

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

Introduction: Secular Criticism

1. There is a good graphic account of the problem in Noam Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 6. See also Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), pp. 147-164.

2. The example of the Nazi who read Rilke and then wrote out genocidal orders to his concentration-camp underlings had not yet become well known. Perhaps then the Durrell-Secretary of Defense anecdote might not have seemed so useful to my enthusiastic friend.

3. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), and his *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

4. See my article "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," forthcoming in *Critical Inquiry* (Fall 1982), for an analysis of the liaison between the cult of textuality and the ascendancy of Reaganism.

5. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (1953; rpt. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 557.

6. See the evidence in Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937).

7. Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," trans. M. and E. W. Said, *Centennial Review*, 13 (Winter 1969), p. 17.

8. Hugo of St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 101.

9. See my *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), esp. chap. 1.

10. A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

11. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (1869; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 70.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
13. Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture: Essays on Learning and Literature* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), p. 175.
14. Quoted in Philip D. Curtin, ed., *Imperialism* (New York: Walker and Company, 1971), p. 182.
15. Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 298.
16. See *Orientalism*, pp. 153-156; also the important study by Bryan Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978).
17. See my *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 81-88 and passim.
18. The information is usefully provided by Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
19. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (1932; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1953), pp. 343-344.
20. Georg Simmel, *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. K. Peter Etkorn (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 12.
21. Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 32.
22. John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 193-194.
23. For an extended analysis of the role of interpretive communities, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).
24. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 252.

1. The World, the Text, and the Critic

1. Paul Ricoeur, "What Is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation," in David Rasmussen, *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricoeur* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), p. 138. For a more interesting distinction between oeuvre and text, see Roland Barthes, "De l'Oeuvre au texte," *Revue d'esthétique*, 3 (1971), 225-232.
2. I have discussed this in chap. 4 of *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).
3. Riffaterre, "The Self-Sufficient Text," *Diacritics* (Fall 1973), p. 40.
4. This is the main polemical point in this tract *Ar-rad'ala'l nuha*, ed. Shawki Daif (Cairo, 1947). The text dates from 1180.

5. Roger Arnaldez, *Grammaire et théologies chez Ibn Hazm de Cordoue* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1956), pp. 12 and passim. There is a clear, somewhat schematic account of Ibn Ginni, Ibn Mada, and others in Anis Fraiha, *Nathariyat fil Lughba* (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al Jam'iya, 1973).
6. Arnaldez, *Grammaire et théologie*, p. 12.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
9. *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 195.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
11. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 90.
12. *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Collier Abbott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 51-52.
13. Quoted in Anthony Bisschop, S.J., "Hopkins' Letters to his Brother," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 8, 1972, p. 1511.
14. *Poems of Hopkins*, p. 108.
15. *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 386.
16. *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. J. B. Foreman (London: Collins, 1971), p. 335.
17. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (New York: Vintage, 1964), p. 18.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 80, 61.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
20. *Middlemarch*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 302.
21. *Lord Jim* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), p. 161.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
23. Karl Marx, *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, (1852; Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1947), p. 8.
24. Nietzsche's analyses of texts in this light are to be found everywhere in his work, but especially in *The Genealogy of Morals* and in *The Will to Power*.
25. See in particular Ernst Renan, *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henriette Psichari (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947-1961), VIII, 147-157.
26. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 216.
27. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 189.
28. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1964), pp. 31-32.
29. Jacques Derrida, "La Pharmacie de Platon" in *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 145 and passim.

Ross.

The World,
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Introduction: Secular Criticism

LITERARY criticism is practiced today in four major forms. One is the practical criticism to be found in book reviewing and literary journalism. Second is academic literary history, which is a descendant of such nineteenth-century specialties as classical scholarship, philology, and cultural history. Third is literary appreciation and interpretation, principally academic but, unlike the other two, not confined to professionals and regularly appearing authors. Appreciation is what is taught and performed by teachers of literature in the university and its beneficiaries in a literal sense are all those millions of people who have learned in a classroom how to read a poem, how to enjoy the complexity of a metaphysical conceit, how to think of literature and figurative language as having characteristics that are unique and not reducible to a simple moral or political message. And the fourth form is literary theory, a relatively new subject. It appeared as an eye-catching topic for academic and popular discussion in the United States later than it did in Europe: people like Walter Benjamin and the young Georg Lukacs, for instance, did their theoretical work in the early years of this century, and they wrote in a known, if not universally uncontested, idiom. American literary theory, despite the pioneering studies of Kenneth Burke well before World War Two, came of age only in the 1970s, and that because of an observably deliberate attention to prior European models (structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction).

The essays collected in this book derive from all four forms, even if the realms of journalistic book reviewing and classroom literary appreciation are not directly represented. But the fact is that my activities during the twelve years (1969–1981) when these essays were

written involved me in all four varieties of literary critical practice. That of course is an ordinary enough thing, and true of most literary critics today. But if what in this volume I call criticism or critical consciousness has any contribution to make, it is in the attempt to go beyond the four forms as defined above. And this effort (if not its success) characterizes the critical work undertaken in these essays over and above the occasions and the conventions to which they are indebted.

Now the prevailing situation of criticism is such that the four forms represent in each instance specialization (although literary theory is a bit eccentric) and a very precise division of intellectual labor. Moreover, it is supposed that literature and the humanities exist generally within the culture ("our" culture, as it is sometimes known), that the culture is ennobled and validated by them, and yet that in the version of culture inculcated by professional humanists and literary critics, the approved practice of high culture is marginal to the serious political concerns of society.

This has given rise to a cult of professional expertise whose effect in general is pernicious. For the intellectual class, expertise has usually been a service rendered, and sold, to the central authority of society. This is the *trahison des clercs* of which Julien Benda spoke in the 1920s. Expertise in foreign affairs, for example, has usually meant legitimization of the conduct of foreign policy and, what is more to the point, a sustained investment in revalidating the role of experts in foreign affairs.¹ The same sort of thing is true of literary critics and professional humanists, except that their expertise is based upon noninterference in what Vico grandly calls the world of nations but which prosaically might just as well be called "the world." We tell our students and our general constituency that we defend the classics, the virtues of a liberal education, and the precious pleasures of literature even as we also show ourselves to be silent (perhaps incompetent) about the historical and social world in which all these things take place.

The degree to which the cultural realm and its expertise are institutionally divorced from their real connections with power was wonderfully illustrated for me by an exchange with an old college friend who worked in the Department of Defense for a period during the Vietnam war. The bombings were in full course then, and I was naively trying to understand the kind of person who could order daily B-52 strikes over a distant Asian country in the name of the American interest in defending freedom and stopping communism. "You know," my friend said, "the Secretary is a complex human being: he doesn't fit the picture you may have formed of the cold-blooded im-

perialist murderer. The last time I was in his office I noticed Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* on his desk." He paused meaningfully, as if to let Durrell's presence on that desk work its awful power alone. The further implication of my friend's story was that no one who read and presumably appreciated a novel could be the cold-blooded butcher one might suppose him to have been.² Many years later this whole implausible anecdote (I do not remember my response to the complex conjunction of Durrell with the ordering of bombing in the sixties) strikes me as typical of what actually obtains: humanists and intellectuals accept the idea that you can read classy fiction as well as kill and maim because the cultural world is available for that particular sort of camouflaging, and because cultural types are not supposed to interfere in matters for which the social system has not certified them. What the anecdote illustrates is the approved separation of high-level bureaucrat from the reader of novels of questionable worth and definite status.

During the late 1960s, however, literary theory presented itself with new claims. The intellectual origins of literary theory in Europe were, I think it is accurate to say, insurrectionary. The traditional university, the hegemony of determinism and positivism, the reification of ideological bourgeois "humanism," the rigid barriers between academic specialties: it was powerful responses to all these that linked together such influential progenitors of today's literary theorist as Saussure, Lukacs, Bataille, Lévi-Strauss, Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx. Theory proposed itself as a synthesis overriding the petty fiefdoms within the world of intellectual production, and it was manifestly to be hoped as a result that all the domains of human activity could be seen, and lived, as a unity.

And yet something happened, perhaps inevitably. From being a bold interventionary movement across lines of specialization, American literary theory of the late seventies had retreated into the labyrinth of "textuality," dragging along with it the most recent apostles of European revolutionary textuality—Derrida and Foucault—whose trans-Atlantic canonization and domestication they themselves seemed sadly enough to be encouraging. It is not too much to say that American or even European literary theory now explicitly accepts the principle of noninterference, and that its peculiar mode of appropriating its subject matter (to use Althusser's formula) is *not* to appropriate anything that is worldly, circumstantial, or socially contaminated. "Textuality" is the somewhat mystical and disinfected subject matter of literary theory.

Textuality has therefore become the exact antithesis and displace-

ment of what might be called history. Textuality is considered to take place, yes, but by the same token it does not take place anywhere or anytime in particular. It is produced, but by no one and at no time. It can be read and interpreted, although reading and interpreting are routinely understood to occur in the form of misreading and misinterpreting. The list of examples could be extended indefinitely, but the point would remain the same. As it is practiced in the American academy today, literary theory has for the most part isolated textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and render it intelligible as the result of human work.

Even if we accept (as in the main I do) the arguments put forward by Hayden White—that there is no way to get past texts in order to apprehend “real” history directly³—it is still possible to say that such a claim need not also eliminate interest in the events and the circumstances entailed by and expressed in the texts themselves. Those events and circumstances are textual too (nearly all of Conrad’s tales and novels present us with a situation—say a group of friends sitting on a ship’s deck listening to a story—giving rise to the narrative that forms the text), and much that goes on in texts alludes to them, *affiliates* itself directly to them. My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.

Literary theory, whether of the Left or of the Right, has turned its back on these things. This can be considered, I think, the triumph of the ethic of professionalism. But it is no accident that the emergence of so narrowly defined a philosophy of pure textuality and critical noninterference has coincided with the ascendancy of Reaganism, or for that matter with a new cold war, increased militarism and defense spending, and a massive turn to the right on matters touching the economy, social services, and organized labor.⁴ In having given up the world entirely for the aporias and unthinkable paradoxes of a text, contemporary criticism has retreated from its constituency, the citizens of modern society, who have been left to the hands of “free” market forces, multinational corporations, the manipulations of consumer appetites. A precious jargon has grown up, and its formidable complexities obscure the social realities that, strange though it may seem, encourage a scholarship of “modes of excellence” very far from daily life in the age of declining American power.

Criticism can no longer cooperate in or pretend to ignore this enterprise. It is not practicing criticism either to validate the status quo or to join up with a priestly caste of acolytes and dogmatic metaphysicians. Each essay in this book affirms the connection between texts and the existential actualities of human life, politics, societies, and events. The realities of power and authority—as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies—are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics. I propose that these realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness.

It should be evident by now that this sort of criticism can only be practiced outside and beyond the consensus ruling the art today in the four accepted forms I mentioned earlier. Yet if this is the function of criticism at the present time, to be between the dominant culture and the totalizing forms of critical systems, then there is some comfort in recalling that this has also been the destiny of critical consciousness in the recent past.

NO reader of Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis*, one of the most admired and influential books of literary criticism ever written, has failed to be impressed by the circumstances of the book’s actual writing. These are referred to almost casually by Auerbach in the last lines of his epilogue, which stands as a very brief methodological explanation for what is after all a monumental work of literary intelligence. In remarking that for so ambitious a study as “the representation of reality in Western Literature” he could not deal with everything that had been written in and about Western literature, Auerbach then adds:

I may also mention that the book was written during the war and at Istanbul, where the libraries are not equipped for European studies. International communications were impeded; I had to dispense with almost all periodicals, with almost all the more recent investigations, and in some cases with reliable critical editions of my texts. Hence it is possible and even probable that I overlooked things which I ought to have considered and that I occasionally assert something that modern research has disproved or modified . . . On the other hand, it is quite possible that the book owes its existence to just this lack of a rich and specialized library. If it had been possible for me to acquaint myself

with all the work that has been done on so many subjects, I might never have reached the point of writing.⁵

The drama of this little bit of modesty is considerable, in part because Auerbach's quiet tone conceals much of the pain of his exile. He was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe, and he was also a European scholar in the old tradition of German Romance scholarship. Yet now in Istanbul he was hopelessly out of touch with the literary, cultural, and political bases of that formidable tradition. In writing *Mimesis*, he implies to us in a later work, he was not merely practicing his profession despite adversity: he was performing an act of cultural, even civilizational, survival of the highest importance. What he had risked was not only the possibility of appearing in his writing to be superficial, out of date, wrong, and ridiculously ambitious (who in his right mind would take on as a project so vast a subject as Western literature in its entirety?). He had also risked, on the other hand, the possibility of *not* writing and thus falling victim to the concrete dangers of exile: the loss of texts, traditions, continuities that make up the very web of a culture. And in so losing the authentic presence of the culture, as symbolized materially by libraries, research institutes, other books and scholars, the exiled European would become an exorbitantly disoriented outcast from sense, nation, and milieu.

That Auerbach should choose to mention Istanbul as the place of his exile adds yet another dose of drama to the actual fact of *Mimesis*. To any European trained principally, as Auerbach was, in medieval and renaissance Roman literatures, Istanbul does not simply connote a place outside Europe. Istanbul represents the terrible Turk, as well as Islam, the scourge of Christendom, the great Oriental apostasy incarnate. Throughout the classical period of European culture Turkey was the Orient, Islam its most redoubtable and aggressive representative.⁶ This was not all, though. The Orient and Islam also stood for the ultimate alienation from and opposition to Europe, the European tradition of Christian Latinity, as well as to the putative authority of ecclesia, humanistic learning, and cultural community. For centuries Turkey and Islam hung over Europe like a gigantic composite monster, seeming to threaten Europe with destruction. To have been an exile in Istanbul at that time of fascism in Europe was a deeply resonating and intense form of exile from Europe.

Yet Auerbach explicitly makes the point that it was precisely his distance from home—in all senses of that word—that made possible the superb undertaking of *Mimesis*. How did exile become converted

from a challenge or a risk, or even from an active impingement on his European selfhood, into a positive mission, whose success would be a cultural act of great importance?

The answer to this question is to be found in Auerbach's autumnal essay "Philologie der Weltliteratur." The major part of the essay elaborates on the notion first explicitly announced in *Mimesis*, but already recognizable in Auerbach's early interest in Vico, that philological work deals with humanity at large and transcends national boundaries. As he says, "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation." His essay makes clear, however, that his earthly home is European culture. But then, as if remembering the period of his extra-European exile in the Orient, he adds: "The most priceless and indispensable part of a philologist's heritage is still his own nation's culture and heritage. Only when he is first separated from this heritage, however, and then transcends it does it become truly effective."⁷ In order to stress the salutary value of separation from home, Auerbach cites a passage from Hugo of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*:

It is, therefore, a great source of virtue for the practiced mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about in visible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land [the Latin text is more explicit here—*perfectus vero cui mundus totus exilium est*].

This is all that Auerbach quotes from Hugo; the rest of the passage continues along the same lines.

The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. From boyhood I have dwelt on foreign soil, and I know with what grief sometimes the mind takes leave of the narrow hearth of a peasant's hut, and I know, too, how frankly it afterwards disdains marble firesides and panelled halls.⁸

Auerbach associates Hugo's exilic credo with the notions of *pau-pertus* and *terra aliena*, even though in his essay's final words he maintains that the ascetic code of willed homelessness is "a good way also for one who wishes to earn a proper love for the world." At this

point, then, Auerbach's epilogue to *Mimesis* suddenly becomes clear: "it is quite possible that the book owes its existence to just this lack of a rich and specialized library." In other words, the book owed its existence to the very fact of Oriental, non-Occidental exile and homelessness. And if this is so, then *Mimesis* itself is not, as it has so frequently been taken to be, only a massive reaffirmation of the Western cultural tradition, but also a work built upon a critically important alienation from it, a work whose conditions and circumstances of existence are not immediately derived from the culture it describes with such extraordinary insight and brilliance but built rather on an agonizing distance from it. Auerbach says as much when he tells us in an earlier section of *Mimesis* that, had he tried to do a thorough scholarly job in the traditional fashion, he could never have written the book: the culture itself, with its authoritative and authorizing agencies, would have prevented so audacious a one-man task. Hence the executive value of exile, which Auerbach was able to turn into effective use.

Let us look again at the notion of place, the notion by which during a period of displacement someone like Auerbach in Istanbul could feel himself to be out of place, exiled, alienated. The readiest account of place might define it as the nation, and certainly in the exaggerated boundary drawn between Europe and the Orient—a boundary with a long and often unfortunate tradition in European thought⁹—the idea of the nation, of a national-cultural community as a sovereign entity and place set against other places, has its fullest realization. But this idea of place does not cover the nuances, principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association, and community, entailed in the phrase *at home* or *in place*. In this book I shall use the word *culture* to suggest an environment, process, and hegemony in which individuals (in their private circumstances) and their works are embedded, as well as overseen at the top by a superstructure and at the base by a whole series of methodological attitudes. It is in culture that we can seek out the range of meanings and ideas conveyed by the phrases *belonging to* or *in a place*, being *at home in a place*.

The idea of culture of course is a vast one. As a systematic body of social and political as well as historical significance, "culture" is similarly vast; one index of it is the Kroeber-Kluckhohn thesaurus on meanings of the word "culture" in social science.¹⁰ I shall avoid the details of these proliferating meanings, however, and go straight to what I think can best serve my purposes here. In the first place, culture is used to designate not merely something to which one belongs

but something that one possesses and, along with that proprietary process, culture also designates a boundary by which the concepts of what is extrinsic or intrinsic to the culture come into forceful play. These things are not controversial: most people employing *culture* would assent to them, as Auerbach does in the epilogue when he speaks of being in Istanbul, away from his habitual cultural environment, within its research materials and familiar environment.

But, in the second place, there is a more interesting dimension to this idea of culture as possessing possession. And that is the power of culture by virtue of its elevated or superior position to authorize, to dominate, to legitimate, demote, interdict, and validate: in short, the power of culture to be an agent of, and perhaps the main agency for, powerful differentiation within its domain and beyond it too. It is this idea that is evident in French Orientalism, for example, as distinguished from English Orientalism, and this in turn plays a major role in the work of Ernest Renan, Louis Massignon, and Raymond Schwab, major scholars whose work is assessed in the last part of this book.

When Auerbach speaks of not being able to write such a book as *Mimesis* had he remained in Europe, he refers precisely to that grid of research techniques and ethics by which the prevailing culture imposes on the individual scholar its canons of how literary scholarship is to be conducted. Yet even this sort of imposition is a minor aspect of culture's power to dominate and authorize work. What is more important in culture is that it is a system of values *saturating* downward almost everything within its purview; yet, paradoxically, culture dominates from above without at the same time being available to everything and everyone it dominates. In fact, in our age of media-produced attitudes, the ideological insistence of a culture drawing attention to itself as superior has given way to a culture whose canons and standards are invisible to the degree that they are "natural," "objective," and "real."

Historically one supposes that culture has always involved hierarchies; it has separated the elite from the popular, the best from the less than best, and so forth. It has also made certain styles and modes of thought prevail over others. But its tendency has always been to move downward from the height of power and privilege in order to diffuse, disseminate, and expand itself in the widest possible range. In its beneficent form this is the culture of which Matthew Arnold speaks in *Culture and Anarchy* as stimulating in its adherents a powerful zeal:

The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time [Arnold's definition of culture of course] and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light.¹¹

The question raised by Arnold's passion for culture here is the relationship between culture and society. He argues that society is the actual, material base over which culture tries, through the great men of culture, to extend its sway. The optimum relationship between culture and society then is *correspondence*, the former covering the latter. What is too often overlooked by Arnold's readers is that he views this ambition of culture to reign over society as essentially combative: "the best that is known and thought" must contend with competing ideologies, philosophies, dogmas, notions, and values, and it is Arnold's insight that what is at stake in society is not merely the cultivation of individuals, or the development of a class of finely tuned sensibilities, or the renaissance of interest in the classics, but rather the assertively achieved and *won* hegemony of an identifiable set of ideas, which Arnold honorifically calls culture, over all other ideas in society.

Yet it is still pertinent to ask Arnold where this struggle for hegemony takes place. If we say "in society" we will approach the answer, I think, but we will still have to specify *where* in society. In other words, Arnold's attention is to society defined grossly as, let us say, a nation—England, France, Germany—but more interestingly he seems also to be viewing society as a process and perhaps also an entity capable of being guided, controlled, even taken over. What Arnold always understood is that to be able to set a force or a system of ideas called "culture" over society is to have understood that the stakes played for are an identification of society with culture, and consequently the acquisition of a very formidable power. It is no accident that in his conclusion to *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold resolutely identifies a triumphant culture with the State, insofar as culture is man's best self and the State its realization in material reality. Thus the power of culture is potentially nothing less than the power of the State: Arnold is unambiguous on this point. He tells first of his unqualified opposition to such things as strikes and demonstrations, no

matter how noble the cause, and then goes on to prove that such "anarchy" as strikes and demonstrations challenge the authority of the State, which is what morally, politically, and aesthetically they are:

Because a State in which law is authoritative and sovereign, a firm and settled course of public order, is requisite if man is to bring to maturity anything precious and lasting now, or to found anything precious and lasting for the future.

Thus in our eyes, the very framework and exterior order of the State, whoever may administer the State, is sacred; and culture is the most resolute enemy of anarchy, because of the great hopes and designs for the State which culture teaches us to nourish.¹²

The interdependence in Arnold's mind between culture, the sustained suzerainty of culture over society (anything precious and lasting), and the framework and quasi-theological exterior order of the State is perfectly clear. And it signifies a coincidence of power, which Arnold's entire rhetoric and thought constantly elaborates. To be for and in culture is to be in and for a State in a compellingly loyal way. With this assimilation of culture to the authority and exterior framework of the State go as well such things as assurance, confidence, the majority sense, the entire matrix of meanings we associate with "home," belonging and community. Outside this range of meanings—for it is the outside that partially defines the inside in this case—stand anarchy, the culturally disfranchised, those elements opposed to culture and State: the homeless, in short.

It is not my intention here to discuss in detail the profoundly important implications of Arnold's concluding remarks on culture. But it is worth insisting on at least a few of those implications in a broader setting than Arnold's. Even as an ideal for Arnold, culture must be seen as much for what it is not and for what it triumphs over when it is consecrated by the State as for what it positively is. This means that culture is a system of discriminations and evaluations—perhaps mainly aesthetic, as Lionel Trilling has said, but no less forceful and tyrannical for that¹³—for a particular class in the State able to identify with it; and it also means that culture is a system of exclusions legislated from above but enacted throughout its polity, by which such things as anarchy, disorder, irrationality, inferiority, bad taste, and immorality are identified, then deposited outside the culture and kept there by the power of the State and its institutions. For if it is true that culture is, on the one hand, a positive doctrine of the best

that is thought and known, it is also on the other a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best. If with Michel Foucault we have learned to see culture as an institutionalized process by which what is considered appropriate to it is kept appropriate, we have also seen Foucault demonstrating how certain alterities, certain Others, have been kept silent, outside or—in the case of his study of penal discipline and sexual repression—domesticated for use inside the culture.

Even if we wish to contest Foucault's findings about the exclusions by classical European culture of what it constituted as insane or irrational, and even if we are not convinced that the culture's paradoxical encouragement and repression of sexuality has been as generalized as he believes, we cannot fail to be convinced that the dialectic of self-fortification and self-confirmation by which culture achieves its hegemony over society and the State is based on a constantly practiced differentiation of itself from what it believes to be not itself. And this differentiation is frequently performed by setting the valorized culture over the Other. This is by no means a metaphysical point, as two nineteenth-century English examples will demonstrate quickly. Both are related to the point I made earlier about Auerbach, that culture often has to do with an aggressive sense of nation, home, community, and belonging. First there is Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 on Indian education:

I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalist themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education . . . It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.¹⁴

This is no mere expression of an opinion. Neither can it be dismissed, as in his *Grammatology* Derrida has dismissed Lévi-Strauss,

as a textual instance of ethnocentrism. For it is that and more. Macaulay's was an ethnocentric opinion with ascertainable results. He was speaking from a position of power where he could translate his opinions into the decision to make an entire subcontinent of natives submit to studying in a language not their own. This in fact is what happened. In turn this validated the culture to itself by providing a precedent, and a case, by which superiority and power are lodged both in a rhetoric of belonging, or being "at home," so to speak, and in a rhetoric of administration: the two become interchangeable.

A second instance also concerns India. With admirable perspicacity Eric Stokes has studied the importance of utilitarian philosophy to British rule in India. What is striking in Stokes's *The English Utilitarians and India* is how a relatively small body of thinkers—among them Bentham, of course, and both Mills—were able to argue and implement a philosophic doctrine for India's governance, a doctrine in some respects bearing an unmistakable resemblance to Arnold's and Macaulay's views of European culture as superior to all others. John Stuart Mill among the India House Utilitarians has today a higher cultural status, so much so that his views on liberty and representative government have for generations passed as the advanced liberal cultural statement on these matters. Yet of Mill, Stokes has this to say: "In his essay *On Liberty* John Stuart Mill had carefully stated that its doctrines were only meant to apply to those countries which were sufficiently advanced in civilization to be capable of settling their affairs by rational discussion. He was faithful to his father in holding to the belief that India could still be governed only despotically. But although he himself refused to apply the teachings of *Liberty* or *Representative Government* to India, a few Radical Liberals and a growing body of educated Indians made no such limitations."¹⁵ A quick glance at the last chapter of *Representative Government*—to say nothing of the passage in the third volume of *Dissertations and Discussions* where he speaks of the absence of rights for barbarians—makes absolutely clear Mill's view that what he has to say about the matter cannot really apply to India, mainly because in his culture's judgment India's civilization has not attained the requisite degree of development.

The entire history of nineteenth-century European thought is filled with such discriminations as these, made between what is fitting for us and what is fitting for them, the former designated as inside, in place, common, belonging, in a word *above*, the latter, who are designated as outside, excluded, aberrant, inferior, in a word

below. From these distinctions, which were given their hegemony by the culture, no one could be free, not even Marx—as a reading of his articles on India and the Orient will immediately reveal.¹⁶ The large cultural-national designation of European culture as the privileged norm carried with it a formidable battery of other distinctions between ours and theirs, between proper and improper, European and non-European, higher and lower: they are to be found everywhere in such subjects and quasi-subjects as linguistics, history, race theory, philosophy, anthropology, and even biology. But my main reason for mentioning them here is to suggest how in the transmission and persistence of a culture there is a continual process of reinforcement, by which the hegemonic culture will add to itself the prerogatives given it by its sense of national identity, its power as an implement, ally, or branch of the state, its rightness, its exterior forms and assertions of itself: and most important, by its vindicated power as a victor over everything not itself.

There is no reason to doubt that all cultures operate in this way or to doubt that on the whole they tend to be successful in enforcing their hegemony. They do this in different ways, obviously, and I think it is true that some tend to be more efficient than others, particularly when it comes to certain kinds of police activities. But this is a topic for comparative anthropologists and not one about which broad generalizations should be risked here. I am interested, however, in noting that if culture exerts the kinds of pressure I have mentioned, and if it creates the environment and the community that allows people to feel they belong, then it must be true that resistance to the culture has always been present. Often that resistance takes the form of outright hostility for religious, social, or political reasons (one aspect of this is well described by Eric Hobsbawm in *Primitive Rebels*). Often it has come from individuals or groups declared out of bounds or inferior by the culture (here of course the range is vast, from the ritual scapegoat to the lonely prophet, from the social pariah to the visionary artist, from the working class to the alienated intellectual). But there is some very compelling truth to Julien Benda's contention that in one way or the other it has often been the intellectual, the *clerc*, who has stood for values, ideas, and activities that transcend and deliberately interfere with the collective weight imposed by the nation-state and the national culture.

Certainly what Benda says about intellectuals (who, in ways specific to the intellectual vocation itself, are responsible for defiance) resonates harmoniously with the personality of Socrates as it emerges

in Plato's *Dialogues*, or with Voltaire's opposition to the Church, or more recently with Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual allied with an emergent class against ruling-class hegemony. Even Arnold speaks of "aliens" in *Culture and Anarchy*, "persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general humane spirit," which he connects directly with ideal culture and not, it would appear, with that culture he was later to identify with the State. Benda is surely wrong, on the other hand, to ascribe so much social power to the solitary intellectual whose authority, according to Benda, comes from his individual voice and from his opposition to organized collective passions. Yet if we allow that it has been the historical fate of such collective sentiments as "my country right or wrong" and "we are whites and therefore belong to a higher race than blacks" and "European or Islamic or Hindu culture is superior to all others" to coarsen and brutalize the individual, then it is probably true that an isolated individual consciousness, going against the surrounding environment as well as allied to contesting classes, movements, and values, is an isolated voice out of place but very much *of* that place, standing consciously against the prevailing orthodoxy and very much for a professedly universal or humane set of values, which has provided significant local resistance to the hegemony of one culture. It is also the case, both Benda and Gramsci agree, that intellectuals are eminently useful in making hegemony work. For Benda this of course is the *trahison des clercs* in its essence; their unseemly participation in the perfection of political passions is what he thinks is dispiritingly the very essence of their contemporary mass sellout. For Gramsci's more complex mind, individual intellectuals like Croce were to be studied (perhaps even envied) for making their ideas seem as if they were expressions of a collective will.

All this, then, shows us the individual consciousness placed at a sensitive nodal point, and it is this consciousness at that critical point which this book attempts to explore in the form of what I call *criticism*. On the one hand, the individual mind registers and is very much aware of the collective whole, context, or situation in which it finds itself. On the other hand, precisely because of this awareness—a worldly self-situating, a sensitive response to the dominant culture—that the individual consciousness is not naturally and easily a mere child of the culture, but a historical and social actor in it. And because of that perspective, which introduces circumstance and distinction where there had only been conformity and belonging, there is distance, or what we might also call criticism. A knowledge of history, a

recognition of the importance of social circumstance, an analytical capacity for making distinctions: these trouble the quasi-religious authority of being comfortably at home among one's people, supported by known powers and acceptable values, protected against the outside world.

But to repeat: the critical consciousness is a part of its actual social world and of the literal body that the consciousness inhabits, not by any means an escape from either one or the other. Although as I characterized him, Auerbach was away from Europe, his work is steeped in the reality of Europe, just as the specific circumstances of his exile enabled a concrete critical recovery of Europe. We have in Auerbach an instance both of filiation with his natal culture and, because of exile, *affiliation* with it through critical consciousness and scholarly work. We must look more closely now at the cooperation between filiation and affiliation that is located at the heart of critical consciousness.

RELATIONSHIPS of filiation and affiliation are plentiful in modern cultural history. One very strong three-part pattern, for example, originates in a large group of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers, in which the failure of the generative impulse—the failure of the capacity to produce or generate children—is portrayed in such a way as to stand for a general condition afflicting society and culture together, to say nothing of individual men and women. *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* are two especially well-known instances, but there is similar evidence to be found in *Death in Venice* or *The Way of All Flesh*, *Jude the Obscure*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Mallarmé's and Hopkins' poetry, much of Wilde's writing, and *Nostramo*. If we add to this list the immensely authoritative weight of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, a significant and influential aspect of which posits the potentially murderous outcome of bearing children, we will have the unmistakable impression that few things are as problematic and as universally fraught as what we might have supposed to be the mere natural continuity between one generation and the next. Even in a great work that belongs intellectually and politically to another universe of discourse—Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*—there is much the same thesis being advanced about the difficulties and ultimately the impossibility of natural filiation: for, Lukacs says, reification is the alienation of men from what they have produced, and it is the starkly uncompro-

missing severity of his vision that he means by this all the products of human labor, children included, which are so completely separated from each other, atomized, and hence frozen into the category of ontological objects as to make even natural relationships virtually impossible.

Childless couples, orphaned children, aborted childbirths, and unregenerately celibate men and women populate the world of high modernism with remarkable insistence, all of them suggesting the difficulties of filiation.¹⁷ But no less important in my opinion is the second part of the pattern, which is immediately consequent upon the first, the pressure to produce new and different ways of conceiving human relationships. For if biological reproduction is either too difficult or too unpleasant, is there some other way by which men and women can create social bonds between each other that would substitute for those ties that connect members of the same family across generations?

A typical answer is provided by T. S. Eliot during the period right after the appearance of *The Waste Land*. His model now is Lancelot Andrewes, a man whose prose and devotional style seem to Eliot to have transcended the personal manner of even so fervent and effective a Christian preacher as Donne. In the shift from Donne to Andrewes, which I believe underlies the shift in Eliot's sensibility from the world-view of *Prufrock*, *Gerontion*, and *The Waste Land* to the conversion poetry of *Ash Wednesday* and the *Ariel Poems*, we have Eliot saying something like the following: the aridity, wastefulness, and sterility of modern life make filiation an unreasonable alternative at least, an unattainable one at most. One cannot think about continuity in biological terms, a proposition that may have had urgent corroboration in the recent failure of Eliot's first marriage but to which Eliot's mind gave a far wider application.¹⁸ The only other alternatives seemed to be provided by institutions, associations, and communities whose social existence was not in fact guaranteed by biology, but by affiliation. Thus according to Eliot Lancelot Andrewes conveys in his writing the enfolding presence of the English church, "something representative of the finest spirit of England of the time [and] . . . a masterpiece of ecclesiastical statesmanship." With Hooker, then, Andrewes invoked an authority beyond simple Protestantism. Both men were

on terms of equality with their Continental antagonists and [were able] to elevate their Church above the position of a local

heretical sect. They were fathers of a national Church and they were Europeans. Compare a sermon of Andrewes with a sermon by another earlier master, Latimer. It is not merely that Andrewes knew Greek, or that Latimer was addressing a far less cultivated public, or that the sermons of Andrewes are peppered with allusion and quotation. It is rather that Latimer, the preacher of Henry VIII and Edward VI, is merely a Protestant; but the voice of Andrewes is the voice of a man who has a formed visible Church behind him, who speaks with the old authority and the new culture.¹⁹

Eliot's reference to Hooker and Andrewes is figurative, but it is meant with a quite literal force, just as that second "merely" (Latimer is merely a Protestant) is an assertion by Eliot of "the old authority and the new culture." If the English church is not in a direct line of filiation stemming from the Roman church, it is nevertheless something more than a mere local heresy, more than a mere protesting orphan. Why? Because Andrewes and others like him to whose antecedent authority Eliot has now subscribed were able to harness the old paternal authority to an insurgent Protestant and national culture, thereby creating a new institution based not on direct genealogical descent but on what we may call, barbarously, *horizontal affiliation*. According to Eliot, Andrewes' language does not simply express the anguished distance from an originating but now unrecoverable father that a protesting orphan might feel; on the contrary, it converts that language into the expression of an emerging affiliative corporation—the English church—which commands the respect and the attention of its adherents.

In Eliot's poetry much the same change occurs. The speakers of *Prufrock* and *Gerontion* as well as the characters of *The Waste Land* directly express the plight of orphanhood and alienation, whereas the personae of *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* speak the common language of other communicants within the English church. For Eliot the church stands in for the lost family mourned throughout his earlier poetry. And of course the shift is publicly completed in *After Strange Gods* whose almost belligerent announcement of a credo of royalism, classicism, and catholicism form a set of affiliations achieved by Eliot outside the filial (republican, romantic, protestant) pattern given him by the facts of his American (and outlandish) birth.

The turn from filiation to affiliation is to be found elsewhere in the culture and embodies what Georg Simmel calls the modern cultural

process by which life "incessantly generates forms for itself," forms that, once they appear, "demand a validity which transcends the moment, and is emancipated from the pulse of life. For this reason, life is always in a latent opposition to the form."²⁰ One thinks of Yeats going from the blandishments of "the honey of generation" to the Presences who are "self-born mockers of man's enterprise," which he set down in *A Vision* according to a spacious affiliative order he invented for himself and his work. Or, as Ian Watt has said about Conrad's contemporaries, writers like Lawrence, Joyce, and Pound, who present us with "the breaking of ties with family, home, class, country, and traditional beliefs as necessary stages in the achievement of spiritual and intellectual freedom": these writers "then invite us to share the larger transcendental [affiliative] or private systems of order and value which they have adopted and invented."²¹ In his best work Conrad shows us the futility of such private systems of order and value (say the utopian world created by Charles and Amelia Gould in *Nostramo*), but no less than his contemporaries he too took on in his own life (as did Eliot and Henry James) the adopted identity of an emigré-turned-English-gentleman. On the other side of the spectrum we find Lukacs suggesting that only class consciousness, itself an insurrectionary form of an attempt at affiliation, could possibly break through the antinomies and atomizations of reified existence in the modern capitalist world-order.

What I am describing is the transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system. Now whether we look at this new affiliative mode of relationship as it is to be found among conservative writers like Eliot or among progressive writers like Lukacs and, in his own special way, Freud, we will find the deliberately explicit goal of using that new order to reinstate vestiges of the kind of authority associated in the past with filiative order. This, finally, is the third part of the pattern. Freud's psychoanalytic guild and Lukacs' notion of the vanguard party are no less providers of what we might call a restored authority. The new hierarchy or, if it is less a hierarchy than a community, the new community is greater than the individual adherent or member, just as the father is greater by virtue of seniority than the sons and daughters; the ideas, the values, and the systematic totalizing world-view validated by the new affiliative order are all bearers of authority too, with the result

that something resembling a cultural system is established. Thus if a filial relationship was held together by natural bonds and natural forms of authority—involving obedience, fear, love, respect, and instinctual conflict—the new affiliative relationship changes these bonds into what seem to be transpersonal forms—such as guild consciousness, consensus, collegiality, professional respect, class, and the hegemony of a dominant culture. The filiative scheme belongs to the realms of nature and of “life,” whereas affiliation belongs exclusively to culture and society.

It is worth saying incidentally that what an estimable group of literary artists have adumbrated in the passage from filiation to affiliation parallels similar observations by sociologists and records corresponding developments in the structure of knowledge. Tönnies' notion of the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* can easily be reconciled with the idea of filiation replaced by affiliation. Similarly, I believe, the increased dependence of the modern scholar upon the small, specialized guild of people in his or her field (as indeed the very idea of a field itself), and the notion within fields that the originating human subject is of less importance than transhuman rules and theories, accompany the transformation of naturally filiative into systematically affiliative relationships. The loss of the subject, as it has commonly been referred to, is in various ways the loss as well of the procreative, generational urge authorizing filiative relationships.

The three-part pattern I have been describing—and with it the processes of filiation and affiliation as they have been depicted—can be considered an instance of the passage from nature to culture, as well as an instance of how affiliation can easily become a system of thought no less orthodox and dominant than culture itself. What I want abruptly to talk about at this juncture are the effects of this pattern as they have affected the study of literature today, at a considerable remove from the early years of our century. The structure of literary knowledge derived from the academy is heavily imprinted with the three-part pattern I have illustrated here. This imprinting has occurred in ways that are impressive so far as critical thought (according to my notion of what it ought to be) is concerned. Let me pass directly now to concrete examples.

Ever since Eliot, and after him Richards and Leavis, there has been an almost unanimously held view that it is the duty of humanistic scholars in our culture to devote themselves to the study of the great monuments of literature. Why? So that they may be passed on to younger students, who in turn become members, by affiliation and

formation, of the company of educated individuals. Thus we find the university experience more or less officially consecrating the pact between a canon of works, a band of initiate instructors, a group of younger affiliates; in a socially validated manner all this reproduces the filiative discipline supposedly transcended by the educational process. This has almost always been the case historically within what might be called the cloistral world of the traditional Western, and certainly of the Eastern, university. But we are now, I think, in a period of world history when for the first time the compensatory affiliative relationships interpreted during the academic course of study in the Western university actually exclude more than they include. I mean quite simply that, for the first time in modern history, the whole imposing edifice of humanistic knowledge resting on the classics of European letters, and with it the scholarly discipline inculcated formally into students in Western universities through the forms familiar to us all, represents only a fraction of the real human relationships and interactions now taking place in the world. Certainly Auerbach was among the last great representatives of those who believed that European culture could be viewed coherently and importantly as unquestionably central to human history. There are abundant reasons for Auerbach's view being no longer tenable, not the least of which is the diminishing acquiescence and deference accorded to what has been called the Natopolitan world long dominating peripheral regions like Africa, Asia, and Latin America. New cultures, new societies, and emerging visions of social, political, and aesthetic order now lay claim to the humanist's attention, with an insistence that cannot long be denied.

But for perfectly understandable reasons they are denied. When our students are taught such things as “the humanities” they are almost always taught that these classic texts embody, express, represent what is best in our, that is, the only, tradition. Moreover they are taught that such fields as the humanities and such subfields as “literature” exist in a relatively neutral political element, that they are to be appreciated and venerated, that they define the limits of what is acceptable, appropriate, and legitimate so far as culture is concerned. In other words, the affiliative order so presented surreptitiously duplicates the closed and tightly knit family structure that secures generational hierarchical relationships to one another. Affiliation then becomes in effect a literal form of *re-presentation*, by which what is ours is good, and therefore deserves incorporation and inclusion in our programs of humanistic study, and what is not ours in this ulti-

mately provincial sense is simply left out. And out of this representation come the systems from Northrop Frye's to Foucault's, which claim the power to show how things work, once and for all, totally and predictively. It should go without saying that this new affiliative structure and its systems of thought more or less directly reproduce the skeleton of family authority supposedly left behind when the family was left behind. The curricular structures holding European literature departments make that perfectly obvious: the great texts, as well as the great teachers and the great theories, have an authority that compels respectful attention not so much by virtue of their content but because they are either old or they have power, they have been handed on in time or seem to have no time, and they have traditionally been revered, as priests, scientists, or efficient bureaucrats have taught.

It may seem odd, but it is true, that in such matters as culture and scholarship I am often in reasonable sympathy with conservative attitudes, and what I might object to in what I have been describing does not have much to do with the activity of conserving the past, or with reading great literature, or with doing serious and perhaps even utterly conservative scholarship as such. I have no great problem with those things. What I am criticizing is two particular assumptions. There is first the almost unconsciously held ideological assumption that the Eurocentric model for the humanities actually represents a natural and proper subject matter for the humanistic scholar. Its authority comes not only from the orthodox canon of literary monuments handed down through the generations, but also from the way this continuity reproduces the filial continuity of the chain of biological procreation. What we then have is a substitution of one sort of order for another, in the process of which everything that is nonhumanistic and nonliterary and non-European is deposited outside the structure. If we consider for a minute that most of the world today is non-European, that transactions within what the UNESCO/McBride Report calls the world information order is therefore not literary, and that the social sciences and the media (to name only two modes of cultural production in ascendancy today over the classically defined humanities) dominate the diffusion of knowledge in ways that are scarcely imaginable to the traditional humanistic scholar, then we will have some idea of how ostrichlike and retrograde assertions about Eurocentric humanities really are. The process of representation, by which filiation is reproduced in the affiliative structure and made to stand for what belongs to us (as we

in turn belong to the family of our languages and traditions), reinforces the known at the expense of the knowable.

Second is the assumption that the principal relationships in the study of literature—those I have identified as based on representation—ought to obliterate the traces of other relationships within literary structures that are based principally upon acquisition and appropriation. This is the great lesson of Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*. His extraordinarily illuminating discussion there of the seventeenth-century English country-house poems does not concentrate on what those poems represent, but on what they *are* as the result of contested social and political relationships. Descriptions of the rural mansion, for example, do not at bottom entail only what is to be admired by way of harmony, repose, and beauty; they should also entail for the modern reader what in fact has been excluded from the poems, the labor that created the mansions, the social processes of which they are the culmination, the dispossessions and theft they actually signified. Although he does not come out and say it, Williams' book is a remarkable attempt at a dislodgement of the very ethos of system, which has reified relationships and stripped them of their social density. What he tries to put in its place is the great dialectic of acquisition and representation, by which even realism—as it is manifest in Jane Austen's novels—has gained its durable status as the result of contests involving money and power. Williams teaches us to read in a different way and to remember that for every poem or novel in the canon there is a social fact being requisitioned for the page, a human life engaged, a class suppressed or elevated—none of which can be accounted for in the framework rigidly maintained by the processes of representation and affiliation doing above-ground work for the conservation of filiation. And for every critical system grinding on there are events, heterogeneous and unorthodox social configurations, human beings and texts disputing the possibility of a sovereign methodology of system.

Everything I have said is an extrapolation from the verbal echo we hear between the words "filiation" and "affiliation." In a certain sense, what I have been trying to show is that, as it has developed through the art and critical theories produced in complex ways by modernism, filiation gives birth to affiliation. Affiliation becomes a form of representing the filiative processes to be found in nature, although affiliation takes validated nonbiological social and cultural forms. Two alternatives propose themselves for the contemporary critic. One is organic complicity with the pattern I have described.

The critic enables, indeed transacts, the transfer of legitimacy from filiation to affiliation; literally a midwife, the critic encourages reverence for the humanities and for the dominant culture served by those humanities. This keeps relationships within the narrow circle of what is natural, appropriate, and valid for "us," and thereafter excludes the nonliterary, the non-European, and above all the political dimension in which all literature, all texts, can be found. It also gives rise to a critical system or theory whose temptation for the critic is that it resolves all the problems that culture gives rise to. As John Fekete has said, this "expresses the modern disaffection for reality, but progressively incorporates and assimilates it within the categories of prevailing social (and cultural) rationality. This endows it with a double appeal, and the expanding scope of the theory, corresponding to the expanding mode of the production and reproduction of social life, gives it authority as a major ideology."²²

The second alternative is for the critic to recognize the difference between instinctual filiation and social affiliation, and to show how affiliation sometimes reproduces filiation, sometimes makes its own forms. Immediately, then, most of the political and social world becomes available for critical and secular scrutiny, as in *Mimesis* Auerbach does not simply admire the Europe he has lost through exile but sees it anew as a composite social and historical enterprise, made and remade unceasingly by men and women in society. This secular critical consciousness can also examine those forms of writing affiliated with literature but excluded from consideration with literature as a result of the ideological capture of the literary text within the humanistic curriculum as it now stands. My analysis of recent literary theory in this book focuses on these themes in detail, especially in the way critical systems—even of the most sophisticated kind—can succumb to the inherently representative and reproductive relationship between a dominant culture and the domains it rules.

WHAT does it mean to have a critical consciousness if, as I have been trying to suggest, the intellectual's situation is a worldly one and yet, by virtue of that worldliness itself, the intellectual's social identity should involve something more than strengthening those aspects of the culture that require mere affirmation and orthodox compliancy from its members?

The whole of this book is an attempt to answer this question. My position, again, is that the contemporary critical consciousness stands

between the temptations represented by two formidable and related powers engaging critical attention. One is the culture to which critics are bound filiatively (by birth, nationality, profession); the other is a method or system acquired affiliatively (by social and political conviction, economic and historical circumstances, voluntary effort and willed deliberation). Both of these powers exert pressures that have been building toward the contemporary situation for long periods of time: my interest in eighteenth-century figures like Vico and Swift, for example, is premised on their knowledge that their era also made claims on them culturally and systematically, and it was their whole enterprise therefore to resist these pressures in everything they did, albeit of course, that they were worldly writers and materially bound to their time.

As it is now practiced and as I treat it, criticism is an academic thing, located for the most part far away from the questions that trouble the reader of a daily newspaper. Up to a certain point this is as it should be. But we have reached the stage at which specialization and professionalization, allied with cultural dogma, barely sublimated ethnocentrism and nationalism, as well as a surprisingly insistent quasi-religious quietism, have transported the professional and academic critic of literature—the most focused and intensely trained interpreter of texts produced by the culture—into another world altogether. In that relatively untroubled and secluded world there seems to be no contact with the world of events and societies, which modern history, intellectuals, and critics have in fact built. Instead, contemporary criticism is an institution for publicly affirming the values of our, that is, European, dominant elite culture, and for privately setting loose the unrestrained interpretation of a universe defined in advance as the endless misreading of a misinterpretation. The result has been the regulated, not to say calculated, irrelevance of criticism, except as an adornment to what the powers of modern industrial society transact: the hegemony of militarism and a new cold war, the depoliticization of the citizenry, the overall compliance of the intellectual class to which critics belong. The situation I attempt to characterize in modern criticism (not excluding "Left" criticism) has occurred in parallel with the ascendancy of Reaganism. The role of the Left, neither repressed nor organized, has been important for its compliance.

I do not wish to be misunderstood as saying that the flight into method and system on the part of critics who wish to avoid the ideology of humanism is altogether a bad thing. Far from it. Yet the dan-

gers of method and system are worth noting. Insofar as they become sovereign and as their practitioners lose touch with the resistance and the heterogeneity of civil society, they risk becoming wall-to-wall discourses, blithely predetermining what they discuss, heedlessly converting everything into evidence for the efficacy of the method, carelessly ignoring the circumstances out of which all theory, system, and method ultimately derive.

Criticism in short is always situated; it is skeptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings. This is by no means to say that it is value-free. Quite the contrary, for the inevitable trajectory of critical consciousness is to arrive at some acute sense of what political, social, and human values are entailed in the reading, production, and transmission of every text. To stand between culture and system is therefore to stand *close to*—closeness itself having a particular value for me—a concrete reality about which political, moral, and social judgments have to be made and, if not only made, then exposed and demystified. If, as we have recently been told by Stanley Fish, every act of interpretation is made possible and given force by an interpretive community, then we must go a great deal further in showing what situation, what historical and social configuration, what political interests are concretely entailed by the very existence of interpretive communities.²³ This is an especially important task when these communities have evolved camouflaging jargons.

I hope it will not seem a self-serving thing to say that all of what I mean by criticism and critical consciousness is directly reflected not only in the subjects of these essays but in the essay form itself. For if I am to be taken seriously as saying that secular criticism deals with local and worldly situations, and that it is constitutively opposed to the production of massive, hermetic systems, then it must follow that the essay—a comparatively short, investigative, radically skeptical form—is the principal way in which to write criticism. Certain themes, naturally enough, recur in the essays that make up this book. Given a relatively wide selection of topics, the book's unity, however, is also a unity of attitude and of concern. With two exceptions, all of the essays collected here were written during the period immediately following the completion of my book *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, which argued the practical and theoretical necessity of a reasoned point of departure for any intellectual and creative job of work, given that we exist in secular history, in the "always-already" begun realm of continuously human effort. Thus each essay presupposes that book. Yet it is more important to point out that (again with

two exceptions) all of these essays were written as I was working on three books dealing with the history of relations between East and West: *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), and *Covering Islam* (1981), books whose historical and social setting is political and cultural in the most urgent way. On matters having to do with the relationship between scholarship and politics, between a specific situation and the interpretation and the production of a text, between textuality itself and social reality, the connection of some essays here to those three books will be evident enough.

The essays collected here are arranged in three interlinked ways. First I look at the worldly and secular world in which texts take place and in which certain writers (Swift, Hopkins, Conrad, Fanon) are exemplary for their attention to the detail of everyday existence defined as situation, event, and the organization of power. For the critic, the challenge of this secular world is that it is not reducible to an explanatory or originating theory, much less to a collection of cultural generalities. There are instead a small number of perhaps unexpected characteristics of worldliness that play a role in making sense of textual experience, among them filiation and affiliation, the body and the senses of sight and hearing, repetition, and the sheer heterogeneity of detail. Next I turn to the peculiar problems of contemporary critical theory as it either confronts or ignores issues raised for the study of texts (and textuality) by the secular world. Finally, I treat the problem of what happens when the culture attempts to understand, dominate, or recapture another, less powerful one.

A word is in order about the special role played by Swift in this book. There are two essays on him, both of them stressing the resistances he offers to the modern critical theorist (resistance being a matter of central relevance to my argument in this book). The reasons for this are not only that Swift cannot easily be assimilated to current ideas about "writers," "the text," or "the heroic author," but that his work is at once occasional, powerful, and—from the point of view of systematic textual practice—incoherent. To read Swift seriously is to try to apprehend a series of events in all their messy force, not to admire and then calmly to decode a string of high monuments. In addition, his own social role was that of the critic involved with, but never possessing, power: alert, forceful, undogmatic, ironic, unafraid of orthodoxies and dogmas, respectful of settled uncoercive community, anarchic in his sense of the range of alternatives to the status quo. Yet he was tragically compromised by this time and his worldly circumstances, a fact alluded to by E. P. Thompson and

Perry Anderson in their dispute over his real (progressive or reactionary) political commitments. For me he represents the critical consciousness in a raw form, a large-scale model of the dilemmas facing the contemporary critical consciousness that has tended to be too cloistered and too attracted to easy systematizing. He stands so far outside the world of contemporary critical discourse as to serve as one of its best critics, methodologically unarmed though he may have been. In its energy and unparalleled verbal wit, its restlessness, its agitational and unacademic designs on its political and social context, Swift's writing supplies modern criticism with what it has sorely needed since Arnold covered critical writing with the mantle of cultural authority and reactionary political quietism.

It is an undoubted exaggeration to say, on the other hand, that these essays make absolutely clear what my critical position—only implied by *Orientalism* and my other recent books—really is. To some this may seem like a failing of rigor, honesty, or energy. To others it may imply some radical uncertainty on my part as to what I do stand for, especially given the fact that I have been accused by colleagues of intemperate and even unseemly polemicism. To still others—and this concerns me more—it may seem that I am an undeclared Marxist, afraid of losing respectability and concerned by the contradictions entailed by the label "Marxist."

Without wishing to answer all the questions raised by these matters, I would like my views to be as clear as possible. On the question of government and foreign policy that particularly involve me, nothing more should be added here than what is said in the last four essays in this book. But on the important matter of a critical position, its relationship to Marxism, liberalism, even anarchism, it needs to be said that criticism modified in advance by labels like "Marxism" or "liberalism" is, in my view, an oxymoron. The history of thought, to say nothing of political movements, is extravagantly illustrative of how the dictum "solidarity before criticism" means the end of criticism. I take criticism so seriously as to believe that, even in the very midst of a battle in which one is unmistakably on one side against another, there should be criticism, because there must be critical consciousness if there are to be issues, problems, values, even lives to be fought for. Right now in American cultural history, "Marxism" is principally an academic, not a political, commitment. It risks becoming an academic subspecialty. As corollaries of this unfortunate truth there are also such things to be mentioned as the absence of an important socialist party (along the lines of the various European par-

ties), the marginalized discourse of "Left" writing, the seeming incapacity of professional groups (scholarly, academic, regional) to organize effective Left coalitions with political-action groups. The net effect of "doing" Marxist criticism or writing at the present time is of course to declare political preference, but it is also to put oneself outside a great deal of things going on in the world, so to speak, and in other kinds of criticism.

Perhaps a simpler way of expressing all this is to say that I have been more influenced by Marxists than by Marxism or any other *ism*. If the arguments going on within twentieth-century Marxism have had any meaning, it is this: as much as any discourse, Marxism is in need of systematic decoding, demystifying, rigorous clarification. Here the work of non-Marxist radicals (Chomsky's, say, or I. F. Stone's) is valuable, especially if the doctrinal walls keeping out non-members have not been put up to begin with. The same is true of criticism deriving from a profoundly conservative outlook, Auerbach's own, for example; at its best, this work also teaches us how to be critical, rather than how to be good members of a school. The positive uses of affiliation are many after all, which is not to say that authoritarianism and orthodoxy are any less dangerous.

Were I to use one word consistently along with *criticism* (not as a modification but as an emphatic) it would be *oppositional*. If criticism is reducible neither to a doctrine nor to a political position on a particular question, and if it is to be in the world and self-aware simultaneously, then its identity is its difference from other cultural activities and from systems of thought or of method. In its suspicion of totalizing concepts, in its discontent with reified objects, in its impatience with guilds, special interests, imperialized fiefdoms, and orthodox habits of mind, criticism is most itself and, if the paradox can be tolerated, most unlike itself at the moment it starts turning into organized dogma. "Ironic" is not a bad word to use along with "oppositional." For in the main—and here I shall be explicit—criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom. If we agree with Raymond Williams, "that however dominant a social system may be, the very meaning of its domination involves a limitation or selection of the activities it covers, so that by definition it cannot exhaust all social experience, which therefore always potentially contains space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not yet articulated as a social institution or even project,"²⁴ then criti-

cism belongs in that potential space inside civil society, acting on behalf of those alternative acts and alternative intentions whose advancement is a fundamental human and intellectual obligation.

There is a danger that the fascination of what's difficult—criticism being one of the forms of difficulty—might take the joy out of one's heart. But there is every reason to suppose that the critic who is tired of management and the day's war is, like Yeats's narrator, quite capable at least of finding the stable, pulling out the bolt, and setting creative energies free. Normally, however, the critic can but entertain, without fully expressing, the hope. This is a poignant irony, to be recalled for the benefit of people who maintain that criticism is art, and who forget that, the moment anything acquires the status of a cultural idol or a commodity, it ceases to be interesting. That at bottom is a *critical* attitude, just as doing criticism and maintaining a critical position are critical aspects of the intellectual's life.

1

The World, the Text, and the Critic

SINCE he deserted the concert stage in 1964, the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould has confined his work to records, television, and radio. There is some disagreement among critics as to whether Gould is always, or only sometimes, a convincing interpreter of one or another piano piece, but there is no doubt that each of his performances now is at least special. One example of how Gould has been operating recently is suited for discussion here. In 1970 he issued a record of his performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in the Liszt piano transcription. Quite aside from the surprise one felt at Gould's eccentric choice of the piece (which seemed more peculiar than usual even for the arch-eccentric Gould, whose controversial performances had formerly been associated either with classical or contemporary music), there were a number of oddities about this particular release. Liszt's Beethoven transcription was not only of the nineteenth century but of its most egregious aspect, pianistically speaking: not content with transforming the concert experience into a feast for the virtuoso's self-exhibition, it also raided the literature of other instruments, making of their music a flamboyant occasion for the pianist's skill. Most transcriptions tend on the whole to sound thick or muddy, since frequently the piano is attempting to copy the texture of an orchestral sound. Liszt's Fifth Symphony was less offensive than most transcriptions, mainly because it was so brilliantly reduced for the piano, but even at its most clear the sound was an unusual one for Gould to be producing. His sound previously had been the clearest and most unadorned of all pianists', which was why he had the uncanny ability to turn Bach's counterpoint almost into a visual experience. The Liszt transcription, in short, was an entirely dif-

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

Introduction: Secular Criticism

1. There is a good graphic account of the problem in Noam Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 6. See also Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), pp. 147-164.

2. The example of the Nazi who read Rilke and then wrote out genocidal orders to his concentration-camp underlings had not yet become well known. Perhaps then the Durrell-Secretary of Defense anecdote might not have seemed so useful to my enthusiastic friend.

3. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), and his *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

4. See my article "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," forthcoming in *Critical Inquiry* (Fall 1982), for an analysis of the liaison between the cult of textuality and the ascendancy of Reaganism.

5. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (1953; rpt. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 557.

6. See the evidence in Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937).

7. Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," trans. M. and E. W. Said, *Centennial Review*, 13 (Winter 1969), p. 17.

8. Hugo of St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 101.

9. See my *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), esp. chap. 1.

10. A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

11. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (1869; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 70.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
13. Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture: Essays on Learning and Literature* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), p. 175.
14. Quoted in Philip D. Curtin, ed., *Imperialism* (New York: Walker and Company, 1971), p. 182.
15. Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 298.
16. See *Orientalism*, pp. 153-156; also the important study by Bryan Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978).
17. See my *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 81-88 and passim.
18. The information is usefully provided by Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
19. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (1932; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1953), pp. 343-344.
20. Georg Simmel, *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. K. Peter Etkorn (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 12.
21. Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 32.
22. John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 193-194.
23. For an extended analysis of the role of interpretive communities, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).
24. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 252.

1. The World, the Text, and the Critic

1. Paul Ricoeur, "What Is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation," in David Rasmussen, *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricoeur* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), p. 138. For a more interesting distinction between oeuvre and text, see Roland Barthes, "De l'Oeuvre au texte," *Revue d'esthétique*, 3 (1971), 225-232.
2. I have discussed this in chap. 4 of *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).
3. Riffaterre, "The Self-Sufficient Text," *Diacritics* (Fall 1973), p. 40.
4. This is the main polemical point in this tract *Ar-rad'ala'l nubut*, ed. Shawki Daif (Cairo, 1947). The text dates from 1180.

5. Roger Arnaldez, *Grammaire et théologies chez Ibn Hazm de Cordoue* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1956), pp. 12 and passim. There is a clear, somewhat schematic account of Ibn Ginni, Ibn Mada, and others in Anis Fraiha, *Nathariyat fil Lugha* (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al Jam'iya, 1973).
6. Arnaldez, *Grammaire et théologie*, p. 12.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
9. *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 195.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
11. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 90.
12. *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Collier Abbott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 51-52.
13. Quoted in Anthony Bisshof, S.J., "Hopkins' Letters to his Brother," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 8, 1972, p. 1511.
14. *Poems of Hopkins*, p. 108.
15. *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 386.
16. *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. J. B. Foreman (London: Collins, 1971), p. 335.
17. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (New York: Vintage, 1964), p. 18.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 80, 61.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
20. *Middlemarch*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 302.
21. *Lord Jim* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), p. 161.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
23. Karl Marx, *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, (1852; Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1947), p. 8.
24. Nietzsche's analyses of texts in this light are to be found everywhere in his work, but especially in *The Genealogy of Morals* and in *The Will to Power*.
25. See in particular Ernst Renan, *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henriette Psichari (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947-1961), VIII, 147-157.
26. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 216.
27. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 189.
28. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1964), pp. 31-32.
29. Jacques Derrida, "La Pharmacie de Platon" in *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 145 and passim.

11. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (1869; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 70.
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13. Quoted in Anthony Bisschop, S.J., "Hopkins' Letters to his Brother," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 8, 1972, p. 1511.
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