shall briefly discuss Eliot's selective use of personal pronouns in his early poetry.

II. The Process of Depersonalization

For T.S. Eliot, the most important principle in the creation of a work of art is the process of depersonalization.³⁾ In the famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"(1920), Eliot insists that "the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career" (SW 52). In the creation of the work of art this consciousness of the past or the sense of tradition is, Eliot says, inseparably bound up with the process of depersonalization. According to Eliot, what happens to the poet during the creation is "a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable," so "the process of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (SW 53). And "it is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science" (SW 53).⁴⁾ The poet may not be a true poet until he accomplishes the two inseparable tasks, to develop the sense of tradition and to depersonalize his personal experiences.

To define the process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition, it is crucial to understand two points: what Eliot thinks poetry to be and what "tradition" is. Eliot considers "the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written" (SW 53). The best parts of a poet's work are "those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their

3) In the use of the term 'depersonalization' I do not agree with Stephen Spender who said it "would imply as Rimbaud's *dérèglement des sens* — the programmatic disorganization of the senses". *Eliot*. Fontana: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1975. P.149. I took the term from Eliot himself, when he said, "It is in this *depersonalization* that art may be said to approach the condition of science." ("Tradition and the Individual Talent", *The Sacred Wood* 53. My italics) And I wish the term to have its meaning in the discussion of Eliot's "Impersonal theory of poetry".

4) Though I agree with Thomas Meighan, when he said "Depersonalization has two aspects: the reader's evaluation of a poem, and the relationship of the poet to his work," the present discussion is focused on the latter. *T.S. Eliot: A Critical Study of His Principles and Achievements*. New York: Vantage Press, 1977. P. 70.

immortality most vigorously" (SW 48). The essay has begun with Eliot's regret of the present trend in using the word "tradition" in English writing, where at most its adjective appears "in a phrase of censure" (SW 47), not in the appreciations of living or dead writers. He also strongly objects to a notion that "the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its success" (SW 48):

Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may say nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves *a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence*; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is *a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together*, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

No poet, no artists of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. (SW 49. My italics.)

"Tradition" is not a matter of one-sided influence. There is "conformity between the old and the new" (SW 50). While a new work of art is influenced by tradition in its creation, it also modifies "the *whole* existing order" when it comes: "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (SW 50). The poet who is aware of this conformity feels

great difficulties and responsibilities, because he is also aware that "he must be inevitably judged by the standards of the past" (SW 50). In other words the poet must be aware that "the mind of Europe — the mind of his own country — a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind — is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen" (SW 51).

In a later essay, "The Function of Criticism" (1923), Eliot gives more detailed definition of tradition. The literature which he thought in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is,

the literature of the world, of the literature of Europe, of the literature of a single country, not as a collection of the writings of individuals, but as 'organic wholes,' as systems in relation to which, and only in relation to which, individual works of literary art, and the works of individual artists, have their significance. There is accordingly something outside of the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself in order to earn and to obtain his unique position. A common inheritance and a common cause unite artists consciously or unconsciously: it must be admitted that the union is mostly unconscious. Between the true artists of any time there is, I believe, an unconscious community. (SE 23-4)

For "a common inheritance and a common cause" the poet should make it his ultimate task to transform his personal experiences into something universal and impersonal, if he is to be a true poet. Thus if "individual talent" of the poet is to be meaningful at all, he must be aware of "tradition", and "tradition" is only rightly approachable through the process of depersonalization in the creation of the work of art. What is important for the poet is not an expression of *personal* emotion, but "an expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet" (SW 59). Of course "only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things" (SW 58). For the poetic experience has to be "formed

out of many personal experiences ordered in some way which may be very different from the way of valuation of practical life, in the expression of it" (*UPUC* 30).

The depersonalization, "an escape from personality" (*SW* 58), is the transmutation of the poet's personal emotion into something "which has its life in the poem". In this process of transmutation, the labor of the poet is not just creative but rather essentially critical: "the large part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour; the labour of sifting, combining, construction, expunging, correcting, testing: this frightful toil is as much critical as creative" (*SE* 30). Thus Eliot emphasizes "the critical mind operating *in* poetry, that is, the critical effort which goes to the writing of it," apart from "the critical mind *upon* poetry" (*UPUC* 30). Eliot compares this critical mind of the poet to the catalyst in chemical reaction: "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material" (*SW* 54). "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images", which must be united to form a new compound (*SW* 55). The poet's maturity consists not in having a personality to express, but in "being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations" (*SW* 53-4). Therefore, what matters is not the greatness of the emotions and feelings but "the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place" (*SW* 55).

The new emotion or self, embodied in the poem under "the fusion" of depersonalization, transcends the poet's ordinary emotion or self. As A.D. Moody pertinently summed up,

The personality of the poet, or the sensibility realised in the poetry, is not the same thing as his ordinary personality. What every poet *start from* is his own emotions; but his life as a poet consists in transmuting 'his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal' ('Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca' *S.E.*, p. 137.) This new creation is essentially a new self, the man recreated in the making of the poem.⁵⁾

Finally the poem itself is *impersonal*. It is “not just either what the poet ‘planned’ or what the reader conceives, nor is its ‘use’ restricted wholly to what the author intended or to what it actually does for readers” (*UPUC* 31). What Eliot ultimately aims at by the “Impersonal theory of poetry” (*SW* 53), is in this impersonal nature of the poem in which tradition and the individual talent conform each other, and the living and the dead coexist:

The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living. (*SW* 59)

III. “Soul-Making” Towards a Felt Whole

The poet recreated in the poem through the process of depersonalization is essentially a new self that not only transcends the original personality and emotions but also forms an unconscious or conscious union between the true artists of any time (*SE* 23-4). Eliot’s concept of the creation of a new self — “soul-making” — in the poem is inseparable from his philosophical thought of knowledge and experience. He is against the dualistic view of reality, according to which the world is made up of the opposites from the beginning. To the contrary, the world is not differentiated at the initial stage of our experience, i.e. immediate experience. With self-consciousness, we experience reality as incompatibly differentiated.

immediate experience ... is a timeless unity which is not as such present either *anywhere* or to *anyone*. It is only in the world of objects that we have time and space and selves. By the failure of any experience to be merely immediate, by its lack of harmony and cohesion, we find ourselves as conscious souls in a world of objects.⁶⁾

5) *T.S. Eliot: Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 73.

6) T.S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1964) p. 31. This is a dissertation submitted in 1916 for

Eliot views the world of objects as dialectically dynamic: "the world not as ready made — the world, that is, of meaning for us — but as constructed, or constructing itself ... at every moment, and never more than an approximate construction, a construction essentially practical in its nature" (*KE* 136). So experience proves "essentially indefinable". Within experience there are present the two opposite aspects such as ideality and reality, objectivity and subjectivity, mind and body. But the distinction of the opposites is not independent: "this distinction did not correspond to a division among objects: for a thing is real or ideal only in relation" (*KE* 157). As Eliot says, "we can think only in terms of things" (*KE* 165). And "from the first the thing is thoroughly relative", existing "only in a context of experience, of experience with which it is continuous" (*KE* 165). So our knowledge of reality is relative, neither subjective nor objective. As "an 'objective' truth is a relative truth" (*KE* 169), and "each individual's experience is unique and not fully communicable",⁷⁾ there is no possibility of total communication between selves. Therefore "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 truths of experience rather than of calculation" (*KE* 164, *My italics*).⁸⁾

Although truth is definable only in the relation of things, and our reality itself is ever constructing and constructed, Eliot believes that every object has "the moment of objectivity" (*KE* 165), and that we have "a felt whole" in common (*KE* 155). According to Eliot, "From first to last reality is experience, but experience would not (so far as we know) be possible without attention and

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University, but not published until 1964. In that this dissertation was written before the first part of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (published in 1919 in *The Egoist*) and it provides a strong philosophical foundation for his literary principles, for the student of literature "it can be genuinely illuminating. Perhaps it is best read as a covert *ars poetica*." Moody, *Ibid.* p.73.

7) Morrissey, *Ibid.* p. 4.

8) But this does not mean that the poet or the critic may ignore fact. Conversely, the critic must have "a very highly developed sense of fact" (*SE* 31). Eliot said, "the sense of fact is something very slow to develop, and its complete development means perhaps the very pinnacle of civilisation" (*SE* 31).

the moment of objectivity" (*KE* 165). Our real situation in this world is that "we have ... a felt whole in which there are moments of knowledge: the objects are constantly shifting, and new transpositions of objectivity and feeling constantly developing" (*KE* 155). If we perceive an object, we perceive it "in a special relation to our body. In our practical relations with objects we find it convenient and even essential to consider the object's relation to ourself as itself an object. ... This self may be primarily the body, but the body is in felt continuity with the spiritual self" (*KE* 155). Therefore with Eliot epistemology is inseparable from metaphysics and this inseparability is suggested to have given us the fine arts:

where the presence of the self is an important part in the meaning of the knowledge, a sort of theory of knowledge is at work. It is this sort of knowing, I presume, that induces us to think of knowing as a relation. There is a relation between the object and the self: a relation which is theoretical and not merely actual, in the sense that the self as a term capable of relation with other terms is a construction. And this self which is objectified and related is continuous and felt to be continuous with the self which is subject and not an element in that which is known. As it is metaphysics which has produced the self so it is epistemology, we may say, which has produced knowledge. It is perhaps epistemology (though I offer this only as a suggestion, and to make clearer the sort of thing that I mean) that has given us the fine arts; for what was at first expression and behaviour may have developed under the complications of self-consciousness, as we became aware of ourselves as reacting aesthetically to the object. (*KE* 155)

The second stage of our experience in this world is that of dissociation; for the conscious self, reality, our experience of the world of the objects, is viewed as dissociated. But there is a felt continuity between the object and the self; the object has its meaning only in relation to the self; "wherever there is the *Ich*, there is a continuity between the *Ich* and its object; not only in the case of perception, but in every case of knowledge" (*KE* 74). In other words, a field of reality is "a condition and expression of the self" (*KE* 74). This notion of a

continuity between the object and the self explains Eliot's important literary theories, such as the process of depersonalization, unified sensibility, objective correlative.

Eliot discusses the third stage in our experience of the world, which, founded on his faith in the felt continuity in the relation of the self and the object, directs toward the recovery of the unified sensibility of the immediate experience beyond the stage of dissociation. Eliot's concept of poetry as "organic wholes" and "tradition" fundamentally rests on this faith. Hence the call for the poet, to recover the original unity of sensibility from its present dissociation which has resulted from the dualistic thinking since the seventeenth century:

The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. ... In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. (*SE* 287-8)

The creation of the new self in the poem originates from this supreme call for the poet to recover the unified sensibility, i.e. to create "the felt whole" where the relations of objects are constantly shifting, and new transfigurations of them are constantly developing.

IV. The Autotelic Nature of the Work of Art & Points of View

As we have discovered the true poem is impersonal. The work of art is autotelic, having its own existence as an object. Apparently, in order to make this impersonal object, the poet should have a disinterested point of view. Paradoxically, however, the poet is not free from his own bias. This paradox leads us to another fact: the reader is not free from his own bias, either: "both artist and audience are limited" (*UPUC* 109). So we recognize, with Eliot, "Pure' artistic appreciation is ... only an ideal ... so long as the appreciation of

art is an affair of limited and transient human beings existing in space and time" (*UPUC* 109). Even in the matter of reading his own poem, a poet does not have more advantage than the reader, for "indeed, in the course of time a poet may become merely a reader in respect to his own works, forgetting his original meaning — or without forgetting, merely changing" (*UPUC* 130). So "what a poem means is as much what it means to others as what it means to the author" (*UPUC* 130): "The reader's interpretation may differ from the author's and be equally valid, or even better" (*OPP* 30). Naturally, "The poem's existence is somewhere 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 of the experience of the reader or the writer as reader" (*UPUC* 30). Therefore, "honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry" (*SW* 53).

It may sound incompatible if the poet with his own limitations can create an impersonal work of art which does not belong to any point of view. Yet, clearly Eliot believes that it is one thing to create a work of art which does not belong to any point of view and it is another to admit that the poet is not free from a limited point of view. Then the question is: how does the poet create this object, admitting his limited point of view?

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot suggests that the poet can accomplish this task only with a "process of depersonalization" (*SE* 7). In the relation to "tradition" the new substance in the process is achieved "by way of the transubstantiation of the old" (Bolgan 90):

In other words, what Eliot was suggesting in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" was not only that the creative process is to be understood in terms of the process whereby the personal is depersonalized but he was suggesting as well that such a concept of creativity is an expression of, and depends for its operational validity on, a quite different theory of the soul than the one he was "struggling to attack" in that particular essay. (Bolgan 90-1)

Eliot says, "In order to know what a particular event is, you must know the soul to which it occurs, and the soul exists only in the events which occur to it;

so that the soul is, in fact, *the whole world of its experience at any moment*, while both soul and event transcend that moment. The soul is its whole past so far as that past enters into the present, and it is *the past as implied in the present*" (KE 79, My italics). In this sense the soul is, as F.H. Bradley said, "the present *datum* of psychical fact, plus its actual past and its conditional future".⁹⁾

Eliot's soul is "something one progressively makes and makes ... by means of a ceaseless process of transubstantiation" of the old and the new (Bolgan 91). In other words, Eliot's "soul-making" rests on "the *continuity* of the phenomenal or personal self with the noumenal or impersonal self and in the conviction that the first of these gains actual substance and significance in time only to the extent that it enters into the becoming of the other in time" (Bolgan 92). "Soul-making" is possible only because, "in any case, we are constantly developing and rectifying our perceptions by comparison with other perceptions; we are constantly on the lookout for error" (KE 155). The conscious self, in the world of dissociation, where "neither point of view is more nearly ultimate than the other" (KE 30), indulges itself in "the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them" (KE 147-8). The ideal end of this painful task is a new form of immediate experience, "a time less unity": "an all-inclusive experience outside of which nothing shall fall" (KE 31).

What is it to have a "point of view"? What is its relation to the painful task of unification? We face here the essentially paradoxical nature of the process of soul-making. Not belonging to any point of view is quite different from having no point of view. In other words, it does not proceed from the impersonal nature of the work of art that it does not have any point of view. Conversely, it is by having a particular point of view that we can move towards its transcendence. In the work of art there is a continuous movement towards higher points of view, which transcend the two points of view, built on the *dialectical* unification of the two, losing neither. As soon as the unification, the

9) quoted from *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley*, p. 79.

third point of view, is achieved, however, it gives way to a higher point of view, containing all the previous ones therein. So it is now clear that by the impersonal nature of the work of art, i.e. that it does not belong to any point of view, Eliot means that there is ever full of the newly forming points of view towards a dialectical unification of the previous:

We are unable to say, however, that one point of view is right and the other wrong, for we thus imply an element of identity, or of identical reference; the assertion of one point of view against another must be made from a third point of view, which somehow contains the first and the second. And yet it must be noticed (for I see no way to avoid this hair-splitting) that it is only from the third point of view that the first two are therein contained. For as soon as we have realized that we have reached a third point of view we are already at a fourth, in which the first and second reassert themselves once more. So that it is only so long as we can support a particular point of view ... that we can believe that the contradiction between truth and error is superseded. (KE 121)

How does the poet make the transmutation of the discordant points of view actually happen in the work of art? To answer this question, we must ask first "In what way do we reach a third point of view in the work of imagination?" This inevitably leads us to a relation of the poem and the reader. In the philosophical thesis, Eliot questions, "Can we, in reading a novel, simply assume the characters and the situation?" (KE 123). We know that "the characters and the situations are all 'imaginary'" (KE 123). In order to be imaginary, however, "they must be contrasted with something which is real" and "to be contrasted it must be more than a pure reference" (KE 124). In other words it must have "a reality of its own distinct from its reference. The fiction is thus more than a fiction; it is a real fiction" (KE 124):

An imaginary object has thus two main aspects: its intention to be real and its reality as an intention. As the former it is limited by its paucity of relations; as the latter it exists by virtue of its relations. There is,

strictly speaking, no imaginary objective: we attend to a complex which comprehends two points of view — a real object with few relations and an intended object which consists of its relations. (*KE* 125)

The work of art is only possible from another third point of view, which contains the previous two. The process of our making the third point of view in reading a work of imagination is closely related to the autotelic nature of the work of art, i.e. the independence of the fictional character by its “internal necessity”:

We thus analyse the intended object of fiction into its reference and its reality. The reality in its turn is not a simple object but an intended object, for it includes everything from the antecedents of the character in the author’s mind, to the symbols which express the character on paper. We may mean the character as a presentation to the author’s mind,; but a figure in fiction may and often does have an existence for us distinct from what is merely our interpretation of what the author ‘had in mind’. Frequently we feel more confidence in our own interpretation of the character than in any account of the genesis and meaning which the author may give himself. This is not always mere accident; no really ‘vital’ character in fiction is altogether a conscious construction of the author. On the contrary, it may be a sort of parasitic growth upon the author’s personality, developing by *internal necessity* as much as by external addition. So that we come to feel that the point of view from which the author criticizes is not wholly internal to the point of view from which he created the character. Of course this difference should not be insisted upon, for the author may shift from a creative to a critical point of view and back at any moment. Now a character which is ‘lived through’, which is real to us not merely by suggesting ‘that sort of person’ but by its independent cogency, is to the extent of its success real. Treating it as imaginary involves a change of viewpoint. Besides this reality, the character has other relations which are inconsistent with reality. It belongs in other contexts, has relations which are incompatible with its reality. Its

unreality, therefore, is not in itself, but in relations extending far beyond itself; its reality is its reference, and its unreality as that to which it refers is its reality as an 'imaginary' object. And, on the other hand, as an imaginary object it is just as real as anything; it is as a real object that it is imaginary. ... When we speak of the character as a fiction we mean a relation between an object real from one point of view and certain entities (ultimately physical) which are real from another point of view. The imaginary object, it will follow, is a highly complex ideal construction. It exists as such only from a third point of view ... (*KE* 124-5. My italics.)

This 'internal necessity,' which explains the independence of the work of art, is also crucial to understanding the active role of the reader. For Eliot the reader is no longer a passive recipient who receives the represented result of a given process of creation. The other side of the process of depersonalization is "to establish the reader's status as a co-creator of the work of art" (Bolgan 62). Whenever the reader enters into the impersonal world of art, he is invited to experience personally, without the poet's intrusion, so at the very moment of construction he finds himself at the centre of the painful task of unification. As Bolgan warned, however, this does not endow the reader with liberty to do whatever he wants:

If the reader ... is confronted by Eliot with a "do-it-yourself" poem, it does not follow from this that he can "do it" in any way he likes, for the process is both self-generative and self-corrective as it goes along. What the new methodology emphasizes is that the use of "objective correlative[s]" will provide, as nothing else can, a precisely controlled subjective response and one that is unique in being both subjective and impersonal at the very same time. It is so in the sense that, although it is personally generated and felt, what is generated and felt is both guided and restrained by the systematic and therefore impersonal relations whose objective lineaments the reader has retraced. (Bolgan 87)

It is no wonder then that Eliot has required of the reader the shift of attention

from the author's personality or intention to the objective structure of the text itself.

It is clear that the process of soul-making itself is not possible without creating ever-superseding points of view. And this process of depersonalization has two aspects: the poet must depersonalize his ordinary emotions by way of the working of this dialectical unification of the points of view, and then the results of the depersonalization, the poetic emotions, must evoke the same dialectical unification of the points of view from the reader. As we discovered, the work of art is to be an object where "the real world would consist in the relations of points whose entire existence was relation" (*KE* 160) and where through the forming and re-forming of the relations the ever constructing unification is possible. How does the poet create such an object with ever-forming relations of points of view? The transmutation of the discordant points of view in the work of art is not automatically given as soon as any work is completed. It requires "great labour" (*SW* 49), for only those who have the historical sense, the "sense of the timeless as well as the temporal together" (*SW* 49), can create such a timeless unity in the work. Just by cataloguing several points of view the poet cannot create "soul-making" in his work. The points of view should be coherently related to each other. In other words, the dialectical transpositions of objects and relations should be presented through the relations of the points of view. The soul-making, the transfiguration of the moments of objectivity or the transubstantiation of the selves towards a felt whole is, by nature, inseparable from the dialectical unification of the various points of view. So the point of view is to imply "soul"; it should be something through which the ordinary emotion turns significant; it should be the frame by which the apparently unrelated experiences are organized and coherently related to each other.

As we have discovered, Eliot's Impersonal theory of poetry starts from his concept of poetry as "a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written" (*SW* 53). Its firm philosophical basis is this: our knowledge is only meaningful in the presence of the self; the self and the object is continuous and related; and "the objectified and related self" is continuous with "the subject self." In the view of literature as "organic wholes," there is something more

valuable which brings us to a common allegiance than something just individual. In the best poems, "the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (SW 48). So if he is to be a true poet, the poet must have the historical sense which is developed with "great labour" and only with this sense he can make his work to be among "a common inheritance and a common cause" which unite him to the past as well as to the present. To make his work united to this common inheritance and common cause, the poet should escape from his own personality to express something more valuable. The process of depersonalization in the work of art is the transmutation of the personal experiences into something universal and impersonal. Philosophically speaking, its aim is to create the objectified and related self, which is continuous with the subject self and the object as well. In order to create this sort of self, the poet escape from the direct expression of his personality. In a later essay Eliot emphasises this again:

No artist produces great art by a deliberate attempt to express his personality. He expresses his personality indirectly through concentrating upon a task which is a task in the same sense as the making of an efficient engine or the turning of a jug or a table-leg. (SE 114)

If we recall the metaphor of catalyst, the comparison becomes more pertinent. The finished poem is compared to something independent of the poet and the poet to an engineer or a carpenter. The poet's mind is what should "constantly amalgamate" various experiences:

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. (SE 287)

The true poet is never simply to "arouse these same emotions in the audience" (*CC* 38), at however primitive a stage of expression and appreciation. If he forces his own impressions upon the reader, the outcome may not be called a work of imagination. It is just a report of his subjective impressions, not the work of art. The point of view works at this point. It is closely bound up with the amalgamation or abstraction of the ordinary emotions by which the "disparate" experiences forms new wholes, for through the points of view, the "chaotic, irregular, fragmentary" experiences are organised into something coherently related.

Therefore, "it is essential that a work of art should be self-consistent, that an artist should consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass: on the one hand actual life is always the material, and on the other hand an abstraction from actual life is necessary condition to the creation of the work of art" (*SE* 111). In other words, the depersonalization is "an abstraction from actual life." But as Eliot also admits, an artist is a human with his own bias. He cannot be a totally disinterested personality. But Eliot believes that the poet, if he develops the historical consciousness and is aware of his task as a poet to depersonalize his ordinary emotions into something impersonal and universal, can reach an unconscious union between the true poets of all ages.

V. Eliot's Use of the Personal Pronouns for Various Voices

The voices are closely related to the points of view in their presentation. The third point of view, only through which the work of imagination becomes possible, lurks in or behind the Eliot's speaker. We can recall the philosophical foundation for why the creation of interaction between various points of view — selves or 'finite centres' as Eliot suggests — is inseparable from "the soul" of the work of art that aims at the unity of sensibility where we feel "the whole world of its experience at any moment", through the ceaseless process of transubstantiation of the old and the new, passing from one point of view to another (*KE* 79).

The complex of the process comes from the fact that "we are constantly

passing ... from the judgment as reality to the judgment as a qualification of oneself" (*KE* 78). That is, "in memory and in the observation of the actions of others we have reference to events which are never as such actual" (*KE* 78). This means that we do not have "a consistent enough point of view to determine a subject matter" (*KE* 78). It is always from a complicated interaction of points of view that the idea or judgment is an event, not from the point of view of the subject, nor from the outsider's. The reason is that the theory of identity in our observation of the actions of others, has two aspects: first, the relations of the events are "determined only by the real world from the point of view of the subject, and externally by the real world ... from somebody else's point of view" and second, "the soul is not something definite to which phenomena can be attached all on the same plane, but varies with the meaning which each phenomenon has for it" (*KE* 79). As a result,

We are unable to say, however, that one point of view is right and the other wrong, for we thus imply an element of identity, or of identical reference; the assertion of one point of view against another must be made from a third point of view, which somehow contains the first and the second. And yet it must be noticed (for I see no way to avoid this hair-splitting) that it is only from the third point of view that the first two are therein contained. For as soon as we have realized that we have reached a third point of view we are already at a fourth, in which the first and second reassert themselves once more. So that it is only so long as we can support a particular point of view ... that we can believe that the contradiction between truth and error is superseded. (*KE* 121)

Eliot discusses, "when we speak of the character as a fiction, we mean a relation between an object real from one point of view and certain entities (ultimately physical) which are real from another point of view" (*KE* 125) and "Treating it as imaginary involves a change of viewpoint" (*KE* 124). Here we "qualify our world by the recognition of another's" and "we vary by passing from one point of view to another" or "by occupying more than one point of view at the same time ... we vary by *self-transcendence*" (*KE* 147. My italics).

In short, both the *recognition* of and the *transcendence* of one point of view at the same time forms the base of soul-making: "The self, we find, seems to depend upon a world which in turn depends upon it. ... And the self depends as well upon other selves; it is not given as a direct experience, but is an interpretation of experience by interaction with other selves" (*KE* 146). Soul-making is the process of self-transcendence, "the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them" (*KE* 147-8). So we agree with Eliot when he say,

So that I do not believe that the author in process of composition is ever, in practice, occupied with a single point of view; or that in practice any moment ever exists when one point of view is in exclusive possession. But the 'imaginary object' has all these relations and in fact is these relations. (*KE* 125)

There is no moment one point of view is exclusive in the work of art; there are the relations of points of view. The relations are coherently bound up with the theme of the poem, i.e. the tonalities of the voice of the poet. In Eliot's poetry, these relations are usually controlled by the use of pronouns, particularly the first and the second person pronoun, "I" and "you." They become complex and sometimes enigmatic, as different kinds of consciousness and their relations are included in the pronouns. The "you" in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," for example, may be the presumed silent listener, the other self of Prufrock, the reader, or all these. Especially in Eliot's early poems the reader feels certain disparity between the real and the superficial, i.e. some hidden conflict or invisible tension between the characters, or between two selves in one person. Eliot uses the pronouns to control this degree of disparity; to create manifold points of view, then to unify or compare them, or to hide or define a dominant consciousness in his poem, all of which contribute to the process of depersonalization of the poet's personal self.

In general, the early poems focus on the split consciousness of an individual

self. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is getting more and more introspective as the hidden conflict of his two split selves is exemplified in the pronouns "I" and "you". Besides, in the pronoun "you", the readers' consciousness lurks and finally separates itself in the false "we", betraying the presumed sympathy of "I". The male narrator as the dominant consciousness of "Portrait of a Lady" assumes himself as a social being, unlike Prufrock. We catch this assumption in the use of an indefinite pronoun "we". Here also "you" stands between the speaker's other self and the readers, but more objective. In "Preludes" there is a male observer's consciousness that observes a woman "you". But as soon as this observer is called "he", there appears another observer "I", observing "he" the man who observes "you".

Even in the early poems in the use of the impersonal "you" there is a move from the individual's consciousness to common consciousness. In "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", the consciousness of the poem focuses on the two selves in one's internal consciousness. But it is extended to a common consciousness at the end, where the impersonal "you" is getting more dominant. In *The Waste Land*, the poet boldly juxtaposes many kinds of consciousness, and tries to unite all into one. As fragments "shored against" our ruins, the identities of and the relationships between the various kinds of consciousness change from episode to episode, according to the use of the pronouns, "I", "you", "one", and "we". But as the poem unfolds, the definite pronouns grow more and more inclusive "we" and "one".

In later poems, especially in *Four Quartets*, there is a complete picture of this move from an individual self "I", through some tentative suspension of its particularity and the growing use of more inclusive "we", towards a complete community with the readers. The use of the pronouns varies from passage to passage. Their identities, their different kinds of consciousness are defined *in* and *between* the context. It is not fixed. In most cases dominant consciousness falls between the relations of the pronouns, especially between "you" and "I," creating subtle difference of point of view. The various fragments of reality are invoked by this difference between the consciousnesses.

The use of pronouns is coherently related to the working of memory, not for restriction — of the speaker or the reader to himself — but "For liberation?not

less of love but expanding/Of love" (*Little Gidding*, III). Even when the speaker directs to a definite individual, through a memory, there is always another consciousness of his double and the readers, as is shown in "Preludes" and "La Figlia Che Piange". It is not simple, our mode of being. One and one's double are never fixed and never effaced in unified consciousness, because the other face of being is always in the course of forming:

So I assumed a double part, and cried
 And heard another's voice cry: 'What! Are you here?'
 Although we were not. I was still the same,
 Knowing myself yet being someone other —
 And he a face still forming; yet the words sufficed
 To compel the recognition they preceded. (*Little Gidding*, II)

"Yet the words sufficed/To compel the recognition they preceded", as an effort to unify both, or to go beyond both for groping toward the missing recognition. With this recognition of oneself, the words, one's medium of restoring the lost meaning, may open the possibility of one's general communion with the others. So "I" who "was still the same" is not what 'I' had been, just as "calling the beginning is often the end" is making a new beginning, not going back to an old one. The past experience restored to a new meaning is not the same as before. It is a base for a new start, a new communication. As the individualised "I" comes to get more and more of this recognition, through the journey of its memory accompanied by "you", the poem moves to a more and more inclusive "we". The destination of this journey may be to get to "the still point", where "there we have been", where "we" started: "a condition of complete simplicity"; where the only hope lies in "the choice of pyre or pyre" or "the fire and the rose are one" (*Burnt Norton*, *Little Gidding*).

In every poem there is a memory of past experiences restored to a new meaning by the speaker's present recollections: "do not call it fixity/Where past and future are gathered" (*Burnt Norton*, II). Therefore not only the consciousness, individual and common, but also the consciousness, past and present, gather together in Eliot's poem. It is not just "gathering." It is a

systematic organisation — *construction* — of the experiences which is only possible through the interaction of points of view. Furthermore the process of this organisation is what enables each of Eliot poems to be a “sudden illumination”, not just of one life but of many generations: “the past experience revived in the meaning/Is not the experience of one life only/But of many generations” (*The Dry Salvages*, II). The “sudden illumination” is really new in the sense that it is what the poet, speaker, or the reader has not seen before in the past experience. It becomes possible only through the perspective of a whole. And the process of “soul-making” completes itself in this “sudden illumination,” the result of the “painful task of unification”: the communion, “the common consciousness of all who can feel themselves at one in this ‘Order of words’”, for “a further union, a deeper communion” (*East Coker*, V).

VI. Conclusion: Soul-Making in “Portrait of a Lady”

Even early poetry of T.S. Eliot is not easy to understand, not to mention analyzing it according to the theme of “soul-making” established above. It is partly because Eliot’s poetry also share the several reasons for the ‘difficulty’ of modern poetry in the question of meaning, which Eliot himself indicated in “The Modern Mind” (*UPUC* 151): personal causes, novelty, and the author’s omission of something which the reader is used to finding.¹⁰⁾ But it is mainly because Eliot prefers the impersonal methods.

As Eliot says about the poetry of Dante, “It is a test (a positive test, I do not assert that it is always valid negatively) that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood” (*SE* 200), though he continues: “The impression can be verified on fuller knowledge”. As poetry may begin with just an image or a rhythm which precedes any conscious meaning, so “what we should consider is not so much the meaning of the images, but the reverse process, that which led a man having an idea to express it in images” (*SE* 204).¹¹⁾

10) T.S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London, 1964; first published 1933).

11) T.S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950; first published 1932).

So I must reassure of myself that the meaning of the poem, the ideas and the beliefs of the poet, is not there to be seen. It is in most cases hidden behind the rich suggestiveness of the poetic devices in the middle of which the act of "soul-making" is placed. What Eliot said about Tennyson applies to himself, "Tennyson's surface, his technical accomplishment, is intimate with his depths: what we most quickly see about him is that which moves between the surface and the depths" (*SE* 295). So the impersonal devices in Eliot's poetry are closely connected with and gradually lead the reader to the process of "soul-making". In a word, instead of telling us, Eliot attempts the Dantean method, "to make us see what he saw" (*SE* 205). But at the same time what I should not forget is that Eliot's poetry, like Dante's, is "a whole, that you must in the end come to understand every part in order understand any part" (*SE* 219). So while I "suspend both belief and disbelief", I would like to focus on the poetry itself with the immediate poetic suggestiveness and to acquaint myself well with Eliot's poem part by part.

The act of "soul-making" is achieved mostly by the tones and registers under the authoritative control of the poetic devices. Here I must admit that it is not easy to catch every tone and register in the poetry of Eliot on which the process of "soul-making" mostly depends. But I may begin by concentrating on the impersonal devices of T.S. Eliot, the use of personae often as masks for the poet himself, the use of pronouns as indicator of the various points of view, successive shift of images, echoes of the past poets, the dramatic scenes, the musical patterns by "the auditory imagination", and the succession, the repetition or recurrences of certain phrases, imagery, and situations, which establish their interactive relations and significances. Then from these impersonal techniques by which the characters and their worlds are objectively created — "dissociated", I may proceed on the authoritative control of the tones and the registers, the act of "soul-making", which unifies the various points of view and transcends the dissociated states. Finally I hope, through the precise investigation of these initial approaches, the meaning, i.e. the ultimate achievement of the act of "soul-making" in the poem reveals itself.

Let me take "Portrait of a Lady" for an example, to see how Eliot's impersonal techniques create the two main characters and their worlds

objectively, placing the reader, with the poet, as the observer of the drama. Eliot does not require the reader to sympathize with the subjective state of the characters, but presents it as an object for detached observation. The poem presents each part like a scene of drama, but more complicated, for unlike the direct presentation of characters of drama, the poem is presented just through the speaker's point of view. So there does not actually exist the lady's point of view but her portrait through the speaker. But what is most important is that though it is only possible through the speaker to reach the lady's subjectivity, the dramatic presentation forbids him to control the points of view, bringing the tones and nuances of the lady's speech. The poet's impersonal method is apparently contrasted with that of the lady who is anxious for sympathy in vain. So the detached stance of the speaker at the beginning seems to be superior, which he himself is convinced of. But the point of the poem lies in the revelation of the false position of the speaker to the reader and to the speaker as well. That is, the lady's embarrassing appeal for sympathy in vain results from both her naive romanticism that does not penetrate the reality of the speaker or rather life, and the speaker's false conviction of his superiority.

"Portrait of a Lady" from the first part shows the poet's effort to unify the scenes and the subjective consciousness. The male speaker begins with an impersonal description of temporal setting, which proves to be subtly coloured by his subjectivity. In the next line the scene to the speaker seems to arrange itself, conforming to her intention. The impersonal presentation of the arranged scene in the fourth and fifth lines precedes the speaker's generalisation of it, associated by his subjective impression: 'An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb/Prepared for all the things to be said or left unsaid'. While this projection of the speaker's subjectivity into the scene is gradually done line by line, the reader comes aware of more subjective feelings of the speaker in the later lines than in the first line, with his ironically detached tone already set in.

The next six lines show conflicting attitudes between the speaker and the lady in their different reactions to "the latest Pole". Whereas it becomes burlesque by his comment, she brings heavy and profound themes — "soul" and true friendship — which seem to be out of place or too romantic before his

over-realistic attitude. After this direct conveyance of her speech, the speaker secures his distance by making a generalisation of her speech. He is not affected at all. But the music, "attenuated tones of violins/mingled with remote cornets", which is harmonious with her sensibility, suggests her tones and nuances among her "velleities and carefully caught regrets" in her second speech. It is about friendship but against the speaker's detached mood her desperate appeals for sympathy sounds like monologue.

The speaker brings music metaphors for his inner conflict in the next seven lines, but more important is that the speaker observes his own consciousness, being very self-conscious. "Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins/Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own./Capricious monotone/That is at least one definite 'false note.'" This is the speaker's impersonal generalisation of his subjectivity, making this poem to be also the portrait of the speaker's own in his try to portray the lady.

But in the final five lines of the first part, the speaker does not confront the inner conflict but escapes into the world of man as a social being. At this point of his evasion from self-consciousness (his awareness of his consciousness), the reader comes to be clearly aware of a third point of view: the lady's conveyed by the speaker, the speaker's, and an authoritatively detached one (possibly the poet's). His escape seems not to be convincing against her persistent appeal, with his consciousness under the strong pressure from what she says. Though this kind of distraction comes from his self-possession, the foundation of which, i.e. his claim to the superiority of his point of view proves false. He is just for the worldly things and the commonplace.

In part II, the speaker's impersonal description of the lilacs in the first three lines is closely connected with his psychology. "One" which is twisted "in her fingers" is the metaphor of himself. Here is created unmistakable irony between her act and what she says, but more crucial is the speaker's identification of himself with the lilac. So her act "(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)" stresses her oppressive power over the speaker, with the effect of cinematic close-up in visual parentheses. Slowly but firmly pressing his mind, the lady achieves her superiority in the following speech. While the speaker's self-possession would not confront his reality to the end, making her voice "the

insistent out-of-tune/Of a broken violin" inside his brain, she candidly confesses her reality. Though her opinion of him proves to be wrong, she is quite well aware of her reality at least, "what she is": "But what have I, but what have I, my friend,/To give you, what can you receive from me?/Only the friendship and the sympathy/Of one about to reach her journey's end." In this context, his excuse sounds even self-mocking, far from being justification: "how can I make a cowardly amends/For what she has said to me?"

His escape into the world of the commonplace is clearly unconvincing or his "naked" portrayal of himself in that world does not match hers, while his self-possession is so easily defeated just by "a street-piano" or "the smell of hyacinths". In spite of the speaker's assertion to himself, "I keep my countenance/I remain self-possessed", the final line reveals that he is shaken by her enough to wonder "Are these ideas right or wrong?"

Part III deals with the collapse of the speaker's false self-possession, as the speaker's inner conflict grows. "The October night comes down" exactly resembles "The winter evening settles down" in the first line of "Preludes", as the presentation of temporal setting by subjective mind. The next three lines effectively figure the speaker's difficulty in restoring the shaken self-possession: "returning as before/Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease/I mounted the stairs and turn the handle of the door/And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees". While the speaker feels it is harder to confront her, his superiority, mainly coming from his predictability of what she says or what she does, seems to be empowered when it is verified: "My self-possession flares up for a second;/This is as I had reckoned". But its momentary nature is clearly suggested in "a second", supplemented by "flares up", which associates his self-possession to the "four wax candles" in the initial scene. So her persistent inquiry of the reasons for the failure of their friendship, *unpredicted* by him, collapses his self-possession ruthlessly enough not to be recovered as before. There remains nothing of his self-possession, like the candle which "gutters" out, "we are really in the dark".¹²⁾ His self-

12) In this poem the use of the pronouns as the indicator of various point of view is not prominent. If I focus on the pronoun "we" here, it seems to indicate not "the lady" and the speaker, but indefinite "we" from the speaker's point of view, regarding him as a

possession, as his faithful guard for his appearance to the lady, totally lost, the speaker "suddenly" feels himself like a stranger "in a glass".

It may be that such kind of self-recognition of his inner division as this should have led him to confront his reality and make a sincere communication with her. Instead, he chooses to "borrow" another masks: "And I must borrow every changing shape/To find expression ... dance, dance/Like a dancing bear/Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape". Though this desperate state is more than pathetic, being even clownish for its embarrassing mimicry, it patches his self-possession successfully enough to escape temporarily into the world of "a tobacco trance", preparing for the next "Well!"

But the speaker's shaken self-possession and his awareness of his inferiority, with the reader, seems to be definite, though the speaker does not admit it clearly: "Would she not have the advantage, after all?" So he is doubt of himself, his feelings and even his "right to smile", though still some part of him tries to keep his countenance by forcing a coincidence between his contemplation and the music to which his "inside" music has been "the insistent out-of-tune": "This music is successful with a 'dying fall/Now that we talk of dying —" But the ending line dominates the whole mood: "And should I have the right to smile?"

At the end of "Portrait of a lady" the reader is left with the subjectivity of the speaker, quite different from that at the beginning. The poet has begun with the impersonal description of the setting but it becomes soon closely connected with the subjective state of the characters.¹³⁾ The most effective presentation of these connections can be traced in Eliot's calculated use of the images and metaphors, especially music, lilacs and wax candles, which are also the clear indicator of conflicting points of view and the shifts of their inner states. Important ironic effects come from the dramatic structure of the scenes, creating the authoritative point of view early in the poem, which the reader

social being. So this "we" may match with "you" in the final stanza of part II. In this sense the dominant consciousness of "Portrait of a Lady" assumes itself basically as a social being, unlike Prufrock.

- 13) It may be significant that finally the speaker's affected subjectivity is able to unify the two settings: "Afternoon, grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose"

comes to share. The objective presentation of characters and their worlds given through the impersonal techniques, finally the meaning of the act of "soul-making" in this poem comes. Both of the lady's and the speaker's point of view turn out to be wrong. But what is of great importance in this poem is that the speaker comes to be aware, of his false superiority and his responsibility for the failed human relationship with the lady, and moreover that the reader, with the poet, stands on the transcendent point of view.

It may not matter whether the act of "soul-making" on the part of the speaker is complete or not, who still remains wondering at the end. Eliot as a poet and a human, may be interested in the emptiness of human relationship, related with the matter of expression. As he points out, when we lose our own expression, we are really in the dark. But there is the poet's recognition that false expression like the mimicry of a dancing bear, a parrot, and an ape, could be worse. Maybe the speaker, "sitting pen in hand" at the end, is the portrait of the poet himself, "doubtful" of the *right* use of the pen, but knowing its immense power.

(Abbreviations)

*The titles of the critical works of Eliot precede the cited page numbers in abbreviated forms as follows:

SW: The Scared Wood (London, 2nd ed., 1928)

SE: Selected Essays (New York, 1950; First Published 1932)

KE: Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley (London, 1964)

UPUC: The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London, 1964; first published 1933)

OPP: On Poetry and Poets (London, 2nd ed., 1957)

CC: To Criticize the Critic (New York, 1965)

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