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CRITICISM BETWEEN SCIENTIFICITY AND IDEOLOGY: THEORETICAL IMPASSES IN F.R. LEAVIS AND P. MACHEREY

By

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Abstract

While focussing on the metaphor of scientificity in Leavis's and Macherey's writings, this dissertation addresses other questions central to criticism, cultural theory, and the philosophy of science. Whereas Leavis opposes scientificity, Macherey proposes "scientific criticism" as imperative to theoretical practice. Between the two critics, scientificity reveals its major metamorphoses.

This study is divided into four major parts. Part One situates the concept of scientificity in the modern debate between critics and philosophers of science. I compare their problematization of scientificity to the way this notion has been represented in literary criticism. The debate blurs the boundary between scientific and literary knowledge, and brings the question of ideology in scientific discourse to the fore. Scientificity is thus bound with ideology as an epistemological practice.

Part two focusses on Leavis's rejection of scientificity. In three chapters here I investigate the significance of Leavis's definition of "organic culture," "civilization," "science," and "criticism." These are all

rooted in Arnold's cultural paradigm, which privileges a traditional order. Leavis's opposition to "theory," "science," and "philosophy" problematizes his principles of "precision," "analysis," and "standards." His controversies with C.P. Snow's scientism and with Marxism reveal his concern with theory and scientific epistemology. His defence of "ambiguity," and "impossibility of definition" also makes his framework confront a theoretical impasse that is revealed by a desire to theorize criticism--Leavis's duty towards society--and a fear of theory and science, perceived as destructive.

Part Three, comprising three chapter, considers Macherey's scientific criticism. His notions of the "structure of absence" and "symptomatic reading" are central to his theorization of criticism, science, and ideology. These are formulated through Freud's categories of dream analysis, Saussure's notion of difference, and Althusser's conception of ideology. For Macherey, scientific criticism negates ideology. But his emphasis on "absence" as constitutive of scientificity brings his epistemology to a theoretical impasse that resembles Leavis's. Macherey's anchoring of meaning in economic structures, in ideology, and in Marxism as "science," problematizes his scientific project because it abandons "absence."

Part Four concludes the dissertation by investigating ways in which Leavis and Macherey illustrate the importance of an epistemological phenomenon in literary studies: criticism's struggle with scientificity. Whether opposed or defended, scientificity has helped criticism to emulate the hegemonic discourse of science and to combat rival critical strategies. However, to dispel "scientific" delusions, criticism must scrutinize its affiliation with ideology both in scientific method and in theory.

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In the "human" sciences one often finds an "ideological fallacy" common to many scientific approaches, which consists in believing that one's own approach is not ideological because it succeeds in being "objective" and "natural" . . . Theoretical research is a form of social practice. Everybody who wants to know something wants to know it in order to do something. . . .

. . .I think that it is more "scientific" not to conceal my own motivations, so as to spare my readers any "scientific" delusions. (U. Eco, A Theory of Semiotics 29)

La grammatologie doit déconstruire tout ce qui lie le concept et les normes de la scientificité à l'ontothéologie, au logocentrisme, au phonologisme. C'est un travail immense et interminable. (J. Derrida, Positions 48)

Part One: A Theoretical Introduction: Criticism 'after' Scientificity[1]

In its search for new directions and ways of legitimizing its own existence and practice, modern literary criticism has taken different roads that have brought it sometimes into direct confrontation with scientific discourse, but other times into an uneasy alliance with it. This search has been marked by two major directions: one is anti-scientific, anti-theoretical, whereas the other is committed to the project of elaborating a systematized methodology of literary analysis. Such a state of affairs seems to have endowed modern criticism with a dual identity whose two sides it has been trying to reconcile ever since the question of scientificity came to its attention. It is, therefore, imperative to study the metamorphoses of this

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1 The notion of scientificity (in French "scientificité") as used throughout this dissertation is a metaphor referring to the characteristic of being scientific or the claim to scientific knowledge, precision in method, rigor in analysis, and the universality of truth-finding. Although the term itself is not cited in the OED, it is commonly used nowadays in the discourses of literary theory and the philosophy of science. The closest term to it that the OED cites is "scientificalness", meaning "the quality of being scientific," (2668). See particularly Richard Olson, ed. Science as Metaphor (Belmond, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1971), chaps. 1 and 10.

therefore, imperative to study the metamorphoses of this metaphor of scientificity in criticism if we are to grasp the particular significance of this metaphor itself as well as the development of the discipline of criticism. These metamorphoses manifest themselves in the various ways "scientific criticism" or "a science of literary production" has been represented--either celebrated or decried by conflicting critical strategies--both as a methodology of textual exegesis and as an epistemological enterprise, yielding valuable knowledge. It is in this context that I intend to discuss the critical contributions of F.R. Leavis and P. Macherey to the debate of this literary and epistemological problematic, for each has taken a particular position vis-à-vis the question of theory and scientific criticism. Ultimately, the study of the metamorphoses of scientificity will reveal the ideological drives motivating the critical methodologies both Leavis and Macherey have expounded, as well as the epistemological status of theory, understood as an academic practice.

René Wellek describes such a situation in critical theory as follows:

> . . . literary theory has split into two factions: science and would-be science versus intuition; those who want to construe a universal and universally valid scheme or matrix of literature and those who plunge into the mind or consciousness of a poet by procedures that are

> confessedly purely personal, unrepeatable, not subject to any control by laws of evidence. ("Science, Pseudo-science, and Intuition in Recent Criticism" 78-9)

Indeed, the concern for the universality of critical criteria, the search for systemic models of literary interpretation, and the desire to formulate scientific laws to account for the peculiarity of the literary text have been striking phenomena in the history of twentieth century literary studies (see Karl Kroeber, "The Evolution of Literary Study, 1883-1983" 326-39). Since the late nineteenth century, which witnessed the rising hegemony of modern scientific discourse (see Hans Eichner, "The Rise of Modern Science" 8; and Raymond Williams, Keywords 278-79), with its varied languages and methodologies, and the advent of the social sciences (see Herbert J. Muller, Science and Criticism; and Edward W. Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic 145), literary criticism, especially through its later development into critical theory, has multiplied its efforts to emulate the powerful discourse of science in order to validate its own enterprise. As a result of the radical split that occurred between the natural sciences and the humanities around the turn of this century, Criticism's aim has also been, since then, to guarantee for itself an acknowledged place within the reputed institutions of knowledge in the modern world, and to avoid becoming an obsolete epistemological practice. As John Crowe Ransom put it

clearly in 1938: "Criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic, and this means that it must be developed by the collective and sustained effort of learned persons -- which means that its proper seat is in the universities" (The World's Body 329).

Examplifying this case is the whole Leavisite and "Scrutiny" project and its relationship to the university at Cambridge. The call then was for the institutionalization of criticism as a separate discipline of thought. As Leavis says, "the concern for the idea of criticism and the idea of the university was inseparable" (Towards Standards xxii. See also Francis Mulhern in The Moment of "Scrutiny" 108-14). Another example that parallels this instance on the other side of the Channel is the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines of Nanterre in France in 1968 from which the "theoretical revolution" (Henri Lefebvre, The Explosion 139) started rolling before it took over the Sorbonne. Not unlike the English critical movement at Cambridge, although the latter was less politicized, the French "explosion" called for a "critical university" (111). Indeed, because criticism had to strengthen the viability of its heuristic endeavours, it had to call for more speculative inquiry; in its search for method, it had to borrow various methodological concepts and terminologies from neighboring disciplines, sometimes from the natural sciences.

Certainly, the emergence of criticism as a distinct academic discipline accompanying the establishment of the English Tripos at Cambridge immediately after the First World War should be assessed within this perspective: as a response to the hegemony of science and a strong desire to emulate the methods of scientific discourse.[2] The literary critic who exemplifies this phenomenon par excellence is I.A. Richards, whose early works, namely The Meaning of Meaning (1923), written in collaboration with C.K. Ogden, Principles of Literary Criticism (1924), and Science and Poetry (1926), primarily address the questions of the nature of communication and scientific methodology in their relation to criticism. With special emphasis on the analysis of language situations, Richards tackles the relationship between "thoughts, words and things" in order to elaborate a "new science" which he calls "the Science of Symbolism" (The Meaning of Meaning 242). He argues that "if an account of sign-situations is to be scientific it must take its observations from the most suitable instances, and must not derive its general principles from an exceptional case" (19). In Richards' early formulations of the idea of criticism, scientificity acquired

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[2] On the rise of criticism as a disciple see D. J. Palmer, The Rise of English Studies (London: Oxford UP, 1965); E. M. W. Tillyard, The Muse Unchained (London: Bowers, 1958); and Francis Mulhern, op. cit.; Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: an Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), chap. 1.

the meaning of a generalizing and universalizing principle. Enhanced by an empirical evidence, as developed in his Practical Criticism (1929), the principle of scientificity aimed at impersonal, "disinterested," and objective analysis. The protocol-poems analyzed in this book indicate the extent to which the empirical method Richards sought to refine tried to simulate the scientist's work in a laboratory: observing, dissecting, analyzing "the words on the page," and finally deducing "principles of literary criticism."

However, such a drive towards universal principles and non-subjective methodology in literary interpretation is not totally devoid of any ethical dimensions. Richards' notion of scientificity in criticism still carries within it a moral dimension. His Poetry and Science points out, in the end, the limitations of the scientific apprehension of the world and argues for the necessity of restoring a moral worldview to criticism through the reinstatement of poetry and its moral function within the world of scientific method:

> If a conflict which should never have arisen extends much further, a moral chaos such as man has never experienced may be expected. Our protection. . .is in poetry. It is capable of saving us. . . , of preserving us or rescuing us from confusion and frustration. The poetic function is the source, and the tradition of poetry is the guardian, of the supra-scientific myths. (Poetries and Sciences 78)

This view, which perceives poetry as the saviour of a Western world on the brink of chaos clearly rephrases Mathew Arnold's view of poetry in its relationship to science: "Poetry is indeed something divine," says Arnold. "It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred" ("Literature and Science," 405). In fact, Arnold's ghost has inhabited nearly all traditionalist critics of the Anglo-American critical tradition.[3] Richards's later statements about the relationship between poetry, criticism, and science veered to a further privileging of the world of art and of literary criticism. In 1954, he spoke in favour of the critic:

> The degree of complexity, the number and variety of the components and the multiplicity and specialty of interdependences operative in the poets the Literary Critic studies, is so much higher than in the Experimentalist's pigeons, clever birds though they be, that "lawful" changes meaning in the vast ascent. It reassumes many of the ethical and legal implications the Experimentalist stript from it. ("Notes Towards an Agreement between Literary Criticism and Some of the Sciences" 52)

In Richards's critical universe, the domain of the literary critic has turned out to rank above that of the scientist

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[3] See Chris Baldick, The Social Mission of English Criticism: 1848-1932 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), pp. 40-1 and passim; and Murray Krieger, "The Critical Legacy of Mathew Arnold or, the Strange Brotherhood of T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, and Northrop Frye," The Southern Review 5.2 (1969), pp. 457-74.

because the former encloses more "multiplicity and interrelatedness of independent variables" (52), whereas the world of science remains limited by its laws of precision, observation, and experiment. Richards's final message is that science tends to exhaust the dimension of the unknowable and the mysterious in the universe. His position thus reflects a Kantian inheritance that maintains the incommensurability of the phenomenal world:

> As students of the humanities, we know this to be a deeper matter than any science, as yet, has explored; a matter of what man is and should be, of what his world is and should be, of what the God he should worship and obey is and should be. All this, the scientist--linguistic or other--will admit to be beyond his purview <u>as a Scientist</u>. What is done and what can be done he can inquire into, but what should be done is not within his province. (47)

However, it was around the late 1960s in particular that literary criticism, both in Europe and North America, focused on the notion of scientificity as part of a wider concern for theory (see Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s" 193). Various critics felt that their practice which was mostly university-bound had reached a stage of self-confidence that would warrant their unabashed claim to scientificity. Poetics, Structuralism, Marxism, Semiology, Deconstruction, and Narratology -- just like Formalism and New Criticism before them -- claimed at one time or another the scientific character of their methodologies. For instance, two critics

as opposite to each other as Northrop Frye and Etienne Balibar--the former is in the tradition of New Criticism whereas the latter is in the tradition of Marxism--agree on the same principle, that of the possibility of a scientific criticism. For Frye,

> . . . criticism cannot be a systematic study unless there is a quality of literature which enables it to be so. We have to adopt the hypothesis then, that, just as there is an order of nature behind the natural sciences, so literature is not an aggregate of "works" but an order of words. (Anatomy of Criticism 17)

Whereas for Balibar,

> . . . literary production is rightfully an object of scientific knowledge, just as any other objective phenomenon. Which does not mean that it does not have its own specificity. On the contrary, it means that the text will become truly scientific, or that we will have a better scientific knowledge of it to the extent that its specificity becomes clearer. (P. Macherey and E.Balibar, "Interview" 50)

Both Frye and Balibar defend scientificity as the mode of thought that leads critical method and literary meaning into the realm of "objectivity," "precision," and "scientific knowledge." This positive attitude towards critical abstraction and systems marks, according to Howard Felperin, the third and latest stage of the development of critical theory: after the "philosophical" and the "hermeneutic or interpretive" stage came the "theoretical" or

"pseudo-scientific" stage (Beyond Deconstruction 25-26). Commenting on the peculiarity of this last stage, Felperin argues:

> A new demand for scientific or philosophical rigour, whether to be sought in structural linguistics, marxist historicism, or phenomenological critique, as a control upon the subjectivity and ideology that had unwittingly vitiated our too familiar habits of interpretation, entered the discourse [of criticism]. Literary studies entered upon its theoretical phase. (26)

However, the agreement between Frye and Balibar, as well as among the various critical schools mentioned earlier, on the principle of scientificity does not imply their adoption of the same tools of analysis and their coming to the same findings about literature. Yet, both Frye and Balibar typify a common consensus within the "pro-scientific" mode of thought in criticism. Within this trend, "subjectivity," "intuition," and "individual genius" as Wellek has termed them are pushed to the margins in favor of a more "rigorous," "precise," "systematic," and "objective" approach to the literary text.

These criteria in particular have been captured with striking clarity by Benjamin Hrushovsky, an exponent of Poetics as science. He refines Wellek and Warren's old distinction between "criticism," "literary theory," and "history" in their classic A Theory of Literature (1946; rept.

1963); but unlike them, Hrushovsky believes in the possibility of establishing a science of criticism:

> It is . . . only poetics which can provide a systematic description of literature as a whole, can embody within one system the scientific assessment of its parts and heterogeneous phenomena, and can provide the rational tools and methods for the study of specific issues and texts. Whereas interpretations are valuable to readers interested in particular works of literature; criticism and history tell us about particular writers, periods, national literatures; it is primarily poetics which illuminates literature as a peculiar phenomenon of human culture. It is only through poetics that we can explain to our colleagues in other sciences what literature really is and <u>how</u> it is, and what it is the nature of literary movements, the functioning of language and values in literature. ("Poetics, Criticism, Science," xxiii)

This particular definition of poetics as a science of literature has a pluralistic and interdisciplinary face, an idea which has been part of the argument put forward by the pro-scientificity critics. This definition also aims to totalize methodology which, "through the questions of a scientific order will clarify . . . the issues involved in understanding literture, the connections between literature and other fields of human knowledge" (xxxiii).

Here, we witness a double move in the definition of scientificity. On the one hand, it results from the application of a set of criteria to the text <u>qua</u> text in its specificity as a construction of words. Therefore,

scientificity marks an intrinsic consideration of the text's literariness, thus revealing some formalist concerns. On the other hand, it marks a move outwards, towards a multiplicity of disciplines in order to provide for the extrinsic dimensions of literature. Its concern here is sociological and historical. Through both moves, the notion of scientificity calls for a totalizing apprehension of the literary text. One notes Hrushovsky's faithfulness to Wellek and Warren's traditional distinction between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" modes of literary analysis and which have been reformulated by Tzvetan Todorov as "endogenesis" and "exogenesis" ("On Literary Genesis" 218). Moreover, the notion of scientificity here comes closest to the idea of pluralism, thus expressing a liberal view of the function of criticism.

In this context of scientific inquiry, the critic becomes distinguished from the writer-artist in the sense that the former deals with a special material which he supposedly can handle in a "scientific" manner. For the critic deals in explanation, analysis, as well as abstract theories and rules:

> The critic, as distinguished from the creative artist, the performer, and the audience, is crucially concerned with explanation. In this respect he is akin to the scientist--and to the humanist-theorist as well. . . .
>
> The critic, then, occupies a middle state--between the scientist and the creative artist. Like the scientist, he strives not only tacitly to understand, but explicitly to explain. Like the artist, what he does depends upon acute

> comprehension and discriminating taste which are the products of extended and varied, yet trenchant, experience. (Meyer, "Concerning the Sciences, the Arts--AND the Humanities" 197; 202)

In acquiring a scientific objective, the critic is thus drawn to the side of the scientist and his need to explain rationally rather than to that of the artist and his reliance on imagination. Whatever aesthetic tools the critic possesses, they are there only to complement the scientific "know-how" through which the text is approached.

The other side of this identity that criticism has acquired, the anti-scientific or "intuitive," as Wellek perceives it, signals a much older tradition, whose roots are partly steeped in Romanticism (see Eichener, "The Rise of Modern Science" 15). This critical dimension remains a kind of resistance to such a theoretical and pro-scientific project within the domain of literary studies. As Karl Kroeber points out, "increasing imitativeness of the 'scientific' has accompanied, interestingly, ever more strident proclamations of the 'creativity' of criticism" ("The Evolution of Literary Study, 1883-1983" 329). Traditionalist critics have objected vehemently to the attempts to theorize about literature in an abstract manner and to look at literary texts as if they were inert "lumps," handy for "objective" scientific observation and experiment (see Richard Rorty, "Texts and Lumps" 1-16; and Ruth Anna Putnam, "Poets, Scientists, and Critics" 17-22).

Edward Said, though he cannot be ranked among the traditionalists, argues along similar lines and rejects the "scientific . . . functionalism" of contemporary--especially Structuralist--criticism (The World, the Text, and the Critic 145). These critics have demonstrated the impossibility of turning criticism into a science and literature into an object of scientific analysis. They have called for a need to keep a clear demarcation between art and science:

> We need to remind ourselves that art and science are very different enterprises, aiming at different kinds of results. If both art and science are interpretations, which is true, we must at some stage try to account for the differences between them, for fear that we collapse the distinction altogether, and arrive at absurd conclusions . . . [W]e might still wish to affirm the objective nature of scientific interpretations against the subjective, even individual, interpretations involved in aesthetic judgements. (Winterbourne, "Objectivity in Science and Aesthetics" 258)

While there is a strong temptation on the side of traditional critics to represent scientific meaning as possessing epistemological value that equals that of literary knowledge, "both art and science are interpretation, which is true," the drive to keep a clear demarcation line between the two, but still favouring art, is much stronger. Winterbourne here voices a common opinion which remains oblivious to the necessary difference between art and its criticism as proclaimed by Meyer earlier ("Concerning the Sciences" 202). Winterbourne's concern is with the opposition between art and

science rather than with any common ground shared by criticism and science.

Indeed, a wide number of anti-scientific critics have even gone to the extent of pointing out some of the dangers that reside in the pursuit of critical scientificity and abstract theory. It is argued that this concern would lead to the death of criticism per se, to pure formalism, or to an abstract form of knowledge that is alienated from human experience. Wellek himself concludes that such a pursuit would lead ultimately to "a final extinction of criticism": "criticism becomes philosophizing on one's own, happily exempt from any checks from history, natural science or logic" (Wellek, "Science, Pseudo-Science" 83; 85. See also Gerald Graff, "Who Killed Criticism?" 350-515). Edward Said, for his part, corroborates the same point, saying that purely theoretical and scientific criticism has become alienated from its own "worldliness," having severed its links with "human presence" (Said, The World, the Text and the Critic 147). Addressing the claims of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism in particular, Said insists further that

> [T]he temptations of a rigorous technical critical vocabulary induce occasional lapses into a sort of scientism. Reading and writing become at such moments instances of regulated, systematized production, as if the human agencies involved were irrelevant. The closer the linguistic focus (say in the criticism of Greimas and Lotman), the more formal the approach, and the more scientific the functionalism. (145)

For Said, criticism must be "worldly" in order for its scientificity to equal objectivity in perception. It must not soar in abstract or self-referential cogitations. As he puts it so cogently, "criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constantly opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom" (29). Scientificity must have a human soul, be "secular," engagée and committed to the liberation of humanity.

In many ways, the emergence of a belief in a science of criticism has been made inevitable, or rather overdetermined by the rise of theory and the coexistence of diverse disciplines in the modern academic context: the natural sciences and the humanities have had to exist side by side at the university, an arena where competing for attention or recognition as well as better funding have been crucial to every discipline's survival (see Lyotard, La Condition postmoderne 62 and passim). The pursuit of scientificity in the domain of literary criticism has therefore been part of the pursuit of theory. Not unlike theory, scientificity has been perceived as threatening and as subversive. Indeed, the resistance of Leavisism--as will be detailed in the next chapter--to the idea of a scientific criticism is important testimony to this fear of both scientificity and theory. For the resistance to scientificity goes hand in hand with the

resistance to theory. The accusations levelled against the two of having brought formalism and self-referential theoretical abstraction to the domain of literary study have their own ideological motives. These lie in the ideological orientations of traditionalist approaches which have openly declared their preference for an old humanist order that masks an idealist philosophy of literary essences. Sometimes, as in the case of Leavis, scientific method and abstract theory are coupled with technology, which is viewed as pernicious to modern civilization.

Paul de Man explains this complex phenomenon of the opposition to scientific theory in The Resistance to Theory (1986). His view confirms the direct relationship between opposition to theory and resistance to a scientific model of knowledge. De Man wonders why theory is seen as "so threatening that it provokes such strong resistances and attacks." In his explanation, he relates this resistance to theory's "status as a scientific discipline" (emphasis added), but most importantly, because theory presents a threat to ideologies. He explains:

> . . . upsets rooted ideologies by revealing the mechanics of their workings; it goes against a powerful philosophical tradition of which aesthetics is a prominent part; it upsets the established canon of literary works and blurs the borderlines between literary and non-literary discourse. (The Resistance to Theory 11-12)

In alliance with theory, scientificity has therefore acquired a subversive or rather revolutionary power that can subvert ideologies and reveal the truth of discourse, which lies in its "mechanics" and "workings." It also functions in opposition to "ideology," understood here as a kind of deceitful, false discourse; a negation of scientific knowledge. We are here close to an Althusserian Structuralist-Marxist opposition between "science" and "ideology" in which scientific method in the humanities is presented in highly theoretical terms (see Chap. VI below). But for de Man, theory has a special meaning; it is anchored particularly in a linguistic, philological and Structuralist model. By implication, scientificity must follow the same route in order to define itself as theoretical, capable of "uproot[ing] ideologies."

As de Man argues elsewhere, "the return to theory occurred as a return to philology, to an examination of the structure of language prior to the meaning it produces. This is so even among the most controversial French theoreticians" ("The Return of Philology" 1355); hence his privileging of grammar as central to any viable interpretive practice. This is why, he asserts, any resistance to theory and, by implication, to scientificity should address the nature of language first. According to de Man,

> . . .as long as it is grounded in grammar, any theory of language, including a literary one, does not threaten what we hold to be the underlying principle of all cognitive and aesthetic linguistic systems. Grammar stands in the service of logic which, in turn, allows for the passage to the knowledge of the world. The study of grammar . . . is the necessary pre-condition for scientific and humanistic knowledge. (The Resistance to Theory 14-15; emphasis added)

Thus, through the application of the rules of grammar to the study of language scientificity, after theory, could mediate knowledge. Moreover, grammar bridges the gap that separates such diverse disciplines as theory and mathematics. The scientific knowledge that theory yields is further confirmed by such a rapprochement among disciplines, traditionally perceived as opposites. De Man explains further:

> [The] articulation of the sciences of language with the mathematical sciences represents a particularly compelling version of a continuity between a theory of language, as logic, and knowledge of the phenomenal world to which mathematics gives access. (14)

The most important conclusion one draws from de Man's defence of theory is revealing about the status of scientificity. As part of theory, scientificity bridges the gap between scientific and humanistic disciplines and brings "scientific and humanistic knowledge" under the same umbrella of interdisciplinarity.

But since de Man--like Ransom, Richards, Frye, Hrushovsky, Balibar, Meyer, and all those literary critics who

have sought the transplantation of scientificity into their field of study--was not a mathematician, a physicist, or a biologist, his lumping science and critical theory together needs further support. This must come from pure scientists themselves, for hardly anybody would believe a literary critic's hypothesis that words function like atoms or like particles of light in an Einsteinian system. For if there were a physicist to confirm such a hypothesis and thereby lend support to the critic's hypothesis, then the question of scientificity in literary theory would logically be less troublesome.

Indeed, by launching itself into such an epistemological venture, which is that of the pursuit of scientificity either in emulation of the natural sciences or in opposition to their methodologies, criticism seems to have taken up a complex task. Yet, such a venture seems to have turned out to be a mixed blessing. Though this situation has multiplied criticism's problems and rendered its interpretive task more complex, it helped in the sharpening of its theoretical concepts and tools.

In fact, it was in response to the later developments of the history and philosophy of science that the notion of scientificity in criticism underwent some of its most radical metamorphoses. These modern developments helped narrow the gap

separating the two sides of the argument that literary criticism was trying so hard to reconcile. Assistance came from the scientists themselves. Now, many scientists perceived the natural sciences and the humanities as being close to each other rather than in sharp conflict. As Stephen Toulmin, a physicist, states:

> It is a pity then for scholars working in the humanities to continue shaping their critical attitudes and theories by relying on a contrast with a modern science that--among scientists themselves--no longer even seems to exist.. . . Instead, we should ask scholars to pay more attention to the elements of interpretation--even of hermeneutics--that have become essential to both the natural and human sciences and to base their comparisons between the sciences and the humanities not on the assumed absence of hermeneutic interpretation from natural science but rather on the different modes of interpretation characteristic of the two general fields. ("The Construal of Reality: Criticism in Modern and Postmodern Science" 101)

Such a radical move to bring science closer to the humanities, and criticism in particular, knew many converts among scientists, namely Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend, Michel Serres, and Richard Lewontin, to name just a few of those whose ideas are nowadays widely discussed. This move could be interpreted as a sign of grace conferred upon those critics seeking a science of criticism. It is not only literature specialists who are now calling for a revision of the epistemological status of scientific discourse but scientists themselves. To cite an important example from France, the physicist Jean-Marc Levy-Leblond has

put forward a penetrating critique of modern science, which he perceives as having historically developed toward "une défaite." He argues:

> . . .la science moderne, depuis son émergence à la fin de la Renaissance, est devenue progressivement "la" science tout court. Elle a relégué les autres formes de connaissance, rationnelle ou non, dans le passé historique ou dans la marge institutionnelle.. . . En quatre siècles, la science, telle que nous la connaissons désormais, s'est érigée en modèle hégémonique du savoir.. . . Mais l'histoire de ce triomphe est aussi celle d'une défaite. Au fur et à mesure qu'elle s'est affirmée comme référence majeure du discours social, la science à perdu contact avec la culture. (L'Esprit de sel 87)

Accordingly, if science is to serve its most genuine function in society, it must renew its dialogue with culture, understood here as "le savoir né de la sensibilité, de la subjectivité, le savoir même de la vie qui fonde la culture" (87).

Studies in the history and philosophy of science have contributed a great deal to the evolution of the concept of scientificity. A stronger rapprochement between the natural sciences and literary theory is confirmed. Not unlike Toulmin and Levy-Leblond, Raman Selden argues that "the use of analysis and models in the natural sciences suggests a much more poetic theory of scientific knowledge, and draws attention to the similarities between 'scientific' and

'non-scientific' disciplines, rather than the difference" (Criticism and Objectivity 35). Critical theory, consequently, benefited from this situation in order to pursue further the consolidation of its project of scientificity. The necessity to keep a clear line of demarcation between science and non-science was no longer imperative or defensible. In other words, the metaphor of scientificity is no longer forced to bind its meaning to empiricism and rationality as propounded earlier by the natural sciences. It must now account for some new theoretical impasses that have emerged within the methodology of the natural sciences themselves.

Indeed, the work of Kuhn, Lakatos, Toulmin, Feyerabend, Lyotard, and Castoriadis has been pivotal to recent studies in the history of scientific thought, as well as to the scientific interpretations of literature. This work needs to be studied in depth in order for us to understand the full significance of its effects on the development of critical theory and on the metaphor of scientificity itself. But since a detailed exposition of the work of these scientists and philosophers of science is beyond the scope of this discussion, I shall limit myself to addressing certain specific arguments relevant to the question of scientificity in the field of literary criticism. This will shed important light on the recent metamorphoses of the concept of scientificity, as well as provide for a wider theoretical

framework for the study of Leavis's and Macherey's critical principles.

Thomas Kuhn's work in particular, initiated by his theory of "paradigm shifts" as developed in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962), has brought a powerful critique to "Normal Science," the modes of scientific thought that dominate at any one particular period. His interpretation of the history of the natural sciences points out that, in the end, "normal science" does not differ very much from any discipline in the humanities. Not unlike criticism, for instance, "normal science" is governed by the workings of "paradigms" or dominant theories, the nature of scientific communities, the types of instruments used in research, and by a highly structured "built-in mechanism" that checks on "anomalies" in matters of knowledge (The Structure 24). Sometimes, because of the rigidity of scientific rules, it appears that the closest example to the structure of "normal science" is theology. To substantiate this point, Kuhn argues that "the nature of the educational initiation" (165) of young scientists into the mature practice of science through the rules of paradigms makes them "committed to the same rules and standards of scientific practice" that "seldom evoke overt disagreement over fundamentals" (11). Compared to education in "music, the graphic arts, and literature," scientific education is "narrow and rigid. . .probably more so than any

other except perhaps in orthodox theology" (166). To understand science we must, therefore, understand the functioning of "paradigms" and their "communities" first. For Kuhn, the term "paradigm" has two meanings: "it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques shared by the members of a given community"; at the same time, it "denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science" (175). While dependent on the functioning of a scientific community, "paradigms guide research by direct modeling as well as through abstracted rules" (47). Paradigm shifts or scientific revolutions occur when the dominant paradigm can no longer make room for the anomalies that arise. When "the profession can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice--then begin the extraordinary investigations that lead the profession. . .to a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science" (6). Furthermore, any radical changes that occur at the level of the paradigm directly affect the paradigm's network of relationships: "paradigm changes do cause scientists to see the world of their research-engagement differently" (111). In many ways, scientific theories become closer to literary theories. They are both affected by the nature of their constituencies and their socio-historical contexts. Indeed,

Kuhn concludes, "scientific knowledge, like language, is intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all. To understand it we shall need to know the special characteristics of the groups that create and use it" (210). Anchored in community practices, scientificity must forsake its traditional abode of objectivity and universal truth.

Accordingly, the belief that was held for a long time by empiricist and rationalist philosophies such as the Vienna Circle early in this century in the ontological development of science, its cumulative "progress" and the neutrality of its discourse no longer holds water (206; see also Hans Eichener, "The Rise of Modern Science" 21-22). In the past, this image of scientificity as a view of the world that is detached, impersonal, coherent, value-free, and universally true was in fact only part of the ideological requirements for the functioning of the dominant paradigms. "Science is obviously seldom or never. . .a single monolithic and unified enterprise," Kuhn adds. On the contrary, when "viewing all fields together, it seems instead a rather ramshackle structure with little coherence among its various parts" (<u>The Structure</u> 49). For instance, Kuhn points out, "although quantum mechanics--or Newtonian dynamics, or electromagnetic theory--is a paradigm for many scientific groups, it is not the same paradigm for them all" (50). Clearly, the consensus claimed among scientists often masks various divergences among

the different communities of scientists as well as within their individual specialties. These divergences are often smothered in order to allow the tradition of the paradigm to continue. Moreover, since both "normal science and revolutions are community-based activities" (179), the claim to the neutrality of a scientific language becomes a mere ideological statement: "as for a pure observation-language, perhaps one will yet be devised" (126). In the end, "science does not deal in all possible laboratory manipulations. Instead, it selects those relevant to the juxtaposition of a paradigm with the immediate experience that that paradigm has partially determined" (126).

Toulmin, for his part, corroborates this point in particular by arguing that "scientific discoveries are typically arrived at not by generalizing from preexisting <u>facts</u> but by providing answers to preexisting <u>questions</u>" (Toulmin, "The Construal of Reality" 101). What is problematized here by both Kuhn and Toulmin, besides "normal science," is the status of the scientific "fact" itself. The "fact," as an object of scientific investigation, is no longer a passive ontological entity that exists independently of the methods that seek to appropriate it; it is rather the <u>object of a method</u>. It responds directly to that method in its process of interpretation. In this context and with reference to modern physics, Toulmin maintains:

> The Newtonian choice for passive over active matter seems. . .to have turned as much on issues of social imagery--God being seen to "inspire" matter and confer motion on it, just as the king was seen to be the final source of political agency--as it did on genuine matters of scientific interpretation and explanation. (108)

The end-result of this problematization of the ontological status of the scientific "fact" has led in turn to the questioning of the nature of objectivity as well.

The notion of scientific objectivity which has been pivotal to those critical approaches aiming at an approximation of scientific rigour has thus been problematized by the Kuhnian theory of paradigms, and hence can no longer stand as a yardstick for measuring the validity of the epistemological status of critical discourse. Criticism would be wrong to expect the hard sciences to provide literary methods and their criteria of judgement with an exact scientific model to emulate (see Selden, Criticism and Objectivity 40). Scientific objectivity now bears a self-conscious critical character, a mechanism that allows it to scrutinize its method of analysis from all possible angles. Since the disappearance of the traditionally priviledged Archimedian vantage point--of naive realism--it seems that a relativistic view has slipped from the humanities into the field of "normal science," thereby problematizing the

relationship between the thinking subject (the scientist/critic) and the theorized object (the scientific fact/text). But as Kuhn insists, this does not mean that "anything goes" or that the scientific method should fall into some kind of blind subjectivism (Kuhn, The Structure 191). As Toulmin puts it so succinctly, "in the physical sciences, objectivity can now be achieved only in the way it is in the human sciences: the scientist must acknowledge and discount his own reactions to and influence on that which he seeks to understand" (Toulmin, "The Construal of Reality" 103).

By a kind of tour de force, we witness the return to a defence of intuition and imagination in science--something traditionalist critics and the Romantics propounded, and which Wellek considered to be unjustly excluded by scientific criticism. Toulmin goes on to argue,

> In sciences and humanities alike, we must be prepared to consider the products of human imagination and creation--whether ideas or artifacts, poems or theories--from a variety of different points of view, some of them internal to the immediate content and professional goal, others reflecting more the influence of external factors. (110)

Accordingly, the system that is deemed most scientific is the one that seems to be highly self-reflexive, capable of self-criticism, and conscious of the mechanisms--both intenal and external--that determine its legitimization and functioning.

This is one of the many facets of postmodern science, which Jean-Fançois Lyotard defines in the following terms:

> En s'intéressant aux indécidables, aux limites de la précision du contrôle, aux quanta, aux conflits â information non complète, aux "fracta", aux catastrophes, aux paradoxes pragmatiques, la science postmoderne fait la théorie de sa propre évolution comme discontinue, catastrophique, non rectifiable, paradoxale. Elle change le sens du mot savoir, et elle dit comment ce changement peut avoir lieu. Elle produit non pas du connu, mais de l'inconnu. Et elle suggère un modèle de légitimation qui n'est nullement celui de la meilleure performance, mais celui de la différence comprise comme paralogie. (La Condition Postmoderne 97)

The new science is now portrayed as a system capable of embracing all possible theories even when they are in contradiction with each other. It does not live on the exclusion of opposite discourses, but rather makes room for all the paradoxical ones that come its way.

Thus, Kuhn's, Toulmin's, and Lyotard's reflections on the development as well as the epistemological status of scientific discourse have narrowed the gap separating the natural sciences from the humanities. The alternatives they offer widen the scope of the metaphor of scientificity so as to embrace even those theoretical concepts that were branded in the past as "un-scientific." As a solution to the conflict that has pitted both disciplines against each other for

centuries, Kuhn calls for a comparative study between "the community structure of science" and "the corresponding communities in other fields." Toulmin, for his part, suggests that the aims of conflicting disciplines should be unified, whereas Lyotard proposes "un système ouvert" as the best alternative. For Kuhn, the comparative project he offers should begin by addressing the following key questions:

> How does one elect and how is one elected to membership in a particular community, scientific or not? What is the process and what are the stages of socialization to the group? What does the group collectively see as its goals; what deviations, individual or collective, will it tolerate; and how does it control the impermissible aberration? (Kuhn, The Structure 209)

Not unlike Kuhn, Toulmin suggests that methodological concerns in both disciplines should attend to the same goal:

> [C]ritical judgement in the natural sciences . . . is not geometrical, and critical interpretation in the humanities is not whimsical. In both spheres, the proper aims should be the same--that is, to be perceptive, illuminating, and reasonable. (Toulmin, "The Construal of Reality" 117; author's emphasis)

Indeed, the alternative Kuhn and Toulmin offer to a hegemonic "Normal Science" is that of a highly conscious theoretical system capable of analyzing the workings of its own method while analyzing its object and formulating its rules. The call is then for a science that is not distorted by any monolithic

rhetoric of power that hides ideologies of exclusion. It is, in Lyotard's terms, a "pragmatic open system":

> Pour autant qu'elle est différenciante, la science dans sa pragmatique offre l'antimodéle du système stable. Tout énoncé est à retenir du moment qu'il comporte de la différence avec ce qui est su, et qu'il est argumentable et prouvable. Elle est un modèle de "système ouvert" dans lequel la pertinence de l'énonce est qu'il "donne naissance à des idées", c'est-à-dire à d'autres énoncés et à d'autres régles de jeu. Il n'y a pas dans la science une métalangue générale dans laquelle toutes les autres peuvent être transcrites et évaluées. C'est ce qui interdit l'identification au système et, tout compte fait, la terreur. (Lyotard, La Condition 103-4)

In the light of such an argument, the concept of scientificity has acquired a wider significance which could be summed up in a single Kuhnian key-term: "incommensurability." It is this significance that grants the concept a sense of elasticity when applied to either "science" or "non-science." But most importantly, through this critique of "normal science," the concept of scientificity has moved into the terrain of ideology. A discourse that is marked "Scientific" can no longer pass through the gates of interpretation unchecked. After being perceived as the negation of ideology, scientificity now seems to have collided with it. Both concepts and their ramifications must now inhabit human discourse, be it "scientific" or "non-scientific."

Why Leavis and Macherey? On the one hand, both critics exemplify--although from opposite angles--a continual struggle with the question of scientificity in the domain of literary criticism. On the other hand, they both mark two crucial moments in the development of critical theory: Leavis witnessed and collaborated in the genesis of criticism as a distinct university discipline at Cambridge immediately after the First World War, whereas Macherey mediates some of the major principles of the "theoretical revolution" of the late 1960s in France, and later in England and North America. Moreover, thanks to Leavis and Macherey, scientificity in literary studies has undergone its major metamorphoses. In the meantime, both critics problematize the epistemological status of theory as science, of literature as a viable institution, and of interpretation as a political act.

Therefore, it will be necessary to look at Leavis's and Macherey's critical principles in detail in order to see how the idea of a scientific criticism has been addressed by two opposing critics who not only disagree on the role of theory and the nature of the literary text, but also belong to two different cultures and literary traditions: the English critic is marked by an empirical tradition that is "deeply rooted in the soil," whereas the other belongs to a French tradition that has been historically marked by philosophical abstraction. Leavis still remains an enigma and his work

ambiguous despite the debates he has aroused in various literary journals and departments of English throughout the world. In contrast, Macherey's work still remains obscure despite the attention it has drawn from those critics interested in the debates between the Structuralists, the Marxists, and the Deconstructivists (see Felperin, Beyond Deconstruction; Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology; and Bennett, Formalism and Marxism).

In their accounting for literature, criticism, and theory, both Leavis and Macherey have followed diverging theoretical and epistemological trajectories. The former fought against the notion of a science of criticism whereas the latter supported its possibility. In their conflicting attempts to analyze literature and define the criteria of its interpretation, they reveal the two sides of Wellek's polarity of "science versus intuition." Against the idea of scientificity in criticism, Leavis proposes such notions as "intuition," "sensibility," "organic culture," "life," and "human creativity." In contrast, Macherey views scientificity as the main ideal to be pursued by critical theory in order to achieve a "knowledge" that displaces ideology and "critical fallacies." Whereas Leavis calls for the "unity," "coherence," and "homogeneity" of the literary text, Macherey upholds the notions of "contradiction," "decenteredness," "absence," and "ideology" as necessary elements for his "rigorous" and

"scientific" system. However, the differences between these two critics are not always that clearly marked, for their theorization of literature--although Leavis would not admit to any theory--has led them into major theoretical impasses that are, in the final analysis, not totally dissimilar.

Thus, in the light of the major metamorphoses of the notion of scientificity, as developed in this first section, it is worth considering how Leavis and Macherey have conceived of criticism as a privileged discipline. Part Two, which consists of three chapters, deals with Leavis's critical principles as they develop towards a confrontation with the question of a scientific criticism. Leavis grants increasing attention to this question from 1962 onward, the year he published his Richmond lecture, "Two Cultures?" in response to C.P. Snow's Rede lecture in which the latter idealizes "the scientific culture." To understand Leavis's response to Snow and scientism, we need to address the Arnoldian legacy, especially in the way it conceived of the relationship between science, criticism, and literature. Leavis's argument against science finds many of its echoes in his controversy with Marxism, which he perceives as allied with destructive technology and negativity.

Part Three, which is also divided into three chapters, deals with Macherey's critical system and the elements of his

"theory of literary production." It also addresses the question of ideology in the scientific model posited by Macherey's Althusserian paradigm. Here, the main focus is on Macherey's concepts of "absence," the "non-dit," and "contradiction" as constitutive of literature and critical knowledge. The theoretical problematic that emerges from Macherey's theory is the difficulty of reconciling the "structure of absence" with scientificity and ideology.

Finally, Part Four draws a brief comparative assessment of the two critics' positions with reference to the status of literary criticism, theory, scientificity, and ideology. While drawing on Habermas's critique of modern scientific rationality, I shall point out the need to theorize criticism from the perspective of the theory of ideology. The main idea argued here is that the resistance to or the celebration of the concept of scientificity marks a crucial "moment" in the history of criticism and attests to its continual struggle for survival both as an academic activity and as a human epistemological practice. But in pursuing scientificity, criticism must beware of falling into the ideology of legitimization of particular epistemologies and worldviews.

In addressing these theoretical problems, I shall follow an analytic approach in order to point out the theoretical contradictions of particular systems of closure,

rather than pretending to offer final answers to all the questions raised.

PART TWO:

F.R. Leavis and the Question of Science: Critical Knowledge, Literary Standards, and Valuation

I. Revising the Arnoldian Tradition: Leavis's Criticism, Scientific Knowledge, and "Organic Culture"

> Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effects on our sincere and vital emotions and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion is merely impertinence and mostly dull jargon. (cited in F.R. Leavis, Valuation in Criticism 245-6)

This Lawrentian statement could easily have been uttered by F.R. Leavis. Indeed, he often expressed a similar attitude towards science, as opposed to "vital emotions," at various stages of his career (cf. Thought, Words and Creativity 47; and Education and the University 116). The statement quoted above also marks a clear demarcation between

criticism and science and sums up Leavis's view of the function of criticism; it offers a miniature picture of his representation of scientificity in the domain of literature. In fact, both Leavis's hostility to scientific knowledge and his defence of a critical realm of "emotion" and "sensibility" are nowadays taken for granted by the majority of scholars interested in Leavisite criticism. But what remains a bone of contention among these scholars is the nature of criticism Leavis offers. R.P. Bilan, for instance, sees Leavis as presenting "one of the most definite and coherent ideas of criticism of the twentieth century" (R.P. Bilan, The Literary Criticism of F.R. Leavis 61). Similarly, Gary Watson argues that "in England today the critical practice of the Leavises represents the only valid critical alternative" (The Leavises: the "Social" and the Left; cf. Pradham "Literary Criticism and Cultural Diagnosis," 393). John Needham for his part maintains that Leavis is "the best of the modern English critics because he kept to the central road of criticism, responding as a full human being to literature. . ." (The Completest Mode 158). In opposition to Bilan and Watson, other literary scholars have objected to Leavis's critical principles, for they perceive them as anti-scientific, flawed, and moralistic at heart. Colin MacCabe argues that "the Leavisite position of the mid-sixties (and the essential components were already in place in the late forties) retained a narrow focus on literature" ("The Cambridge Heritage" 248).

formulations depend wholly on. . .mistaken hypotheses. . ." (Literature and Method 203), while Howard Felperin says that "the Leavisite privileging of intuition over intellect, morality over form, evaluation over interpretation, conscience over consciousness. . .seem. . .fundamentally misguided" (Felperin, Beyond Deconstruction 16). These readings of Leavis's work, which are not always illfounded, base themselves mainly on his assessment of what he perceives as the cultural and spiritual crisis of the twentieth century that was generated by the technological revolution.

Yet, what most of these critics merely touch upon is the crucial relevance of Leavis's argument against the "scientific culture" to his formulation of a particular critical approach. In fact, this argument became more engaging after his confrontation with C.P. Snow in the early sixties. As a result, Leavis's perception of the interpretive method in criticism was directly affected by his negative attitude towards science. The peculiar representation of scientificity that he offers, seen basically as a threat to literary values, seems to have forced him--perhaps unawares--to theorize his critical principles, something he openly opposed in the exchanges he had with Wellek, Bateson, and Tanner. As he often argued, criticism and abstract theory were incompatible activities. To him, viewing literature as human experience anchored in a world of moral values such as "responsibility,"

activities. To him, viewing literature as human experience anchored in a world of moral values such as "responsibility," "sinsibility," and "collaborative" action renders criticism more appropriate to the study of literature and culture than any method propounding a scientific or philosophical epistemology. In fact, his confrontation with scientificity marked his discourse with a particular language which was not totally alien to the dominant scientific discourse of his time; hence the complexity of Leavis's statements about literature, criticism, and science.

Until his death in 1978, Leavis repeatedly defended himself against all these objections to his views of criticism and he formulated his own literary principles in response to those critiques directed against him. His criteria of analysis often swayed between the celebration of a particular pseudo-positivistic view of culture, since these criteria were marked by an empiricist bent, and an overt rejection of abstract hypotheses--whether philosophical or scientific--in defence of intuition and emotion. In so doing and despite his confession that "I neither believe in any special 'literary' value nor am hostile to science" (Nor Shall My Sword 152). Leavis tried to put forward a method of "judgement and analysis" that emphasized, such notions as "precision," "verification" of value-judgement (see The Living Principle 35), and the idea of the literary work as a "concrete" object of study whose

reading necessitates a kind of pseudo-objective "self-denial" on the part of the critic (Revaluation 10). These notions which Leavis shares with other critics, such as Eliot, Empson, and Richards in his early phase who have defended the possibility of an "objective" criticism, constitute his anti-scientific system. But these notions, most importantly, reveal also a central paradox in the theorization of his critical approach. His formulation of critical criteria remains positivistic at the level of its language but anti-positivistic and anti-scientific at the level of its cultural content. This is the major thesis that governs Leavis's theoretical vision.

However, this paradox or theoretical impasse which confronts Leavis's representation of scientific method cannot be understood simply on its own, without relating it to a complex network of principles. Some of these are indebted to an Arnoldian heritage while others are anchored in an English cultural tradition that extends back to Ruskin, Carlyle, and Coleridge (see Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 154; 248). Moreover, these principles pertain to his view of society, culture, and the function of both literature and criticism in a contemporary civilisation perceived as being on the brink of chaos. As Leavis pointed out in 1933, "when disintegration, social and cultural, has set in, the business of criticism becomes very difficult of performance" (Towards

Standards of Criticism 5). This is why I find it imperative to look first at Leavis's theory of culture in its relationship to the question of science. For in his critical model, interpretive method is caught between a desire to instaure a lost past of organic culture and to formulate a critical method in response to the hegemony of science. Moreover, the influence of the English cultural tradition on Leavis's understanding of these questions offers us some significant clues as to the nature of this critical system.

Indeed, among Leavis's early concerns which brought him popularity at Cambridge Univesity was his attention to the importance of culture in securing a remedy for the post-war crisis of English society. While addressing the questions of literature, criticism, and scientific method, he worked towards the formulation of a cultural theory that was to remain long a central component of his theorization of criticism and his representation of science. Yet, his discussion of culture never produced a systematic theory. The elements of such a "theory" must be gathered from the various pronouncements Leavis made about society and literature in general in order for us to understand what his real aim was. Often, his definitions of concepts, especially of "organic culture," which he idealized, remain quite ambiguous. Nevertheless, his contribution to the debate around the question of culture proved fruitful in the English context.

For it was this question of culture, which subsequently had direct influence on the development of a number of cultural critics in England, namely R. Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, R. Williams, S. Hall, and others (see Lesley Johnson, The Cultural Critics), and led in the end to the foundation by Hoggart in 1959 of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (see Michael Green, "The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies," 77-90).

What was to occupy primary attention in Leavisite thinking then was the fate of "organic culture." It was the idea of an "organic society" in particular which became central to his worldview even when he emphasized criticism as a special "discipline of thought" with its claim to clearly defined standards of "precision," empirical attention to "the words on the page," and "sensibility" in critical response. In his first pamphlet, Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture (1930), Leavis points out that the crisis of modern society is a crisis of culture, resulting from the disintegration of the "organic society" of the past. "It is a commonplace to-day," he argues, "that culture is at a crisis. It is a commonplace more widely accepted than understood: at any rate, realisation of what the crisis portends does not seem to be common" (Mass Civilisation 5). To Leavis, this crisis is part of the ethos of modern technologized civilisation, a situation that is enhanced by rapid change, the negative effects of technology,

mass-production, and the standardization of values.

To illustrate this point about the effects of industrialism, he refers to the machine as the symbol par excellence that mediates the nature of this crisis of culture. He says:

> The machine, in the first place has brought change in habit and the circumstances of life at a rate for which we have no parallel . . . Change has been so catastrophic that the generations find it hard to adjust themselves to each other, and parents are helpless to deal with their children. It seems unlikely that the conditions of life can be transformed in this way without some injury to the standards of living . . . : improvisation can hardly replace the delicate traditional adjustments, the mature, inherited codes of habit and valuation, without severe loss, and loss that may be more than temporary. It is a breach in continuity that threatens: what has been inadvertently dropped may be irrecoverable or forgotten. (Mass Civilisation 6-7)

Modern "civilisation" has become a threat to "culture." Consisting of "inherited codes of habit" this culture is based upon an important sense of tradition. It seeks to ensure the continuity of a particular sense of cohesion among all the members of the community; hence its "organic" character. The advent of the modern age, according to Leavis, has brought with it a civilisation that negates nearly all the elements of this "organic culture." As a result, the future of such a culture has become bleak, but without being totally hopeless: "the prospects of culture, then, are very dark. There is the

less room for hope in that a standardised civilisation is rapidly enveloping the whole world" (30).

Indeed, in opposing "culture" and "civilisation," Leavis perceives the former as the responsibility of a select minority and represents the Arnoldian principle of "the best that has been thought in the world." In contrast, the latter stands for the uncouth practices of the populace who are said to be enslaved by the intervention of the machine and the unspiritual materialism of the market-oriented technology of publicity in their lives. Such a state of affairs is best exemplified by the alienating effects of the media and the film industry on the masses:

> The films. . .provide now the main form of recreation in the civilised world; and they involve surrender, under conditions of hypnotic receptivity, to the cheapest emotional appeals, appeals the more insidious because they are associated with a compellingly vivid illusion of actual life. (9-10)

Accordingly, the illusory and alienating effects of consumerist civilisation negate the authenticity of the modes of feeling in the "organic" world. And "feeling," like "emotion" and "sincere" responsiveness, is an essential component of Leavis's theorization of culture and criticism. These romantic concepts offer major bases on which Leavis seeks to build his refutation of scientificity.

However, in perceiving "civilisation" and "culture" as "antithetical terms," Leavis reverses the order of history as well as the dominant conception of his contemporary world. Instead of portraying civilisation as progress, he perceives it as "civilized barbarity, complacent, self-indulgent and ignorant. . .[It] can see nothing to be quarrelled with in believing, or wanting to believe, that a computer can write a poem" (Nor Shall my Sword 207). Technology is, therefore, incapable of generating or effecting authentic and "vital" human emotions; the "cheapest emotional appeals" it effects among the masses are inimical to a "healthy" cultural order as reflected in the "organic" society of the seventeenth century, for instance.

For an alternative to modernity and consumerist civilisation, Leavis turns his attention to the pre-industrial past as a genuine epitome of all refined modes of thought and living. These modes are expressed in the language of "art-speech," mediating "organic culture" as it is found, for instance, in the works of Shakespeare, Bunyan, and Donne. Commenting on a passage from Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress, Leavis says that the language here is

> plainly traditional art and, equally plainly the life in it is of the people. . .The names and racy turns are organic with the general styles and the style, concentrating the life of popular idiom, is the expression of popular habit--the expression of a vigorous humane culture. For what is involved is not merely an idiomatic raciness of speech,

> expressing a strong vitality, but an art of social living, with its mature habits of valuation. . . . There would have been no Shakespeare and no Bunyan if in their time, with all its disadvantages by present standards, there had not been, living in the daily life of the people, a positive culture which has disappeared. (The Common Pursuit 208)[1]

For Leavis, the modes of living expressed by "popular idiom" or "art-speech" mediate other notions such as "life," "vitality," "tradition," and the "continuity" of a "humane culture." These are necessary ingredients for an ideal culture that would produce poets and artists such as Donne, Blake, or Lawrence. The elements of an "organic society" are held together by a center of authority that looks after the health of the culture and its cohesion. Cultural disintegration means that "the power and sense of authority are. . .divorced from culture" (Mass Civilisation 26). This locus of authority is later attributed to the discipline of criticism through its institutionalization at the university and is supported by a critical review like The Calendar or Scrutiny.

As to the empirical proof for the existence of this conceptualized "organic culture," Leavis relied mostly on two books, The Wheelwright Shop (1923) and Change in the Village (1912), by George Sturt (George Bourne), which depict the

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[1] In Culture and Environment, p. 2, Leavis and Thompson describe The Pilgrim's Progress as the "supreme expression" of organic culture.

beginning of the Industrial Revolution and its effects on rural England. Leavis relied also on the "anthropological" studies of Q.D. Leavis in her Fiction and the Reading Public (1932). This book which was published the year Scrutiny was launched, had a direct influence on the Scrutineers' method of analysis, especially in their reviews of the novel.[2] Queenie Leavis's interpretation of the history of the English novel and old England's determining role in generating the classics of literature resembles F.R. Leavis's reading of the "great tradition." The following passage from the last public lecture she gave in her lifetime sums up her views of literature, "organic culture," and modern civilisation. She says:

> The England that bore the classical English novel has gone forever, and we can't expect a country of high-rise flat-dwellers, office workers and factory robots and unassimilated multi-racial minorities, with a suburbanized countryside, factory farming, sexual emancipation without responsibility, rising crime and violence, and the Trade Union mentality, to give rise to a literature comparable with its novel tradition of a so different past. (Collected Essays 325)

Here, Queenie Leavis's view of the fate of the idealized culture of the past seems to be even more radically to the right and more pessimistic than that of her husband. But her rejection of nearly all signs of modernity, including women's

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[2] See G. Singh, Editor's Introduction, Collected Essays: Vol. One: The Englishness of the English Novel by Q. D. Leavis, p. 2; and F. R. Leavis, "'Scrutiny': A Retrospect," Scrutiny, Vol. 20 (1963), pp. 2, 9, and 13.

liberation movements, lends strong support to the general Leavisite principle of culture. Moreover, her insistence on the role of the "puritan conscience" in enhancing the emergence of the English classical tradition points towards F. R. Leavis's own privileging of figures like Bunyan and Lawrence and their worldviews, especially their emphasis on morality and religion as imperative dimensions to a healthy cultural order. Indeed, talking about the novelists he selects to represent the "great tradition," Leavis maintains that "they are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity" (The Great Tradition 18).

As for Sturt's testimony to the disappearance of old crafts and traditional skills as a result of the spread of technology, it is widely discussed by Leavis and Thompson in their collaborative work, Culture and Environment. For Sturt, the wheelwright's shop is the symbol of a thoroughly humane "organic" order that centered around a kind of tacit "folk knowledge." Bourne maintains that

> A good wheelwright knew by art but not by reason the proportion to keep between spoke and felloes; and so too a good smith knew how tight a two-and-a-half inch tyre should be made for a five foot wheel and how tight for a four foot. He felt it, in his bones. It was perception with him. (G. Bourne, qtd. in Eugene Goodheart, The Failure of Criticism 17)

There is a kind of mystery in this antique skill the wheelwright possesses and feels "in his bones." It is an essential skill that is lacking in contemporary technologized civilisation and whose disappearance is lamented by the Leavises. When F.R. Leavis later recalls his initial reading of Sturt's work, he says that the wheelwright's work presents a variety of traditional skills which "contained a full human meaning" and "kept a human significance always present, and this was a climate in which the craftsman lived and worked. Lived as he worked" (Nor Shall my Sword 85).

However, this quality of humanness, like that of the claimed organic nature of pre-industrial societies, remains highly ambiguous. For despite Leavis's insistance on clear definitions and critical "discrimination," the idea of "village life" as the examplar of this "organic" human culture must remain "self-explanatory" (Culture and Environment 83; emphasis added). It is grasped mainly through a number of symbols and metaphors. Like the symbol of the machine in the context of a technological civilisation, the wheelwright's shop, as described by Bourne and appropriated by Leavis, becomes a symbol of the "organic society." In fact, the wheelwright's shop is a motif that occurs regularly in Leavis's discussions of the relationship between "civilisation" and "culture" to illustrate the idea of a cohesive community. However, such a view of the "organic

society" and Leavis's theory of culture in general present a number of theoretical problems.

First, Leavis does not problematize the relationship between classical literature and its supposed referent, the "organic society." He reads the works of the poets, dramatists, and novelists whom he idealises in a realistic manner: There would have been no Bunyan without an organic culture. Here language mirrors society unproblematically. In fact, it was this realist method of reading à la Goldmann which has appealed to the left-Leavisites, who flirted with traditional Marxism, as well as to proponents of the sociology of literature. In fact, Q.D. Leavis was well aware of this critical orientation of their project: "I should if challenged, sum up my work as literary criticism which is directed towards the sociology of literature and the arts in general" (Collected Essays 24). This theoretical limitation is partly the result of Leavis's rejection of scientificity and theory, and of his conscious refusal to engage in abstraction. He perceives literary language, in Bunyan or Sturt for example, as a non-problematic mimetic form and a purely realistic reflection of "organic living"; hence Leavis's idealization of nineteeenth century novelists in The Great Tradition. It is as if the literature of the twentieth century, with its symbolist and modernist trends did not count.

Second, Leavis perceives the type of community preceding the emergence of the Industrial Revolution as a homogeneous totality without any contradictions. This view turns the perceived "organic society" more into a myth than a reality. As Lesley Johnson says, it is rather a "fantasy" (The Cultural Critics 107). To a large extent, Andrew Milner is right in pointing out that it is the "absence of a concept of contradiction which lies at the root of all major weaknesses in Leavis's system" ("Leavis and English Literary Criticism" 101). It seems that in this system, it is only the "organic society" that is absolved from contradiction, for Leavis perceives paradoxes and negations at all levels of modern civilisation, but not at the level of the traditional society. In many ways, his "organic" world coincides with Lukacs's "epic" universe. For Lukacs, "the community [of the epic]. . .is an organic--and therefore intrinsically meaningful--concrete totality; that is why the substance of adventure in an epic is always articulated, never closed" (The Theory of the Novel 67). Notwithstanding the radical difference between Lukacs and Leavis, in both the organic and the epic worlds, disintegration has yet not befallen human beings, and the gods--as it were--are still watching over the cohesion of the order of things: "the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God" (88), Lukacs says. For

both Leavis and Lukacs, only with the arrival of modernity does chaos set in.

Third, from a methodological perspective, in perceiving his ideal cultural order as unified and homogeneous, Leavis posits a possible world that is devoid of any ruptures or radical change; hence his insistence on the principle of a "cultural continuity" mediated by language and the Church (Nor Shall My Sword 184). The English language in particular "registers the consequences of many generations of creative response to living: implicit valuations, interpretive constructions, ordering moulds and frames, basic assumptions" (184). When this order changes under the impact of technology, the latter is understood as an alien force coming from an extraterritorial universe. Leavis would hardly admit that the radical change effected by technology actually emanated from elements that were inherent in the structure of the "organic" world itself. When he talks about "creative renewal which means change in every present," he seems to imply the reproduction of cultural sameness to maintain the continuity of "organic" relations (see English Literature in Our Time 184). Moreover, while rejecting change at the level of the organic society, he vehemently campaigns for a radical change of modern civilisation through the spread of literary criticism, whose aim is to instaure a traditional order. In other words, he is for reversed social change, but not for

historical development of the present from the past. Ironically, Leavis's idea of cultural continuity annuls historical continuity, thus refusing to establish any direct link between modernity and the possible contradictions that were part of the "organic" society of the seventeenth century.

The call of the Leavisite cultural model is for a stable system that abolishes the historicity of cultures. In so doing, Leavis rejects contradiction and dismisses change from his idealized culture, thereby undermining the logic of his whole critical project. He calls for a radical transformation of modern civilization but denies organic societies the potential for historical change. Hence, in his attempt to formulate a totalizing theory of culture, Leavis has defeated his own purpose: what remains excluded from the totalized object of his analysis in the end is not "civilisation" but the "organic society" itself. Because the latter belongs to an a priori coherent order, it stands outside the periphery of any changing world that might negate it or transform it into something different. Critical practice need not approach this organic order. And even when it does, its role is merely to confirm the truthfulness of its cohesion, not its contradiction.

In assessing this Leavisite cultural model, Perry Anderson maintains that we should not understand it as a

special case, "as a reflection of megalomania on the part of Leavis." On the contrary, "it is a symptom of the objective vacuum at the centre of the [English] culture" (Anderson, "Components of the National Culture" 269). The Leavisite cultural project is, accordingly, a part of a whole English epistemological phenomenon that nationally concerned itself with a search for homogeneous epistemological totality; hence its insistence on "organic" relationships among all the participants in any cultural practice, whether they are artisans, readers, or teachers of literature. Anderson further explains:

> The central idea of this epistemology. . . demands one crucial precondiction: a shared, stable system of beliefs and values. Without this, no loyal exchange and report is possible. If the basic formation and outlook of readers diverges, their experience will be incommunicable. Leavis's whole method presupposes, in fact, a morally and culturally unified audience. In its absence, his epistemology disintegrates. ("Components" 271)

Indeed, the question of audience, like that of the function of an educated public, is crucial to this epistemology. According to Leavis, without the existence of "a large and cultivated public," the effects of criticism in securing cultural renewal is directly threatened (see Towards Standards xi, 20). "What we need to look to," he goes on to argue, "what we have to ensure and power, is the maintenance of cultural continuity by a body of the educated" (Nor Shall

My Sword 131). Enhanced by an academic center like the university and a literary review like The Calendar or Madox Ford's English Review, this educated public would keep the creative critical process alive in society. In the mid 1920s when The Calendar was being launched, the absence of such a public was a serious problem to which Leavis's circle devoted much of their attention. As he was to recall later on, "the disappearance of the cultivated public and the need for an intelligent and courageous critical organ were familiar topics at our Fridays" (Towards Standards xvii). The seriousness of the case, then, manifested itself in the lack of a responsive public needed for the consolidation of the proposed cultural project. And when both The Calendar and Scrutiny failed, much blame was thrown upon this lack. In 1976, Leavis protested:

> A public capable of appreciating the scandal of the Arts Council's way with literature doesn't exist. The obvious manifestation of such non-existence is the absence, not merely of any serious literary-critical organ, but also of any intelligent concern for the critical function (that is, for literature) in the respectable newspapers and weeklies. (Towards Standards viii)

This idea of an "intelligent" and "educated" public seems to be only an extension of Leavis's earlier conception of the educated "minority" which was meant to initiate the desired cultural revival but was missing. Already in the 1930s, in

Mass Civilization and Minority Culture, Leavis portrayed the sought cultured elite in similar terms:

> The minority capable not only of appreciating Dante, Shakespeare, Donne, Baudelaire, Hardy (to name major instances) but of recognising their latest successors constitute the consciousness of the race (or of a branch of it) at a given time. For such capacity does not belong merely to an isolated aesthetic realm: it implies responsiveness to theory as well as to art, to science and philosophy in so far as these may affect the sense of the human situation and of the nature of life. Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition. (5)

On the one hand, through this appeal to "the consciousness of the race," the idea of the public is extended further so as to embrace the whole "human race," thereby acquiring a totalizing dimension. On the other hand, although this view of the public is selective and elitist, as some critics of the Leavisite system have rightly pointed out (see McCallum, Literature and Method 162; and Baldick, The Mission 164-65 and passim), it still draws on a totalizing conception of culture, merging theory, science, philosophy, and aesthetics together into a single realm, that of the humanist tradition. Thus, in opposing specialization at the level of his ideal "minority" and "public," Leavis tends to relegate scientific knowledge to a secondary position; it is part of the consciousness of the race only in so far as it "may affect the sense of the human situation and the nature of life." Otherwise, it is excluded,

for then it only becomes the concern of a "herd." As the founders of The Calendar announced in their first issue in 1925, "the reader we have in mind, the ideal reader, is not one with whom we share any particular set of admirations and beliefs. The age of idols is past, for an idol implies a herd of literary worshippers" (Towards Standards 27). Specialization, therefore, means a "herd" and both terms threaten the organic community, which must look for a coherent totality that transcends all differences among its members as well as its disciplines:

> Today there is only the race, the biological-economic environment; and the individual. Between these extremes there is no class, craft, art, sex, sect or other sub-division which, it seems to us, can claim privilege of the rest. (27)

"Organic culture" becomes the metaphor that dominates Leavisite discourse whenever it scrutinizes any cultural, philosophical, or scientific concepts. Like every term that Leavis recommends as an essential component of the critic's and the scientist's epistemological repertoire, criticism and science are defined and criticized, while their functions are scrutinized, through a fixed meaning of the "organic culture." Both science and criticism are judged in accordance with what they offer in terms of the possibility of retrieving, creating or maintaining the "continuity" of this "organic" human world. For the standards of criticism to be of value, especially

within the educational system that Leavis defends, they must help reconstruct the "tradition" of English Literature, for the latter mirrors genuine culture and ensures its continuity in a present that is hostile to it. With a strong sense of commitment to such a project, Leavis argues:

> Our business, our vital need, is to maintain the continuity of life and consciousness that a cultural tradition is, and not to lose anything essential from our heritage--the heritage that is only kept alive by creative renewal (which means change) in every present. If we continue to have an influential educated public, a responsible public that cares for and represents the heritage and is concerned (as such a public will be) to get it shared as widely as possible, we shall hear much less of the lost sense of purpose. And we can't forsee what, by its creative action in the third realm (which the technologico-Benthamite world despises and ignores) a living cultural tradition may do for humanity. (English Literature in Our Time 184)

Literature has now been turned into a substitute for the lost culture, "a substitute living": the aim of education as the cultivation of critical awareness "should be to give command of the art of living" (Culture and Environment 107). In assuming such an important responsibility, literature and criticism must cultivate organic sensibility in order to make the public conscious of the lost culture as well as of the destructiveness of contemporary civilisation. As Leavis further argues:

> to form it. . .--for that, rather, is what the critical function looks like when decay has gone so far. (For Continuity 183)

Not unlike literature, criticism is entrusted with a double task: to re-instaure an organic and authentic sensibility on the one hand, and to combat the destructive manifestations of scientific knowledge on the other. But in order to fulfill such a task, criticism needs a modus operandi that allows it to address the nature of method as in the other disciplines, particularly in the natural sciences; hence Leavis's uneasy insistence in the previous quotation on "test[ing]" and "defin[ing]" critical judgements. To circumvent this pradoxical situation, Leavis offers a number of critical standards which he anchors, in the final analysis, in a humanist discourse that posits an a priori cultural ideal. He asserts:

> In the rapidly changing external civilization of the technological age it is particularly necessary that the consciousness of human responsibility and what it involves should be cultivated and strengthened to the utmost -- that there should be a directing sense of human need and human ends the most richly charged with human experience that can be made to prevail. (Nor Shall My Sword 140-41; emphasis added)

The hammering on the word "human" in this statement, as Leavis so often does in his writing, signals the boundaries of the epistemological space that criticism must inhabit. With such emphasis, he voices a sense of urgency in the need to defend

humanism as a way of consolidating the mission which criticism must fulfill. Nonetheless, this emphasis betrays a kind of fading away of the exact meaning of this humanism itself, to the extent that the word "human" becomes vague and abstract: It embraces all possible positive categories while displacing whatever science stands for. In the end, the term "human," like "organic," is turned into an essentialist, totalizing metaphor whose primary aim is to displace scientificity in critical thought.

This point is made clearer in Leavis's argument against C.P. Snow during their controversy around the question of the "two cultures": science and the Humanities. In rejecting the privileged status that Snow and other scientists grant the natural sciences in education, Leavis insists on the primacy of humanist concerns in any discipline deserving attention in the modern world:

> [T]he advance of science and technology means a human future of change so rapid and of such kinds, of tests and challenges as unprecedented, of decisions and possible non-decisions so momentous and insidious in their consequences, that mankind --this is surely clear--will need to be in <u>full intelligent possession of its full humanity</u>. (<u>Two Cultures?</u> 26; emphasis added)

The value of scientific thought is judged by its results and consequences. This is why, in order to grasp the real significance of what Leavis offers as an alternative to

The value of scientific thought is judged by its results and consequences. This is why, in order to grasp the real significance of what Leavis offers as an alternative to scientificity, we need to look carefully at the way he portrays the world of technology, which negates the "organic" universe and its humanism. Indeed, in circumventing the problem of a scientific method, Leavis nearly always points out the negative effects of science as technology instead of rationalizing the theoretical principles of the method refuted. As Pamela McCallum has pointed out, this attitude is part of the empiricist bent that marks the Leavisite mode of thought and places it at the heart of the English cultural tradition (see McCallum, Literature and Method 201).

Since Leavis's early works and right up to his death in 1978, the question of science is a motif that is constantly yoked to "technologico-Benthamism," and is evoked along with a number of negative effects on "life," "continuity," "creativity," and "organic" modes of living. From Culture and Environment through to The Living Principle (1975), Leavis's critique of science is construed through a series of associations defining it in relationship to a plethora of criteria that constitute his theory of the "organic culture." In the same way that he traces the moment of the "organic society" to the time before the Industrial Revolution, Leavis

situates the beginning of "the great change," that of "the confident start of science upon its accelerating advance," in the seventeenth century (Nor Shall My Sword 126). For him the "Great Cause," the initiator of the modern crisis in civilisation, is science. Its effects seem to pervade every sector of modern culture; hence his perception of technology as a negative totalization of all manifestations of modernity. Science seems to totalize all the negations of the lost "organic culture." This negative totality is not only that of scientific method but also of the effects of knowledge gained by it:

> Science, scientific method and scientific thought, science as represented by the Royal Society. . . has a profound effect on non-specialist intellectual ideals, on the habits of assumption and valuation that marked the educated, on the conception of Nature, on the cosmos and Man's place in it, on standards of civilized conduct, on the prevailing notion of civilization, on architecture, on ethics, on religion, on the English language. (172-73)

Such a spectral and contemptuous image of science in its invasion of all walks of life and forms of thought is fully embodied, in Leavis's view, by the country that has unquestionably become the symbol of modernity for nearly all twentieth-century cultural critics, from O. Spengler to H. Marcuse. It is America which, with its heavy reliance on

scientific research and technology has secured a leading role for itself in the modern world. Because of its technological culture, America came to represent for Leavis the full embodiment of technologico-Benthamism, his bête noire. Indeed, in his eyes, America constitutes a major threat to genuine English culture, its continuity, and its "religious spirit" which represent the pillars of authentic organic existence. In his sustained faithfulness to Arnold's views, Leavis compares the threat that American technological culture represents to the threat of the spread of "spiritual philistinism" and moral decay which Arnold perceived in Holland in the nineteenth century:

> What threatens us, the alternative to successful resistance, is too unspeakably repellent--the hope is the recognition of that. What we face in immediate view is a nightmare intensification of what Arnold feared. He saw this country in danger of becoming a greater Holland; we see it unmistakably turning with rapid acceleration into a little America.. . . We see in fact a blind and complacent acceptance of the process by which this country is ceasing to maintain its cultural continuity or to have a constitutive character at all--to be anything more (final triumph of spiritual Philistinism) than a political, economic and administrative identity. (English Literature in Our Time 33)

This dreaded influence has already manifested itself, in the lower strata of English culture, in the spread of Pop Art among the masses, and at "higher cultural levels," where Leavis maintains, "we have to fight it" (34). The sphere of struggle is thus located at the level of the university where

criticism and literature are said to have been eroded by American standards of valuation:

> It has become current as matter of commonplace that. . .in literary criticism America has an obvious superiority, that American work in scholarship and criticism has in our time performed the major service to English literature.
>
> The significance of these positions lies in their being so utterly ungrounded. (34)

These views of American culture convey a position that is clearly nationalistic, often blindly patriotic, and hostile to anything American. Commenting on Leavis's position towards American literature, Wellek accurately points out that "the American novel enters somehow sideways into the great tradition, with Hawthorne as the ancestor of James and Mark Twain," adding that Leavis disparages most American novelists and "becomes more and more anti-American, not, as he avows, on personal or nationalistic grounds but for fear of Americanization" ("The Latter Leavis" 497-8). Yet, if we consider Leavis's indirect response to this judgement, a different explanation must be sought. He says that his critique of American culture "has nothing of the chauvinist in it and a very different thing from patriotic nationalism. Nor has the spirit of it the least touch of contemporary nostalgia for lost imperial 'greatness'" (<u>English Literature in Our Time</u> 34-35). Similarly, he maintains elsewhere that "it is

misleading to describe me as anti-American" (Nor Shall My Sword 133). The answer Leavis offers urges us to look elsewhere for the reasons behind his vehement critique of modern American society as well as its scientific and technological culture. At the same time, his answer can explain the reasons that have prompted him to oust scientificity from the sphere of literary criticism.

In a key passage that appeared first in Education and the University in 1943, and which Leavis quoted later in 1972 in Nor Shall My Sword, he reaffirms his opposition to American culture and offers an explanation for such a view:

> American conditions are the conditions of modern civilization, even if the 'drift' has gone futher on the other side of the Atlantic than on this. On the one hand there is the enormous technical complexity of civilization, a complexity that could be dealt with only by an answering efficiency of co-ordination--a co-operative concentration of knowledge, understanding and will . . .On the other hand, the social and cultural disintegration that has accompanied the development of the inhumanly complex machinery is destroying what should have controlled the working. It is as if society, in so complicating and extending the machinery of organization, had incurred a progressive debility of consciousness and of the powers of co-ordination and control--lost intelligence, memory and moral purpose. . . The inadequacy to their function of statesmen and labour-leaders is notorious, depressing and inevitable, and in our time only the very naive have been able to be exhilarated by the hopes of revolutionaries. The complexities being what they are, the general drift has been technocratic, and the effective conception of the human ends to be served that accompanies a preoccupation with the smooth running of the machinery tends to be a drastically simplified one. The war, by providing

> imperious immediate ends and immediately all-sufficient motives, has produced a simplification that enables the machinery, now more tyrannically complex than ever before, to run with marvellous efficiency. The greater is the need for insisting on the nature of the problem that the simplification does not solve, and on the dangers that, when this war is over, will be left more menacing than before, though not necessarily more attended to. (201-2)

Three major points here recapitulate Leavis's general representation of American culture, and by implication, of technology and science. On the one hand, there is a "technical complexity" that is injected into modern society by the presence of machinery at all levels of the social order. This has led to a "simplification" in the conceptualization of the functioning of the human order. On the other hand, there are the negative consequences this state of affairs has effected: "social and cultural disintegration"; the breakdown of every centre of authority; and a process of individual alienation, which manifests itself in a "debility of consciousness" and a loss of "intelligence, memory and moral purpose." The third point, which Leavis indicates as the determining factor of the modern condition, and which actually marks a break in his thought in this passage, is the event of the war. As the war is recalled in the last instance, what brings it to mind here is the machinery and the complexity it adds to the running of the system. The war seems to mark a digressive break in his thinking. Being a destructive agent, the war has necessitated

technology and science, complexity in human relationships, and caused havoc. For Leavis, "more and more does human life depart from the natural rhythms, the cultures have mingled, and the forms have dissolved into chaos" (cit. in Iain Wright, "F. R. Leavis, the 'Scrutiny' Movement and the Crisis" 41). The war blurred all the landmarks that maintained the stability of the social order of the past. Ultimately, the war turns out to be a signifier that has displaced not only all the significations of science and technology as signs of modernity, but those of the organic society as genuine existence as well.

Indeed, Leavis seems to evoke the war with a kind of obsessive cadence throughout his writings. For him, the war destroyed creativity, killed the "young genius" Lawrence, and "may be said to have killed Ford's English Review in advance" (Towards Standards xi). Moreover, "what the strain of the war did was to accelerate the essential development of modern civilization. That civilization depended more and more on technology, its economy more and more on millions and statistics" (xv). The war was a drastic "rupture" in the continuity of culture and history, causing a "mass of destruction and disintegration." For Leavis, only Eliot's poetry, especially Four Quartets seems to be capable of capturing the real significance of this "plight." "The central Eliotic preoccupation," Leavis argues, what is "at the sick

deep centre of the modern psyche. . .may be called the technologico-Benthamite plight" (Nor Shall My Sword 122). To a large extent, the war bears a metonymic relationship to science and technology; it is conceived as another facet of the same negative totality: "the war being more representative of the totality of the real drives of developing industrial civilization" (xii).

Leavis had first-hand experience of war working as a stretcher-bearer at the front during the First World War, and the trauma of this experience was to remain with him all his life. However, Leavis's view of war goes beyond simple personal experiences. As an intellectual, he was not alone in his attitude towards war. To a large extent, his views mediate the consciousness of a whole generation of English and European intellectuals who addressed this enigma of destruction in their writings. Among his English contemporaries, one would cite Eliot, Richards, Orwell, Forster, Caudwell, Auden, Lawrence, and Tawney, among others. They offered different explanations for this "rupture," but all threw much of the blame upon technology and science. For instance, George Steiner offers a view parallel to Leavis's. Steiner says:

> What had turned professional, essentially limited warfare into massacre? Different factors intervened: the murderous solidification of the trenches, fire-power, the sheer space covered by

> the eastern and western fronts. But there was also, one suspects, a matter of automatism: once the elaborate machinery of conscription, transport and manufacture had slipped into gear, it became exceedingly difficult to stop. The enterprise had its own logic outside reason and human needs. (Steiner, In Bluebeard's Castle: Notes Towards the Re-definition of Culture 32)

Steiner's idea of "automatism" here relates directly to Leavis's view of the "complexity" and "marvellous efficiency" of the war machinery. For both writers, technology generated a destructive logic that became the negation of all forms of human necessity.

Lying at the heart of Leavis's explicit marginalization and then abandonment of the project of scientificity in his theorization of culture is the war, with its images of death and destruction against which he continuously celebrated the idea of "human life": "there is a drawing unselfrecognized conviction that we can get on, and get on better, without much life; and that is the most frightening thing about our civilization" (Nor Shall My Sword 33). On "life" depends creativity, continuity, and all the other positive values of an ideal order of things:

> [I]n speaking of the need to maintain cultural continuity, [I] insist that the maintaining, being either a strongly positive drive of life or pitifully nothing, is creative. Only in terms of literature can this truth be asserted with effect in our world, and the asserting must be, not a

> matter of dialectic, but itself, in a patently illustrative way, an assertion of life. And here I state the unique nature, and the central importance, of English as a university study. (120)

In positing English literature as a discipline of thought that is capable of saving "creativity" and "life" and of opposing technology, war, and science, Leavis reconfirms the presence of a strong intellectual bond that links him to an intellectual English tradition extending from Coleridge and Arnold up to Lawrence and Williams. In fact, Leavis's celebration of the principle of "life" is a restatement of Lawrence's philosophy of creativity, which is held in direct opposition to scientific knowledge. Lawrence says:

> [It] may be said that every genuine creative writer's work is the discovery of a new way. Life is unamenable to mathematical or quantitative finality or treatment, and every creative writer is a servant of life. The dualism of subject and object, fact and value--it faces us, unprofitably, with all the problems of epistemology--is hostile to life. (quot. in F. R. Leavis, Thought, Words, and Creativity 45)

For both Lawrence and Leavis, it is the negation of "life" as effected by warfare which leads them, in the end, to oppose scientific knowledge and reinstate a philosophy of creativity as an alternative. In addition to this significance that Leavis attributes to the war, there is his faithfulness to

the Arnoldian tradition which he revises, without in fact radically veering from its path. This tradition had always read science through a privileging of poetry and belles lettres. Even when this tradition shifted its attention to criticism towards the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth, poetic creativity remained a central criterion for evaluating knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative to consider the Arnoldian legacy, especially in its attitude to scientific knowledge, criticism, and poetic creation. This will shed light on Leavis's critical paradigm and reveal the extent to which Arnold's attempt to reconcile poetry and science at the level of criticism was carried farther by Leavis.

Leavis and the Arnoldian Legacy:

After Wordsworth's assertion in the preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads (1802) that "poetry was the first and last of knowledge--. . .as immortal as the heart of man," Arnold, despite his disappointment in the Romantics, still projected in 1880 that "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay" (M. Arnold, The Portable Arnold 299). Such a powerful statement in defence of poetry, coming approximately sixteen years after the publication of his influential essay, "The

Function of Criticism in the Present Time" (1864), may come as a surprise to us. It certainly indicates the extent to which Arnold's project remained ambivalent about whether literary criticism could totally replace poetry at a historical juncture where all religious beliefs were being eroded by secular scientific thought. It is an ambivalence that we also encounter later in the development of Leavis's "practical criticism" and Richards' New Critical approach.

In 1864, in both "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" and "The Literary Influence of Academies," it was critical thought rather than poetry that received Arnold's full endorsement. Criticism then became the "appointed guardian" to look after the moral and epistemological needs of the culture of the time. In "The Function of Criticism," Arnold's argument starts with a defence of critical inquiry against Wordsworth's view of criticism as parasitical, sponging on the real works of literature represented by creative writing. Arnold's response is that creative genius cannot be limited to the discovery of novel ideas: "the grand work of literary genius," he says, "is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery" (237). The latter are the areas reserved for the critic. Yet creative power, he goes on to elaborate, is not limited to the activity of the poet alone. It is shared by criticism, not only as an imaginative but also as an interpretive force. Its function

is to help generate a knowledge of the world that is realistic and objective (see The Portable Arnold 238).

Critical thought is the common denominator uniting all disciplines of learning. Science is not exempted from this general view of the world. Arnold refuses to establish a boundary-distinction between science per se and other disciplines of thought. Similarly, the distinction between poetry and criticism is glossed over. Poetry being at the service of critical ideas about life: "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete" (300; emphasis added). Here, he is driving at the establishment of a firm connection between critical-poetic creativity and scientific inquiry. And the best way for him to achieve this purpose is through the advocacy of a "critical power" that is a common and an intrinsic characteristic of all forms of human knowledge. Accordingly, it is a critical power that would generate concepts needed in his age in order to evaluate ideas, harmonize the relationship between divergent disciplines, and "discipline" the society itself.

Going beyond the Classicists' and the Romantics' elevation of the sublimity of poetic thinking, Arnold indicates his target as the defence of critical thought. He

recommends that, while keeping a certain distance from the object of poetic knowledge, the poet should turn critic in order to achieve ideal poetic results. Such a method Arnold labels "disinterestedness,"[3] which approximates scientific objectivity; i.e., the poet's subjectivity and lyrical musings must be curtailed in order to achieve a critical standard of high intellectual quality. In fact, this concept of "disinterestedness" and its scientific connotations--indicating less subjective interferences on the part of the subject in perceiving an object--were very attractive to such critics as T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis, and N. Frye. To enhance this notion of "disinterestedness," Arnold also evoked the idea of "free will" and independent critical thought that could soar above political partisanship in order to create an ideal world of free thought. The practice of criticism becomes basically "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world" (265; author's emphasis). And when Arnold asks himself--rhetorically--about the exact meaning of "the best that is known," his answer is very specific as to what exactly constitutes an ideal epistemological universe. He has as much praise for the natural sciences as he does for other

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3 Arnold, "The Function of Criticism," p. 247 and passim. Murray Krieger notes that this concept is Kantian; see his "The Critical Legacy of M. Arnold," The Southern Review, 5. 2 (1969), pp. 463. Chris Baldick argues that Arnold borrowed the concept from Saint-Beuve. For a succinct comparison between Saint-Beuve and Arnold, see Baldick, op. cit., pp. 11-15.

disciplines of study and argues that "into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton . . .We must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it" (413-15).

It is only through the strengthening of the critical faculty of intelligence that proper knowledge--including here both the scientific and Humanistic kinds--can be restored. To serve this perfection of thought is the function of criticism. Without it, fulfilling any loftier tasks, such as those pertaining to the spiritual role with which it must be invested, will remain illusory. For Arnold what distinguishes ideal criticism is a certain sense of spiritual commitment--a puritanical view of existence. Indeed, the further Arnold elaborates on the way he perceives the nature and function of criticism, the more it becomes obvious that critical thinking, not unlike his conception of poetry, is turned into a substitute religion. It is turned into a way to salvation through the attainment of an absolute truth: "beauty," "conduct," and happiness, all understood as instincts in human nature. According to a Leavisite mode of expression, the institution of such a criticism is meant to ensure the living continuity of "real" cultural standards and to maintain strong ties with the organic past of the society--"cultural" being

here an inclusive term relating to all the norms required to evaluate knowledge.

A concrete visualization of this particular role of criticism, as a cultural apparatus or a powerful institution--which Leavis develops in the image of Cambridge--can be read in Arnold's unflinching praise for the French Academy. Founded in 1637 by Cardinal Richelieu, who wanted it to be a type of "Literary Tribunal" intended to look after the health of the French language, literary taste, and standards of evaluation, the Academy came to symbolize the center of authority for Arnold. (The parallel centrality of the University of Cambridge to Leavis's critical thought is very significant here). As a supervisory body to check the cultural health of society, the Academy was, meant to function as a powerful center to ward off the dangers that Ernest Renan saw in the emerging "inferior literatures." Not unlike Richelieu, Arnold--like Leavis after him--saw the dangers of literary anarchy lying at the heart of "provincial" ideas and styles. These manifested themselves in what he perceived as a lack of "precision of style," in "prose somewhat barbarously rich and over-loaded"; and in the "<u>eruptive</u> and <u>aggressive</u> manner in literature" (<u>The Portable Arnold</u> 288; author's emphasis). In faith to Arnold's dream of a center of authority, Leavis emphasized the necessity of the university--with the "English School," in particular--and the right public in order to

cultivate proper critical awareness. Thus the emergence of the Arnoldian view of literary knowledge at a time when the Church had failed its mission lends special meaning to the concept of a criticism--as a "critical force." For both Arnold and Leavis, criticism becomes a wished-for institution to govern the production of particular forms of signification.

Arnold's conception of "practical criticism" is totally different from what it became after him through Leavis and Richards. For Arnold, the word "practical" has a clearly Platonic meaning and denotes, as he admits, "handicraft and trade and the working professions," which Plato "regards with disdain" because "the base mechanic arts and articrafts. . . bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man" (405). The Arnoldian version of the term "practical" makes it refer directly to a negation of politics. This is why he warns against it and recommends critical knowledge as an "independent" sphere of ideas that is unaffected by any form of political filiation: "A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack [sic]; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them" (251). In contrast, the later New-Critical rephrasing of the term "practical" reverses this original meaning and--ironically--associates it with the other

Arnoldian notion, that of "disinterestedness," thus making the term "practical" a formalist, depoliticized concept.

It is against this cultural background and from this angle of binary opposition between the "practical" versus the purely-intellectual or theoretical activities in culture that Arnold--like Leavis after him--addresses the relationship between science and literature. In his 1885 essay on literature and science, he argues with T.H. Huxley--a representative of the rising power of anti-humanist positivism of the nineteenth century--about the function of Belles Lettres as opposed to scientific subjects in education. It is a question that re-emerges as the centre of attention of much of Leavis's writing, and as a bone of contention during the controversy that pitted him against C.P. Snow in the early 1960's. In Arnold's writing in defence of literature in particular and the Humanities in general against science, he posits three major propositions.

First, literature is an all-inclusive term. It cannot be understood as some sort of "superficial humanism," because it "may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book" (411). He further contends that "Euclid's Elements and Newton's Principia are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature" (411-12). By blurring all distinctions between scientific and non-scientific

writing, Arnold's argument makes glossing over contradictions inside the epistemological world he projects easy to effect. This move also tends to simplify the argument, hence avoiding more complex issues relevant to the epistemological conditions that determine a particular discipline, whether literary or scientific. Furthermore, the world of "the best which has been thought and said in the world" can be expanded to include mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology and what has been achieved by scientists such as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Darwin. Such a line of reasoning leads Arnold to the next deduction.

Second, by implication, all knowledge is humanist, "and a genuine humanism is scientific" (411). A simplified reconciliation is, therefore, reached and both scientific and non-scientific disciplines are joined together under the same umbrella as the best that has been thought in the world. The contradictions that ripped apart the intellectual world in the nineteenth century seem, on the surface, to be absent here. But this is only a deceptive situation, for the secular scientific world is simply incorporated into the Arnoldian paradigm in order to serve what Arnold himself terms the "human instinct" for order and spiritual salvation. This deduction leads him--in turn--to the next proposition.

Third, there is a human instinct for "beauty," "conduct," and "happiness" that human knowledge in toto exists to serve in perpetuity. And "in seeking to gratify this instinct in question," Arnold further argues, "we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity" (417). It is in the gratification of this instinct that the scientific and non-scientific subjects take forked paths. The humanist subjects are perceived as more apt to satisfy the human instinct because they appeal to the senses and "engage the emotions" in the same way that "the knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church" did during the Middle Ages. Scientists like Darwin or Huxley are considered unable to connect human desire for "conduct" and "beauty" with the purely scientific knowledge they produce. "They will give us," Arnold maintains,

> other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants . . .or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great "general conceptions of the universe". . . . But still it will be knowledge they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put. (419)

Accordingly, science is perceived as having failed to evoke human emotion or to maintain proper "conduct"; it is the function of the humanities to fulfill this task.

Finally, we witness a return to the epistemological paradise of poetic creation. Poetry is once again reinstated as the mediator between science and human instinct. And criticism, after an attempt to move its theoretical formulations a little beyond traditional and Romantic notions of poetic creation and imagination, is allocated a marginal position.

When Leavis rethinks the Arnoldian worldview and defends Arnold against aestheticist accusations that his views of poetry are affiliated with the doctrine of 'Art for Art's Sake', he evokes the famous Arnoldian phrase that "poetry is the criticism of life" (Leavis, The Critic as Anti-Philosopher 60). At the same time, and while ignoring the full implications of T.S. Eliot's comments on that particular statement in his The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Leavis acquiesces to Arnold's belief in the impossibility of defining exactly the criteria of this criticism of life (60). But what Leavis neglects most is a full consideration of the ultimate meaning that criticism embodies in Arnold's theory of poetry; that it must remain purely intellectual, "disinterested," and non-"practical". Theoretically speaking, this criticism must simply cogitate about the beauty of its disinterested practice. Indeed, Leavis remains incapable of distancing himself from Arnold's views about criticism, science, and the function of literature in general.

Arnold's final conclusion about the relationship between science and poetry signals a return to the realm of poetic creation. After an ambitious project to reconcile literary disciplines and science through the launching of an important project theorizing the critical function, the Arnoldian paradigm falls back on the classical and quasi-romantic appeal to poetic creation as an almost religious experience, and re-confirms it as the only type of knowledge that is valuable in human existence. He makes this assertion in defence of the humanities:

> [W]hile we shall have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, . . . yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and the need in him for beauty. (Arnold, The Portable Arnold 429)

By an ultimate tour de force, Arnold demonstrates the inadequacy and incompleteness of science. And gently he pushes scientific inquiry--like criticism for that matter--completely out of his frame of reference. Poetry, in its classical quasi-Longinian sense, as a spiritual creation beckoning human consciousness towards some subliminal moments of communion with the self, is re-instated on the throne from which it--not unlike Religion--has been ousted by scientific

thinking or critical theorization: "Science thinks, but not emotionally," Arnold concludes; "it adds thought to thought, accumulates the elements of a synthesis which will never be complete until it is touched with the beauty and emotion; and when it is touched with them, it has passed out of the sphere of science" (Cited in Baldick, The Mission 41).

Commenting on Arnold's assessment of Wordsworth, Leavis--indicating some of his own early critical directions--notes that "the critical attitude, in fact, illustrates the general theoretical soundness that is represented by 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', where Arnold sets forth his view of the healthy relations between poetry and life" (Leavis, Revaluation 154). This idea articulates the epistemological bond that relates Leavis to Arnold, not only at the level of criticism as "criticism of life" but also at the level of the relationship of scientific methodology to critical practice. A difference between the two critics must be pointed out here, however; contrary to Leavis, Arnold does not take the claimed destructiveness of technology and science as the center of his reading of literature and criticism.

However, Arnold's addressing the question of science in criticism as well as his aim to incorporate various disciplines in approaching literature signal his importance and relevance to Leavis's work. His final reconciliatory

move to supersede this project and to reinstate, instead, a celebration of the value of poetry as real human thought *par excellence* has only proved the extent to which the issue itself presents insurmountable theoretical complications for any critic. In fact, it was Leavis, whose attitude towards science and particularly techno-science--what he called the "technologico-Benthamite ethos"--was hostile, who took over the Arnoldian theoretical project and expanded on it. Thus, addressing the same problematic of literature, criticism, and science, but from a fresh perspective, Leavis promised a widening of the scope of criticism and a better understanding of its function. Undoubtedly, without Arnold, Leavis's *Scrutiny* project and what followed would never have seen the light of day.

What particularly marks Leavis's revision of this Arnoldian tradition is the attention he pays to science and scientists. In his formulation of a set of literary standards and criteria which were to determine what would constitute literature and specify the telos of criticism, Leavis kept in mind the position of a number of scientists towards the humanities and literature in particular. These scientists' views about literature curricula within university programs, and their understanding of the cultural problems of their society tend to attract Leavis's attention more than the question of scientific method. (The Snow-Leavis controversy

had as primary concern this particular issue.) When Lord Robbins privileges the sciences in education by saying that "in a complex society such as ours, the hope of order and freedom in social conditions must rest upon the advancement of systematic knowledge in social studies," and adds that "as with the natural sciences, the universities have a fundamental contribution to make" (cit. by Leavis in English Literature in Our Time 137), Leavis responds with an opposite view. He argues that such a desire to turn "university English" into a "Social Science" which reveals a "devotion to the natural sciences" is only "another disquieting symptom" of the crisis. For, as he goes on to elaborate, "it would be better for us if they [the social studies] were pursued and studied, in so far as they aspire to be authoritative sources of knowledge and wisdom about human nature and human life" in an "intellectual and spiritual" climate (173). This is a principle that he maintains also when he raises the question of critical standards:

> Scientists. . .in their defence of standards . . .may count on the essential measure of success, for science is recognized as nationally important. And standards as we in "Engish" are concerned for them are in their nature not amenable to effective presentation and assertion. They are patently not susceptible of reduction to quantitative, mathematical or any kind of demonstrative terms, and the drive of our triumphant technologico- Benthamite world is not merely indifferent, but hostile, to the human creativity they represent. (Nor Shall My Sword 151)

This idea of scientists being in alliance with technologico-Benthamism but against "creativity" and "life" is clarified further when Leavis insists on an important distinction among scientists. For him, there are scientists who are on the side of creative artists, and there are those who are mere philistines. He explains:

> I was on the point of saying that the immense army of scientists, or laboratory professionals, share in the intellectual lack and the philistine commensense that goes with it, when I checked myself in order to make an important distinction. True science is what is represented by great creative scientists, who are not common; they exhibit neither the lack nor the humanly reductive commonsense [sic]. (Valuation in Criticism 295)

In making this distinction, Leavis is guided particularly by Lawrence's vitalist philosophy and idea that "any creative act occupies the whole consciousness of a man. This is true of the great discoveries of science as well as of art" (cited in ibid., 295). The point here is that through his continual references to scientists in general, and "creative scientists" in particular, Leavis not only calls for the support of scientists such as Michael Polanyi, Collingwood, Marjorie Grene, and Michael Yudkin, but also seems to betray his strong desire to emulate scientific thought by offering clearly defined principles and methodological criteria. This is consistent with the theoretical impasse that characterizes his whole epistemology. In Nor Shall My Sword and The Living

whole epistemology. In Nor Shall My Sword and The Living Principle, for instance, both Grene and Polanyi are cited in support of his arguments against "positive science" and in favour of "tacit knowledge," "life," and "intuition." Similarly, he refers to Yudkin, a biologist, in his argument against Snow. To prove his point in The Critic as Anti-philosopher, Leavis recalls an important passage from Grene's The Knower and Known which celebrates the "revolution of life":

> We have come, or are coming, at least to the end of this epoch, the epoch presided over by the Newtonian cosmology and Newtonian method. We are in the midst of a new philosophical revolution, a revolution in which, indeed, the new physics too has had due influence, but a revolution founded squarely on the disciplines concerned with life: on biology, psychology, sociology, history, even theology and art criticism. Seventeenth century thinkers had to free themselves from the bonds of Newtonian abstraction, to dare, not only to manipulate abstractions, to calculate and predict and falsify, but to understand. The revolution before us is a revolution of life against dead nature, and of understanding as against the calculi of logical machines. (cited in The Critic as Anti-philosopher 21)

Grene's vitalist epistemology here is as anti-technology as Leavis' attitude towards "the imperialism of the computer." Yet, notwithstanding his acquiescence to Grene's granting philosophical inquiry a privileged position here--something he rejects during his arguments with Wellek and Tanner--his attention in reading this passage is directed

mostly towards the idea of a "revolution of life against dead nature," of "culture" versus a "civilization" of the machine. Although Grene's tone here is more optimistic than Leavis's in his writings, both of them agree on the role of "the machine" as the ultimate threat to this "revolution of life." Negatively perceived, technology becomes for both Grene and Leavis a deus ex machina in resolving the epistemological complexities that a theorization of human knowledge is confronted with.

The other scientist-philosopher to whom Leavis turns to in order to validate his visionary world of the "revolution of life" is Polanyi. The latter's views of science provided Leavis with vital support in making such categories as "individual creativity," "intuition," "sensibility," "tacit knowledge," "life," and "imagination" central tenets of the literary criticism he proposed as a discipline to reform the "English School" at Cambridge. Leavis quotes Polanyi as follows:

> Thus our understanding of living beings involves at all levels a measure of indwelling; our interest in life is always convivial. There is no break therefore in passing from biology to the acceptance of our cultural calling in which we share the life of a human society, including the life of its ancestors, the authors of our cultural heritage. (cited in Nor Shall My Sword 24)

Leavis sees the same virtues in Grene and Polanyi as in Lawrence. The "strength of Polanyi's thought," Leavis argues, lies in his evocation of a "cultural heritage" and "life" as universal principles. Both principles fit in well with Leavis's own belief in "organic" continuity and literary tradition, which are part of the set of criteria that constitute his critical system. This totalizing epistemological outlook, manifested in Grene's words and in Polanyi's idea of "no break. . .in passing from biology to" culture, projects a humanist view which smoothes out the opposition between science and non-science. It is a passage marked by the absence of any distinct boundaries or sense of contradiction between disciplines. This is what Leavis expressed during his diatribe against Snow, Annan, and Robbins, in his notion of the "One Culture." At the same time, the type of knowledge which results from the application in method of these totalizing criteria that Leavis borrows from certain scientists tends to claim a universal character: "All thought is incarnate; it lives by the body and by the favour of society. But it is not <u>thought</u> unless it strives for truth, a striving which leaves it free to act on its own responsibility, with universal intent" (epigraph to <u>Nor Shall My Sword</u>).

Thus, by continuously resorting to pronouncements by scientists and philosophers of science in order to convince

his audience of the viability of his views of criticism, literature, and society, Leavis remains caught up in an epistemological paradox: "I am faced with a difficult problem of method," he confesses in The Living Principle (14). On the one hand, he sees the necessity of a set of standards that would guarantee understanding and ensure the process of continuity with the organic society of the past as imperative; on the other hand, he seems to be wary of any openly declared systematic method resembling a science for fear of its potential affiliation with technological culture: "of course, I myself don't dispute that there has to be the approach that defines its problems, and deals with them, in terms of statistical data, charts and the computarizable generally" (Nor Shall My Sword 145). Thus, in order to ensure that the idea of "living" principles would be apprehended by the public he was addressing, and to implement the desired cure for the modern malaise of technological civilisation, he used such terms as "precision of thought," "concreteness," "disinterested intelligence," and "impersonal" method to legitimize his own discourse. Yet, in order to distinguish his approach from scientific method, which he saw as cultivating spiritual barrenness, philistinism, and ecological disaster, Leavis had to emphasize notions of individual intuition, tacit knowledge, the impossibility of definitions, but also the unprovenness of essential criteria. This paradox manifests itself, as we shall now see, in the way Leavis conceived and

propounded a "theory" of literary criticism which he sometimes called "The Living Principle" and at other times "Judgement and Analysis" or "Valuation in Criticism."

II. Towards "Living" Critical Standards: the Necessity of "Precision" and Ambiguous Meaning

> Criticism. . .must be in the first place (and never cease being) a matter of sensibility, of responding sensitively and with precise discrimination to the words on the page. (Leavis, Towards Standards 16; emphasis added)

> What Mr. Eliot's poetry has to give is to be educated into a new understanding of the nature of precision in thought. (Leavis, The Common Pursuit 254; emphasis added)

Not unlike his theorization of culture which led him in the end to the marginalization of scientific knowledge because he perceived it as negating "organic" existence and enhancing the destructive effects of technology, Leavis's formulation of a set of critical principles to approach literature did not escape a direct confrontation with the notion of scientificity. At the level of criticism, Leavis's engagement with scientific discourse and method seems to be much more controversial than at the level of his cultural theory, especially after his controversy with Snow over the "Two Cultures" in the 1960s. Since this crucial event in

Leavis's development as a literary critic, scientific epistemology drew more of his attention and intellectual energy until his death in 1978. This concern is revealed particularly through his increased attention to questions of critical theory, method, and abstract thinking in interpreting literature, as well as through his theoretical exchanges between Rene Wellek and Michael Tanner over the nature of criticism and its raison d'etre. Moreover, his most theoretical essays, as collected in The Living Principle (1975), Thought, Words, and Creativity (1976), The Critic as Anti-Philosopher (1982), and Valuation in Criticism (1986), were written for the most part during the latter part of his career, at which time the question of theory and scientific criticism became controversial issues. In addressing them, Leavis emphasized a number of concepts that still constitute major elements in his theoretical framework, namely the notions of "standards," "criteria," "discrimination," "precision," "definition," "disinterestedness," "objectivity," "concreteness," and others. These terms had belonged to his earlier critical repertoire, but they were taken up again with more vigour during the later years. However, since many of these terms belonged also to the discourse of science, in appropriating and redefining them, Leavis seems to have offered his most theoretical challenge to science as a discipline of thought. At the same time, the key-terms which formed the basis of his theorization of "organic culture,"

such as "sensibility," "livingness," "intuition," and "creativity," were evoked in order to relate his ideal critical method to the cultural telos he envisaged for his contemporary society.

In his analyses of literary works and his metacritical commentaries, Leavis always appealed to such key-terms in order to explain the urgent "need" for criticism to establish itself as a separate discipline supported by the university and an intelligent "public" sensitive to literature. From the beginning, his writing was marked by this search for ways of institutionalizing criticism, indeed, a major elaboration of the Arnoldian epistemological and educational project. For instance, as early as 1933, Leavis expressed his concerns for the nature of criticism as follows:

> A novel, like a poem, is made of words; there is nothing else one can point to. We talk of a novelist as "creating characters," but the process of "creation" is one of putting words together. We discuss the quality of his "vision," but the only critical judgements we can attach <u>directly to observable parts of his work concern particular arrangements of words</u>--the quality of the response they evoke. Criticism, that is, must be in the first place (and never cease being) a matter of sensibility, of responding sensitively and <u>with precise discrimination to the words on the page</u>. But it must, of course, go on to deal with the larger effects, with the organization of the total response to the book. (<u>Towards Standards</u> 16-17; emphasis added)

Such notions as "observable parts," "precise discrimination" and his emphasis on the empirical character of the text, the "particular arrangements of [its] words," clearly demonstrate to what extent Leavis's critical principles are affiliated with empiricist and positivist thinking, which conceived understanding as "based only on observable facts and the relations between them and the laws discoverable from observing them" (Williams, Keywords 238). Nonetheless, Leavis argued vehemently against positivism and, as he claimed, its technologico-Benthamite off-shoot all along. This lends the critical method and the knowledge that he offers as an alternative to scientific epistemology a sense of complexity and ambiguity which reflects the theoretical impasse that confronted him also at the level of his theorization of "organic culture." One may note a striking homology between Leavis's theorization of culture and his conceptualization of a critical method. Both take a similar position towards the question of science.

When Leavis came to define the basic tenets of the discipline of criticism in the face of the hegemony of scientific discourse, he was to put forward the "norms" or "criteria" as the "standards" which he believed constituted criticism proper. He stated them as carefully as possible so that critical method and its telos would not overlap with the other disciplines, especially the natural sciences, which he

claimed were denying literature its "true" value. This would also guarantee criticism a specific and essential position in society, specifically at the heart of the educational edifice (see English Literature chap. 1 and passim). It clear that Leavis will be remembered mainly for his concern to determine critical practice as a distinct category of thought. Yet, as R.P. Bilan confirms in his The Literary Criticism of F.R. Leavis (1979), "what has not received wide enough attention is the fact that lying behind [Leavis's]. . .judgements on literature is a very subtle and lucidly articulated idea of literary criticism" (61). It is the articulation of this "lucidity" and coherence of the Leavisite critical system that needs to be addressed carefully, for Leavis's basic theoretical notions, especially when they confront the question of scientificity, remain on close inspection problematic.

Anyone attempting to pin down Leavis's "standards" of criticism must not neglect his own statement that "one can't prove the rightness of. . .judgements; the mode of verification that goes with this order of thought isn't proof, and certainly yields no finality. But it is characteristic of the most important convictions one forms to admit to nothing like proof" ("Mutually Necessary" 148). Nevertheless, and notwithstanding other statements which reemphasize his belief in the tacit nature of all forms of knowledge, Leavis himself

always reminded "the responsible critic" of the importance of literary standards and critical norms; they should be sought and followed closely by any approach that aspires to win public attention. At times, critical standards are granted so much importance by Leavis that they become central to the life of society itself. "Unless the standards are maintained," he warns in Nor Shall My Sword, "the whole community is let down" (151).

To elucidate how, "exactly and precisely," Leavis formulated his "Standards of criticism", I propose to consider, as a starting point, three representative excerpts from his writings. Like most of his other statements, these passages are carefully wrought but also emotionally charged. The excerpts also relate to three important stages in his life. Without reflecting any radical breaks in his thought, they support a crucial argument: that Leavis's critical opinions developed towards a theorization of a critical method which, in its acerbic argument against scientism, could hardly escape the influence of the latter's discourse despite his appeal to certain categories that were hardly accessible to scientific inquiry.

The first passage marks some of Leavis's earliest formulations of the idea of criticism and of the role of the critic sui generis. It is an excerpt from his "Reply" to Rene

Wellek's review of Leavis's Revaluations (1932), which appeared in the Scrutiny issue of March, 1937:

Text 1

> The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against any premature or irrelevant generalizing--of it or from it. His first concern is to enter into possession of the given poem (let us say) in its concrete fullness, and his constant concern is never to lose his completeness of possession, but rather to increase it. In making value-judgements (and judgement as to significance), implicitly, he does so out of that completeness of possession and with that fullness of response. He doesn't ask, "How does this accord with these specifications of goodness in poetry?"; he aims to make fully conscious and articulate the immediate sense of value that "places" the poem. (The Common Pursuit 213)

The second extract is an important statement about the object of critical judgement; this activity has its boundaries, setting it apart from other disciplines. It also marks a middle period in Leavis's career. The significance of this excerpt lies also in the fact that it was written in 1962, during the vogue of Leavis's "Two Cultures?" lecture. It indicates his view of the role of the critic during the time of his controversy with C.P. Snow over the question of "scientism" versus "Literarism" (Leavis, Nor Shall 135). This passage is as follows:

Text 2

> You cannot point to the poem; it is "there" only in the re-creative response of individual minds to the black marks on the page. But--a necessary faith--it is something in which minds can meet. The process in which this faith is justified is given fairly enough in an account of the nature of criticism. A judgement is personal or it is nothing; you cannot take over someone else's. The implicit form of a judgement is: This is so, isn't it? The question is an appeal for confirmation that the thing is so; implicitly that, though expecting, characteristically, an answer in the form, "yes, but---," the "but" standing for qualifications, reserves, corrections. Here we have a diagram of the collaborative-creative process in which the poem comes to be established as something "out there," of common access in what is in some sense a public world. It gives us, too, the nature of the existence of English literature, a living whole that can have a life only in the living present, in the creative response of individuals, who collaboratively renew and perpetuate what they participate in--a cultural community or consciousness. More, it gives us the nature in general of what I have called the "Third Realm" to which all that makes us human belongs. (Two Cultures? 28)

The third passage, which I shall quote extensively because of its importance in this context, was published posthumously. It signals the final stage of Leavis's career and argues for the particular role of "Standards" in the consolidation of a proper critical approach. It demonstrates as well how Leavis's thought had developed towards a problematic theory of literature that is opposed to defining critical terminology, while explicitly advocating "precision of thought." This passage presents a sense of a more overt

awareness of the question of scientificity, the thorny issue that was to occupy Leavis until his death.

Text 3

> It is characteristic of our field of thought that we have to use terms we can't strictly or neatly define. Of the term "standards" worse can be said: it invites the user to endorse and adopt false suggestions that make intelligent thought about the nature of criticism impossible. The standards of criticism are not at all of the order of the standards in the Weights and Measures Office. They are not producible, they are not precise, and they are not fixed. But if they are not effectively "there" for the critic to appeal to, the function of criticism is badly disabled. In fact, it is always a part of the function of criticism to assert and maintain them; that is, to modify them, for to maintain is to vitalize, and to vitalize is almost inevitably to modify.
>
> The goal to which the poet labours is a rightness that has a compelling impersonal authority; it is something other than the poet's self. "Precision" entails thought. The steps by which the poet moves towards the final rightness compel him to cultivate a considering, weighing, testing consciousness. The rightness, then, is precision; it is an achievement of thought: in the achieving of it, thought of a non-philosophic and non-scientific kind has played an essential part. . . .
>
> The precision sought in art-speech bears an ironical relation to the utterly different precision sought by science. The scientific precision is associated with an ideal of impersonality too. The scientific impersonality fosters the philistine commonsense of the age of technologico-industrialism. . .True science is what is represented by great creative scientists, who are not common. (Valuation in Criticism 244; 295)

Taken together, these three extracts illustrate the basis of Leavis's critical paradigm. They offer a sense of the evolution of his thought towards a higher level of abstraction or theorization. In their chronological order, they also indicate the striking culmination of his thought towards an explicit engagement with the problematic of critical standards in scientific criticism. Before taking issue with these critical tenets in detail, it is worth examining some of the most relevant propositions in each of these passages.

In "Text 1" (1937), there is a specification of what constitutes the function of the critic gua critic: a complete possession of the poem, leading towards a coherent response which forms a value-judgement of strict relevance and resists abstract generalizations. Ultimately the critic arrives at a full realisation of the value of the poem. The role of the reader-critic is defined here by Leavis without any hesitation as to what the critic should or should not do when approaching a literary text. Accordingly, a text's meaning does not wait for the application of some external rules of poetic value; on the contrary, it is made "fully conscious" of its artistic value -- as if brought to life by the critic's intervention. Nonetheless, certain expressions such as the "possession" of a poem, the "concrete fullness" of a reading, and the "plac[ing]" of the text, remain highly ambiguous. As for the tone of the passage, it remains emphatic and didactic; a

common characteristic of Leavis's style. Other stylistic features that emerge here are significant. His repetition of some terms for the sake of further clarifying their meaning, as the overuse of dashes, commas, and parenthetical statements, the insertion of hypothetical dialogues with an imaginary reader who is addressed as a single individual, and the wide use of words in quotation marks to emphasize their special meaning--all together convey a feeling of uneasiness about the significations mediated by Leavis's critical discourse. This also reveals his persistent drive to get at some "precise" meaning that the words he uses cannot totally grasp. It is as if his thinking were confronted with a wall of abstraction that he cannot surmount despite the burning desire to do so.

In "Text 2" (1962), on the other hand, Leavis's attention is focussed more on the poem <u>qua text</u> and its intepretation. The poem is understood as a common public "space" "out there", where the minds of the readers as individuals meet in a "collaborative-creative" exchange. This critical activity solicits the confirmation of particular analyses, but remains also open to disagreement. Through this "collaborative" process, the poem is read as a representative part of a whole literature manifesting its life and that of a "cultural continuity." Furthermore, both the text and the judgement it generates determine the existence of a cultural

consciousness which, in turn, offers us what Leavis calls "the Third Realm," a Lawrentian concept that signifies the repository of some indefinable sacrosanct "human" values resembling those that dominate an "organic" order (see Two Cultures? 29; English Literature 48; and Nor Shall my Sword 110).

There are two other major points that should be noted here. First, this passage is silent about what criteria of literariness would qualify a particular poem or novel for the celebration of this "Realm." It is taken for granted that not all texts are literary, for they do not all answer to the criteria of the "great tradition" as represented by Austen, G. Eliot, James, Dickens, Conrad, and Lawrence. In contrast, writers such as Joyce, Auden, Woolf, and Forster are excluded from the canon of "great" writers. Corroborating this point are other studies by Leavis, namely The Great Tradition, English Literature in Our Time and the University, and Thought, Words and Creativity. In these books, he always considers literature in terms of a hierarchy with Blake, Wordsworth, Lawrence, and T.S. Eliot, in addition to the novelists of the "great tradition," ranking highest. For Leavis, all of these artists share in the consciousness and "spirit" of the genius that makes them "alive" to the spiritual imperatives of the world they live in (The Great Tradition 36; 38). For example, talking of Conrad's "major

quality"--and this is a judgement that is applicable to nearly all the other novelists and poets chosen--Leavis says:

> [H]e is one of those creative geniuses whose distinction is manifested in their being peculiarly alive in their time--peculiarly alive to it; not "in the vanguard" in the manner of Shaw and Wells and Aldous Huxley, but sensitive to the stresses of the changing spiritual climate as they begin to be registered by the most conscious. (Great Traditon 33)

Literature mediates a spiritual and religious meaning that contrasts with the secular world of science and technologico-Benthamism. Indeed, Northrop Frye's refutation of this idea of "tradition" or what he terms "the touchstone theory" in reference to Arnold is relevant here. Frye is correct in saying that the idea of a literary tradition enhances the creation of a "scriptural canon. . .to serve as a guide for those social principles which" require "culture to take over from religion" (Anatomy of Criticism 22).

Second, in "Text 2" the nature of the critic's consciousness is not specified. According to Leavis, in approaching the text to be analyzed, the critic must assume a certain "faith" in "the black marks on the page" (Two Cultures? 28). Such a view denotes a hermeneutic-phenomenological understanding of the critical act. It is as if the critic must be prepared beforehand to enter a sacred

textual territory where the reading-interpretive act, the "collaborative-creative process," becomes a communion within the "Third Realm." Yet, despite this ambiguity at the level of textual significance and critical practice, Leavis still insists on the necessity of "precision" in meaning.

Nonetheless, such a characterization of the literary text in general, and of the type of interpretative meaning it is supposed to generate can hardly be denied the status of theory. The way in which Leavisite thinking has evolved towards an argument with "scientism," as shown in "Text 3" for instance, attests to the fact that his anti-theory claim must be taken with a grain of salt. Leavis's anti-theory stance is itself theoretical.

The third excerpt is actually a direct engagement with the particular domain of critical theory and the question of its standards and criteria. In the first paragraph, the latter are seen as diametrically opposed to those standards of scientific discourse denoted here by Leavis's phrase: "the standards in the Weights and Measures Office." Unlike these norms, literary criteria are accordingly impossible to "fix" or to re-"produce." Nor are they "precise." But one recalls Leavis's own paradoxical predilection for notions of "precision" and "concrete[ness]." In fact, the second paragraph of this excerpt brings this paradox to the fore. We

are told that the poet's goal is the achievement of a sense of "impersonality" as the right method leading to "rightness [which]. . .is precision." This method also relies on "considering, weighing, testing" as crucial steps in the critical-creative process. We are thus left out in the dark as to the nature of the boundaries that separate this method from the one adopted in the scientific "Weights and Measures Office." This point reveals the extent to which Leavis's critique is continuously directed against a fixed image of science. It is the same image he relied on earlier to formulate his conception of the organic world.

However, it must be noted that the "standards" Leavis argues about here are more connected with the poetic text than with the metapoetic one. The artistic consciousness referred to is clearly that of the poet, which is offered as a yardstick for measuring the intensity of critical consciousness. Criticism is therefore assessed according to the creative-poetic power it mediates, a creativeness that speaks the language of "livingness":

> Not only can we not do without the word "life"; any attempt to think out a major critical issue entails using positively the shifts in force the word is bound to be incurring as it feels its way on and out and in towards its fulfilment.. . . [A] critic who would be intelligent about the novel must be intelligent about life. (<u>The Critic As Anti-philosopher</u> 114)

Nonetheless, this fusing together of the function of the poet and that of the critic into a single occupation that is dominated by a vitalist concern does not seem to defeat Leavis's powerful argument for the establishment of criticism; both poets and critics seem to be involved in a creative-critical process. It is a process whose mode of thinking, unlike that of "scientific impersonality [which] fosters" the ethos of industrialism, cultivates "life" and maintains vitalizing standards.

Leavis's statements reveal a sense of urgent necessity to define and apply particular criteria or norms in order to improve the practices of literary analysis. But without explaining why, Leavis claims that these critical standards defy any attempts to pin them down to clear meaning: standards "are not producible, they are not precise, they are not fixed"; they are just "there for the critic to appeal to." The validity of such a critical principle--not unlike Leavis's views on "life" and "organic culture"--is disproved by his statements about how difficult it is to define standards. However, a definition is still a definition even when it defines its object through a series of negations or of its opposites. By saying that standards are necessary for the critic's job, that they must be differentiated from scientific criteria, that their "absence is disabling" for any proper critical sensibility, and that they should be maintained in

order to vitalize criticism and culture, Leavis forsakes every sense of the impossibility of determining the nature of critical standards. In addition, when we are told that one of the primary goals of poetic creativity is the cultivation of a particular consciousness that aims at achieving "rightness," "precision," and "impersonality," as essential critical criteria, we are, indeed, very close to the diction of scientific discourse as understood either by those critics who believed in the scientificity of literary method or by natural scientists (cf. Raymond Williams, Keywords 276-80). Likewise, Leavis insists that "the rightness, then, is precision." But it is a kind of precision that is graspable only through its opposites; the "thought of a non-philosophic and non-scientific kind has played an essential part" in its conceptualization.

What Leavis's literary inquiry has led to is, therefore, basically the establishment of an uneasy, even "ironic" and paradoxical affinity between critical knowledge and scientific knowledge. Criticism must aim at a "precision" of thought, but it is a precision that does not resemble "precision" in science. One is faced with an important question here. Was Leavis's claim for this idea of "precision," along with a plethora of its synonyms, made mainly as a response to the idea of "weighing," "measuring," and experimenting in laboratories, which are practices that

essentially mark disciplines such as physics, mathematics, and chemistry? Leavis's own words provide a clear answer: "science is obviously of great importance to mankind; it is of great cultural importance. But to say this is to make a value-judgement--a human value judgement" (Nor Shall 140). This idea reveals the extent to which his reasoning about critical practice was shaped by a desire to emulate the methodologies of the natural sciences in order to create a literary knowledge that is similarly "of great importance to mankind," but that is governed by a critical discipline, not by the scientific method. But this desire was automatically frustrated, even cancelled in advance, by the implications that scientific knowledge offers, especially in terms of the potential destructiveness of technology as a byproduct of science. Accordingly, science is not pure knowledge or method, but "techno-science," perceived as an undifferentiated totality, embracing both scientific knowledge and technology.

Leavis's search remained that of a critical method, capable of mediating a "living principle" and a certain humanism that he thought were the only means capable of solving the cultural crisis modern civilisation faced. To fulfill this goal, "criticism must always remain humanist," he maintains in Education and the University (19). This is why the notion of "livingness," for instance, which he adopts as a

yardstick for assessing the extent to which various writers, critics, artists, philosophers, and scientists are responsibly committed to "humanitas" cannot be totally anchored within the boundaries of the type of literary realm for which he campaigned. Although Leavis keeps reminding himself that "I neither believe in any special 'literary' values nor am hostile to science" (Nor Shall 152; 158), the view he often gives of criticism is undeniably purist: "The idea of making science students attend lectures on English literature and students in the humanities attend lectures on science is pitiful in its futility. It can affect nothing real. . . .As for 'mixed courses', they must be regarded with suspicion" (English Literature 96).

"Livingness," like all Leavisite critical standards, had therefore inevitably to incorporate some forms of socio-historical, religious, and ethical content into its epistemological framework. As C.H. Rickword, one of the editors of The Calendar wrote, "the organic is the province of criticism" (cit. in Leavis, Towards Standards 34). This extra-literary dimension that inhabits Leavis's theorization of criticism constitutes his major theoretical error in his argument against a number of critics. It was a failure to scrutinize the full implications of the very premises Leavis adopted as a basis for his formulation of critical standards, literary knowledge, and evaluation.

Not unlike the exchange Leavis had simultaneously with Wellek and Tanner, his argument with Bateson over the relevance of historical context to literary interpretation is illuminating in this discussion of the epistemological status of "critical standards." His thesis in "The Responsible Critic" is that Bateson's idea of a "contextual criticism," which necessitates placing the literary text in its original socio-historical context, in order to grasp its full meaning, must remain inappropriate for the discipline of literary criticism. Bateson's "discipline," Leavis argues, "is not merely irrelevant; it isn't, and can't be, a discipline at all; it has no determinate enough field or aim" (Leavis, "The Responsible Critic" 173; emphasis added). It fails, according to him, to approach the text as a literary entity. Instead, Leavis goes on to explain, it makes literary criticism

> dependent on the extra-literary studies. . .To suggest that their purpose should be to reconstruct a postulated "social context" that once enclosed the poem and gave it its meaning is to set the student after something that no study of history, social, economic, political, intellectual, religious, can yield. ("The Responsible Critic" 174)

Adding that the "social context" that Bateson "postulates is an illusion" (173), Leavis goes on to explain what a poem really is. His view recalls his theorization of the literary work as it is discussed in "Text 2". Leavis argues:

> The poem. . .is a determinate thing; it is <u>there</u>; but there is nothing to correspond--nothing answering Mr. Bateson's "social context" that can be set over against the poem, or induced to re-establish itself round it as a kind of framework or completion. . .there never <u>was</u> anything. ("Responsible Critic" 174)

The notions of "determinate[ness]," "there[ness]", and "nothing[ness]" that Leavis postulates here as originally characterizing the poem add other theoretical dimensions to his idea of the nature of critical standards: that the meaning of a text is not fixed, and that the latter does not bear any direct relationship to the moment of its creation.

Such a view makes Leavis's theory even more problematic. On the one hand, his rejection of any contextualism carries formalist connotations which go against his readings of Shakespeare, Bunyan, Eliot, or Conrad, who are chosen as "geniuses" because of the claimed "spiritual" dimension that inhabits their writings and that reflects the worlds they lived in. This also evokes Leavis's other statements concerning his ideal literary moments, conceived as possessing an intimate relationship with an organic social context. On the other hand, his argument that Bateson's critical discipline "has no determinate. . .field or aim" sharply contrasts his earlier stipulation that the concepts of criticism require no final definitions and no telos. Leavis's assessment of Blake is to the point here. It reveals the

extent to which Leavis's teleology confronts the ambiguity of its own logic with much difficulty. Of Blake, he says:

> [I]n postulating a telos, a terminus ad quem, Blake was involving himself in a fundamental contradiction. In his insistence on a human creativity that means human responsibility he was repudiating all forms of determinism; to posit an ultimate end ("in my beginning is my end") that gives significance to the creative effort, being its final cause, is to gainsay the repudiation. (The Critic as Anti-Philosopher 21)

While insisting on the necessity of a precise and determinate critical aim in Bateson's approach, Leavis reproaches Blake for postulating a particular telos. If there is any consistency in Leavisite discourse, it is mainly at the level of its paradoxical logic.

However, notwithstanding the cogency with which such a response to Bateson contradicts some of Leavis's own previous comments on the problem of exact definitions in science and in literature, the ontological status of the text as defined during their exchange poses a number of unanswered questions. To borrow some of Bateson's language in his later "Reply," it is a logical deduction to ask in what way the poem is determined, and what conditions--literary or extra-literary --play a role in determining the "thereness" of a text or its existence as such. Furthermore, Leavis's assertion that "in dealing with created-works, [the critic] is concerned with

life" ("Responsible Critic" 178) complicates even more his argument against Bateson. It commits both criticism and "the poem" to something that is surely beyond the literary-textual domain: "Life" and the cultivation of "sensibility." This is another facet of the problem we encountered earlier in relation to Leavis's conception of "organic culture" and its enemy, Benthamite civilisation.

Thus Andor Gomme with his high praise for "the consistency of Leavis's lifelong endeavour" ("Why Literary Criticism" 45), and Bilan with his comment on the "lucidity" of Leavis's criticism (The Criticism 61) lack insight into the paradoxes which in fact underpin the Leavisite theory of literature. The exchange between Leavis and Bateson corroborates, in reality, an on-going battle not only within Leavisite discourse, but also in literary criticism as a discipline of thought. It is a battle over the need to clarify the epistemological norms and critical standards that should govern literary analyses, to specify the nature of the knowledge acquired through the reading and teaching of literary works.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that despite these sometimes acerbic exchanges between Leavis and Bateson over the nature and role of critical interpretation, their positions do not seem in the end to be mutually exclusive. As

Bateson himself confirms in the last piece he contributed to the exchange: "the critical gospels that he [Leavis] and I preach are, indeed, complementary rather than contradictory. . . .In the end we shall be found to be on the same side ("Postscript" 316). In fact, what Bateson's "contextual" criticism turns out to be is basically another form of subjectivism. It hardly grants the literary text any a fortiori social or historical grounding from which the critic might extract some interpretive prompts in order to complement the original meanings of a text. Whereas Leavis emphasizes the "thereness" as well as the quasi-emptiness of the poem, Bateson--not unlike him--stresses the fact that textual meaning is brought into the text mostly by the critic's intervention in its set of "conventional black marks" (Bateson, "The Responsible Critic: A Reply" 307). Even though he reproaches Leavis for not explaining the exact meaning of his statement that "the poem. . .is there," Bateson does not seem to add much insight to Leavis's other idea that there is "nothing" else the critic can relate to in the text except the printed marks on the page. Accordingly, Bateson argues,

> I imagine he [Leavis] must mean that the poem, as we meet it on the printed page, consists of certain specific words arranged in a certain determinate order. But strictly speaking, of course, there is nothing there, nothing objectively apprehensible, except a number of conventional black marks. The meanings of the words, and therefore, a fortiori the meaning of the whole poem, are emphatically not there. To discover their meaning, the connotations as well as the denotations, we shall often find ourselves

> committed to precisely . . . stylistic, intellectual and social explorations . . . There is no alternative--<u>except to</u> invent the meaning ourselves. ("Responsible Critic: A Reply" 307; author's emphasis)

The closest Leavis gets to stating a similar position to this one is in an earlier discussion of his "Sketch for an English School," published in <u>Scrutiny</u> in 1941. His position here confirms a type of critical subjectivism in which Bateson's view of a poem would find a positive ally. Leavis maintains that a poem

> is "there" for analysis only in so far as we are responding appropriately to the words on the page. In pointing to them (and there is nothing else to point to) what we are doing is bringing into sharp focus, in turn, this, that and the other detail, juncture or relation in our total response; . . . what we are doing is to dwell with a deliberate, considering responsiveness on this, that or the other mode or focal point in the complete organization that the poem is, in so far as we have it. (<u>Education and the University</u> 70)

Still, the "appropriate. . .total response," the "sharp focus," "the complete organisation" of the text--with their allusions to precision and analytic rigor--remain unspecified here. All these categories seem to rely on intuition for analysis and understanding. If we were to evaluate them, Leavis's previous answer to Bateson could be legitimately played back against him: these terms have "no

determinate enough" criteria that could sustain them within the critical function to which he appeals as a prerequisite for the understanding and overcoming of the cultural crisis. Since Bateson was asked to determine what exactly he meant by "social context," Leavis also must explain further what exactly makes a focus sharp, a critic's response appropriate, or a formal organisation of a poem complete. His answer seems to lie within intuition and individual genius. Not being governed by any clear rules, this criterion certainly stands as an arbitrary principle that must refute Leavis's claimed belief in criticism as a collaborative act. His liberal and positivist principle, "this is so, isn't it?" seems to have failed the test here. This principle is rendered even more arbitrary by the fact that it is never explained. And the more the answer is relegated to the background, the more it reemerges in other discussions and essays by Leavis. What this debate between Bateson and Leavis boils down to is surely a central quibble over what norms or heuristic laws could standardize the methodology of critical practice in order to enable the critic to generate meaning from a particular literary text.

When assessing the Leavis-Bateson exchange in his _The Moment of 'Scrutiny'_ (1979), Francis Mulhern does not pay much attention to this common hermeneutic principle which indicates a striking rapprochement between Bateson's and Leavis's

theorizations of literature and criticism. Instead, Mulhern contextualises the exchange by placing it in the midst of a rivalry between a dying Scrutiny and a nascent Essays in Criticism, the literary review that Bateson launched at Oxford in 1951 (The Moment 301). However, Mulhern is right in pointing out that both Bateson and Leavis share in the same "Arnoldian cultural strategy designed to secure 'the function of criticism at the present time'" (The Moment 298). He adds that the exchange could not lead to an explicit mutual agreement on the nature of criticism because "Leavis remained obdurate" although Bateson "emphasized his admiration for Scrutiny and renewed his plea for cooperation between the two journals in the interests of their shared commitment to literature" (300). As to the significance of the exchange, Mulhern concludes that its "main methodological issue and the theoretical problems underlying it remain, in very different intellectual settings, as pressing today as they were in 1953" (300).

In a comparable way, this debate over "context" and "standards" is reenacted in a slightly different form during Leavis's exchanges with René Wellek and Michael Tanner. Both exchanges were about the relationship between literature and philosophy. Although there was a period of nearly thirty years separating the two exchanges, both Wellek's initial response to Leavis's method and Tanner's recent renewal of that

argument in his review of The Living Principle seem to have explicitly marked the Leavisite categories of analysis. To a certain extent, they have brought them into a sharper theoretical focus. They have also forced Leavis to determine his theoretical "colours" and to reveal the exact character of his idea of "living standards."

Wellek's initial objections to Leavis's method of reading poetry, as demonstrated in the latter's Revaluation (1936), have been often cited by critics discussing Leavis's criticism. The main points of Wellek's critique fall under four interrelated propositions: (i) that Leavis's assumptions about literature were not stated "explicitly" nor "defended. . .systematically"; (ii) that his privileging of actuality in poetic creation made him neglect idealism--a crucial trend in human thought; (iii) that Leavis's view of the Romantic poets ignored the fact that there is a coherent philosophical outlook underlying the Romantic world-view; and (iv) that it is a "'fallacy of origins'. . .to reduce. . .[poetic meaning] to individual experience" (Wellek, "Literary Criticism and Philosophy" 23-40). As Leavis refused to enumerate the exact principles governing his appreciation of poetic works, Wellek went on to sketch them on his behalf:

> Your poetry must be in serious relation to actuality, it must have a firm grasp of the actual, of the object, it must be in relation to life, it must not be cut off from direct vulgar living, it should not be personal in the sense of indulging in personal dreams and fantasies, there

> should be no emotion for its own sake in it, no afflatus, no mere generous emotionality, no luxury in pain or joy, but also no sensuous poverty, but a sharp, concrete realization, a sensuous particularity. The language of your poetry must not be cut off from speech, should not flatter the singing voice, should not be merely mellifluous, should not give, e.g., a mere general sense of motion, etc. ("Literary Criticism and Phiosophy" 23)

In formulating these seemingly rigid criteria which were, in fact, all quoted verbatim from different sections of Leavis's book, Revaluation, Wellek invited him to "defend this position more abstractly and to become conscious that large ethical, philosophical, and. . .ultimately, also, aesthetic choices are involved" (23).

In response to this, Leavis declared that "literary criticism and philosophy seem to me to be quite distinct and different kinds of disciplines--at least, I think they ought to be" ("A Reply" 31). Literary criticism is not philosophy and therefore its critical standards cannot be theorized in an abstract manner. For forcing himself into stating his critical norms, as a philosopher would like them to be, would not pertain to the discipline of criticism. There is not much to be "gained by the kind of explicitness [Wellek]. . .demands" (33), Leavis insists. And against Wellek's claims that it is only philosophy that could make literary criteria clearer, Leavis retorts:

> I thought I had provided something better. My whole effort was to work in terms of concrete

> judgements and particular analyses . . .; by choice, arrangement, and analysis of concrete examples I give. . .phrases a precision of meaning they couldn't have got in any other way. (34; emphasis added)

In thus positing these norms of critical thought, characterized by notions of "concreteness," "precision," and "analysis" in opposition to philosophical thought which is distinguished by "abstraction" and a "judicial one-eye-on-the-standard-approach" (31), Leavis commits his anti-philosophical approach to an empiricist bent that shares much with positivist thought as Williams pointed out earlier. As Pamella McCallum confirms, the centrality of empirical experience in Leavisite critical thought even brings him closer to Benthamism, his bête noire (Literature and Method 201; see also Tanner, "Literature and Philosophy" 54).

Leavis's hostility to philosophy and his disagreement with Wellek about standards highlight another important point in his theory: he perceives both philosophy and science as close mates, sharing the same epistemological origin.

> Philosophers are not scientists and don't reckon to apply strict scientific method, but nevertheless the traditional philosophic discipline aims at an intellectual strictness that in ethos is closely related to science. . . . [P]hilosophers in general seem to start at the mathematico-logical end of discourse and never to be able to escape from the implicit criteria. (Valuation in Criticism 290-91)

In opposing Wellek's appeal to philosophical thinking to determine the nature of criteria without which no critical project can be carried out, Leavis groups philosophy and science under the same umbrella of abstraction. He accuses the latter of lacking "precision of thought" and of venturing into generalizations that tend to lead the critic away from the poem. But most of all, philosophical thought, like scientific practice, is perceived as a negation of "life." Hence Leavis's privileging Blake's "extraordinary precision" and Lawrence's anti-Cartesian principles against Locke's or Newton's scientific abstractions. In this context, Leavis says of Lawrence that "he was profoundly anti-Cartesian, believing not only that life had always been there, but that the separated pure inanimate nature of natural science was a falsifying abstraction" (Thought, Words and Creativity 45).

In 1975, when Michael Tanner takes over this question of literature's relationship to philosophy, his starting point is obviously Wellek's earlier critique of Leavis. In his review article, "Literature and Philosophy," Tanner indicates that Leavis is more insightful than Wellek in opposing the imposition of any extrinsic norms--be they philosophic or other--upon literature, and in refusing to subscribe to the idea of a coherent "Romantic philosophy" uniting all the Romantic poets. In Wellek's critique of Leavis, Tanner finds two important propositions lacking, which if attended to,

would bring literature closer to philosophy: (i) "the relationship between poetry and what it is concerned to state, when that is something that can reasonably be called a philosophy" ("Literature and Phiosophy" 57); and (ii) the notion of "the probative force of literature," which often allows Leavis to qualify certain successful novels as "moral fables" or "dramatic poems" (58). These propositions, Tanner concludes, not only cross the paths of philosophical inquiry but also nourish a complex paradox in Leavis's view of literature. He "both wants the art to vindicate itself without being referred to anything beyond itself, and also wants to claim that it tells the truth about our civilization" (58).

However, in spite of the significance of this paradox and what Tanner views as Leavis's suspicion towards philosophy, the latter's "striking ignorance" of psychology, as well as his mistrust of the potential of the social sciences to achieve progress in human knowledge, Tanner still perceives Leavis's thought as close to philosophy. This is shown, according to Tanner, in the way the first chapter of The Living Principle establishes an epistemological link language, thought and objectivity. Tanner concludes:

> Nonetheless, Leavis's instinct for where the danger-zones in philosophy are for someone who wants to hold his views of the relation between thought, languages and objectivity is extraordinarily sound and his ideas about coping with them are also those of a first-rate

> philosophical intelligence. ("Literature and Philosophy" 62)

Whether this pronouncement was made by Tanner mainly to balance his severe critique of Leavis's views of philosophy as an ally to Benthamism is difficult to determine. One thing is sure, however; it welcomes Leavis's poetic method into the purview of philosophical thought. Yet both Wellek and Tanner seem to ignore the close attention that Leavis has unremittingly granted criticism sui generis and its standards. The latter were indeed his primary focus even while he argued for a particular type of poetic creation or against philosophical enquiry.

It is true, however, that Leavis's later essays, namely The Critical Principle, The Critic as Anti- Philosopher, and Valuation in Criticism pay a great deal of attention to the problem of the relationship of language to thought, but this does not warrant the claim that his main target here is a philosophy of literature. On the contrary, for to be faithful to Leavis's own words, his engagement with philosophy must be relegated to a secondary order. His primary concern is essentially with critical standards in connection with scientific norms as the latter were claiming academic priority at the university. This is precisely what Tanner and Wellek see as the foundation of Leavis's philosphical inquiry. Nonetheless, a distinction must be made here; Leavis's

critique of philosophy does not perceive it sui generis but in terms of its relationship to scientific abstraction, its lack of artistic-creative precision, and its indirect negation of organic culture. To this effect, in the theoretical chapters of both The Living Principle and Thought, Words and Creativity, as in his posthumous articles in Valuation in Criticism, his argument with scientism is renewed. Not only does he take up again his theoretical crusade against "Cartesianism" in his "Thought, Language and Objectivity" (in The Living Principle) but he also calls upon D.H. Lawrence in a critique (in Thought, Words and Creativity) of Lord Robbins's and I.A. Richards's appeals to scientific objectivity. It is, therefore, understandable that both Wellek and Tanner, in assessing Leavis's literary views, pay little attention to Leavis's explicit concern with the relationship between criticism per se, philosophy, and scientific knowledge. As Leavis argues elsewhere:

> What the student needs to acquire a minimum knowledge of is the way in which the "common-sense notion of the universe" (Whitehead's phrase) took possession of the ordinary man's mind, and with what consequences for the climate of the West and the ethos of our civilization. This involves being able to state intelligently what the Cartesian-Newtonian presuppositions were and to what kind of philosophical impasse they led--that still exemplified in the philosophies of science and the positivist and empiricist fashions that prevail. (Nor Shall 126)

Accordingly, whether the question is that of criticism, philosophy, or knowledge in general, Leavis's critique, in the last instance, is of the affiliation of all epistemologies and forms of human thought with science and the ethos of "technologico-Benthamism."

Part of the underlying argument of "Mutually Necessary" (1976), Leavis's reply to Tanner's article, lends strong support to this view. The second half of this article reverts to the discussion of the problematic relationship among "critical standards," "verification," "valuation," and scientific criteria. At the same time, it evokes Lord Robbins and his "Educational Report," which Leavis saw as a big blow to the place of the humanities within the univesity, because it gave priority to scientific learning ("Mutually Necessary" 137). From his reply, it is clear that what was weighing on his mind at that stage of his academic and intellectual career was the threat posed by the hegemony of the sciences. Though he is very critical of philosophy because of its alliance with science--but he also expresses mild recommendation of its usefulness--his complaint is essentially not about philosophy. In his later writing in particular, his addressing of philosophical issues is mainly a part of his critique of scientism:

> One deduces that the main academic business of the university is to promote scientific education, advance natural science, and serve industry.

> Robbins does, of course, recognize that some other kind of provision should be made, such as might be thought of as doing something to balance the emphasis on natural science: humanity itself should get some attention. ("Mutually Necessary" 137)

In The Living Principle, on the other hand, Leavis's discussion of the nature of philosophical inquiry is adopted merely as a theoretical threshold leading to the specification of critical analysis as distinct from scientific inquiry. The first chapter, "Thought, Language and Objectivity," one of the most theoretically argued essays Leavis ever wrote, is a comparative analysis of critical standards and scientific criteria. In the same vein, his references in it to Andreiski's Social Science and Sorcery and to Grene's The Knower and the Known are part of the attempt to review the exact status of critical standards while clarifying the function of criticism within "English" as a distinct discipline. From the outset, he puts forward two main arguments: the question of norms in "Practical Criticism" (renamed "Judgement and Analysis"), and the academic status of "English" as a discipline which safeguards a particular, valuable type of knowledge. Both arguments are considered in detail against the valorization of scientific disciplines--represented here by Mathematics:

> "English" is at the other extreme of Mathematics. One can more readily talk in a descriptive and definitive way of the kind of intelligence that begin [sic] to define the discipline. There can be no equivalent of Principia Mathematica. Nonetheless, it is politic to insist on "descriptive," and necessary to be able to justify the insistance. (The Living Principle 20)

It is not a critique of philosophy that we meet here, as Tanner would have us believe, but rather an attempt to produce a systematic defence of literature and critical "intelligence" in the face of scientific method as represented by Mathematics. Such an attitude towards what represents science stems from the findings of his cultural theory as developed particularly in Civilisation and Minority Culture, Culture and Environment, and Q.D. Leavis's Fiction and the Reading Public. These works evoke all the negative characteristics of a scientific-technological civilization. Nonetheless, this view raises questions as to the extent to which Leavis's theorization of literature really relied upon the fundamental distinctness of purely literary categories.

While defining English as "a discipline sui generis--a discipline of intelligence," Leavis insists that "there will be no neat and final account of the distinctive discipline, but the need and challenge to define and redefine will always be there" (The Living Principle 20). This is a way of distancing his approach from an abstract-scientific notion of definition. The problem that confronts his method is,

therefore, the need to attain finalizing proof in particular critical judgements but, at the same time, the sense of a crippling impossibility of doing so. In addition to this genuine concern for the redefinition of the discipline, which is understood as having to obey no fixed criteria, Leavis's project here answers the implications that "Practical Criticism" has come to convey to those concerned with literary studies. By changing its nomenclature to "Judgement and Analysis," he means to rethink a methodology that he defined earlier as the following:

> [It] is criticism in practice, and we are engaged in that when, for instance, we decide that a novel is good, give our grounds for the judgement, and put the case with care, or when we inquire into the justice or otherwise of Eliot's conclusion, Hamlet being in question, that "the play is most certainly an artistic failure". (The Living Principle 19)

Leavis's focus is the specification of the grounds for valuation or judgement in critical analysis and that of metacritical commentaries about other critics' evaluations. He seeks to vindicate the practices "Practical Criticism" has been turned into; "a specialized kind of gymnastic skill to be cultivated and practiced as something apart" (19).

Therefore, in the face of mathematical method, Leavis's study is to review the particular categories that constitute

literary analysis as a distinct method relying on its own special norms and standards. Its purpose is to demonstrate how such a method, with its "intelligence," could foster the required results: the cultivation of intelligence, the creation of a responsible public, and the maintenance of an authentic "organic" culture.

The other criterion that is connected with science, and which Leavis attributes to the practice of literary criticism is "objectivity." In several of his later essays, he addresses this concept with acuity. However, it seems that in addressing it, he tends to empty it of its scientific content--as denoting final, universal truths that depend on precise and validating proofs and experiments. The term "objectivity" becomes more recurrent in his writing from the 1960s onward. It is a term which he often evokes whenever the issue of scientificity is at hand. At the same time, "objectivity" is directly linked with poetic creativity, literary standards and value--all understood in non-scientific (i.e."non-mathematical") terms. Since objectivity has been a cornerstone criterion in scientific discourse, Leavis attacks its priviliged position by investigating the nature of meaning, language, thought, and knowledge. But as he must keep the boundaries between criticism and "positive" science clearly drawn, this criterion of "objectivity" first has to be demystified and its scientific connotations refuted before

making it more accessible, as another critical standard, to his ideal literary critics.

For that purpose, scientific "objectivity" is primarily perceived as a "fallacy" that is hostile to life (Thought, Words and Creativity 45). And borrowing this view from Lawrence's Fantasia and the Unconscious, Leavis maintains that "'objectivity'. . .[is] a deadly fallacy and [that]. . . science, which in the course of the recent centuries had invested the assumptions behind 'objectivity' with the authority of clear commensense, was advancing to new conquests over life at an acceleration" (Thought 45). Accordingly, when Leavis looks at any criteria to be defined either in science, criticism, or philosophy, these criteria have to be assessed beforehand through their potential alliance with the central concepts of "life" and "human nature." For him "scientific objectivity" is "rigorously opposed to natural human perception" (Valuation in Criticism 289). Like the notion of the human world, "life" infiltrates every concept Leavis uses in this context. It is a form of humanism that ultimately contributes moral overtones to nearly all his pronouncements. Humanism figures prominently in the more detailed redefinition of "objectivity" which he presents later on:

> Impersonality and precision for the common scientist are linked as ideals with a superstitious belief in the attainableness of pure objectivity. Of course the human "common world"

> has always been, very humanly, more inclusive than the objective world of science. But objectivity in the scientific sense is a late and sophisticated derivative of the creativity that has built up the human world by creating language. The concept has been arrived at in the pursuit of demonstrable precision--arrived at therefore by trying to eliminate every trace of anthropocentricity. But mankind is incurably--inevitably--anthropocentric. Pure reality an sich--reality not humanly created--is beyond our experience; great scientists--though they have to be mathematicians--know that. (Valuation in Criticism 296)

Through this attack on these basic standards of scientific inquiry--impersonality, objectivity, precision, and non-subjective truth--Leavis achieves a tour de force. Through his evocation of the anthropomorphic character of human discourse in general, he brings the principle of scientific objectivity into the realm of creativity and individual genius. Thus by undermining the scientificity of the term "objectivity" Leavis makes it easier for his paradigm of "collaborative-creative" criticism to function according to its norms of individual consciousness as governed by a teleological belief in the transhistoricity of the organic world. Yet a nagging question persists: How could a critical approach that centers around the notion of individual genius ever allow itself to be collaborative? The answer must lie in a Judeo-Christian conception of the self that is rooted in a theology of the body as an alternative source of knowledge: "The very statement that water is H_2O is a mental tour de force. With our bodies we know that water is not H_2O, our

intuitions and instincts both know it is not so" (Lawrence, cit. in Thought, Words and Creativity 47-8). In calling upon Lawrence's epistemology of the body, Leavis maintains that this type of knowledge "transcend[s]--transcend[s] so impossibly--the [scientific] commonsense, the whole cultural ethos, in which one had been brought up, and in terms of which one did one's thinking" (Thought 48).

The influence of Lawrence's anti-scientific views on Leavis's epistemological framework permeates his conceptualization of critical standards and critique of science. In addition to Blake, Arnold and Eliot, it is D.H. Lawrence whom Leavis regularly cites, especially with reference to the ultimate meaning of literature, life, the role of the unconscious in shaping culture, and the organic character of pre-industrial communities (Thought 45 and passim). With regard to scientificity in criticism, Leavis, not unlike Lawrence, encloses all the intellectual powers of scientific inquiry and artistic creation within the same purview of intuition and creativity. Objective knowledge, according to him, is primarily intuitional and cannot abide by the rational laws of the mind alone. In citing a lengthy extract from Lawrence's "Introduction to These Paintings," Leavis confirms his loyalty to the Lawrentian "philosophy" of an all-encompassing cosmic epistemology:

> Any creative act occupies the whole consciousness of a man. This is true of the great

> discoveries of science as well as of art. The truly great discoveries of science and real works of art are made by the whole consciousness of man working together in unison and oneness: instinct, intuition, mind, intellect all fused into one complete consciousness, and grasping what we may call a complete truth, or a complete vision, a complete revelation in sound.. . .
>
> And the same applies to the genuine appreciation of a work of art, or the grasp of a scientific law, as to the production of the same. The whole consciousness is occupied, not merely the body. The mind and spirit alone can never really grasp a work of art, though they may, in a masturbating fashion, provoke the body into an ecstasized response. The ecstasy will die out into ash and more ash. And the reason we have so many trivial scientists promulgating fantastic "facts" is that so many modern scientists likewise work with the mind alone, and force the intuitions and instincts into a prostituted acquiescence.. . . (cit. in Thought 47)

The image of science in this passage is drawn through the language of a sexualized body that rejects the dichotomy of body and mind and seeks their fusion into one another. This view perceives scientific knowledge as similar to literary knowledge but only in order to subsume the former under the latter. In this respect, Leavis's main argument, after Lawrence's, develops towards the embrace of individual "intuition" as the common denominator uniting all disciplines. "Objective" knowledge (whether in literature, criticism, philosophy, or science) is thus unified as a coherent "anthropocentric" whole that is ultimately tacit and personal. "Any judgement," Leavis argues, "is personal and spontaneous or it is nothing" (The Living Principle 35). This view is

undoubtedly a far cry from Leavis's earlier pronouncements about the necessity of "precision," a term that is undeniably pregnant with scientific connotations. It also problematizes a major principle in critical discrimination: "the cultivation of analysis that is not also a cultivation of the power of responding fully, delicately and with discriminating accuracy to the subtle and precise use of words is worthless" (Education and the Univeristy 116; emphasis mine). This idea of accuracy and precision in the use and interpretation of words refutes any belief in intuition, since, if all critics were to adopt the same principle, they should come up with the same results. This would cancel their creative input in interpreting the text and ultimately defeat the potentiality of reaching the utopian "communion" Lawrence and Leavis dreamt of.

What makes all these categories peculiarly inconsistent and short of methodological reliability is the fact that they remain "personal." They pertain to individual consciousness and intuition, while serving as a transhistorical cultural axis which extends back from the present to the "immemorial" origins of a claimed organic order of things:

> The standard, though personal--apprehended personally as in and of the nature of the real, and applied personally, but not as a matter of decision--is not merely personal; it is a product of immemorially collective creativity. (The Living Principle 33)

Such transcendental and solipsistic formulations that Leavis often tends to fall into are indications of the difficulties he is faced with when trying to formulate a paradigm of literary judgement that would not accept the rationalization of its categories in a scientific manner: i.e. as abstract, independent, and ultimately requiring proof or evidence to warrant any conclusions. In order to dispute the value of scientific reasoning, Leavis's thought has to resort ultimately to the humanist notion of a comprehending "community" (not of a "stupid" public [Valuation in Criticism 251]) in order to protect itself against accusations of pure subjectivism.

Yet the problem remains insoluble: How to differentiate critical standards from scientific ones if we were to resort mainly to the notions of community or intuition as the ultimate referent and yardstick for judgement? Indeed, Leavis ends up urging for a moral view of standards in all disciplines. He argues that "the discipline that maintains the standards of science has its existence in a specializing community, the intellectual devotion of which is a special and professional morality" (The Living Principle 33). Nonetheless, it is difficult not to view the "intelligent" elite (see Valuation in Criticism 247 and passim) of "responsible" critics for whom Leavis vehemently compaigned as

also defending a particular morality. In this context, scientific criteria are relegated to the ethical realm of the community that upholds them. In contrast, literary standards seem to be immune from this pitfall, since without them, humanity is lost. In order to understand the moral significance of Leavis's critical thought, a scrutiny of the function he attributes to "critical standards" in a world of ethics is necessary here.

With regard to these standards, it is necessary to refer to two important titles by Leavis: first, Towards Standards of Criticism (1933), a collection of articles from the defunct The Calendar which were reprinted (comprising a new introduction by Leavis) in 1976; second, "Standards of Criticism," which appeared in print several years after his death. Notwithstanding the dropping of the word "Towrds" from the second title, it is essential here to notice that "standards" bracket his career, and that he had to return to the question of "critical standards" towards the end of his life in order to settle some theoretical scores within his approach. In various places (see Literature in Our Time 47 and passim; For Continuity 76 and passim), however, he treats this key-term in direct relationship to most of the other tenets that characterize his approach to literary knowledge; namely, "sensibility," "life," "critical awareness," and "tradition."

The interconnectedness of the concept of standards with other Leavisite key-notions is revealed particularly in the following passage from the 1976 introduction to Towards Standards of Criticism. While explaining the conditions that led to the ill-fate of Scrutiny, which died in 1953, and relating them to the "university-function" as a primary factor in securing the health of critical thought, Leavis argues:

> Of course, an essential element in the shaping project of Scrutiny was the realization that, if the knowledge of what critical standards were was to be saved, which could only be done by keeping them livingly present to some public, it must be by establishing a special relation between criticism and the univesity.. . . [T]he function of the university is to restore and maintain the educated public in which standards (which mean really the power to endorse standards or "meet" in them) are "there." (Towards Standards xxi-xxii)

Being one of the paramount catch phrases necessary for the launching as well as the maintenance of The Calendar and then Scrutiny, "critical standards" became the mediating principle between Leavis's conception of the public, criticism, tradition, the university, and the social context in which he was situated. Moreover, against the moral deterioration and the spiritual philistinism generated by techno-science and its Benthamite utilitarian philosophy, the maintenance of "standards" became Leavis's moral duty to society. He often reminded his readers that "there would at any rate seem to be little profit in a concern for tradition and for sanctions

that is not associated with 'standards of criticism'" (Towards Standards 9).

Being assigned such a critical-cultural and moral function, the concept of "standards" is no longer a purely literary notion that could be interpellated solely from "the black marks on the page" or determined therefrom with precision. Neither is its role restricted to the domain of a criticism that is simply literary. In fact, since the term itself is so charged with ideological and cultural meaning, it resists fixing within clearly defined parameters. Hence the difficulties that Leavis himself found when trying to define the exact meaning of "standards". In a manner that was similar to that adopted in explaining the significance of other key-terms, Leavis's explanation of "standards" finds a safe refuge only in his reiterated phrases about the impossibility of fixing difficult but crucial terms. Detailing this point, there is a lucid and personally engaging passage in English Literature in Our Time and the University:

> The word "standards" is not the less necessary because, like so many of the most important words in our field of discourse, its use can't be justified by the kind of definition the prompt logic of the enemy demands. One can't long discuss the study of literature and the unavoidableness of critical judgements without using it. And when I try to explain what "standards" are, what is their nature and authority as we, students of literature and (therefore) critics, are concerned with them, my underlying and essential preoccupation is not merely or mainly theoretical, but brings together very intimately my disquiet at the actual state of

> criticism in the English-speaking world, my conception of what literary studies should be at the university, and my sense of the idea of a university as it needs to be fostered--and realized--in the technological age. (45)

Such an urgent tone emphasizes the unremitting and imperative need to establish or re-instate proper standards of criticism, for as Leavis points out in For Continuity 76 and passim, these standards did exist once and were respected. According to him, they were necessitated by the conditions of total disarray his contemporary cultural world was in. Although not explicitly specified in this passage, Leavis's vision of the decay of his contemporary cultural scene, as detailed in Culture and Environment and Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture, would be rivalled only by that of an Eliot or a Spengler (cf. "The Waste Land"; The Decline of the West). Yet, despite the deep conviction with which Leavis believes in the decline of his contemporary world, he seems to be unable to give a clear description of the critical standards he deems relevant to the reestablishment of the requisite order and health within the literary world. The difficulty which the reader encounters when trying to grasp Leavis's slippery terms turns out to be disabling for both the understanding and the practice of criticism. For unless the reader assumes certain theoretical givens as Leavis does--hence his resort to genius, intuition and the Lawrentian knowledge of the body--his or her approach to a text cannot proceed with total conviction. This

ambiguity of the concept of "standards," like that of "precision," "objectivity," and "organic culture," offers us valuable insights into the nature of the knowledge that Leavis ultimately presents to us: It is an ambiguous knowledge that uses scientific terminology because it seeks the certainty of belief but, at the same time, shrinks away from it because of an underlying fear of theory, abstraction, philosophy, and science. All these issues, coupled with Leavis's ignorance of the theoretical battles of the 1950s and 1960s, his inability to engage fully in theory, or even sometimes to write clear and lucid metacritical prose, are indications of a profound malaise resulting from a theoretical impasse in which the Leavisite epistemology found itself.

The word "standards" becomes, in Saussurian terms, a signifier without a signified; yet this signified's existence seems to be a prerequisite for the functioning of its signifiers. As Leavis states:

> I'm not much interested in establishing in any thorough-going theoretical way that the phrase "the standards of literary criticism," means something; that their basis must be this, and their nature that. On the other hand, I <u>am</u> very much preoccupied with vindicating literary-criticism as a specific discipline--a discipline of intelligence, with its own field, and its own approaches within that field. And in particular I am preoccupied with insisting that there is an approach to the problem of "standards" that is proper to the field of literary criticism and to the literary critic as such. (<u>English Literature</u> 45-46)

The problem here is theoretical. It is a complex dilemma between perceiving the "standards" as not "meaning something", and indicating "literary" standards as faithful carriers of "proper" "literary" signification. This complexity is solved only through Leavis's final appeal to the emphatic "am"; the ultimate refuge lies in an ontological consciousness as the purveyor of "objective" knowledge. However, while this ontology celebrates an intuitional epistemology, it turns out to be a prison-house of thought, inhibiting the mind from venturing into the vast realm of critical thought. The result of this impasse is the striking frequency of deixis such as "this," "that," "there," and "here" in Leavis's prose.

Not unlike the dilemma that lies at the heart of Leavis's argument with scientific propositions, such a formulation of literary standards confirms the paradox that characterizes his critical discourse: an urgent need for clearly defined terminology, marked at the same time by a dread of specificity. It might not be too farfetched an idea to deduce that the Leavisite discourse is marked by a quasi-schizophrenic bent. It lays down certain theoretical requirements that it cannot satisfy itself. For instance, how to map a "proper. . .field of literay criticism" without fixing its criteria and making them agreeable to a large audience of critics? How to create "a discipline of

intelligence" without exactly determining what intelligence consists of? Last, how to refute an exact definition of criticism when one's critical project rejects other contending ("enemy") approaches because they are said to lack "discriminating accuracy"?

Since standards are so problematic and graspable only through ambiguous language, they have to be "assumed," as Leavis himself confirms during his review of The Calendar's short-lived achievements. On standards, he says, "nothing more is said about them. Nothing more needed to be said; for if we can appreciate--which is not necessarily to agree with--the reviewing in The Calendar, we know what they are, and if we cannot, then no amount of explaining or arguing will make much difference" (Towards Standards 4). And in formulating its theoretical notions in this manner, Leavis falls victim to what he criticizes other approaches for doing: total abstraction, a lack of precision, and the assumption of non-literary principles (cf. the debate with Bateson over contextualism). Furthermore, he leaves critical theory and practice in the hands of individual intuition, thereby running the risk of sheer subjectivist relativism. Moreover, if these were the ultimate criteria for building up a theory of literary criticism, we would be tempted to wonder whether, by the same token, any approach would not be entitled to claiming the same principles and thereby stand on safer grounds.

However, Leavis's theorization of "critical standards" requires a final comment if we are to grasp its full significance. These "standards" tend to bear on "practical" issues, as Arnold termed them. They are perceived as a regenerative motor of "living" experience; their absence from certain moments of English history as instanced by the contemporary "dissociation of sensibility" carries drastic consequences. When standards were protected in the past, the culture was much healthier: "The standards in Gosse's time ['the age of Arnold and Bennett'] may not have been generally operative among 'the cultivated,' but respect for them was" (For Continuity 76). The maintenance of these standards goes hand in hand with an ethical order as elaborated through the Leavisite theorization of culture. Concurrently, the notion of "living standards," like that of "objectivity" and "sensibility" takes on added significance when it is related to Leavis's encounters with radical epistemologies, especially Marxism which was a powerful current of thought at Cambridge during the 1930s and 1940s (see Mulhern, The Moment of 'Scrutiny' 89-94).

This notion was adopted as a counter-argument in order to resist the wide appeal of such economic concepts as a "high standard of living" which not only was appealed to by radical and reformist ideologies alike but was also a very popular

issue on the agendas of liberal-democratic politicians. "Standards" became a politicized watchword. What disturbed Leavis most was the fact that the term was a guiding principle for capitalist mass-production and advertisement industries. For him, these all meant the standardization of values and mechanization of human relations.

However, there seems to be no intended pun on Leavis's part in reversing the common usage of this term, i.e., turning it into that of "living standards," concerned primarily with life and pertaining ultimately to an English literary heritage. "If a literary tradition," he says, "does not keep itself alive. . .not merely in new creation, but as a pervasive influence upon feeling, thought and standards of living (<u>it is time we challenged the economist's use of this phrase</u>), then it must be pronounced to be dying or dead" (<u>For Continuity</u> 72; emphasis added). Defined from an economist's perspective, standards appeared to carry lethal significance; they were direct manifestations of the emergent consumer civilization of the "technologico-Benthamite" age. Scientific ("positivistic") ideas, like Marxist thought, were both perceived through their connection with this assumed fact. They both seemed to have had much to do with the consequences. Leavis reemphasizes this point, both in <u>Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow</u> (1962) and <u>Nor Shall my Sword</u> (1972). As this second book shows, after his encounter with

Snow's scientistic attacks against literary intellectuals, Leavis appears to use the term "standards" more often against the prejudices of anti-literary scientism than against consumerist ideology--though the latter could still be read as the second target of that critique. To this effect, commenting on a statement in the Guardian, he argues:

> "Science is a means to an end": that emphasis might have been accepted as a hopeful sign if one had. . .ever come across any evidence that. . . the "end" in view was ever seriously conceived as anything other, anything more adequate, anything less congenial to statistical criteria, than a "rising standard of living"--an advancing G.N.P., more equitable distribution, and an improved Health Service. (Nor Shall 137-8)

Notwithstanding such a negative view of the tremendous improvements that a "rising standard of living" and a high G.N.P. can bring to the lives of disinherited members of society, we notice here that "standards" is perceived through a valuation of science, whose value--in turn--is measured only by a conservative model of social reform. To read democratic achievements like a "more equitable distribution" of wealth and an "improved Health Service" as retrograde principles reveals the extent to which Leavis's conservative politics, like his representation of science, was anachronistic. This also refutes his longtime commitment to the principle of "life" and "humanitas."

From these positions which Leavis maintained towards the manifestations--literary, cultural, political, and economic--of his contemporary society, one can deduce several pertinent observations about the ideological stance of his critical epistemology in general. Through his increasing concern with the question of standards and literary principles as weapons against philosophy, scientific knowledge, and method, his theorization of criticism has stretched beyond its literary purview and fallen into conservative politics. By perceiving scientific thought mostly through the drastic repercussions of technological development, Leavis was led to reject any cultural theory that would leave room for a view that sees theory, philosophy, science, and industrialism as beneficial enterprises. A final verdict on the significance of scientific knowledge is confirmed without ambiguity, whereas the knowledge that emanates from critical standards must remain ambiguous, undefined, and impossible to fix despite Leavis's insistence on precision, clarity, and concreteness in thought. On the other hand, scientists are not differentiated from Marxists, for instance, for they all worship "the machine" and are, therefore, against "life." This view also led Leavis to privilege the literature of an agrarian pre-industrial social order ("old England" and its "art-speech") which he saw as governed by the "living principle." Howard Felperin's assessment of the critical project of "Leavis and his followers" is to the point:

> Their consistent claim to be vigorous, independent, discerning minds making free discriminations among the best and the less than best that has been thought and said could appear, with great plausibility, to be nothing other than a conditioned reflex, the by-product of a social process long in train and distinctively English. Their precious "sensibility" could be described, sociologically, as the reaction (or reaction-formation) of a puritan petite-bourgeoisie (seemingly forever on the rise since the Middle Ages), against a growing mass culture on the one side, and an academic culture still dominated by aristocratic amateurs, on the other: the groups already identified by Arnold, with anxious wit, as Philistines, Populace, and Barbarians respectively. (Beyond Deconstruction 13)

Indeed, since Leavis was highly conscious of a sense of competition with techno-scientific disciplines both within the university and in society at large, he could not totally disavow scientific terminology. Notions of precision, accuracy, objectivity, impersonality, and disinterestedness became recurrent terminology in his and the Scrutineers' language. However, since Leavis was so faithful to cultural tradition, he could not abandon his Arnoldian inheritance and its valuation of essentialist notions of human nature and subjective experience. Hence the paradox with which he found himself confronted. In theorizing his object of study as well as his criteria of analysis, he opted for artistic intuition as well as a Lawrentian mystical phenomenology of the body as a center of perception. These became ultimate standards for

constructing a humanist kind of knowledge. Nonetheless, this concern for critical standards reveals, beside Leavis's own crusade against techno-science, criticism's direct engagement with scientific methodology in the process of constructing its own distinctness and mapping its epistemological terrain. This is illustrated especially by the other confrontations between Leavis, on the one hand, and Snow representing scientism and the Marxist tradition, on the other.

III. Beyond "Scientism" and Cultural "Determinism": Leavis Against C.P. Snow and Marxism

> [W]e have to insist, and compel for English, the corresponding respect (there is no respect as things are), that we stand for a discipline of intelligence as genuine as that of any of the sciences and certainly not less important. (F.R. Leavis, Nor Shall my Sword 108)

> What, as a matter of fact, one commonly finds in Marxists is that oblivion of, indifference to, the finer values which is characteristic of a "bourgeois," "capitalist" or Rotarian civilisation -- the civilisation produced by a century of the accelerating modern process. (F.R. Leavis For Continuity 5)

In formulating a critical approach which required the postulation of a set of standards and criteria, Leavis had two major opposing epistemologies in mind: "scientism"--understood here as unflinching defence of science and technology--and Marxism. However, his argument with Marxism waned by the end of the forties, although Leavis kept referring to it occasionally in his later years (Mulhern, The Moment of 'Scrutiny' 88; and Pechey, "Scrutiny and English Marxism" 68), while his controversy with "scientism" lasted much longer and intensified further after 1959, when Snow's Rede Lecture appeared (cf Leavis, "'Literarism' versus

'"scientism"'" in Nor Shall 135-60). While arguing against "scientism" and perceiving it as a threat to the values he propounded, Leavis occasionally turned to Marxism to reiterate his refutation of its epistemology. As Perry Anderson points out in reference to the "Scrutiny" movement, "Scrutiny was born in close relation to Marxism. . .and it developed in a permanent tension with it thereafter" ("Components of the National Culture" 272). Yet Leavis never addressed Marxism as a science per se, but as a political doctrine that was in alliance with science, technology and "'bourgeois', 'capitalist' or Rotarian civilization" (Leavis, For Continuity 5). Nonetheless, like his controversy with "scientism", Leavis's argument with Marxism offers us important insights into the reasons behind his refutation of scientificity in literary criticism. In his representation of science, Leavis relegates Marxism to a secondary order, hence the logic of discussing his response to the Marxists only after our discussion of his controversy with Snow.

Leavis, Snow and the Idea of Science:

The primary objective of Snow's "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution" (1959) is twofold: a defence of the absolute usefulness of science--both theoretical and applied, as opposed to literary disciplines, in solving social problems--, and the recommendation of a global propagation of

science and technology--through education--first in Britain and then throughout the world. Only "by rethinking our education," Snow maintains, can the gap between literature and science (Public Affairs 24), like the rift separating the rich and the poor (28), be bridged. Concomitantly, any other form of human knowledge is automatically relegated to this compound objective and situated in relation to these two modes of thought: the "traditional [or literary] culture" and "the scientific culture." As he argues:

> This [scientific] culture contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level, than literary persons' arguments; even though the scientists do cheerfully use words in senses which literary persons don't recognise, the senses are exact ones, and when they talk about "subjective," "objective," "philosophy" or "progressive," they know what they mean, even though it isn't what one is accustomed to expect. (Public Affairs 20)

Indeed, it was this clear privileging of science and the denigration of the literary culture that urged Leavis to reassess his theorization of critical standards along the lines of Snow's "scientism." Against science, Leavis posited criticism as "a discipline of intelligence [that is] as genuine as that of any of the sciences" (Nor Shall 108). In fact, both Snow's project of a popular scientific education and Leavis's programme for "the training of critical awareness," as the subtitle of Culture and Environment goes, meet at the level of a problematic interpretation of the

notion of scientificity. Each side assesses it from a different vantage point and charges it with forms of signification that are far from innocent.

One of the most striking ideas in Snow's Rede Lecture is the extent to which literary culture is marginalized from the scientific purview that he maps there. Concurrently, critical theory succumbs to the same fate. Yet, remembering Snow as a novelist who was concerned also with the basic manifestations of literature, one would expect, at least, some primary assessment of the views of some of the schools of criticism prominent during the late 1950s. These schools, which range from Formalism to aestheticism, Philology, New Criticism, Structuralism, and Marxist criticism remained unheeded. Instead, the whole critical tradition and its arguments with scientific method were simply ignored by Snow as if they had never existed. Nearly all of the representatives of literature cited by Snow are novelists, poets or dramatists. A possible explanation of this oversight may lie in Snow's understanding of literary culture mainly as "traditional culture," excluding any later developments of literature into literary criticism as one of its branches. Yet, even today, most of his commentators--detractors and supporters alike--have ignored this absence of criticism from his theorization of culture (cf. N. C. Graves, The Two

Cultures Theory chap 1; and L. B. Meyer, "Sciences, Arts" 48).

The reviews of the two-cultures question have mainly concentrated on the ways "culture," with reference to literature and science, was initially formulated by both Snow and Leavis. The former advocated the existence of two irreconcilable cultural entities; the latter admitted to the reality of only one. But the truth of the matter is that both Leavis and Snow believed in one single coherent culture, with one crucial difference between them: the one defended a "scientific" totality, the other an "organic" whole pertaining to the "Third Realm." For Snow, literature is redundant, and when there is no way to do away with it, it should play a cosmetic role and be subordinated to scientific thought: "If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist" ("The Two Cultures" 19). In contrast, for Leavis, science--especially applied science--ought to be subordinate to the literary realm and kept at bay because of its destructive nature. If we cannot live without it, it should then think "life" as well as tacit knowledge before it is embraced. Here lies the core of the controversy between what came to be known as ""scientism"" and "Literarism" (see Huxley, Literature and Science).

In this thorny controversy, defining the two cultures became a priority for both sides. For his part, Snow insisted on an "anthropological" and an "intellectual" meaning of the term "culture":

> [T]he scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. That is, its members need not, and of course often do not, always completely understand each other; biologists more than not will have a pretty hazy idea of contemporary physics; but there are common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep. It cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class. (Public Affairs 18)

The characteristics noted in this attempt to formulate a complete definition are those of "the scientific culture." They are absent from what Snow labels "traditional culture." Scientists, according to him, have an innate drive that links them together: "in much of their emotional life, their attitudes are closer" to each other than to those of literary intellectuals. And "without thinking about it, they respond alike" (19). As for "the literary culture," nowhere in the Rede Lecture is there a similarly systematic and positive definition of it. Although Snow talks about it here and there, it remains merely a set of widespread attitudes, which implies that it is not really a proper "culture." Furthermore, emphasizing the superiority of the scientific world, Snow says that "the scientific edifice. . .is the most beautiful and

wonderful collective work of the mind of man" (21). In his opinion, no such edifice has been constructed by the humanities. In contrast, the culture of the "literary intellectuals" is delineated by Snow in a rather fragmented style. It is a sub-cultural world whose 'inhabitants' are hardly connected with each other. They lack the cementing ingredient that binds the scientists together. Thereby, their culture embodies nearly all the characteristics that negate the scientific world.

It was this type of hierarchical view of the "two cultures," as well as the fact that Snow's Rede Lecture was being used as a textbook in schools, that drew Leavis's uncompromising remarks in his Richmond Lecture, Two Cultures? The Significance of C P Snow (1962). His rage was directed against the author in person, of whom Leavis was spitefully dismissive. It is because of Snow's formulations, which, in fact, hardly granted literary sensibility any vital role, that Leavis responded with such vehemence. Even when Snow tried to reformulate his cultural theory later, it never appeased Leavis's rage. Leavis says:

> [T]he argument of Snow's Rede Lecture is at an immensely lower conceptual level, and incomparably more loose and inconsequent, than I myself, a literary person, should permit in a group discussion I was conducting, let alone a pupil's essay. (Two Cultures? 15; author's emphasis)

Leavis reproaches the Rede Lecture for showing ignorance about literature; it reflects "a naiveté indistinguishable from the portentous ignorance" about history and the reality of the Industrial Revolution (23); and, most of all, it exhibits virtuosity in the use of cliches (17). Calling Snow's view of industrial science "crass Wellsianism," in response to the accusation against literary culture of being Luddite, Leavis proceeds to offer a different explanation of "scientific culture". For him, "the advance of science and technology means" a number of "momentous and insidious" consequences (26).

This view of science and technology, which refutes Snow's high praise for "the scientific culture," ought not be taken at face value or perceived as a total rejection of science on Leavis's part. Leavis is conscious of such a problem and is careful in formulating his view of the scientific culture. In 1970, he declared: "I neither believe in any special 'literary' values nor am hostile to science" (Nor Shall My Sword 152). His argument is against a particular "scientism"--that of Snow, Annan, Robbins and Todd, as he says--which the university Establishment defended at the expense of literary studies and the Humanities. In a similar context, he argues:

> More generally, I am not suggesting that we ought to halt the progress of science and technology, I am insisting that the more potently they accelerate their advance the more urgent does it become to inaugurate another, a different, sustained effort of collaborative human creativity which is concerned with perpetuating, strengthening and asserting, in response to change, a full human creativity--the continuous collaborative creativity that ensures significance, ends and values, and manifests itself as consciousness and profoundly human purpose. (Nor Shall 156)

Of course, the totalizing notion of the "full human" alternative that Leavis proposes here must be specified more clearly. From the outset, Leavis is careful not to introduce a hierarchical criterion in his assessment of the "two cultures." Unlike Snow, he subscribes to the postulate that there is only one culture, a human one, not a separate, purely literary domain that depends on the total exclusion of the scientific one. This one culture is open to "the unknown" and is rooted in "the livingness of the deepest vital instinct" of human nature (Two Cultures? 27). "It is something that is alien to both of Snow's cultures," a "Realm" that should be kept alive as "the centre of human consciousness" (p 29) in the face of the possible dangers of "scientism" and technology. And this alternative, Leavis insists, must not be reified into an abstract hierarchy of literary values (Lectures in America 23).

Unlike Leavis's proposition, Snow's main thesis in his Rede Lecture is more concerned with validating the socio-political function of science as useful and liberating knowledge. It is a view that takes for granted the superiority of the epistemological categories on which science bases its judgements (Public Affairs 20, and passim).

In opposition to literary culture, the "scientific culture" represents all the virtues he believed humanity should aspire to. To him, scientists, in spite of their being "impoverished" by a lack of literary knowledge, which they are supposed to have, "are very intelligent men. Their culture is in many ways an exacting and admirable one" (20). And whereas non-scientific writers have abhorrent political affiliations, scientific writers are morally uncorrupt: "they are by and large the soundest group of intellectuals we have; there is a moral component right in the genesis of science itself, and almost all scientists form their own judgements of the moral life" (21). Moreover, especially when they are in an international cross-cultural encounter, "they are freer than most people from racial feeling; their own culture is in its human relations a democratic one" (40). These ethical values of science, often coated in romanticized imagery, stem from an underlying ability among scientists to transcend what Snow perceives as the tragic nature of "the individual condition," in which "each of us dies alone" (16). When faced with the

same condition, literary intellectuals are helpless. In contrast, scientists are a socially committed breed. Their tendency to challenge the existential human condition attests to their will to struggle in order to save their "fellow human beings" from disease and other social ills (16). "As a group, the scientists. . .are inclined to be impatient to see if something can be done until it's proved otherwise" (17). This is what makes the scientific culture really a culture. It has the ability to transcend all socio-cultural and national barriers.

Such an optimistic view of existence among scientists is strengthened by what Snow perceives as the objective nature of the methodology that the scientific discipline embodies. The scientific culture, he asserts, "contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level, than literary persons' arguments" (20). Accordingly, the scientific method is legitimized because of its appeal to rigour, precision and a synoptic view of its epistemological terrain. As noted earlier, these are concepts that Leavis also appealed to in his own way. "The judgements the literary critic is concerned with are judgements about life," Leavis argues. "What the critical discipline is concerned with is relevance and precision in making and developing them" (Lectures in America 23).

Nevertheless, although Snow reiterates his statement here in order to uphold the objective status of the methodology of the "scientific culture," it does not preclude further inconsistencies on his part. He does not offer us a concrete example of what an exact definition of any of these terms would be. Moreover, if we compare his pronouncements in his Rede Lecture to his later revisions of this question of the two conflicting cultures, we note that there are clear shifts in his position. They seem to be the result of the public's response to his ideas, rather than that of any inherent objectivity in the epistemological categories he uses. As a result, Lord Snow's argument turns out to be not so different from Leavis's defence of the literary culture. He adopts a discourse that generates its own essentialist principles in order to win public support.

It seems that the only thing on which Snow agrees with Leavis is this emphasis on reforming the whole society through the academic practices of the university. As Leavis himself admits: "Like Snow I look to the university. Unlike Snow, I am concerned to make it really a university, something (that is) more than a collocation of specialist departments--to make it a centre of human consciousness: perception, knowledge, judgement and responsibility" (Two Cultures? 29). On both sides of the debate, education became, by implication, the

locus of the struggle for the "right" recognition of the value of "real" culture. To the same end, the establishment of Scrutiny by Leavis and his colleagues was mainly an enterprise to expand the purview of university education in order to create a wider--but still select--public.

Snow's line of argument is controlled by a wide appeal to techno-science. By implication, any culture that does not serve this metaphor becomes obsolete. Such a view priorizes technological research and establishes a sub-hierarchy even within the scientific field itself. Pure science, for instance, must serve industry if it wants to qualify for acceptance by the "real world." Against this idea of a total embrace of technology as progress, and as "the only weapon we have [in order] to oppose the bad effects of. . .technology itself" (Snow, "Prologue," Public Affairs 9), Leavis posits an opposite view. At least momentarily, he opts for a total rejection of mixing science and literature courses in schools. (see English in Our Time 96). It was a view that he revised later when he advocated a "reciprocal" exchange between all disciplines of knowledge (cf. Nor Shall 158 and 186). It is nevertheless a view that proves the extent to which his continual battle with the illusory ideals of techno-scientificity structured his theorization of knowledge in general.

In Snow's discourse, science acquires a political and ideological dimension. His appeal to the Soviet educational system as a model to be emulated in order to solve the neglect--particularly in England--of the importance of the scientific-technological culture signals two crucial points: first, that his discourse, while being still that of a scientist, has shifted to a more overtly politicized perspective. It invites us to contextualize it by placing it within the ideological framework of the Cold War climate. It also bespeaks the technological competitive atmosphere between the East and the West over who was going to 'save' the rest of the world. First, "scientists would do us good all over Asia and Africa" (Public Affairs 42). Second, this emphasis on the liberating function of education through the priorizing of national technological expertise and leadership marginalizes literary knowledge even further. As this knowledge cannot, by its nature, produce a competitive type of 'hard' technology, "literary culture" is made more subservient to the scientific mind and its future aspirations. Literature is allotted the simple role of entertainment. To confirm his conclusions, Snow points out the radical changes that have affected Western societies as a result of the scientific cultural revolution, especially through its positive effects on individual standards of living. He reminds us that these "transformations have also proved something which only the scientific culture can take in its stride. Yet, when we don't take it in our

stride, it makes us look silly" (Public Affairs 40). In the end, it is the "scientific culture" that turns out to be the center of Snow's intellectual universe. Being the mode of thought par excellence, it is presumed that it should be granted national and international leadership capabilities in order to bring about the total liberation of humanity. And the image of techno-science as an unquestioned liberator of humanity is achieved.

Snow's scientism, therefore, becomes an exemplary discourse in search of the means by which it must legitimize its own worldview in opposition to literary knowledge. Its appeal to the positive effects of technological science, its denial of the fact that the "scientific culture" can serve ideological ends as much as a non-scientific one does, and its celebration of the glories of the Industrial Revolution are all part of this legitimizing process. Its message is, presumably, that any discourse that cannot serve this idea (like literature or criticism) must either reform its vision and practices by embracing scientism, or must face the dire consequences of being allotted a secondary position in the hierarchy of human knowledge. In his attack on literary culture as fundamentally lacking in scientific rigour, Snow's intention is revealed. It is an attempt to demystify a particular view of the world, but only through the substitution of a new myth of its own. And it is this flaw in

Snow's argument that places Leavis at some advantage in this controversy.

Indeed, what Snow does not address is the rhetoric of scientism in which scientific thought is depicted mainly as a series of glorious achievements, using all the narrative prompts of a fairy-tale--good characters versus evil ones; saviours, heroes, the nearly impossible task they must accomplish against all the odds that they must first defeat, etc. This discourse often flirts with the categories of mythopoetic narratives. It consequently lends itself to ideological appropriations rather than to the realm of 'Objectivity'. Jean-Francois Lyotard is quite lucid on this point. In his La Condition postmoderne (1979), he argues:

> Que font les scientifiques appelés à la télévision, interviewés dans les journaux, apres quelques "découvertes"? Ils racontent une épopée d'un savoir pourtant parfaitement non-épique. Ils satisfont ainsi aux régles du jeu narratif, dont la pression non seulement chez les usagers des média, mais dans leur for intérieur, reste considérable. . .L'Etat peut dépenser beaucoup pour que la science puisse se représenter comme une épopée: à travers elle, il se rend crédible, il crée l'assentiment public dont ses propres décideurs ont besoin. (49)[1]

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[1] See also Levy-Leblond, "La Science, la politique," in L'Esprit de sel (1984), pp. 217-221; and Albert Jacquart, ed., Les Scientifiques parlent (1987), particularly the essay included here, "Voie sans issue?" by Cornelius Castoriadis, who cogently explains the connection between science, scientists and power-politics (263-98).

These views remain a striking evocation of the ideological drift of Snow's scientism towards a messianic vision of scientific and technological culture. On the whole, his scientistic project of reviving cultural practice among the literary and the scientific communities, and of suggesting ways to solve the communication crisis that exists between them has to end in failure. Its premisses have been shown to lack the theoretical framework that would enable it to understand cultural practice. It was because of the theoretical limitations of Snow's standpoint that Leavis's argument--notwithstanding its spiteful side--managed to win support from various representatives of both cultural poles. In fact, as it turned out, Snow discriminated against not only literature, its critics and theorists but also against other scientific disciplines.

The Yudkin Objections:

Michael Yudkin was one of the first scientists to object to Snow's thesis, before even knowing of Leavis's Richmond Lecture (Leavis, "Prefatory Note," Two Cultures? 5). Yudkin's radical disagreement with Snow's main objective of making science subjects compulsory at the level of all the formative stages of a student's education enhances Leavis's rejection of science but also attests to the important fact

that the "scientific culture" is not as coherent as Snow wants us to believe. On the other hand, the disagreement between Yudkin and Snow inside the scientific community itself may shed more light on the significance of the Snow-Leavis controversy and on the character of scientific discourse as such. It becomes just like any other human discourse, comprising contradictions of its own, and is in continual need of extra-discursive institutions (e.g. an institution like the university or the Royal Society) in order to enforce and legitimize its premisses or to uphold its judgements on other cultural practices. In this context, commenting on the issues of scientific consensus and of cumulative progress, on which scientism tends to build its truth-claims, especially in biology, Richard Lewontin, a zoologist at Harvard University, says:

> Les leçons presentées comme fournies par la science peuvent être à angle droit ou même en sens opposé du véritable cheminement scientifique. A tout le moins, il y a un filtrage sélectif des faits et des théories scientifiques, lorsqu'ils sont transposés dans le domaine socio-politique. Il est possible d'utiliser la théorie de l'évolution et la génétique des populations pour fonder une vision du monde à la Pangloss, à condition de mettre l'accent sur les éléments voulus de la biologie évolutive et d'ignorer les autres. A l'intérieur même de la biologie évolutive, la popularité de certains éléments dépend de l'idéologie et de la théorie sociale admises. Les deux se renforcent l'une l'autre et

> semblent se légitimer réciproquement.
> ("L'Evolution du vivant" 72)[2]

These critiques of science coming from prominent scientists lend strong support to Leavis's cautious attitude towards scientificity, but they do not validate it wholly.

Indeed, Yudkin's argument lends full support to Leavis's critique of Snow but offers no radical view of scientific discourse. In his "Sir Charles Snow's Rede Lecture," Yudkin, a biochemist, argues that Snow's lecture "is more concerned with number two than the term 'culture'" (33). He adds that for Snow, "science includes only the physical sciences, [excluding] the biologists, the biochemists and the physiologists" (38). In fact, Yudkin's intervention in the Leavis-Snow debate problematizes Snow's scientism further, especially when Yudkin refuses to recommend scientific education to non-scientists (38). What Yudkin recommends instead is the teaching of "critical thought, which is characteristic of the scientific culture" (36). His parallel emphasis on the "training of the intellectual faculty, through the rigour of such studies as grammar or logic" (39), both pertaining to literary studies, relates him directly to Leavis's main principle of "the training of critical awareness" and places him at the opposite end of the spectrum

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[2] The highly controversial case of Lyssenko is relevant here. See Lecourt, Lyssenko (1986); and Medawar, "Scientific Fraud."

from Snow. For knowledge, according to Yudkin, does not have to be totally scientific in order to be useful. Any knowledge that has no purpose cannot bring a positive contribution to society. Its practicalness must be measured by the extent to which it can be in the service of the community. He points out that "the fact that the arts students cannot be educated into the scientific method is not as disastrous as Sir Charles imagines" (38). The aim of education, according to Yudkin, should be twofold: it has the practical purpose of preparing individuals for living in a community, but also the social goal of teaching the student "to become a more sociable, or aware, or sympathetic, person" (38). It is at this level of visionary humanism that Leavis finds in Yudkin a strong ally against Snow's one-sided scientism. It was probably for this reason that Leavis also decided to publish Yudkin's essay, along with his Richmond Lecture, in the first place. In this way, Leavis confirms a latent desire--noticeable in the stance of his theorization of "organic culture" and of standards of criticism--to communicate a literary discourse along with an agreement from a scientific one--spoken by a representative of science (cf. I.A. Richards, "Notes towards an Agreement Between Literary Criticism and some of the Sciences"). This search for "scientific" support is strengthened further by Leavis's recurrent references to other scientists, like Marjorie Grene and Michael Polanyi during his discussion of critical standards.

However, in pursuing his liberal view of literary subjects, Yudkin reminds Snow of the fact that if the gap between the "two cultures" is to be bridged, the wide privileging of scientific subjects inside educational institutions must be superseded. In the meantime, Yudkin expresses certain worries about the alarming situation at the level of the university in particular. It is a situation, he believes, that might lead to the disappearance of "the traditional culture" altogether. Against these potential consequences, Yudkin warns that with

> the loosening of the requirements for scientists' matriculation at Oxford and Cambridge, and with the foundation of new universities and colleges with an unusually high proportion of science students. . ., there is a real danger that the problem of the "two cultures" may gradually cease to exist. . .Instead there will be the atrophy of the traditional culture, and its gradual annexation by the scientific--annexation not of territory but of men. It may not be long before only a single culture remains. ("Sir Charles Snow's Rede Lecture" 44-5)

Such a cogent critique of Snow's scientific project strongly enhances Leavis's argument against him and the other members of the Establishment, such as Todd, Bobbins, Annan, and others (Nor Shll 151; 178), whom Leavis perceives as "destroyers of standards" for their unabated commitment to the primacy of the techno-scientific culture.

In many ways, Yudkin's critique of Snow's scientism is corroborated by Castoriadis's refutation of the claimed accumulative, progressive nature of science. The latter points out a widely defended "fallacy" that was inherited, he says, from a nineteenth century conception of knowledge as progressive ("Voie sans issue?" 280). For Castoriadis, this "fallacy" indicates that

> les théories scientifiques qui se succèdent constituent des traductions de moins en moins inexactes de la réalité, et que, si succession il y a, c'est parce que les théories antérieures représentent des "cas particuliers" des théories ultérieures, lesquelles sont, en retour, des "généralisations" des premières. (280)

The error lying at the heart of this mode of scientific reasoning, Castoriadis goes on to explain, is that it implies the existence of "[une] harmonie préétablie entre un ordonnancement de strates de l'être et un développement de notre pensée,. . .[et] que le plus 'profond', le moins immédiatement phénomenal est nécessairement l'universel" (280). This way of understanding the knowledge process, which Castoriadis says is common among most scientists, also selects its examples and data in order to prove particular theories. "On continue," he concludes "d'invoquer obstinément, pour la fonder, la succession Newton-Einstein, du reste nullement typique de l'histoire de la science, oblitérant le bouleversement catégoriel, axiomatique et représentationnel qui les sépare" (280-81).

Thus in these critiques of the basic tenets of scientism, we read less and less confirmation of Snow's visionary scientism. By establishing a direct link among scientific discovery, socio-political orientations, and the choice of data, scientists and critics of science such as Castoriadis, Kuhn, Toulmin, and Harding link scientific theory directly to ideological affiliations. Thus, although Leavis was unaware of the complex theoretical and synoptic premises that these critics of science based themselves on (mostly because Leavis was opposed to abstract theory and was unaware of any theory of ideology), his critique of Snow's pronouncements on the gap between the "two cultures" cannot be refuted as totally alien to these critics' views. When Leavis asserts that value judgement is inherent to scientific evaluation, he undoubtedly approximates the politicized conclusions about the nature of scientific discourse reached by those scientists in their critique of scientism. As he states, "science is obviously of great importance to mankind. . . .But to say that is to make a value-judgement--a <u>human value judgement</u>" (<u>Nor Shall</u> 140; emphasis added). Such a belief in the inherence of value-judgement to all human discouses, be they scientific or not, is undoubtedly more powerful and would rally more consensus than Snow's orthodox perception of the humanities. However, the same statement could also be turned (without pyrrhonism) against Leavis's definition of criticism. Resorting to an "inner human nature"

(For Continuity 188) as an ultimate referee of judgement cannot be reserved for the critique of science alone; rather, it must be extended to every form of signification and cultural exchange, including Leavis's theorization of literature. Besides, excluding science from "responsibility" and "human need," as Leavis implies, begs many questions. It simply cannot be claimed that science is of no "importance to mankind" only because it does not relate to this "need," which remains in itself totally ambiguous. Leavis's humanism is highly problematic for it is defined in vague and ambiguous terms.

However, in spite of Leavis's appeal to an intrinsic "human nature," a concept which remains problematic throughout his theorization of culture and criticism, his argument against Snow holds some water. It is a more skeptical reading of the ideological conditions governing human knowledge. Even when a certain discipline tries to monopolize knowledge by claiming total scientificity, Leavis's position towards it is skeptical rather than rejectionist. He often refused to subscribe to a particular view only because it had acquired wide currency or dominance. Indeed, this is one of the characteristics of genuine critical practice. Leavis could be understood as saying that for a particular discourse to become dominant, it needs the "right" cultural institution(s) to validate its epistemological value in the public consciousness

as a value-free system of thought; hence his crusade against the Sunday papers, advertising magazines, and Pop culture (see Culture and Environment 36; and Nor Shall my Sword 221). This discourse also needs to invent a proper language or narrative, as Lyotard understands it, in order to tell its epic victories and ignore its defeats. This of course applies to discourses across the whole spectrum of human cultural experience. In fact, it is probably one of the reasons why Leavis found imperative the idea of an educational institution of high standing, such as Oxford or Cambridge, as a "liaison centre" of authority and accompanied by a critical review, such as Scrutiny, so vital to his critical-cultural project. Certainly, self-criticism is not a common practice in Leavis's writing. He is taking after Arnold and his long-standing veneration of Richelieu's Académie Française.

Leavis, Marxism and Science:

Thus Leavis's critical thought has followed a steady trajectory towards a final settling of accounts with scientism as represented by Snow and the "technologico-Benthamite" culture. Other theoretical questions that have marked this trajectory, especially those raised by Leavis's debate with Wellek, Bateson, and Tanner seem to recede into the background. In fact, during the later part of his career, and from the date of Snow's Rede Lecture onwards, scientism was

only one of the two major espistemologies that Leavis crusaded against. The other was Marxism. However, references to Marxism tend to weaken after the Richmond Lecture; Leavis did not produce any sustained anti-Marxist critiques like those he wrote in the 1930s and 1940s (see particularly the essays collected in For Continuity and in The Common Pursuit). Instead, it was scientism which took over his attention in theorizing criticism. It was back in 1940 that Leavis declared the Marxist period over: "quite recently the Marxist decade [1930s] came to its sharp close: that chapter ended before the chronological period was quite out" ("Retrospect of a Decade" 176). Yet, if one glances at the writings of the inheriters of the Leavisite critical legacy, such as Williams, Eagleton, and Anderson, one would notice that Marxism is far from being dead in contemporary English thought. Actually some of its trends have refined Leavisism and surpassed it through a firm belief in the possibility of a scientific criticism, on the one hand, and the embrace of Continental Marxist epistemoplogies, on the other (see Williams, "Literature and Sociology: In Memory of L. Goldmann"; Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology; Bennett, Formalism and Marxism; and Pechey, "'Scrutiny', English Marxism and the Work of R. Williams"). Nonetheless, Marxism and Scientism were the two major threats that Leavis perceived in his conceptualization of literature, criticism and science.

In his critique of Marxism, Leavis never addresses it as a "science," which is what it always claimed itself to be, nor as a distinct literary theory approaching literature according to a particular set of methodological criteria as opposed, for instance, to the textual analysis propounded by the Scrutiny group. Instead, he reads Marxism principally as a political doctrine that has little concern for literature. Accordingly, he works towards the demolition of Marxism's main tenets, which he perceived as revolving around such notions as "the Class War," the economic determinism of "the methods of production," and the idealization of the technological age in social development ("Under Which King, Bezonian?" (160-75). For him, these Marxist principles tend to obliterate the specificity of literature. They express total disregard for traditon and for the necessity of maintaining cultural continuity between the present and the past. By reading Marxism along these lines, Leavis offers a critique of it that seems to go beyond the literary domain per se, and to move into the socio-political arena of discourse in order to defend a certain set of cultural values that are also present in his critique of scientism and his theorization of organic culture.

The engagement between Marxism and Leavisism, which reached its peak in 1930s, resulted, as Raymond Williams points out in his "Literature and Society," in the latter's favour for two major reasons. On the one hand, Leavis's

critical method, "practical criticism," was more equipped in dealing with literature as such, offering "detailed accounts of actual consciousness" (9). On the other hand, Marxism then had to rely on generalizations and extra-literary categories in order to account for the literary phenomenon. The major weakness of Marxism, Williams concludes, lay in the inherited formula of "base and superstructure" and in its simplistic understanding of the relationship between literature and the economic infrastructure of society (9). However, although Leavis never addresses the base-superstructure metaphor directly, his critique of economic determinism in literary interpretation refers to the specificity of this metaphor and hits Marxism at its weakest point. Nonetheless, Williams fails to notice that Leavis's argument against Marxism parallels his controversy with Snow's scientism. In fact, Leavis's refutation of Marxist principles bases itself on problems that he perceives as common to both epistemologies. For him, they have the same philosophical outlook because they worship a capitalist, technological order and rely on "the 'materialist' interpretation of human history" (Nor Shall 213).

One may even notice a definite progression in Leavis's thinking about Marxism, including a change from an uneasy attempt to salvage some Marxist views, to a total rejection of the whole doctrine. In the early 1930s, Leavis maintained:

> I agree with the Marxist to the extent of believing some form of economic communism to be inevitable and desirable, in the sense that it is to this that a power-economy of its very nature points, and only by a deliberate and intelligent working towards it can civilization be saved from disaster. (The question is, communism of what kind? Is the machine--or Power--to triumph or to be triumphant over, to be the dictator or the servant of human ends? (For Continuity 184-85; emphasis added)

The reservations that Leavis expresses here about Marxism pertain essentially to the risk of this epistemology's fostering the ethos of technology worship, which he reiterates in reference to techno-science and "mass-civilization." His suspicion about the viability of "economic communism" is triggered by his fear of "the Machine" and "Power." In cultural analysis, the emphasis on economic determinism, a principle that is also central to Marxism, invites the same cautious attitude from Leavis:

> Of course the the economic maladjustments, inequities and oppressions demand direct attention and demand it urgently, and of course there is a sense in which economic problems are prior. But concentration on them of the kind exemplified by Mr Wilson [a Marxist critic] works to the consummation of the cultural process of capitalism. (6)

For Leavis, priorizing economic principles in any methodology is important, but risks compromising the ideals of capitalism.

This cautious attitude towards Marxist theory marks the period in which a number of Marxisant critics were writing for Scrutiny, writers like Alick West, A.L. Morton, Edgell Rickword, Douglas Garman, L.C. Knights, and W.H. Auden. By 1937, most of them had left the Review (see Mulhern, The Moment of 'Scrutiny' 88-91). However, Leavis's attitude towards Marxism became more radical in its rejectionist stance. By 1963, Leavis had become more convinced that Marxist principles could not be accommodated. In one of his posthumous essays, he argues:

> [B]oth the capitalist "democracy" of the West and Marxism are enemies of life . . . The naively idealistic Marxism of the left is (like idealistic terrorism and nationalism) a religion-substitute that is obscurely felt, deep-down, by up-holders of "democracy" to be more realistic and logical than their own pseudo-belief. (Valuation in Criticism 294)

In rejecting Marxism and Capitalism, Leavis presents himself as more radical than both. The alternative he offers is literature and criticism, which seem to him to represent fully the requirements for remedying the cultural crisis of his time. Leavis sums up these views in the last issue of Scrutiny, where he reviews the major antagonisms his approach had to deal with.

In "'Scrutiny': A Retrospect" (1963), Leavis rewrites the history of his review's critical achievements as well as

that of his own engagement with the Marxist critics of the period. Adopting a highly polemical tone, Leavis explains, in a passage which must be cited at length here because of its significance:

> We were of course empirical in spirit: we were very conscious of being in a particular place at a particular time.. . . We were anti-Marxist--necessarily so (we thought); an intelligent, that is real, interest in literature implied a conception of it very different from any that a Marxist could expound and explain. Literature--what we knew as literature and had studied for the English Tripos--mattered; it mattered crucially to civilization--of that we were sure. It mattered because it represented a human reality, an autonomy of the human spirit, for which economic determinism and reductive interpretation in terms of the Class War left no room. Marxist fashion gave us the doctrinal challenge. But Marxism was a characteristic product of our "capitalist" civilization, and the economic determinism we were committed to refuting practically was that which might seem to have been demonstrated by the movement and process of this. The dialectic against which we had to vindicate literature and humane culture was that of the external or material civilization we lived in. "External" and "material" here need not be defined: they convey well enough the insistence that our total civilization is a very complex thing, with a kind of complexity to which Marxist categories are not adequate. (4; emphasis added)

Most of the arguments invoked here are reminiscent of the ideas that Leavis put forth against Snow's scientism: the alliance of the refuted epistemology with Capitalism and "mass civilization," the centrality of "Literature" to "human reality," the emphasis on "the autonomy of the human spirit," the inadequacy of deterministic methodologies because they

relegate culture to alien factors, and, above all, the rejection of reductionist views that consider the class struggle as the motor of history. Most of these principles were formulated initially during Leavis's early confrontation with Marxism and were then turned into cliché-formulae which he evoked regularly afterwards both against Snow and the Marxists. According to Leavis, these Marxist categories dovetailed with the ethos of technologico-Benthamism. Being perceived merely as a form of commitment to the improvement of individuals' material standards of living, they were, consequently, perceived as lending full support to the encroachment of "capitalist mass civilization." The latter, since it had been proved by various Scrutineers' studies to be lethal to cultural and spiritual health, left no room for literature.

Moreover, the methodology of dialectical materialism which constitutes the basis of these Marxist categories is, according to Leavis, simplistic. It is unable to account for the function of literature _per se_. It seems to him to be challenged by the cultural phenomenon of _Scrutiny_ itself. As a historical manifestation of its contemporary civilization, the Review could not be economically determined because it was set against all the capitalist values of that civilization. "There can be no doubt," Leavis observes, "that the dogma of the priority of economic conditions, however stated, means a

complete disregard for--or, rather, a hostility towards--the function represented by Scrutiny" (For Continuity 161). From this perspective, society is understood as a "complex" totality that cannot be deciphered easily through any "simple" theory of dialectic reasoning or by any methodology that is governed by the material modes of production: "Marxist categories are not adequate" to explain the "complexity" of civilization. Arguing this point in an earlier essay, "Restatement for Critics" (1933), Leavis says that "the dialectic itself brings the Marxist to the point at which he must contemplate a quite different relation between culture and the economic process from that of the past" (187). This insistence on the specificity of the cultural realm, in its complexity, and on the necessity to revise the orthodox view of the determinism of culture by the economic base was to the point. In fact, this is exactly what the inheritors of the Leavisite legacy Bennett, Eagleton, Hall, Hoggart, and Williams have done, but only at the cost of an engagement with interdisciplinary and theoretical studies (cf. Widdowson, ed., Re-Reading English 45-90; Hall, et al., eds., Culture, Media, Language 227-68). They have elaborated a revised theory of the "Superstructures," while moving towards a more refined theory of ideology that inspired most of its concepts from studies done on the Continent. These studies on ideology and language ranged from the writings of the Voloshinov/Bakhtin Circle to those of Tel Quel, Barthes, Kristeva, Goldmann, Althusser,

Macherey, Lacan, and Gramsci, specially in the case of Bennett, Williams, Eagleton, Hall, the Screen Group, and the CCCS at Birmingham University.[3]

However, in trying to offer an alternative to the Marxist dichotomy of the "Cultural" versus the "Economic", Leavis seems to falter. Or, to borrow his own terminology, he seems "to leave it [the answer] to the aposiopesis" (Towards Standards 14). While requiring a redefinition of the relationship between culture and economic infrastructures, between the "'external' and the 'material'," he leaves his own answer suspended. Both sides of the dichotomy, Leavis asserts in the long extract cited above, "need not be defined: they convey well enough the insistence (emphasis added)" on the nature of society as a "complex" totality. Once again, we notice that Leavis's argument here, not unlike his earlier propositions on the definition of "standards," or his defence of "literary culture" against Snow's "scientific culture," follows a regular ad hominem type of argumentative pattern: first it refutes the opponent's thesis on grounds of lack of "precision" in its terminology, but then, when alternative explanations are offered, the terms given are by no means more precise or clearer. They even admit to their own ambiguity and "complexity" as signs of their creative nature. The

[3] See individual authors' works cited in the bibliography.

alternative is ultimately assumed as given; ambivalence remains the final refuge. Instead of a dualism, we are presented with an ambiguous trope of the "complex whole." To Leavis, the absence of such a sense of complexity from dialectical logic is what actually attracts intellectuals to Marxism: "it is certain that for most Marxists," he concludes, "the attraction of Marxism is simplicity: it absolves from the duty of wrestling with complexity" (For Continuity 5; emphasis added).

Leavis's anti-Marxist critique thus asserts that, at the methodological level, Marxist theory lacks the rigour and precise criteria to account for what really constitutes human culture. To him, notions of "class," class conflict, and "culture" are used "uncomprehendingly" by Marxist critics. Of those whom he cites in confirmation of this verdict, Edmund Wilson's and Prince Minsky's "inadequacies are related to their shamelessly uncritical use of vague abstractions and verbal counters" (For Continuity 171). Leavis reproaches Minsky, in his Marxist study of Eliot's "The Waste Land," for "paying little attention to the essential organisation" of the poem (170). What Leavis finds more "significantly betraying" is Minsky's identification of criticism with scientific and mathematical principles. Leavis's response to this view is quite condescending: "Mathematicians are often illiterate" (171). In contrast to both Wilson and Minsky's critical

views, Leavis argues that Scrutiny's criticism is "vigilant and scrupulous about the relation between words and the concrete" (171). In evoking such empiricist principles, Leavis here reconfirms a certain positivist bent, about which, paradoxically, he expresses strong reservations when arguing against Snow.

This praise for complex systems as a theoretical stand has invited conflicting comments from critics of Leavis: Perry Anderson considers it a manifestation of a desire to achieve a totalizing system, Howard Felperin reads it as an intentional drive towards an open critical system of meaning comparable to Deconstruction; and Iain Wright rejects it as a sign of Leavisism's inability to come to terms with the British cultural crisis of the 1930s. One can argue that it is a theoretical note consistent with Leavis's other cultural principles as demonstrated earlier in reference to his theorization of "organic society," the definition of "critical standards," and his refutation of Scientism. His appeal to "the human spirit" as the center of cultural consciousness, ultimately bears on a religious apprehension of the complex, the mysterious and the "unknown" (in the Lawrentian sense).

Nonetheless, despite the fact that Leavis tends to simplify Marxist theory in order to make it an easy target for his attacks and to refute it in totality, his major

disagreement with Marxism and his search for an alternative to it go beyond his praise of "complexity" and his sketchy remarks about the necessity of methodological rectifications. His critique extends to the refutation of two central notions in Marxist philosophy: the class struggle and the determinism of culture by the economic base, both of which have been problematic categories in Marxist thought. He claims that whereas economic determinism ignores the specificity of culture, the principle of class struggle would only disrupt the sense of continuity between various historical moments in the development of civilization and negates "organic culture." Accordingly, he argues that interpreting historical evolution in these terms reveals the extent to which "material standards of living" and technology for him, capitalist phenomena par excellence are the guiding principles of Marxist thought:

> The process of civilisation that produced, among other things, the Marxian dogma, and makes it plausible, has rendered the cultural difference between the "classes" inessential. The essential differences are indeed now definable in economic terms, and to aim at solving the problems of civilisation in terms of the "class war" is to aim, whether wittingly or not, at completing the work of capitalism and its products, the cheap car, the wireless and the cinema. (For Continuity 172)

Since Marxism's emphasis on the notion of the class struggle is mainly to achieve economic parity at the expense of moral, spiritual values, it cannot help being part of the

dominant technological ethos. Leavis renders the term "class" itself obsolete. It can neither explain cultural differentiation nor bring about the required alternative to a capitalist mode of development. As a guiding principle, it is more of a potential threat to cultural order than a remedy to the crisis. For, if adopted as the basis of a scheme for social reform, it would only enhance what Mathew Arnold always warned against: "Anarchy." Leavis further contends that "incitements to the Class War. . .are likely to be effective . . .in precipitating some Fascist coup d'état, with the attendant advance of brutalization" (12). Such an eventual threat would presumably destroy all the finest values that tradition has produced over centuries of its development; hence Leavis's emphasis on "continuity."

With "continuity," there is autonomy of "the human spirit" which is not class-bound. Locating cultural practice above class conflicts paves the way towards the supersession of social contradictions which might lead to the necessity of a radical break with the past. It also allows for the projection of a cultural order which exhibits harmony among all social groups of a society, without being affected by any economic modes of production. Instead of the term "class," Leavis posits "humanity" as a coherent ensemble, mediated by particular individuals. Marxism's error, according to Leavis, lies in its rejection of individual genius as the mediator of

history: "You can't be interested in literature and forget that the creative individual is indispensable. Without the individual talent, there is no creation" (The Common Pursuit 185). Such a view is an elaboration of Eliot's theory of culture as developed in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent," a work that lends Leavis vital support in his argument against Marxism and in his deduction that classes cannot be said to articulate artistic production. "There is," Leavis maintains,

> a point of view above classes; there can be intellectual, aesthetic and moral activity that is not merely an expression of class origin and economic circumstances; there is a "human culture" to be aimed at that must be achieved by cultivating a certain autonomy of the human spirit. (For Continuity 9)

Instead of class conflicts and economistic views of culture, Leavis posits an autonomous domain of "human values." His conclusion is that any literary analysis that gives primary attention to the economic conditions of a certain society in its attempt to understand its literature is bound to ignore what makes literary works. These are governed by a specific sense of "tradition" which differs from any Romantic perception of works as individualized creations:

> For if the Marxist approach to literature seems to me unprofitable, that is not because I think of literature as a matter of isolated works of art, belonging to a realm of pure literary values (whatever they might be); works regarding the production of which it is enough to say that

> individuals of specific evaluative gifts were born and created them.. . .
>
> Something like the idea of Tradition so incisively and provocatively formulated by him [Eliot] plays, I think, an essential part in the thinking of everyone today who is seriously interested in literature.. . .
>
> The ways in which it is at odds with Marxist theories of culture are obvious. It stresses, not economic and material determinants, but intellectual and spiritual, so implying a different conception from the Marxist of the relation between the present of society and the past, and a different conception of society. (The Common Pursuit 183-84)

While refuting the Romantic notion of the individual and the Marxist idea of the "social" as governed by classes, Leavis smuggles in a refined notion of the "individual talent" as a guarantor of literary and cultural continuity. He maintains:

> [T]he difference between the Marxist kind of attitude toward literature and that represented by the idea of Tradition I've invoked. . .stresses the social aspect of creative achievement as the Romantic attitude didn't: but it allows for the individual aspect more than the Marxist does. . . Without the individual talent there is no creation. While you are in intimate touch with literature no amount of dialectic, or of materialistic interpretation, will obscure for long the truth that human life lives only in individuals. (185)

The literary origin of these Leavisite propositions, especially his weighing Eliot over Marxism, reconfirms his adherence to a particular, clearly definable tradition of cultural theory, established before him and consolidated by

the Arnoldian paradigm. It is a tradition that has prioritized in its epistemological outlook such categories as "the human spirit," the "Mind of Europe," and individual creative genius. Moreover, in disregarding socio-economic determinism and its accounts of the literary phenomenon, this tradition has emphasized "individual talent" not only as a guarantor of cultural continuity but also as a primary force in effecting whatever necessary changes "Tradition" needs. For Leavis, writers like Bunyan, Blake, Conrad, Lawrence, and Eliot, are simply elements in this chain of Tradition's continuity, serving the proper function of the real artist and critic.

However, Leavis's admiration for Eliot did not last long. This allegiance was soon to shift to Lawrence:

> Who was there [in the 1920s] in literary criticism that impressed one as worth intensive pondering but Eliot--whose impressiveness turned out to be so largely illusion? In any case, his thought at its best, even if there had been more of it, could hardly help one to adjust oneself to Lawrence's. Only Lawrence was qualified to do that, and he demanded that one should transcend--transcend so impossibly--the commonsense, the whole cultural ethos, in which one had been brought up, and in terms of which one did one's thinking. (Thought, Words and Creativity 48-9; see also D. H. Lawrence 367-77)

In the 1963 "Retrospect" (17), Leavis records his past exasperation with what he saw as a form of hypocritical stand The Criterion, edited by Eliot, had taken towards Marxism in the 1930s; he perceived in its position a certain laxity

towards the Left, while Eliot's political views veered to the right: "Eliot, the Rightist man of principles, who, Anglo-Catholic himself and admirer of Charles Maurras, handed over to the Leftist poets to use for their ends the review pages of his quarterly" (17). Explaining further how Scrutiny, in contrast, was more consistent in its anti-Marxist position than The Criterion, Leavis admits: "we did indeed reject Marxism--and we had no use for any proposed antithesis, Fascistic, Poundian, Wyndham-Lewisite or Criterionic"(17). Thus through its engagement with Marxism, and because of the intellectual pressures on the Scrutiny Group to "show [their] . . .colours," Leavisite critical thought lost its innocence and became as ideological as that of its opponents. Although Leavis always avoided stating outright the nature of that position, he did say in 1940 that "Scrutiny invites the description 'liberal'" ("Retrospect of a Decade" 175).

Despite this change of heart vis-a-vis Eliot, Leavis never tried to establish, in a self-critical manner, the connection between Eliot's culturalist theory of Tradition, which remained within Leavis's idea of literature until the end, and his own political orientation. Such notions as "tradition," "individual genius," the "human spirit" and the "Race" (humanity) were transferred later on by Leavis into

his studies of Lawrence (cf. Thought, Words and Creativity 15-61 and passim), for whom he sustained a relentless admiration until the end of his life. Thus any study of Leavisism must study both Eliot's and Lawrence's influence on Leavis's anti-scientific and anti-Marxist view of literature and criticism, for it is a crucial part of the background to Leavis's theoretical and epistemological framework. This Lawrentian influence is revealed more explicitly by the image of the utopian world which Leavis offers as an alternative to the Marxist challenge.

This alternative is a world that is devoid of class conflicts and resembles the pre-industrial state of society, before the "dissociation of sensibility" befell the Earth. Perceived as "organic," it is endowed with a cultural tradition in which all the members of the society are said to share in the experience of literature. A concrete image of this world is portrayed, according to Leavis, by artists like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Bunyan--among others. The language these artists wrote was the living "art-speech" of the community they lived in: "Bunyan himself shows how the popular culture to which he bears witness could merge with literary culture at the level of great literature" (The Common Pursuit 191). Similarly, Marvell is perceived as "pre- eminently refined, European in sophistication, and intimately related to a tradition of courtly urbanity; but his refinement involves

no insulation from the popular" culture (191). Another example of the organic universe that Leavis cites in The Common Pursuit is that of oral cultures as reported by Bertha Phillpotts in her Edda and Saga (cit. 194). Presumably, in this world of saga literature, all classes participated in the cultural experience of the community: "Though it was democratic," Leavis cites Phillpotts, "in the sense that it appealed to the whole people, [the saga literature] was mainly the creation of the intellectual classes" (194). In this world from which social classes have disappeared, there seems to be a living bond that connects people together, just like the bond Snow attributes to the scientific community.

Against the Marxist utopian vision of a classless society, Leavis posits his own utopia; the difference to be noted between the two utopias is that the Leavisite ideal world is more of an Eden of the past than a technologized paradise of the future. In fact, a variation on that same image is revealed by Leavis during his first exchange with Snow. In Two Cultures? he asks, rhetorically:

> Who will assert that the average member of a modern society is more fully human, or more alive, than a Bushman, an Indian peasant, or a member of one of those poignantly surviving primitive peoples, with their marvellous art and skills and vital intelligence? (26)

This visionary world, tinged with primitivism, becomes Leavis's response to both Marxism and scientism. In a sense, both doctrines are perceived through a negative attitude towards technology. For him, "the Marxian future looks so vacuous, Wellsian and bourgeois" (For Continuity 188).

In the meantime, we find compounded with this idea of an irrecuperable edenic world of "living culture" Leavis's regularly reiterated notion of "the human spirit," already encountered in Arnold's cultural theory. This notion is invested with a characteristic of mystery that hinges on a dimension of transcendental and religious sacredness. Nonetheless, religion was never Leavis's forte. Unlike Arnold, he perceived "Christian discrimination. . .[as] a decidedly bad thing" that should not interfere with the work of the critic (The Common Pursuit 254). The spiritual element he seems to attribute to the literary world is closer to the Lawrentian idea of the "dark god" of the cosmos, something resembling pagan sensibility but ultimately rooted in a spiritual universe that parallels the "old Mexican religion" as depicted in Lawrence's The Plumed Serpent (see Thought, Words and Creativity 54) In fact, towards the end of his last book on Lawrence, Leavis cites approvingly a passage from the latter's Mornings in Mexico, thus offering a striking image of the alternative world he projects against science, technology, and Marxism:

> They [the Native Mexicans] are all involved in every moment in their old, struggling religion. Until they break in a kind of hopelessness. . . [sic] Which is what is rapidly happening. The young Indians who have been to school for many years are losing their religion, becoming discontented, bored and rootless. An Indian with his own religion inside him cannot be bored. The flow of the mystery is too intense all the time. (cit. Thought, Words and Creativity 152)

The dubiousness of such a romantic interpretation of human experience in an underdeveloped society notwithstanding, this portrait of the Mexican peasants is a miniature image of what Leavis understands as the twentieth-century cultural crisis. The disintegration of "sensibility," of "fine living," and of "the human spirit" seems to be sparked off, according to Leavis, by the loss of faith as caused by the spread of education which he pejoratively calls elsewhere "democratic education". This is a view that must remain diametrically opposed to the campaign that Scrutiny as well as the Calendar launched in favour of the universalization of critical practice, and the strengthening of university education in order to resist the ethos of technologico-Benthamism, Scientism, Marxism, and capitalism. The alternative world that Leavis projects against these modes of thought, and of Marxism in particular, is finally a utopian universe with a unified social consciousness that centers around "the human spirit." It is a world that is governed, as he indicates, by a sense of communal experience, of "relations between man and

man and man and the environment in its seasonal rhythm." (For Continuity 165; and Nor Shall My Sword 129)

In his attempt to go beyond any Marxist notion of a fractured social consciousness that emanates from a class society, and in his wish to produce a totalizing frame of reference that would account for human experience as a whole, Leavis confirms the paradox that structures his paradigm. He imposes a critical censorship and legitimizes a hierarchical judgemental system that reveals itself in the principle of "Tradition" he invokes. He excludes modernist writing--Auden, Joyce, the Bloomsbury Group and others--from the ideal 'State of tradition' while defending Eliot's highly technical and abstract poetry. He also opposes Marxism's telos, the classless society, while idealizing primitive and pre-industrial societies, partly because they possess no class structure. More importantly, Leavis's own statements about the precise relationship between literature or culture in general and its extra-literary environment have not been totally consistent.

In some instances, his propositions have made him almost recuperable for the camp of Marxist critics (see Milner, "Leavis and English Literary Criticism"; and Pechey, "'Scrutiny', English Marxism"). These critics often cite Leavis's saying: "I agree with the Marxist to the extent of

believing some form of economic communism to be inevitable and desirable" (For Continuity 184). Along the same theoretical line, Leavis maintains in Lectures in America: "of course, the collaborative creation of the world of significances and values has to be a matter of response to material conditions and economic necessities" (20). Considered in isolation, these two statements do not account for Leavis's rejection of Marxism nor his belief in the autonomy of the cultural realm. This is what makes him recuperable to many Marxist readings of his paradigm. But when read in their context, such statements hardly remain unqualified in Leavis's discussions of literature. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that Leavis does not reject economistic determinism totally; he allows it some kind of relative autonomy in determining human consciousness, although this relativity is never theorized in specific terms. Otherwise, his theorization of the organic relationship that he established between pre-industrial societies, or their art of "fine living" and their "art-speech" literature, would not hold. It is this point that has gained Perry Anderson's sympathy for Leavisism. Anderson, a Marxist historian, perceives the latter as an exceptional attempt in British intellectual history to totalize all practices in its national cultural theory. His deduction is that, "suppressed and denied in every other sector of thought, the second [after Anthropology], displaced home of the totality became literary

criticism" as voiced by Leavisism (Anderson, "Components of the National Culture" 268).

Conclusion:

Indeed, in its attempt to theorize its methodology of approaching literature as well as the distinctness of the type of knowledge it generates, the British critical tradition seems to have engaged itself in a kind of general trans-disciplinary practice. From Arnold to the later Leavis and beyond, there seems to be an underlying wish to formulate an alternative literary-critical epistemology in order to resist the rising challenge of various emergent discourses: materialist, secular, politicized "practical" in Arnold's sense, scientific, Marxist, and others. Such terms as disinterestedness, objectivity, precision, accuracy, impersonality, and empirical analysis, were adopted as tropes to serve the purpose of this epistemological project of resistance. As the case of Leavis shows, the initial attempts often expressed a desire to go beyond formal linguistic construction in order to posit a system of thought that would embrace all conflicting discourses. For instance, when Leavis later came to oppose the reductionism of "practical criticism," he asserted:

> [T]o insist that literary criticism is, or should be, a specific discipline of intelligence is not to suggest that a serious interest in literature

> can confine itself to the kind of intensive local analysis associated with "practical criticism" --to the scrutiny of the "words on the page" in the minute relations, their effects of imagery, and so on. (The Common Pursuit 200)

However, this attempt never matured into a fully developed theory of criticism; partly because of Leavis's fear of falling into theory and philosophy, and thereby into an alliance with any one of the enemy discourses of techno-science or of Marxism. More importantly, there was a strong skepticism about the scientific terminology of theory because it was perceived as being contrary to the traditional values of "art-speech," "organic culture," the literary heritage, artistic creativity, intuition, and those of "the human spirit." The new contending discourses upholding scientificity seemed to challenge all these Leavisite categories and values which were deemed the only cultural standards allowing for the continuity of a world ripped apart by wars, social turmoil, secular materialism, scientific inventions, and the effects of technology. Consequently, in resisting any form of alienated consciousness, Leavisite literary criticism had to resort to the reinstitution, at the level of the imaginary, of traditional essentialist principles of intuition, creativity, and the human spirit. This epistemological move reestablished a form of religious thought, which it had rejected in the first place during the search for a totalizing epistemology.

Hence the paradox that Raymond Williams trenchantly describes in his remark that:

> we need theory, but that certain limits of existence and consciousness prevent us from getting it, or at least making certain of it; and yet the need for theory keeps pressing on our minds and half-persuading us to accept kinds of pseudo-theory which as a matter of fact not only fail to satisfy us but often encourage us to go on looking in the wrong place and in the wrong way. An idea of theory suggests laws and methods, indeed a methodology. But the most available concept of laws, and from it the most available organized methods, come in fact. . .from studies that are wholly different in kind: from the physical sciences, where the matter to be studied can be held to be objective, where value-free observations can then be held to be possible, as a foundation for disinterested research, and so where the practice of hard, rigorous, factual disciplines can seem--indeed can be--feasible. ("Literature and Society" 6)

Williams' statement replays the desire for a method, a theory, and a totalizing epistemology. Even while superseding the Arnoldian and Leavisite legacies, Williams reenacts a similar project that tries to unite all disciplines scientific and non-scientific through a theory of criticism and a methodology. The terminology of disinterestedness, precision, and accuracy is also reiterated here. The dream of scientificity and theory in the domain of English Letters lives on.

Therefore, whatever the limitations of Leavis's epistemology are, his attempt at theorizing literary culture

independently of the orthodox Marxist conception of the determinism of the economic base deserves due attention. Despite its theoretical weaknesses, Leavis's project subverted the traditional view of the base/superstructure metaphor at a time when Marxism was busy with narrow economist readings of culture (see Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory"). In attending to literature as a distinct practice, and thereby granting criticism a respectful position in the humanities (something it would presumably not have received had it remained relegated to economist views), Leavis's thought has contributed greatly to the development of literary theory. The development of Marxist theory of culture, since the Structualist Revolution of 1968, especially on the other side of the English Channel, has moved in the same direction. With the Althusserian theorization of ideology, the superstructure (as the cultural domain of Marxist theory) has come to acquire its relative autonomy vis-a-vis the economic base. Meanwhile, the economic base has been relegated to a status of a "determinism in the last instance"--to borrow Althusser's now commonly cited phrase.

However, this epistemological move has been accompanied by a firm belief in the possibility of a science of criticism, as well as in a theoretical (critical) knowledge that tries to approximate as closely as possible the type of knowledge generated by the natural sciences. On the one hand, such a

move has perpetuated the struggle between scientism and literary culture; on the other, it has confirmed the fact that the development of criticism as a discipline has been unable to go beyond its continual reference to science, against which it always needed to measure its own theoretical achievements. The science of literature, which was developed in France, among several critics, by Pierre Macherey, a Post-Structuralist-Marxist critic, and was initiated in England by Williams, Eagleton, Hall, Hirst, and Bennett, among others in the 1970s, remained unknown to Leavis. Had he known about it, he would probably have been both thrilled and disappointed: thrilled by the fact that finally criticism and literature are theorized as relatively autonomous disciplines by some Marxists themselves albeit sometimes at a high level of philosophical abstraction which would have been unacceptable to Leavis; but disappointed at the new venture grouping together the two devils Marxism and Science with which he had fought all his life.

PART THREE

Towards a "Scientific" Theory of Literature:

P. Macherey, LIterary Production, "Absence," and Ideology

KAVANAGH: Would you still argue for the possibility of a "science" of the literary text?

MACHEREY: Yes, as a guiding idea, as an orientation, as a road to follow. Absolutely not as an idea of an already constituted science that one could simply develop and apply--that is, something that could be used to interpret one-by-one the ensemble of that which is baptized as "Literature." ("Interview," [1982] 49-50)

IV. Beyond "Critical Fallacies": Elements of Macherey's Theory of "Scientific Criticism"

> [l]es oeuvres littéraires devraient faire l'objet d'une science particulière: faute de quoi elles ne seront jamais comprises. (Macherey, Pour une théorie 66; emphasis added)

Excluded from the artisitc and the critical domains by Leavisite critical discourse, the notion of scientificity in criticism finds a welcoming abode in the Machereyan "theory of literary production." The notion of science as a theoretical principle has now become a "guiding idea. . .an orientation. . .a road to follow." Whereas Leavis openly rejects the dichotomy between the natural sciences and literature by claiming the existence of an a priori singular "human" discourse, Macherey takes an opposite view vis-à-vis this issue. For him, the opposition between a scientific discourse and a non-scientific one is located inside the purview of criticism itself. He distinguishes between those non-scientific--i.e., ideological--"critical fallacies," which is capable of generating true knowledge, "a science." Thus,

he blurs the boundaries between the sciences and literary disciplines, boundaries that historically have proven troublesome for many literary critics. His position seems to reveal a remarkable desire to take for granted the absence of those boundaries that have caused many critics, writers, and social scientists coutless headaches in trying to rationalize the relationship between literature and science. Such a desire is well captured by Roland Barthes in his Leçon (1978), his inaugural lecture at the College de France, when he says:

> Il est de bon ton, aujourd'hui de contester l'opposition des sciences et des lettres, dans la mesure ou des rapports de plus en plus nombreux, soit de modèle, soit de méthode, relient ces deux régions et en effacent souvent la frontière; et il est possible que cette opposition apparaisse un jour comme un mythe historique. (19)

But Barthes here is defending another theory, Semiology which is different from Macherey's idea of science, but which he still baptises "a science." Barthes does not seem to have in mind a possible rapprochement between the humanities and physics or mathematics, for instance. His concern is rather with the relationship between literature and linguistic science (see Barthes, The Russtle of Language 6).

However, in spite of the importance that he attributes to the notion of scientificity, Macherey remains like Barthes, unable to draw any systematic comparison between

Mathematics or Physics or Medicine and literary criticism. This is why Macherey's theoretical project, as it centers around the notion of scientificity, remains by no means unproblematic. His formulation of particular laws on which he bases his "science" of criticism tends to conflict with the claimed systematicity of the type of epistemology he projects. This is a theoretical problem that results mainly from a critical method which proposes to theorize "presences," "absences," and "ideology" in the literary text, while refusing to subscribe to any univocity of literary meaning. Macherey's approach is confronted with a theoretical paradox that resembles Leavis's theoretical impasse. Macherey's defence of scientificity point out the complexity of critical practice but does not resolve the theoretical problems that confront the discipline of criticism. It is therefore imperative to address Macherey's theoretical principles first if we need to understand the scientific epistemology and framework he projects in his writings. However, because of its full engagement with theoretical abstraction, the Machereyan theorization of criticism and literature in contrast to the Leavisite anti-philosophical and anti-scientific epistemology has granted critical theory the importance it deserves, especially by giving full rein to theoretical speculation about interpretation.

If we compare Macherey's pronouncements on criticism with those of F.R. Leavis, we will note that these two critics present not only radical differences but also important similarities. Both of them emphasize the distinctness of criticism, develop a methodology to account for literature as a separate field of inquiry with its own characteristics, and privilege cultural activities as semi-autonomous practices that do not always obey the rules of socio-economic determinism. Thus both have contributed to the revision of the Base-Superstructure metaphor which has caused the classical Marxist doctrine major difficulties. These pertain to the question of the transparency of literary language, the ways in which meaning is determined, and the relationship between truth and falsehood in relation to ideology (see Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Theory," 3-16; Macherey ,"Problems of Reflection," (51-52). But the radical differences between the critical perspectives of these two critics tend to overweigh their resemblances. Whereas Leavis ultimately withdraws from any venture into the realm of critical theory as I have indicated because of what he saw as its direct alliance with abstract philosophy and destructive techno-science, Macherey, coming from a French philosophical tradition, perceives abstrat theorization as a necessary step towards the fomulation of a proper "scientific criticism." According to him, criticism is a speculative methodology, like a science, with its own "laws" and definable

"object," the latter two terms being key concepts that constitute the roots of every rational epistemology and lead to scientific truth.

Guided by the necessity to establish a scientific criticism, Macherey postulates a literary "explanation" which --he emphasizes--is different from "le mythe vieilli de l'explication de texte" (Pour une théorie 93). Knowing the text requires the knowledge of its absences, gaps, and lacunae. Going beyond the Sartrean question, "Qu'est-ce que la littérature?", Macherey attends to other questions: "how is the text made?" and "how to construct a science of the literary text?" (see "Interview" [1982] 50). This project has led him to the problematization of nearly all the literary categories that an Eliot or a Leavis would accept as givens, such as creation, individual genius, and aesthetic experience. In fact, Macherey seems to challenge most essentialist critical concepts, either Marxist or non-Marxist. As Etienne Balibar, who has collaborated with Macherey in this scientific project, explains:

> It's a question of criticiszing at once the idea that the literary text is something entirely given--in which evrything is manifest and at the same time something whose reason or hidden explanation must be sought in a meaning that is elsewhere. Of course, this "elsewhere" can be anything that one wishes: either the depths of the"creative" artist's soul, or the economic and social formation, or the class struggle (in the mechanical, pseudo-Marxist versions). It is a

> question of attacking at the two points at once, of saying, to the contrary, thatthere is no hidden meaning, but that the literary object is in a materialrelation with other texts, other discourses, other practices, etc.. . . ("Interview," 49)

The aim of the Machereyan critical project is accordingly not only to go beyond a particular tradition comprising various sorts of literary approaches but also to produce a new knowledge: "produire un savoir neuf" (Pour une théorie 174).

In advocating a "materialist" criticism, Macherey attempts to go beyond structuralist criticism while borrowing both Saussurean concepts and Freudian concepts, such "tombeau des structures," "lecture symptomale," the manifest versus the latent content of the text. He thus enforces the totalizing character of his proposed theory: he offers a critical method that aims at axhausting meaning by explaining "silence." The result is a current of skepticism, abstraction, self-consciousness, and politicization of meaning that pervades his theoretical discourse. It is, in fact, this characteristic of his method that has prompted critics like Robert Young and Christopher Butler to link Macherey's work directly with that of Barthes in S/Z and with the project of Deconstruction (see Young, Untying the Text 6; Butler, Interpretation, Deconstruction and Ideology 114; and Brooker, "Post-Structuralism" 61-67). Not unlike Structuralism and Deconstruciton, which have made literature and criticism

highly conscious of the process of literary production, Macherey's theory questions nearly all the fundamental principles of traditional literary approaches. It particularly subverts the ontologico-epistemological status of the institution of "literature" itself.

Not unlike Derrida and the early Barthes, Macherey wants to rid criticism of all the vestiges of metaphysics and idealism that have "blinded" criticism to the perception of its proper object of study. New attention is given to "Writing," to "l'écriture" as an autonomousmaterial activity whose practice when studied rationally can generate theoretical or "scientific" knowledge: "montrer à travers l'écriture, que c'est le discours lui-même qui est perverti; définitivement, montrant et masquant, s'offrant et se dérobant, lui-même ou un autre" (Pour une théorie 119). In a similar fashion, Barthes celebrates the primacy of "writing" and its connection with the scientific-critical project: "A partir du moment ou l'on veut bien admettre que l'oeuvre est faite avec de l'écriture est possible" (Critique et vérité 56-7). Accordingly, Macherey rejects any traditional critical method that perceives literary meaning as a nut that must be extracted from a shell, as in the "criticism of taste" or those approaches common within the Sociology of Literature that read works of art as organic or simply as mirror-reflections of class or socio-economic structures (see

Macherey, "Problems of Reflection" 51-52 and passim). In this respect, such notions as "Literature," "method," "creation," "form," "meaning," "presence," "reflection," "structure," "judgement," to cite only a few, have all been problematized by Macherey from the start. Even "Theory" itself and "Criticism" have been scrutinized for their significance. Through the deconstruction of these terms, Macherey lays the foundations for a would-be "scientific" theory of literary knowledge.

It is therefore by approaching these notions in order to formulate a "materialist" and "scientific" criticism that Macherey has contributed to the development of the discipline of criticism in a radical way. By establishing a direct opposition between "la critique comme appréciation (l'école du gout)" and "la critique comme savoir (la 'science de la production litteraire')" (Pour une théorie, 11), Macherey grants the metaphor of scientificity a complex meaning. It embraces both Marxist and scientific meanings. This notion is posited in direct opposition to Leavis's argument against scientific knowledge. Perhaps, at this level could both Leavis's and Macherey's epistemologies be read as mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, the Machereyan reformulation of the metaphor of scientificity has led to a metamorphosis of the concept scientificity itself. Whereas Leavis relates it to a negative vision of the modern world and perceives it as a

threat to creative literature, Macherey brings it towards the center of critical inquiry, thereby making it the most viable concern of literary-theoretical analysis. As he maintains: "les oeuvres littéraires devraient faire l'objet d'une science particulière: faute de quoi elles ne seront jamais comprises" (Pour une théorie 66).

For Macherey, theorizing literture scientifically does not mean remaining inside enclosed textual parameters in a Formalist fashion, or positioning one's analysis outside the text's "littérarité." Literary criticism, accordingly, must first abolish the traditional dichotomy of "l'envers" and "l'endroit," of "the inside" and "the outside," thereby erasing the boudaries that have traditionally separated these two epistemological spaces. Macherey argues further that the theorist must know the text in a way that it cannot know itself, by theorizing its "absences," "gaps," and "silences":

> Ce que dit le livre vient d'un silence: son apparition implique la "présence" d'un non-dit, matière à laquelle il donne forme, ou fond sur lequel il fait figure. Ainsi le livre ne se suffit pas à lui-même: nécessairement l'accompagne une certaine absence, sans laquelle il ne serait pas. Connaître le livre, cela implique qu'il soit tenu compte aussi de cette absence. (Pour une théorie 105)

"Absence" or the "Non-dit" of the text is one of the fundamental concepts in Macherey's scientific theory. At the

level of this "absence," the other concepts constituting the meaning of the text, such as authority, ideology, subjectivity (the author's and the reader's), the conditions of possibility, and ideological effects, converge and collaborate in making the text what it is. For Macherey, "le mon-dit" is the structure of the work. This idea of "absence" is also the point of encounter between Macherey's theory and Derrida's work (see Margins of Philosophy 67 and passim).

We have here a critical methodology that has pushed theory to the limits where meaning loses its traditionally claimed wholeness and univocity, and becomes a polysemic concept that grants the text a pluralistic dimension. The questions that the critic must ask, accordingly, are not to be defined a priori. As Macherey argues, "Il n'y a pas de question definitive, il n'y en a prabablement jamais eu une seule à la fois" (Pour une théorie 18). To a multi-faceted question, there are only multiple answers. Every reading of a text must therefore take such a multiplicity and openness into account. Macherey's view of literary meaning leads him to emphasize polysemy and complexity. The work shows, "par une sorte d'hésitation, la multiplicité de ses voix" (38). What he in fact sets out to do is to formulate a method for the uncovering of the possible meanings that a literary work can engender; meanings that lie inside as well as outside the

literary work. Hence the theoretical complexity, the difficulty, and often the enigmatic character of his approach.

However, Macherey's scientific project must first go beyond a number of critical fallacies, such as "the empirical," "the normative," and "the structuralist" fallacies, or "illusions critiques." As he maintains:

> Alors peut-être pourront être exorcisées les formes d'illusion qui ont retenu jusqu' ici la critique littéraire dans les liens de l'idéologie: illusion du secret, illusion de la profondeur, illusion de la règle, illusion de l'harmonie. Décentrée, exposée, déterminée, complexe: reconnue comme telle,l'oeuvre risque de recevoir sa théorie. (122)

Only in its decenteredness, not in its claimed coherence, unity and harmonious totality, does the the literary work achieve its real character as such. At the same time, only through the pursuit of a clear definition of these concepts can a theory of literary proudction achieve its legitimate status as scientific.

Initially, Macherey proposes two key concepts on which he bases his refutation of these "illusions critiques." He establishes a crucial distinction between the "domaine" and the "objet" of criticism. The "domain" seems to be a diachronic accumulation of literary works, whereas the "object" tends to signify the synchronic character of a work

of art. This is what allows it to be studied as an autonomous construct that is "produced," not created: "La spécificité de l'oeuvre c'est aussi son autonomie: elle est à elle-même sa propre règle dans la mesure où elle se donne ses limites en se les construisant" (66; author's emphasis). However, an essential characteristic of the critical discourse is that it is never fully spoken by its "object," the text. This discourse attends to the text only by creating a "distance" from it while remaining anchored in the latter. This relationship between theory and its object of study renders Macherey's idea of scientificity highly enigmatic, especially since it iws marked by a "silence" that becomes in turn the site of critical inquiry. He indicates that "la parole critique, si elle n'est pas énoncée par le livre, est d'une certaine façon sa propriété: il ne cesse d'y faire allusion s'il ne la dit pas vraiment. Il faudra s'interroger sur le statut de ce silence" (102). However, Macherey is not proposing that we lapse into the "interpretive fallacy," which perceives critical practice as a process of extracting a deep meaning from the text. Rather, textual significance is situated at the level of the text's narrative structure.

For Macherey, both "object" and "domain" must first be differentiated from each other and comprehended before any theorization of criticism or literature can be made possible. Such a distinction, according to him, is also important in

that it forms the basis of a truly scientific epistemology. To specify the "object" of a critical methodology is to relate it to a set of "laws" as in a science, and thereby make it the object of knowledge--scientific knowledge in particular. In contrast, to specify a "domain" is merely to set artistic "rules" which remain beyond the scope of such a knowledge. These "rules" transform the work into a commodity and prepare it for consumption. Elaborating this distinction and arguing one of his main theses, Macherey writes:

> [O]u bien la critique littéraire est un art, et alors elle est complétement déterminée par l'existence préalable d'un domaine (les oeuvres littéraires), qu'elle cherchera à rejoindre, pour en trouver la vérité, et finalement se confondre avec lui, puisqu'elle n'aura plus par elle-même aucune raison d'exister. Ou bien elle est une certaine forme de savoir: elle a alors un objet, qui n'est pas sa donnée mais son produit; à cet objet elle applique un certain effort de transformation; elle ne se contente pas de l'imiter, d'en produire un double; entre le savoir et son objet, elle maintient donc une distance, une séparation. Si le savoir s'exprime dans un discours, et s'applique à un discours, ce discours doit être <u>par nature</u> différent de l'objet qu'il a suscité pour pouvoir en parler. Si le discours scientifique est rigoureux c'est parce que l'objet auquel, par sa propre décision, il s'applique, se définit par un autre type de rigueur et de cohérence. (15)

For critical theory, the distinction between criticism as "art" and criticism as "savoir" is essential. Each has its own principles and criteria for studying the text. To Macherey, there is an opposition between a type of

criticism that is determined by an a priori established field, ("domaine"), and another type of criticism which is theorized simultaneously, has an "object," and is a aspecific form of knowledge. The former duplicates the literary text which it takes as a given, whereas the latter produces its object from which it remains detached. However, theory is said to transform its "object" through a process of analysis that is marked by a "distance." The knowledge generated is "produced" instead of being "created." The critic is therefore a producer of knowledge, not a creator of meaning. (Creation , for Macherey, carries religious overtones.) Moving into this epistemological terrain of "production" guarantees the formulation of a set of critical laws that the critic formulates before approaching the text. In their application to the literary object, these laws transform it in such a way that it becomes unknown to itself: "le critique fait eclater en l'oeuvre une différence, fait apparaître qu'elle est autre qu'elle n'est" (15). As in the sciences, this critical method and its object are marked by a difference that keeps them apart and forbids their confusion. In a similar fashion, the discourse of theory is "par nature différent de l'objet qu'il a succité pour pouvoir en parler" (15). It is, accordingly, this theoretical discourse which chooses, "par sa propre décision," its object of study, not the reverse. The role of the critic is therefore reduced to its minimum subjective

interference into the text in order that a kind of objectivity be reached. Thus the text itself seems to acquire an autonomous consciousness that resembles that of a speaking subject.

Such a view of the literary text recalls some Structuralist and Post-Structuralist pronouncements on authority and the nature of writing. Both Barthes and Foucault have declared the death of authority at the hand of writing. As Barthes maintains, "we know that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning, the 'message' of the Author-God, but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes, Image-Music-Text 146). Foucault, in turn argues along the same line, lending at the same time strong support to Macherey's insistence on the centrality of absence to literary discourse: "we should reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault line, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance" (Language, Counter-Memory 121). If literary discourse, in Macherey's terms, can make "sa propre décision," like a fully conscious or free, active human agent, it must relinquish any sense of authorial presence and intention that traditional criticism, and Leavisism for that matter, have ascribed to it. However,

this problematization of the authorial origin of the work adds to the complexity of the problem at hand, that of the nature of scientificity in Machereyan theory. If the text is "made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures," as Barthes maintains, and if its meaning arises from absences, how can scientificity claim an objective knowledge of literary production?

Within Macherey's propositions lies a complex problem pertaining to the relationship between theory and its "object," a relationship that is claimed to be an essential criterion for the establishment of any scientific epistemology in the domain of literature. This relationship, Macherey argues, is characterised by "une distance," "une différence" that determines the meaning of the text and distinguishes what it says from what the critical method says about it. The two discourses, consequently, are defined in such a way as to have "rien de commun." Macherey explains further:

> Cette distance, l'écart suffisant pour que s'y installe une <u>discursivité vraie</u>, est essentielle, et caracterise définitivement les rapports entre l'oeuvre et sa critique: ce qu'on pourra dire de l'oeuvre en <u>connaissance de cause</u> ne se confondra jamais avec ce qu'elle dit d'elle-même, parce que les deux discours ainsi superposés ne sont pas de même nature. Ni dans leur forme ni dans leur contenu ils ne peuvent être identifiés: ainsi, entre le critique et l'écrivain, une <u>différence</u> irréductible doit être posée au départ; elle n'est pas ce qui distingue deux points de vue sur un même objet, mais l'exclusion qui sépare l'une et l'autre deux formes de discours. Ces discours n'ont rien de commun: l'oeuvre telle qu'elle est

> écrite par son auteur n'est pas exactement l'oeuvre telle qu'elle est expliquée par le critique. (Pour une théorie 15)

At first sight, the critical method proposed here and its object seem to be totally alien to each other because they speak two different languages: one is the discourse of knowledge (science); the other is the language of "méconnaissance" (something resembling ideology). The reader is tempted to argue, how is criticism going to explain the meaning of texts then, and to claim the validity of its methodology? The answer seems to lie in the Machereyan theory itself. What characterizes this complex relationship between criticism and its target is a difference in form and in content, a difference which is a relationship. This differential relationship does not effect a total alienation between the two poles of this dichotomy. The two are interconnected by an absent discursive space or "a gap" ("l'inconscient du texte"), which lies at the heart of the text, but about which the text itself must remain silent. Otherwise, what Macherey calls "une discursivité vraie" could not be spoken of.

This silent space that the text inhabits is defined by Macherey as a "structure." This seems to be the only concept that is posited in advance, for neither the theory nor the literary text is given a priori. In Macherey's own terms, "la

méthode, pas plus que l'objet, n'est donnée au départ; ils se déterminent l'un l'autre conjointement: la méthode est nécessaire pour construire l'objet; mais la juridiction de la méthode est elle-même subordonnée à l'existence de l'objet" (17). The truth of this kind of rationalization lies in the impossibility of origins and beginnings. The ontological presence of the text as such is therefore blurred. Neither the method nor its object is given, but both are postulated at the same time; they both determine each other dialectically. Yet, "absence" is privileged as a structure that precedes both the text and its theorization, an argument that problematizes Macherey conceptual framework. With Nietzsche in mind, he says:

> Ce qui est important dans une oeuvre, c'est ce qu'elle ne dit pas. Ce n'est pas la notation rapide: ce qu'elle refuse de dire; ce qui serait déjà intéressant: et là-dessus on pourrait bâtir une méthode, avec, pour travail, de <u>mesurer des silences</u>, avoués ou non. Mais plutôt: ce qui est important, c'est ce qu'elle <u>ne peut pas dire</u>, parce que là se joue l'élaboration d'une parole, dans une sorte de marche au silence.
>
> Toute la question est alors de savoir si on peut interroger cette absence de parole qui précéde toute parole comme sa condition. (<u>Pour une théorie</u> 107)

This privileging of "silence" and the methodological priority it receives seems to lead Macherey's theoretical perspective into the essentialist trap of several approaches that he is trying to criticize. Moreover, the question initially posed, that of the relationship between the text and

its knowledge, between literature and criticism, has not received a viable answer. The result is a sense of ambiguity that belies Macherey's epistemology as well as the concept of scientificity itself.

To resolve this ambiguity, Macherey proposes another fundamental concept: "les conditions de possibilité" of the text as an object of criticism. Like the notion of distance proposed earlier, these conditions of existence are categories that seem to acquire priority in turn. They precede "absence." They are the material conditions around which the laws of criticism are formulated. Thus theory addresses not the work itself, since the concept of "the work" has been invalidated, but its "conditions of possibility." These conditions are both formal, namely about the work's purely stylistic features, and ideological--relating to a socio-cultural framework that determines the structure of absence. As Macherey argues, "pour identifier une forme de connaissance, plutôt qu'à la qualité de savoir qu'effectivement elle nous apporte, il importe de s'intéresser aux conditions qui ont rendu possible l'apparition de ce savoir" (Pour une théorie 17). What seems to replace Macherey's rejection of any priorization of either theory or its object is a series of questions whose answers define the set of laws that the knowledge of the text requires. But this knowledge is achieved only through the specification of the text's condition of existence. This would

lead us to the formulation of how a certain literary object comes to be what it is: written, sold, read, taught, and ciculated as a product.

It must be emphasized here that "Literature" as an entity is rejected in advance. Behind Macherey, there is Sartre. Macherey's theoretical framework is conscious of Sartre's Qu'est ce que la littérature? (1949), in the same way Barthes's Le Degré zéro de l'écriture (1953) is a direct response to the latter. As Macherey remarks: "from the outset, we refused to respond to the question: 'What is Literature?'" ("Interview" [1982] 50); "On aura à se demander pourquoi la question critique rompt formellement avec celle de la linguistique, et ne demande pas: qu'est-ce que la littérature?" (Pour une théorie 159). Elaborating the point eleswhere in an argument against the claims of "the eternal charm of Greek art," Macherey adds:

> The Iliad, a fragment of a universal literature, used. . .as a vehicle for memory, is not the Iliad produced by the material life of the Greeks, which was not a "book" nor even a "myth" in our sense of the word, which we would like to apply retrospectively. Homer's Iliad, the "work" of an "author" exists only for us, and in relation to new material conditions into which it has been reinscribed and reinvested with new significance . . . .It is as if we ourselves have written it (or at least composed it anew). ("Problems of Reflection" 45)

This view of the literary work recalls the structuralist drive to do away with the author and with the acceptance of "Literature" as an instituted body of works or of concepts that precede theoretical practice. However, although Macherey offers an attack on Sartre, he does not seem to present a view of the text that is alien to the Sartrean definition of the work as "une toupie." Nor does his theory of "absence" seem that alien to Sartre's phenomenological criticism. In fact, in Qu'est-ce que la littérature? Sartre perceives the literary work in terms that resemble Macherey's perception of the Iliad. Sartre says:

> [L]'objet littéraire est une étrange toupie qui n'existe qu'en mouvement. Pour la faire surgir, il faut un acte concret qui s'appelle la lecture, et elle ne dure qu'autant que cette lecture peut durer. Hors de là, il n'y a que des traces noirs sur le papier. Or l'écrivain ne peut pas lire ce qu'il écrit, au lieu que le cordonnier peut chausser les souliers qu'il vient de faire, s'ils sont à sa pointure, et l'architecte habiter la maison qu'il a construite. (52-3)

Not unlike Sartre's view, Macherey's argument at this stage seems to be structured by a desire to displace the claimed universality of those literary categories of fixed meaning, authorial presence, the transparence of mimetic language, and the passivity of the reading process. These categories have long accounted for aesthetic values. In refuting these categories, Macherey posits alternative criteria that take over the epistemological space of the text

under the name of rationality, scientificity, and critical "laws." These principles are now invested with enough power to help bring about the institutionalization of the idea of the "science of the text." Accordingly, part of Macherey's "theory of literary production" is an inquiry into how the literary work is made, has come to be literary, and been canonized as such.

However, Macherey's postulation of the principle of the primacy of the work's "conditions of possibility" as the origin and fulcrum of critical laws seems to privilege theory qua theory. Hence the importance he grants to theory as a necessary step towards scientific knowledge: "faire la théorie d'une forme de connaissance, cela consiste d'abord à exhiber la question autour de laquelle elle est bâtie, et qui l'entoure si bien qu'elle finit par la cacher" (Pour une théorie 18). But while addressing what the text "hides," this "question" emanates neither from the method nor from its object. It comes from "les lois de. . .production" of knowledge itself. It asks: "quelles sont les conditions effectives de sa possibilité"? (17). As a result, it expresses a certain wariness of excessive indulgence in theory by insisting on the empirical and deductive method, but only through the implementation of a wider theoretical perspective. Moreover, while going beyond both textual "empiricism" and the idea of theory for theory's sake, Macherey seems to undertake

the theoretical task of investigating the "unconscious" of the text which could be apprehended only through more theory and which is conceptual rather than empirical. The abstract and theoretical are therefore fundamental aspects of the question of scientificity.

For Macherey, this questioning process in his theoretical project complies with the idea that scientific laws can only answer questions pertaining to "How". Meanwhile, he rejects those questions relating to "Why" since they are mainly constitutive of the project of "interpretation," which Macherey perceives as inherently teleological:

> Que gagne-t-on à remplacer l'explication (qui repond à la question: comment l'oeuvre est-elle faite?) par l'interprétation (pourquoi l'oeuvre est-elle faite?). D'abord semble-t-il on élargit le champ d'application de l'entreprise critique: ne la limitant plus à l'étude des moyens, technique aveugle, on lui ouvre le domaine inexploré des fins.. . .
>
> Interpréter, c'est répéter, mais d'une curieuse répétition qui dit peu en disant moins. (93)

Literary production is therefore governed by laws rather than by rules and relies more on "comment l'oeuvre est. . .faite" than on "pourquoi. . .elle [est] faite." When Macherey, later on, argues against Structuralist criticism, this formalist

dictum, "How the work is made," is proposed as a basic question that scientific criticism must ask:

> A cette science [la linguistique], elle [la critique] demandera, non seulement de lui enseigner d'hypothétiques régles du langage, mais surtout de donner une réponse à la question: qu'est-ce que le langage? Alors seulement elle pourra envisager de répondre à sa question: comment une oeuvre (cette oeuvre) est-elle faite? On aura à se demander pourquoi la question critique rompt formellement avec celle de la linguistique, et ne demande pas: qu'est-ce que la littérature? (159)

In his theorization of "literary production," Macherey puts forth a critique of several dominant critical methodologies before he moves on to the presentation of the "laws" that govern his model of analysis. Formalism, Textual Criticism, Structuralism, traditional Marxism, and Aestheticism are some of the approaches he refutes. He approaches their theoretical views through what he identifies as the essential norms of a proper rationalization of critical analysis, namely: the relation between the notions of "object" and "domain" in criticism, the text's "conditions of possibility," the formulation of "Laws," the definition of the epistemological "distance" that separates theory from practice, as well as the question of the work's "unspoken absences." Etienne Balibar explains his and Macherey's understanding of criticism and points out another element of the latter's theory:

> It is a question of saying that the literary text is not that sleek, totally manifest ensemble, enclosed in its coherence, that a certain

> structuralism, among other methods of literary analysis, pretends to circumscribe, and to describe exhaustively. In fact, it is impossible to describe the literary text exhaustively because in reality it is not self-sufficient; it is full of gaps and absences . . . One cannot do a phenomenological reading of the text, one must do a "symptomatic reading"--"symptomatic" having above all a negative connotation, suggesting that all is not given. (Macherey and Etienne Balibar, "Interview" 49)

In going beyond both Sartre's phenomenological criticism and Barthes's Structuralist views of the text, Macherey--as Balibar points out--appeals to a Freudian/Lacanian concept, "the symptomatic method," which enhances the working of the other categories of his theory. It is the notion of "lecture symptomale" which attempts to exorcise the unspoken unconscious of discourse. However, this "symptomatic reading" and the concept of objective scientificity must be reconciled.

In formulating these elements of a theory of literary production, Macherey in his Pour une théorie distinguishes among three main "fallacies" that have governed traditional criticism: the first is "empiricist," the second "normative," and the third "interpretive." They all dismiss the necessity of formulating theoretical, rational and scientific knowledge. Although the "normative" and "empiricist" fallacies seem to be opposed to each other, they are similar at heart. Since they treat the literary work according to rules that are basically norms of value-judgement, they consider literature merely as a

commodity for consumption, thereby missing the real status of the literary work. Macherey comments:

> [L]a méthode traditionnelle [a]. . .tendance à glisser sur la pente d'une illusion naturelle, qui est l'illusion empirique. . .Celle-ci traite l'oeuvre, objet de l'entreprise critique, comme une donnée de fait, immédiatement découpée, et s'offrant spontanément au regard qui l'inspecte. (Pour une théorie 23)

The "empiricist fallacy" is initially attributed to those traditional critical methodologies which are presumably concerned with the purely aesthetic value of literature, elaborated for the sake of public taste. Such a literary method is an art, rather than a rational theory. It mainly prepares the work for public consumption, not for knowledge. Macherey contends that this method remains an approximation of knowledge: "un art, connaissance non plus théorique mais pratique et empirique. . .formule des règles générales, qui n'ont qu'une valeur approchée, moyenne" (21-22).

On the other hand, the "normative fallacy," Macherey argues, tends to be more concerned with passing value-judgements on the literary work. This "fallacy" evaluates the aesthetic features of the work by comparing it with an absent model that the work is supposed to emulate. In privileging an absent ideal model of the concrete text, this approach reveals Platonic affiliations. Normative criticism reproaches the work for aesthetic limitations because it perceives it as either approximating the valued model or falling below its standards.

approximating the valued model or falling below its standards. Leavis's 'theory' of literary standards, which upholds the idea that the work of art must obey the rules of an "organic" literary model in order to achieve its creative sublimity may be cited here as an example of this approach. In other words, by positing a particular set of novelists such as Austen, Eliot, Conrad, and Lawrence as model writers because they mediate a moral and spiritual world in their writing, Leavis proposes an organic model that the novels of all times should aspire to reproduce. For Macherey, such a view of literature falls into idealism and leaves the work aside while focusing on the model to be imitated. Normative criticism therefore remains unable to read the work as an autonomous entity, whose laws and conditions of possibility can be apprehended independently of any outside interference. Nor can it produce a form of theoretical, scientific knowledge. He explains further:

> Refusant à l'oeuvre telle qu'elle est un caractère définitif, et mettant au contraire l'accent sur ses altérations, le jugement critique affirme en elle la présence de l'autre, sous les espèces de la norme qui permet de le juger. L'oeuvre est donc bien soumise au principe d'une légalité. . .Jusque dans sa prétention à construire, à juger positivement, la critique normative affirme son pouvoir de déstruction. (Pour une théorie 26)

In fact, in what seems to be a paradoxical move, "normative" criticism tends to abolish the materiality of the

text in the process of trying to repossess it from its authorial production: "l'illusion normative, c'est l'illusion empirique déplacée, située en un autre lieu. En effet elle transpose seulement les caractéristiques empiriques de l'oeuvre en les attribuant à un modèle, donnée ultime et indépendante" (30). Yet this "normative" method of reading is claimed to be not totally unproductive. According to Macherey, it attributes to the work a certain "mobilité": it distinguishes the work's appearance from its reality, hence marking a certain discrepancy between two potentially valuable dimensions of the work: what it explicitly reveals and what it hides. Through its attention to a model, Macherey concludes, "normative" criticism confirms the deceptive nature of the text (31), which is a dimension that contributes to Macherey's theory of ideology in literary analysis.

The third type of criticism that Macherey rejects is "l'illusion interprétative." Like the other two methods criticized, this approach is also inadequate. It adopts an essentialist view of literature and approaches the literary work as a coherent entity that is reproduced by the critical act. When it interprets the text, it aims for a "pure reading" and does not offer a "knowledge" of the work. Instead, it creates a substitute; a unified, coherent and self-sufficient meaning. The "interpretive fallacy" is then an approach that remains oblivious to the text's gaps and margins, which are as

crucial as the "manifest" side of the text in carrying meaning. Hence it misses the exact nature of the author's activity by substituting monolithic significations:

> Toujours, l'écrivain doit résoudre plusieurs problèmes à la fois, à des niveaux différents: aucun choix ne va jamais par lui-même. Interpréter, c'est justement réduire l'explication à l'identification d'un seul de ces choix. (121; emphasis added)

For Macherey, the critic as interpreter tends to take up a critical position either at the center of the text or totally outside it. The meaning that he or she offers of the text is a substitute that equals in value the original text (93). Critical practice is, thereby, turned into a kind of commentary that ignores both the complexity of meaning and the internal contradictions that structure the work:

> En fait, l'interprétation réalise une opération inverse, mais équivalente: elle transpose l'oeuvre dans un commentaire, cherchant, par ce déplacement, à faire apparaître, inchangé et délivré des ornements qui le cachaient, avéré, son contenu. L'interpréte réalise un double de l'oeuvre: ainsi il retrouve, dans une miraculeuse réciprocité, ce dont elle est elle-même le double. (93)

Furthermore, interpretation abolishes the distance between the literary object and theory, a distance which--for Macherey--constitutes the principle par excellence of a scientific theory of literature. Thus interpretation is merely a repetition of its object of study: "Interpréter, c'est

répéter, mais d'une tres curieuse répétition qui dit plus en disant moins: répétition purifiante, au terme de laquelle un sens, jusque-là caché, apparait dans sa seule vérité" (93-4). By limiting itself to a singular view of its object as a totality, interpretation remains unable to go beyond the work in order to investigate the real conditions that have led to its genesis. This dependence on a perception of the work as situated within closed boundaries proves this method's alliance with the "empiricist fallacy." At the same time, it allows the critic to remain unaware of what other meanings the literary work represses or is silent about. Elaborating this point further, Macherey observes that

> La critique interprétative repose sur un certain nombre d'illusions. . .: elle situe l'oeuvre en un espace qu'elle dote de la perspective de sa profondeur; elle dénonce le caractère immédiatement trompeur de l'oeuvre, signe ambigu qui indique un sens et le dissimule à la fois; enfin, elle suppose en l'oeuvre la présence active d'un unique sens autour duquel celle-ci serait, quoique diversement, rassemblée. Surtout, entre l'oeuvre et sa critique, elle rétablit un rapport d'intériorité: interprétatif, le commentaire s'installe au coeur de l'oeuvre et livre son secret. Entre l'objet (l'oeuvre littéraire) et sa connaissance (le discours critique), nulle autre distance que celle qui sépare la puissance de l'acte, le sens de sa manifestation. Le commentaire est contenu par l'oeuvre: à moins que ce ne soit l'inverse; de toute façon, l'un et l'autre sont confondus d'une manière qui caractérise. . .la méthode empiriste. (94-5)

It is therefore imperative, Macherey advises us, to go beyond the limitations of the "interpretive fallacy" because

it lacks the proper theoretical ingredients for the formulation of a knowledge of the work. To supersede this "fallacy," Macherey proposes that the text should be accounted for as such, with no depth, no unity, and no doubling of its meaning. He asserts:

> Nous sommes donc amenés, pour déjouer l'illusion interprétative, à formuler une hypothèse méthodique concernant la nature de l'oeuvre. L'oeuvre doit être élaborée, traitée, sans quoi elle ne sera jamais un fait théorique, l'objet d'une connaissance; mais elle doit aussi être laissée telle qu'elle est, sans quoi portera sur elle un jugement de valeur et non un jugement théorique. (96)

In addition, the binary opposites of "appearance" and "reality" which construct both the "normative" and the "interpretive" approaches must be dispensed with because they ignore the principle that reality is not a fixed given but a construction. It is through this system of opposites that Macherey points out the intimate relationship between the two approaches he rejects here. He contends that

> Penser l'oeuvre à partir du couple d'opposés réalité-apparence, c'est renverser l'illusion normative pour tomber dans l'illusion interprétative: remplacer la ligne apparente du texte par une vraie ligne qui se trouverait placée derrière la première. (120)

Those critical methodologies which base their analysis on this dichotomy of "envers et endroit" are entrapped by a common illusion. As critical discourses, they can no longer

differentiate themselves from the discourse of fiction that they try to interpret. They simply masquerade as theoretical knowledge, without offering us a science of the text. Perceiving these critical fallacies as "un déguisement," Macherey states,

> Les oeuvres construites à partir de ce principe [of the inside and the outside] sont peut-être de fausses oeuvres, des oeuvres critiques qui se posent, sous le déguisement d'un discours, la question de la nature de ce discours; critiques camouflés, jugés masques fréquentant les bas-fonds pour les mieux connaître et les mieux détruire. (32; emphasis added)

By refuting these "fallacies," Macherey conceives of the text in a new light. Because of its complexity and multi-layered character, the literary work seems to offer an idea of openness and to resist all interpretations that reduce it to an essence. However, this line of argument seems to undermine the Machereyan epistemology as well, for by upholding a "theory of production", a system, the 'real' of literature is fixed by the "laws" of this theory that theorizes it; hence Macherey's appeal, in the end, to a principle of ideological determinism. He is careful not to fall into any form of "Semiosis," the labyrinth of textual play and openness, à la Umberto Eco (see Pour une théorie 99). In fact, Macherey perceives Eco's theory as a variation on the "interpretative" method because, on the one hand, it misses the exact nature of the work, which is, for Macherey,

ultimately closed by its conditions of possiblity. On the other, it duplicates the text by positing the existence of an incomplete simulacrum which the reader must reveal. Arguing against Eco's theory of the "open text," Macherey notes:

> L'oeuvre. . .n'avait plus alors un sens mais plusieurs: mais cette multiplicité possible, indéfinie qui est une propriété ou un effet et dont l'accomplissement est confié à des lecteurs, n'a rien à voir avec la complexité réelle, nécessairement finie, qui est la structure du livre. Si le livre ne produit pas, ne contient pas le principe de sa fermeture, elle est pourtant définitivement enfermée, contenue dans les limites qui lui appartiennent en propre sans qu'elle ne les soit elle-même données. L'inachévement de l'oeuvre est aussi la raison de sa finitude. (99; emphasis added)

After having initially proposed that the literary work is marked by polysemy and openness ("multipicité possible, infinie"), both of which result from its "silent gaps" or its unintentional "unconscious" structure, Macherey paradoxically postulates the closure of the text. The nature of the text's closure is manifested only in its openness: "l'inachevement est aussi la raison de sa finitude." This cryptic statement which structures Macherey's theoretical framework voices a crucial paradox: in order to refute other theories ("les illusions critiques") which defend a simplistic closure of meaning, Macherey posits a certain complex indefiniteness of the meaning of the literary text. Yet, in order to formulate his own theory, which is an eclectic ensemble of Freudian, Marxist, and Structuralist concepts, he is forced to appeal to

the view of the text as finite: "la complexité réelle, nécessairement finie, qui est la structure du livre" (99). This move towards a new kind of closure, a "finitude" through "l'inachevement du texte," is achieved more forcefully in his later writings through his "theory of the history of the literary effects" and a Marxist notion of "Reflection" (see "Problems of Reflection" 51; and "Sur la littérature comme forme idéologique" 29-48). In fact, this is also the role that the notion of scientificity plays in his theory: it closes meaning by appealing to the concepts of absence, reflection, and effects as constitutive of an objective, scientific knowledge, which is Structuralist- Marxism. This is why Eco's skepticism about any theory's claim to scientificity is relevant to our assessment of Macherey's scientific project. Eco argues:

> In the 'human' sciences one often finds an "ideological fallacy" common to many scientific approaches, which consists in believing that one's own approach is not ideological because it succeeds in being "objective" and "neutral". . .Theoretical research is a form of social practice. Everybody who wants to know something wants to know it in order to do something.. . .
>
> Ceteris paribus, I think that it is more "scientific" not to conceal my own motivations, so as to spare my readers any "scientific" delusions. (A Theory of Semiotics 29)

Macherey's theory, despite its advanced level of theoretical competence, especially when compared with Leavis's critical

framework, remains far from being self-conscious of the paradox that Eco points out here concerning the idea of scientificity.

However, because of his emphasis on the work's "conditions of possibility," "ideological effects," and other socio-historical factors in determining meaning, Macherey seems to mark an important turn away from the literary work qua work--an idea he celebrates in Pour une théorie-- as well as from any idea of theory as an auto-critical activity. His project of a scientific theory of knowledge locates meaning within a particular epistemological space that is neither the text nor its analysis. In his "Problems of Reflection" (1976), Macherey takes up the critique of the "open work" again and emphasizes a "theory of the aesthetic effect" as "an ideological form," confirming the text's affiliation with the reproductive mechanisms of ideology. This shift away from a theory of "production" to that of the aesthetic as ideological effect marks an important stage in Macherey's theorization of literature.

Historically, this shift was sparked by the Althusserian theory of ideology, which acquired wide popularity during the early 1970s (see Macherey and Balibar, "Sur la littérature"; Althusser, Essays on Ideology; Hirst, "Althusser and the Theory of Ideology"; and Gane, "On the ISAs

Episode"). Yet, while Macherey's shift of attention towards the question of "ideological effects" marks the closure of meaning, presumably needed to reinstate the notion of the class struggle as the ultimate signified and motor of history, he still yearns to maintain a sense of epistemological openness and freedom in literary analysis. Now, artistic writing takes up the identity of disparateness and "disorder," which in turn determines their existence. He explains:

> [T]here can be no question of proposing the indefinitely open nature of the work, its radical disorder etc., as a counter-nature just as essential and eternal as the nature which it has supplanted. Disorder, non-order, that is the totality of real contradictions from which we derive an explanation of literary effects, is not the same as the absence of order, a primeval and indeterminate power of negation in itself which disintegrates works by reducing them to a kind of primeval violence of transgression. The incomplete, unfinished nature of literary works, their internal decomposition is to be treated as the form of their material determination: it cannot be reduced to an artifice of construction, it results from the objective laws governing their nature. ("Problems of Reflection" 52-53)

With this move towards the horizons of the relationship between the "incomplete" status of the literary text and its socio-historical context, between its "material determination" and modes of production, Macherey leaves behind a major concern in <u>Pour une théorie</u>: to investigate the "distinct"

character of the text, its literariness. This change in perspective was the result of the events of May 1968 in France. The change has been recognized by Macherey himself, who now perceives Pour une théorie as dominated by a formalist perspective. In his interview with Red Letters, he admits:

> [B]etween 1966 [when Pour une théorie was first published] and the present, there were the events of 1968 which not only disrupted the French universities but the whole French society. These could not fail to have an effect on our work, it was impossible not to take account of them. In particular, we were forced to renounce all that formalism and culturalism which characterised our previous work. So that, theoretically, we were obliged to think in different ways after the events of '68. ("Interview" [1975] 5)

Indeed, Macherey's revision of the formalist bent that characterized his work before 1968 and the development of his epistemology towards a theory of ideology after that date marks an important stage in the evolution of his critical thought in its quest for a scientific theory of literary production. Now "ideology" has become like "silence," "distance," "domain," and "object," a major principle in Macherey's epistemology. The concept of ideology is now privileged over the other concepts that constitute the method of analysis that he posits as an alternative to the "illusions critiques." In fact, when defining the category of ideology as it pertains to literature in "Sur la littérature" (1974), Macherey argues--still keeping a distance from fromalism in mind:

> Remarquons-le d'emblée, parler de <u>forme</u> idéologique n'entraîne ici à aucun <u>formalisme</u>, car ce concept du matérialisme historique ne fait pas référence au "formel" (en tant qu'il se distinguerait d'un "contenu"), mais à l'unité objective d'une <u>formation</u> idéologique.. . .(31)

In fact, in reproaching a number of critical methodologies, like the critical fallacies commented earlier, for ignoring the complexity of interpretation, Macherey points out the absence of a theory of ideology from their readings of literature.

To account for all these categories of "absence," "structure," and "ideology," he offers an alternative method which he calls, after Freud, Lacan, and Althusser, "la lecture symptomale." Macherey defines this type of reading as follows:

> [It] is an expression that had particular significance in the specific cultural context of 1965-66. It expresses the idea of a dialectical reading of texts. At that time, rather than speak of dialectics, which was trapped in a wooden language of orthodox Marxism, it was necessary to speak of "symptomatic reading" to make oneself understood. But it's basically a question of dialectics. . .
>
> All of this is certainly founded on some references; it [symptomatic reading] does not appear out of nowhere. Among other things, it is an attempt to use simultaneously and productively some advances of Marx and Freud. "Symptomatic reading" is a term that functions with others in a systematic context to signal the importance of Freud as much as Marx. ("Interview" [1982] 48)

In theorizing the text, its absence, and ideological ramifications through the practice of a "symptomatic reading," Macherey refuses to subscribe to a methodology that is posited a priori. In the same interview, he admits: "if there was [before 1968] something that all of us who worked with Althusser had in common, it was the refusal, precisely, of things like a methodology--that is, an abstract method, rules. We never had a method" (48). But this lack of a methodology does not mean the adoption of a non-methodical approach to literature or some form of anarchic philosophy which would not be perceived as a science of criticism. This question of method is problematized to a second degree by Derrida who says, in a commentary on Descartes:

> Alors sans doute, si toute méthode, tout comportement, toute opération, toute règle méthodique implique de l'historicité, ce n'est pas de n'importe quelle historicité qu'il s'agit; . . .tout chemin, tout cheminement, et même tout cheminement historique n'est pas forcément de type méthodique, toute marche n'est pas méthode, méthodique. La méthode a une histoire originale; je ne parle pas ici encore du concept de méthode qui a lui aussi son histoire et son historicité, mais de l'historicité propre de la méthode elle-même; cette historicité originale tient aussi au statut de la répétition qui institut toute méthode. ("La Langue et le discours de la méthode" 35)

But whereas Derrida here insists on chance in method, "non seulement le hasard n'est pas contradictoire avec l'idée de cette ortho-méthodologie mais d'une certaine manière il la conditionne, l'appelle et la légitime" (51), Balibar and Macherey insist on system. Balibar adds during the same

interview, their position rejects "method" but institutes "a system," which is represented by the notion of a "symptomatic reading" ("Interview" 27). Yet, the theoretical categories which serve as tools for this type of reading are borrowed--as Balibar admits in the interview--from a re-reading of Marxism and Freudianism. These tools cannot help being posited _a fortiori_, before the object of the "symptomatic reading" is instituted.

Thus, the alternative that Macherey posits to the types of critical "fallacies" reviewed above bases itself on the categories of ideology, absence, and complex openness. It is an alternative that must be understood, according to him, as the fulcrum of a scientific epistemology. It is a "symptomatic" method of reading; a "method" that boasts an awareness of the pitfalls of other methods and critical approaches, hence its claim to scientificity. In contrast, the three "critical illusions" cannot attain this special epistemological status because of the limitations inherent in the "rules" and criteria on which they base their practices. Unlike them, a "symptomatic reading" functions according to a set of laws that are not that different from the theoretical principles which govern the natural sciences. In a cogently argued passage, Macherey elaborates this similarity between the "laws" of his proposed "theory of literary production" and

the principles of a scientific methodology as it is followed in the natural sciences. He says:

> La science ne donne pas de ses objets une interprétation au sens strict du terme: elle les transforme, leur attribuant une signification qu'ils ne possédaient pas au départ. Il n'y a dans le mouvement des corps qui "tombent" aucune vocation à supporter la loi de cette chute, et encore moins à lui obéir (la nature n'est pas un royaume avec un roi qui la soumette à ses lois); les corps tombèrent longtemps et tombent toujours sans énoncer la loi. Mais il était de la vocation du savoir de <u>produire</u> cette loi: c'est dire que la loi n'est pas <u>dans</u> les corps qui tombent, mais ailleurs, à côté d'eux, apparue sur un tout autre terrain qui est celui du savoir scientifique; de là l'échec de tout empirisme, qui prétend dégager des leçons de l'expérience: écouter et dégager la "fable du monde", alors que celui-ci est muet. Cette transformation, théorique et non plus pratique, laisse intacte la réalité à quoi finalement elle s'applique: elle ne la déréalise pas, elle ne la ramène pas à ses origines, à un sens profond, mais lui donne une dimension nouvelle. Alors <u>connaître</u> une oeuvre littéraire, ce ne serait pas la démontrer, la "démystifier", mais produire un savoir neuf: <u>dire ce dont elle parle sans le dire</u>. (<u>Pour une théorie</u> 173-74; author's emphasis)

The separation between the object of science and its laws is confirmed here as a given truth that parallels the theoretical principles governing Macherey's conception of criticism. The relationship between "Science" and "Nature" is held alongside that between theory and its target text, the literary object. Due to its very facticity, Nature is silent, "un monde muet" which relegates the generation of its laws to a separate level, that of scientific knowledge. Knowledge does not affect reality when it analyzes it; "elle

ne la déréalise pas." It produces "un savoir nouveau" of reality.

If this comparison of texts to Nature stands, literary works become "lumps", as Rorty would say (see "Texts and Lumps"), and theoretical practice takes up the task of speaking on behalf of the mute, the blind, and the deaf. Although this view of texts as being "mute" may sound strange, it seems to prevail in the discourse of many critics who celebrate the scientificity of criticism. Northrop Frye, for instance, in defence of his own version of "scientific criticism," says: "Criticism can talk, and all the arts are dumb" (Anatomy of Criticism 4). Drawing, like Macherey, on a comparison between scientific criticism and Physics as well as between literary works and Nature, Frye adds:

> [A] coherent and comprehensive theory of literature, logically and scientifically organized implies that at no point is there any direct learning of literature itself. Physics is an organized body of knowledge about nature, and a student of it says that he is learning physics, not nature. Art, like nature, has to be distinguished from the systematic study of it, which is criticism. (11)

However, Frye's notion of scientificity, which is anchored in a formalist revision of Aristotelian poetics and defined by five generic modes (see Anatomy 33-67), remains different from Macherey's Structuralist-Marxist concept of that term. According to Macherey, since "Reality" and "Nature" cannot

represent themselves, they must be represented or re-presented by this "Savoir scientifique." These are exactly the powers with which Macherey's theory of literary production endows scientific knowledge.

Since none of the "critical fallacies" discussed above is allowed to enter in this privileged realm of scientificity, the most privileged representative of knowledge is "the theory of literary production" itself. In his critique of Macherey, Howard Felperin points out the error in making literary texts and natural objects collide. Felperin says:

> [T]he object of "literary" criticism--like the objects of the "social sciences"--can never have the ontological stability that the natural objects of such "hard" sciences as physics or even the organisms of biology do. The object of criticism, be it literature or even history is not an autonomous "given", but has its existence primarily and ultimately in language, and therefore is not strictly speaking, an object at all.
>
> For language, a fortiori literary language, is full of memories, traces, filiations, any of which are capable of being recalled to active service at any point. The relations between signifier and signified are subject to change without notice; they do not stand still to be studied. (Beyond Deconstruction 62-3)

Two other important points that Macherey raises in the excerpt before last add to the elements of his theory of scientific criticism and should be considered: "la vocation du savoir," and the spatial metaphor of "ailleurs" which is "un

terrain qui est celui du savoir scientifique" where this claimed knowledge and its laws are located. "La vocation du savoir" is here granted authoritative powers to announce the laws of knowledge independently of "reality," which by its very nature always remains "silent." In a similar manner, knowledge is endowed with anthropomorphic characteristics which turn it into a surrogate for the real agents who may generate that knowledge. Deductively, this "savoir" must then be a subjectless thought process that has an autonomous existence and is controlled by no other power outside itself.

One conclusion which may be drawn from this view of knowledge is that "la vocation du savoir," as Macherey perceives it, can realize itself without the intervention of other agents, theorizing subjects. These agents are not necessarily human beings and do not come before this "vocation of knowledge"--since we need, according to Macherey's skepticism about the origins of discourse, to beware of the pitfalls of idealism and theological reasoning. Instead, they exist alongside this vocation and act upon it. Thus, if pushed to its theoretical limits, Macherey's reasoning finds itself in a theoretical impasse. That is, for a scientific theory of literature to be formulated, its concept of scientificity has to be grounded first somewhere outside the empty space of "absence" which structures his epistemological framework.

As for the second point, the topographical metaphor of "ailleurs," it recalls Balibar's earlier statement about the guiding principle of the Machereyan theory. Balibar maintains that the aim of their project is to criticize both the idea that "the literary text is something entirely given--in which everything is manifest," and the view that it is "something whose reason or hidden explanation must be sought in a meaning that is elsewhere" ("Interview" [1982] 49). For these two views, Balibar substitutes a different idea: "the literary object is in a material relation with other texts, other discourses, other practices, etc. . . ." Like Balibar's "elsewhere," Macherey's "ailleurs" sends us back to "absence" as a location of scientific knowledge, which logically leads to silence. But since silence cannot voice its own "color," a scientific "color," it is given a particular voice in order to escape the impasse of its own theorization. Silence becomes a concrete "terrain qui est celui du savoir scientifique"; i.e., "[pour] dire ce dont elle [l'oeuvre] parle sans le dire." In fact, without making this "silence" speak the language of scientificity, Macherey's whole project cannot stand. Earlier on, Macherey rejected "l'illusion interprétative" in order to allocate literature to another space outside itself: "elle situe l'oeuvre en un espace qu'elle dote de la perspective de sa profondeur." The metaphor of "ailleurs" could then be read as a metonymic variation on this concept of depth itself.

Thus Macherey's elements of a scientific theory of literary production seem to confront a major problem, that of anchoring and locating the scientificity of critical practice. Through his appeal to concepts of "absence," the "un-said," "silence," "incompleteness," "ideology," and "effects," Macherey has attempted in the manner of Derrida, to refute all teleological, logocentric, and metaphysical notions of "origins," "presences," and "givens," but this endeavour seems to confront the same theoretical impasse. Even though Macherey says that the function of scientific-theoretical knowledge is not to bring reality back to its origins ("elle ne la ramène pas a ses origines"), the locus of orgin is only displaced: knowledge and its laws are located in an "ailleurs", the gaps and interstices of reality and of the text. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Macherey's attempt to go beyond the critical tradition as it was constituted by the "critical fallacies" he argues against has been unable to supersede its metaphors. His critique of these approaches rejects "interpretation" but keeps the possibility of meaning which is differentiated only by its complexity; he refutes openness but subscribes to "l'inachévement de l'oeuvre"; and he opposes the closure of meaning while seeking "la raison de finitude" of the literary work.

This theoretical problematic, which disturbs the Machereyan theorization of scientificity and critical knowledge can be detected at various levels of his pronouncements about literature, knowledge, and ideology. The appeal of Macherey's approach to the notion of scientificity as well as its development towards a theory of ideological effects stem from this inability to go beyond origins, presences, and priorized givens, which are all structured by the concept of "silence." Perhaps it is only through the implementation of these concepts, which remain neverthelss essentialist despite their rejection of essentialism, that a theory which is in search of a totalizing system could be legitimized. In his critique of Structuralism and of Barthes in particular, Macherey expresses the need for a totalizing method. Structuralist criticism, he says, "apparaît alors comme artificielle et arbitraire, dans la mesure où elle ne peut rendre compte de la totalité de son domaine" (Pour une théorie 169). Macherey's scientific system necessitating the closure of meaning could be ultimately established and legitimized; hence its lapse into ambiguity and cryptic quibbles: "l'inachévement de l'oeuvre est aussi la raison de sa finitude" (99). However, in order to get a better grasp of all these elements of Macherey's scientific criticism, we must look at the way he theorizes the literary text itself, its "structure of absence," and the determining role of "ideological effects."

V. Towards a Theory of Structures: Theorizing the Text and Knowing its "Absence"

> [L]'absence de parole a bien d'autres moyens: c'est elle qui donne à la parole son exacte situation en lui déléguant un domaine, en lui désignant un domaine. Par une parole, le silence devient le centre principiel de l'expression, son point d'extrême visibilité. La parole finit par ne plus rien nous dire: c'est le silence qu'on interroge, puisque c'est lui qui parle. (Pour une théorie 106)

According to Macherey, "critical fallacies," the "interpretive," "the empirical," and "the normative" have failed to produce a "scientific" knowledge of the literary text, and have committed themselves to an illusory conception of the text sui generis by ignoring its "absences." To correct this misconception of the work of art, Macherey offers his own theory of what constitutes the text's literariness and of the various processes that its materials normally go through before becoming a literary text. In part, through the establishment of the "real status" of the literary work seen to be structured by its absences, gaps, and margins, Macherey's theory of literary production and his notion of a "symptomatic reading" investigate the supposedly scientific character of critical knowledge. The question of scientificity is directly linked to the significance of "the structure of

absence" and "silence," for without a definition of the literary text as such, a theory propounding "objective analysis" as proposed by Macherey would face the problem of its own rationality and legitimation. It is therefore worth exploring how Macherey constructs the literary "object" out of its "structure of absence" and applies the elements of his "scientific" project to particular examples.

As we have already seen, the starting point for Macherey's theoretical inquiry in Pour une théorie is the problematization of the ontological status of literature itself. Emulating the methodologies used in the analytical process in the sciences, Macherey distinguishes the "object" of inquiry from the knowledge produced about it, thereby endowing this "object" itself with a certain status of autonomous facticity that enables the critic to approach it objectively. Such a theorization is caught up in a hesitation between the need to furnish this "object" with meaning or to leave it totally "open," and the need to accept its temporary hollowness in the manner of Barthes's idea that the text is "une forme que l'histoire passe son temps à remplir" (cit. Eco, A Theory 310). However, in addition to manifesting itself at the level of meaning, this ambiguity seems to appear at the level of the alternative knowledge and the general theory of scientific criticism that Macherey proposes. His theorization of the "structure of absence" that inhabits the

literary text adds further complexity to his notion of scientificity and sheds more light on the theoretical impasse already pointed out in Macherey's project.

When investigating the nature of the literary text, Macherey poses an essential question:

> La vraie question critique, n'est pas: Qu'est-ce que la littérature? c'est-à-dire: qu'est ce qu'on fait quand on écrit (ou quand on lit)?; mais: à quel type de nécessité renvoie une oeuvre; de quoi est-elle faite, qui lui donne sa réalité? La question critique doit porter sur la matière travaillée, et sur les moyens qui la travaillent. (Pour une théorie 179)

This statement embraces the major facets of the epistemological debate from which the Machereyan theorization of the literary work has emerged. It is an attempt to supersede a "traditional" metaphysical--non-scientific--characterization of the literary text, which has tried to answer the question "What is Literature?". For Macherey, to address this question is to assume that there is an essential entity called "literature" and this risks leading to the perception of the work as the result of inspiration, intuition, and poetic genius. These terms imply, according to him, other essentialist assumptions about 'the psyche,' 'the individual subject,' and 'imagination,' and point to the text as created through some kind of mysterious or pseudo-divine process. In refuting these essentialist notions, Macherey focuses on "la matiere travaillee" of the text, a materialist

principle that denotes more than the network of the text's linguistic materials. The implication is that in the construction process of the work, there exists a material activity, a process of social production and an ideological project in the making. This status of the work is determined by certain means ("les moyens") which could refer not only to the author's ideological intervention in the work but also to other conditions, such as its ideological effects on a reading public, its marketing, and eventual canonization in the schooling apparatuses. This process goes even further; for the work becomes a whole social labour that mediates a society addressing itself and responding to particular historical demands: "You cannot study the production of literature without studying its reproduction," says Macherey ("Interview" [1975] 6).

Shifting his attention to this question of how the text is produced, Macherey now addresses the processes of the text's construction itself. In a move that has more in common with the critical principles of Russian Formalism than with those of classical Marxist criticism, Macherey specifies the purview of this theory as that of the text <u>qua text</u>. The reality of the work is thus located at the level of the <u>meaning</u> of technique as labor, as a process that is both textual pertaining to form and epistemological (concerned with the production of knowledge) within the work. However, this

proposed method of analysis does not stop at the level of the obvious manifestations of language as artistic device. It proposes to deal with the various meanings of the work's signified. It probes the text's margins, its "non-dit," and repressed meanings. For Macherey, the task of the critic is an analytic one and ought to lead to a "materialist" or "scientific" theory of the literary work--"true" analysis being, according to him, the sole property of scientific inquiry: "une analyse véritable ne peut rester dans son objet, dire en d'autres mots ce qui a déjà été dit: plutôt qu'un autrement dit. . . , elle doit rencontrer un jamais dit, un non-dit initial" (174; emphasis added).

This inquiry into the "initial un-said" of the text will lead reading eventually into the terrain not of the "unconscious" of the text, of its author or its reader, but to the text's own structure:

> S'il y a structure, elle n'est pas dans le livre, profonde ou cachée: le livre lui appartient sans la contenir. Ainsi, le fait que l'oeuvre puisse être rapportée à une structure n'implique pas qu'elle soit elle-même, dans sa lettre, unifiée; la structure tient d'autant mieux l'oeuvre que l'oeuvre est diverse, éparse, irrégulière. (174)

In theorizing the text qua text, the Machereyan approach seeks to grasp the exact meaning of the unsaid scientifically by making it into a tangible object of study. But this attempt only succeeds in further problematizing the "object" of

literature. The problem is that the "non-dit" of the literary work and that of the critical fallacies that Macherey opposes turn out to be the same thing; i.e. the "non-dit" that structures the error of the fallacies Macherey opposes is also the structure about which the text seems to remain silent. In fact, it is the "non-dit" unheeded by traditional criticism which becomes the focal point in Macherey's definition of the structure of the text. By implication, the task of a theory of literary production is then to make both the work and the "critical fallacies" "speak" this "silent structure": this "jamais dit." In doing so, Macherey offers a critique of Structuralism (of Levi-Strauss and the early Barthes in particular [see Pour une théorie chap., 18 and passim]) in order to redefine the notion of "structure." He submits this concept to a process of "transformation" that resembles the transformations that his proposed theoretical project applies to the fictional work. In elaborating the definition of the text as a "structure," he makes the latter more amenable to mediating the concept of "absences," margins, and gaps. These terms tend to acquire more importance than the manifest characteristics of the work.

Initially, in maintaining his commitment to the idea of the specificity of the literary text, Macherey poses the fundamental problem as that of a literary structure that has

its own characteristics, independent of extrinsic determinants. For him,

> Le problème ainsi posé est celui de la structure: si on entend par structure ce qui permet de penser le type de nécessité dont relève l'oeuvre, ce qui fait qu'elle est telle non par hasard mais pour des raisons déterminées. (53)

The determined and the determining characteristics of the structure are not to be sought, according to Macherey, "outside" the text or "inside" it. The text has neither inside nor outside. Criticism would not be dealing with its specific "object" if it committed itself to a search for hidden gems in the depths of the work. By its redefinition of the text, criticism goes beyond the views of "structure" as propounded by those critical methodologies which perceive it mainly as an image, a repetition, or a reflection of the text. For Macherey, a structure does not reflect the work as a unity or as a coherent self-image. It is an entity that reveals meaningful contradictions, fissures, and margins. Even when it is apprehended by Structuralists in accordance with the Saussurean model, structure is not theorized in accordance with scientific laws; it still embraces both intrinsic and extrinsic constituents at once. Macherey argues:

> Si le concept de la structure, <u>tel qu'il est scientifiquement défini sur le terrain de la linguistique</u>, peut éclairer d'un sens nouveau l'activité de la critique littéraire, il ne résoudra pas, d'un seul coup tous ses problèmes; et, même s'il parvient à les resoudre, il n'aura

> pas su lui-même les poser. (160; author's emphasis)

By limiting its definition of the term "structure" to the linguistic elements of the work's construction--as in the application of narratological codes, for instance--Structuralism has foresaken the real meaning of "structure." It has perceived the literary work as a coherent totality, an ensemble of elements--its codes--that constitute the text. Its programme is "un retour a l'oeuvre telle qu'elle est en elle-même" (166). The work is made to fit the structural model which somehow exists outside the text and precedes it before it is read. Furthermore, Macherey adds, the Structuralist view of the text confuses the structure and "man" by thinking that "la structure c'est l'homme" (Pour une théorie 167). Here Macherey points out the Structuralist method as applied by Barthes:

> Le but de toute activité structurale, qu'elle soit réflexive ou poétique, est de reconstituter un "objet," de façon à manifester dans cette constitution les règles de fonctionnement (les "fonctions") de cet objet. La structure est donc en fait un simulacre de l'objet, mais un simulacre dirigé, intéressé, puisque l'objet imité fait apparaître quelque chose qui restait invisible, ou si l'on préfère inintelligible dans l'object naturel. L'homme structural prend le réel, le décompose, puis le recompose; c'est en apparence fort peu de chose. . . .Pourtant, d'un autre point de vue, ce peu de chose est décisif. . .: le simulacre, c'est l'intellect ajouté à l'objet, et cette addition a une valeur anthropologique, en ceci qu'elle est l'homme même, son histoire, sa situation, sa liberté et la résistance même que la nature oppose à son esprit. (Essais Critiques 215)

For Macherey, Barthes perceives the structure as the simulacrum which unites the object and the subject, thereby offering a new knowledge of the world and its anthropomorphism, joined into a single entity which is the structure. Macherey objects to this view of the structure on grounds that it is Platonic in perspective. It ultimately perceives the work as a simulacrum, alienating the work from reality while remaining faithful to a model that is posited a fortiori: "l'objet analysé est considéré comme le simulacre d'une structure: retrouver la structure, c'est fabriquer le simulacre de ce simulacre" (Pour une théorie 167-8). Thus the Structuralist approach seems to Macherey to lead critical practice into mere repetition of the work which is "postulée à partir d'une conception de l'activité littéraire" (168).

Other limitations of this view of "structure," Macherey goes on to argue, arise from a certain confusion of "writing" and "reading". The critic's activity becomes a re-writing of the text, duplicating its textual elements, without any awareness on his or her part of what may have been repressed by the text. From this perspective, "la technique d'analyse qui permet de confondre lecture et écriture renvoie en fait à la très traditionnelle théorie du modèle" (168). His critique here is directed against Gerard Genette's and Roland Barthes's early views of reading as an extension of "writing" (168). For Macherey, this perception of the literary text is

indebted to Valéry and is guilty of two errors: On the one hand, it privileges certain texts which typify this critical doctrine; on the other, it wrongly universalizes the notion of the writer as a critic and the critic as a writer who re-writes the text in the process of interpretation. Macherey argues:

> Valéry est le modèle de l'écrivain critique, ou du critique écrivain. Explicitement il a dit sa volonté d'écrire en creux, d'écrire non pour écrire mais pour lire, d'écrire cette lecture même c'est-à-dire rien.. . . En ce sens Valéry est le premier structuraliste en littérature: rien d'étonant à ce que la méthode structurale s'applique exactement á son oeuvre. (164)

Notwithstanding Macherey's taking Valéry's statement above at face value here, he accepts the practice of writing as revealing a particular form of literary production and admits to the possibility and existence of "hollow writing." By doing so, Macherey creates another problem for his theory of literature. While admitting the presence of a kind of writing that could be about "rien," he puts forward a theory that refuses to grant literary structures that self-reflexivity which is characteristic of Surrealist and Post-modernist modes. Furthermore, we have to inquire about the relationship between Valéry's idea of "rien" and Macherey's notion of "absence."

For Macherey, literary forms are connected with a complex network of relationships that the act of reading must

account for. His discussion of Sartre's novels clarifies this point and goes beyond a confirmation of Valery's idea of "l'écriture en creux." Macherey maintains:

> Sartre's novels are "real" novels. . .written in the period of 1940-5, within a very "modernist" framework, written for and in the wartime situation--for immediate consumption, to satisfy certain tastes. They were received as such, people recognised themselves in the novels of Sartre. The cultural life and activity in his fiction corresponds to the fears and aspirations of the readers. But Sartre's novels very quickly became "old fashioned". ("Interview" [1975] 7)

Macherey's approach here is not that different from a traditional sociological one or from Goldmann's idea of "a rigorous homology between" literary form and society (Towards a Sociology 7). This homology of structures points a direct relationship between the literature of a period and its cultural, political history. Thus the novel is "the transposition on the literary plane of everyday life in the individualistic society created by market production" (7; cf. Racine 30-31). Because Macherey here focuses on notions of writing, reception, ideological effects, and longevity, the question of absence and writing "en creux" is marginalized.

However, Macherey does not deny the importance of an analysis of "writing," in the Structuralist sense of "écriture," as offering important insights into the production of literary meaning. And by relating "writing" to a theory of

ideology, Macherey demonstrates how the Structuralist view of "writing" as self-referential, narcissistic, or hollow remains limited in accounting for the real mechanisms of literary production.

But where Macherey surpasses the Structuralists is in his particular emphasis on "the structure of absence" as constitutive of literary works and as the focus of a scientific theory of literary production. Further, to differentiate his interpretation of "structures" from that of the Structuralists, Macherey goes on to indicate that the concept of "absence" itself favours contradiction and "incompleteness"--a lack of coherence and unity. This view leads him to investigate the conditions of realization of this incoherence which results from the existence of "absences" and gaps in the literary work:

> Si on peut à bon droit utiliser le concept de structure, c'est en comprenant que la structure n'est ni une propriété de l'objet ni une caractéristique de sa représentation: l'oeuvre n'est pas ce qu'elle est à cause de l'unité d'une intention qui l'habiterait, ou par sa conformité à un modèle autonome. . .[L]'hypothèse de l'unité de l'oeuvre suppose une nouvelle forme d'illusion (illusion interprétative). (Pour une théorie 53)

Therefore, the notion of a structure in the way Structuralism has understood it brings the latter into the epistemological terrain of the "interpretive fallacy." It is a theoretical position that cannot claim scientificity because it situates

structure both in the text and in a model outside it, thereby leaving out crucial elements that constitute the identity of literature.

In fact, to surpass this limited view of structure, Macherey re-defines the text's structure as carrying a totally different meaning: "la structure tient d'autant mieux l'oeuvre que l'oeuvre est diverse, éparse, irrégulière: voir la structure, c'est voir cette irrégularité" (175). The emphasis is now on "irregularity," the lack of unity, and decenteredness. Yet perceiving something that is not in the text ("elle n'est pas dans le livre") is, of course, not an easy task for the critic to accomplish. However, let us accept this view of the structure for the time being since it will appear later that it is the only way out of the impasse in which the Machereyan theorization of literature finds itself. Nonetheless, in refusing to attribute harmony, unity, or coherence to the text, Macherey makes the structure of the literary work live on its own contradictions and insufficiency. As the structure becomes an indeterminate entity, the ontological status of the literary work is reflected only in a state of "irregularity" and disparateness. The reasons behind such a contradictory condition of the work's structure are not explored but are posited implicity as the conditions of the structure's existence. According to Macherey's pronouncements, they should not be sought in the

material world; such an identity of the work does not automatically mirror reality. It is one of the conditions of the work's facticity: a result of "la matière travaillée, et. . .les moyens qui la travaillent." As Macherey demonstrates with reference to Lev Tolstoy and Jules Verne, the contradictions of the work's structure differ from those contradictions of the historical reality of these authors' lives. The text's contradictions constitute the absence of that reality from them. In other words, the historical reality is present, but it cannot be detected by the critic except through the apprehension of its absence and its conditions of necessity. These dimensions of the work are apprehended only through a "symptomatic reading."

It seems that Macherey's conceptualization of the work of art here is caught up in two central problems. On the one hand, it tries to attend to the specificity of the work's structure by distinguishing literary from non-literary discourse--in emulation of Formalism and Structuralism. On the other hand, it tries to confirm the historicity and the ideological character of the text while attempting to supersede the classical errors of Realism by rejecting the traditional notion of mirror-reflection of reality. For Macherey, the reflectionist view perceives the literary structure as a direct reproduction of the historical period in which the text was written. A variation of this theoretical

model is Lucien Goldmann's "genetic structuralism," which could be evoked here as a case in point. Goldmann writes:

> La forme romanesque nous parait être en effet la transposition sur le plan littéraire de la vie quotidienne dans la société individualiste née de la production pour le marché. Il existe une homologie rigoureuse entre la forme littéraire du roman. . .et la relation quotidienne des hommes avec les biens en général, et par extension, des hommes avec les autres hommes, dans une société productrice pour le marché. (Pour une sociologie du roman 36)

Macherey's theoretical concept of structure refuses to subscribe to such a notion of "homology" which anchors the literary work in historical reality, thus making the text subservient to a model image outside it. Yet without completely isolating literature from history, Macherey's view grants each entity--the text and reality--its own relative autonomy which is not categorically determined by either one. This reveals a certain ambivalence on his part about any genetic determination of structure because for him such a method tends inevitably towards the metaphysics of origins.

Genetic interpretations of literature turn out to be like the other critical illusions Macherey rejects. In opposition to Realist/mimetic criticism, he argues that "analyser un énonce, ce n'est pas chercher en lui le principe de sa manifestation, de son engendrement, mais montrer à partir de quoi d'autre il est produit: ainsi, et non autrement, la structure se distingue radicalement de la

genèse" (Pour une théorie 175). Without seeking the origins of the text semewhere outside its structure, the critic should look for them in the absence of any direct reflection of the real, in the interstices of the text. The structure of the work is constituted more by the absence of relation than by its presence. Resembling the relationship between theory ("scientific analysis") and its "object" which is governed by a "distance" (a "difference"), the link between the work and its structure is marked by a certain lack of relation. Concurrently, "si le terme de structure a un sens," Macherey explains, "c'est dans la mesure où il désigne cette absence, cette différence, cette altérité déterminées" (174).

Reversing the neo-Aristotelian concept of mimesis, Macherey posits the relationship between the real and the work's structure as a relation of difference, not of empirical similitude. But it is also a double relation of similarity through difference, that is the two entities being marked by absences and gaps, that reveals itself only through an absence. In order to understand this relation, we must look at two major sources that have influenced Macherey's theorization of "the structure of absence" and its ramifications. These two sources are the Saussurean theory of language and the Freudian "symptomatic interpretation" of the dream-work. The influence of these two epistemologies, which have shaped twentieth

century critical thought in general, will shed some important light on Macherey's theorization of scientificity.

The influence of Ferdinand de Saussure's idea of differential relations amongst signifiers in particular is relevant to Macherey's theory here. In briefly citing Saussure, we shall see the crucial centrality of some of his linguistic concepts to the Machereyan theory of literary meaning, especially in reference to the "décalage" between signifier and signified, a difference which defines literary structures. For Saussure,

> [D]ans la langue il n'y a que des différences. Bien plus: une différence suppose en général des termes positifs entre lesquels elle s'établit; mais dans la langue il n'y a que des différences sans termes positifs. Qu'on prenne le signifié ou le signifiant, la langue ne compte ni des idées ni des sons qui préexisteraient au système linguistique, mais seulement des différences conceptuelles et des différences phoniques issues de ce système. Ce qu'il y a d'idée ou de matière phonique dans un signe importe moins que ce qu'il y a autour de lui dans les autres signes. La preuve en est que la valeur d'un terme peut être modifiée sans qu'on touche ni à son sens ni à ses sons, mais seulement par le fait que tel autre terme voisin aura subi une modification. (F. de Saussure, Cours 166)

The most concrete example illustrating this synchronic phenomenon of differences in language, Saussure maintains, is the chess game. Here not only the moves are determined by the positions of each piece on the chess board, but their values and significances as well. Moreover, the system reveals a

total autonomy, depending only on the rules of the game: "un état de jeu correspond bien à un état de langue. La valeur respective des pièces dépend de leurs positions sur l'échiquier, de même que dans la langue chaque terme a sa valeur par son opposition avec tous les autres termes" (125-26).

This kind of differential relationship between the structural segments of the literary text that provides part of the foundations for Macherey's definition of the literary work and marks his theorization of literature in general. But where Macherey goes beyond the Saussurean model of difference is in his emphasis on absences and margins as ideologically constituted. The Saussurean theory of language leaves no room for such a notion. Language is a closed system whose synchronic mechanism of signification allows for an abstract linguistic system in which "[les] termes. . .se conditionnent réciproquement. Autrement dit, la langue est une forme et non une substance" (169; author's emphasis).

In fact, it is because of these formalist tendencies within the synchronic theory of language that Bakhtin and Voloshinov refute the Saussurean view of language and posit, instead, a theory of speech as living "utterance" that is anchored in emotive, cognitive, and ideological speech-situations (See Voloshinov/Bakhtin, Marxism and the Philosophy

of Language 54 and passim). Bakhtin and Voloshinov, whom Macherey does not mention anywhere in his writings, criticize Saussurean linguistic theory for falling into the errors of "abstract objectivism." For them, this mode of thought separates language from history, consciousness, and speech, thereby ending up, "on the grounds of extreme rationalism," with "an artificially constructed, logical, universal language" (54). Both Macherey and Voloshinov/Bakhtin agree on the centrality of ideology to discourse and therefore share in their refutation of the abstract and idealist character of Saussure's theory of language (see T. E. Lewis, "Notes Towards a Theory of the Referent"). Nonetheless, Macherey's view of language borrows a key concept from Saussure, that of "difference" to enhance his emphasis on the special character of absences and unconscious gaps, the latter being primarily Freudian concepts. For Macherey, "la structure de l'oeuvre, qui permet d'en rendre compte, c'est ce décalage interne, ou cette césure, par le moyen duquel elle correspond à une réalité, incomplète elle aussi, qu'elle donne à voir sans la refléter" (Pour une théorie 97).

In privileging absence over presence during his definition of the meaning of the text and of its structure, Macherey's theory seems to relegate the text to a secondary position. Instead of interpreting what "the words on the page" say, we have to look for what they cannot utter, what they

reluctantly suppress. The theory of literary production becomes less concerned with what the text explicitly states. In fact, Macherey rectifies this position in his practical analysis of narratives by Jules Verne, Daniel Defoe, and Jorge Louis Borges. But it is only after having had to abandon the ambiguities of his theorization of the "structure of absence" and difference that he manages to confirm the "exact" meaning of this "unspoken" structure of the text.

The structure of absence as a textual lacuna does not seem to be imposed on the text from without, for such a theoretical move would be teleological. This structure seems to be inherent in every literary text in the same way Saussurean differential relations are inherent in language. Ironically, not unlike Vladimir Propp's theory of the universal structures of the folktale, which Macherey rejects for being a facet of the "interpretive fallacy," his definition of "structure" universalizes "absence" as the common denominator par excellence among all narratives: "Par une parole, le silence devient le centre principiel de l'expression, son point d'extreme visibilite. La parole finit par ne plus rien nous dire: c'est le silence qu'on interroge, puisque c'est lui qui parle" (Pour une théorie 106). As the presence of the structure and its absence are interchangeable, so is the relationship between speech and its exclusion from other forms of discourse. Since it is in its nature to present

itself through its absence, the structure of the work becomes an identification of a language that produces speech ("la parole") as well as its negation ("le silence"). Each plays simultaneously on the existence as well as the exclusion of the other. "A travers la parole absolue," says Macherey, "transparaît une absence de parole, c'est-à-dire une certaine présence, qu'il suffit de dégager" (106).

By defining the structure of a literary work in these terms of difference, absence, gaps, and margins, Macherey's theory renders more problematic the task of the critic in construing meaning according to "scientific laws." The definition of an entity as its negation becomes a handicap for that definition itself. Theoretically, the text is no longer that empirical experience that could be related to "life." Nor could it be studied according to the rules of the artistic devices that signify nothing beyond rhetorical features, generating sentences, word order and phonetic features in order to achieve a particular aesthetic effect as in Formalism. Critical theory, as a result, must try to articulate the exact meaning of this silence. Like the science of nature, theory must speak the laws of the text about which the latter remains silent. Literary structures are silent, but their silence is not dead, since it is made eloquent through and by theory: "Pourtant l'absence de parole a bien d'autres moyens: c'est elle qui donne a la parole son exacte situation

en lui delegant un domaine, en lui designant un domaine" (106).

Yet this eloquence should not be attributed to either a conscious or an unconscious speaking subject--the author, for instance. Being an unconscious process that obeys other simultaneous processes of transfomation and repression, as in Freud's theory of the dream-work, the work's structure is not totally "spoken" by the writer. To this effect, "si l'auteur ne dit pas toujours ce dont il parle, il ne parle pas nécessairement de ce qu'il dit" (108). The authorial voice that biographical, sociological, and psychological approaches have often sought in order to interpret literary works has now, according to Macherey, turned out to be a mirage misleading both reader and critic alike. At the same time, although the unconscious of the text must not be mistaken for the unconscious of the author, the latter's activity has a determining hand in the production of the work and its structure: "l'écrivain ne fait pas semblant d'écrire: il s'engage sur les voies d'une activité réelle" (92).

It is through the full apprehension of these manifestations of "the structure of absence" that the critic is supposed, according to Macherey, to read the literary text as production. Being constituted through the contradictory processes of difference, repression, marginalization, and of meaningful silence, the text and its meaning are

overdetermined by certain phenomena that cannot be determined at the manifest level of the text. Since determination is marked more by absence than by presence, critical attention must be granted simultaneously to the latent as well as the manifest contents of literature. Going beyond the Structuralist view of the work as a structural totality, Macherey posits those alternative terms of "absence," "contradiction," "décalage," and "différence," among others as substitute principles to formulate a new structural nature of the work. This takes up the new identity of perpetual indeterminateness. As Macherey notes, "menant à ce qui n'est pas elle, l'oeuvre, malgré son apparente fermeture, est peut-être déchirée, béante: long corridor qui mène à la Chambre, introduction pure" (31).

But if the work is a mere threshold, an "introduction" to an absent realm that must be reconstructed by the critic's theoretical apparatus, is there any way to specify its ending, beginning, or spatio-temporal limits? According to Macherey, the answer to this question is not a definite affirmative. The notions of beginning and ending are as deceptive as is the apparent linearity of the narrative's manifest structure. Because the work cannot succeed in camouflaging its unevenness and deceptively smooth linearity, it is able to patch up its "dechir[ure]" and hold its disparate elements together. The text is often referred to as

"un tissu de fictions: elle ne contient a proprement parler rien de vrai" (87). And any naive belief in the truthfulness of the order of its events or the transparency of its textual fabric will only lead towards interpretive illusions. Macherey warns us that in the novel, there is "nulle continuité, mais une constante disparité, qui est la forme de sa nécessité, et sans laquelle il n'existerait pas, qui fait que pour expliquer son déroulement, nous ne pouvons nous contenter de le suivre dans son apparente progression" (48).

Macherey and Freud:

In addition to the Saussurean influence on Macherey's theorization of the "structure of absence" as differential and "gaping" ("béante"), the Freudian analysis of the dream-work as a patching mechanism must be considered here. Indeed, the relevance of Freud's theory of dream-work to Macherey's "theory of literary production" deserves more than the passing remarks Macherey reserves for it in his writings. Freudian principles shape not only Macherey's view of "structure" but also his other concepts of silence, ideology, and effects. Without a full account of this relation between Macherey and Freud, our understanding of the former's notions of "symptomatic reading," absence, and scientificity will remain incomplete. Let us look through the 'gaps' of Pour une théorie and observe the margins which reveal the extent to

which Freudian analysis has molded the character of the theoretical categories that constitute Macherey's view of the literary text and scientific knowledge about it.

In his 1975 interview, Macherey says:

> We can take Freud as a point of departure without necessarily passing through Lacan and Derrida. Our relations with Freud are difficult because there are material and complex problems to be resolved. The question of what the practical consequences will be of our own investigations of Freud's work has yet to be resolved.. . .
>
> I don't think we should be deterred from establishing a normal and positive relationship with the scientific work of Freud. (9; emphasis mine)

Such a statement is significant in the way it confirms the crucial importance of Freudian method of dream interpretation to the question of "absence" and the theory of literary production. In fact, talking about Renée Balibar, his colleague and a member of the Althusserian "school," Macherey offers an interesting comment which could be applied to his own work with much accuracy:

> In Renée Balibar's Les français fictifs Freudian concepts play an extremely important role in the analysis of literary phenomena. And indeed they are not general philosophical concepts which carry with them a certain conception of the world, they enable her to construct a theory of literature. She uses them quite empirically to try to analyse texts. And this produces some very interesting, though very incomplete results. But this is only the beginning of a long and complex labour. You will see that we have not neglected this aspect at all--on the contrary. Perhaps the finished work is

> in many ways incomplete but that is not through ignorance of this aspect on our part. Renée Balibar tries not to transpose elements from the science of dreams, but rather to establish relations and to see what can be used in the anlysis of educational determinants and linguistic processes. And the reference to Freud is fundamental. And furthermore. . .what interests us is the production of certain fixed effects in the same way as Freud was able to analyse the production of certain fixed effects of the unconscious in dreams. ("Interview" [1975] 9; emphasis added)

The influence of Freud's theory of dreams on Balibar's work and on Macherey's Pour une théorie, in particular, is of great importance to our understanding not only of Macherey's idea of a "symptomatic reading" but also of his view of structure, construction, and theory of ideology. This is why we need to examine the Freudian pronouncements on the intepretation of the dream-text in more detail than we have done with the Saussurean influence on Macherey's theory.

In his adoption of Freud's "scientific" terminology and concepts, Macherey is not interested in Freud's theory of sexuality, of the unconscious, or hysteria. He is more concerned with Freud's "rational" method of dream analysis, with the mechanism of dream-construction, and with Freud's "elements from the science of dreams," as Macherey notes with reference to Balibar. In Pour une théorie, he argues:

> Freud, malgré son projet ambigu d'une analyse "profonde," ne cherche pas au fond du discours conscient un sens latent; il inaugure une nouvelle forme de rationalité dans la mesure ou il situe ce

> sens ailleurs: dans cet autre lieu, lieu des structures, auquel il donne le nom d'inconscient. L'inconscient, qui n'est pas à proprement parler une réalité, mais un concept . . ., langage sans parole qui lui appartienne en propre, d'où ne sortira jamais rien, mais à partir de quoi s'ordonnent les images du discours et les mots du rêve. (174; emphasis added)

Macherey has discovered a guiding "rational" principle in Freud's theory of the unconscious processes which transform language during the construction of dreams. According to Macherey, Freud perceives the unconscious mainly as a structuring mechanism from which only structures, images, and signs emerge in accordance with a particular discursive order. Therefore, to analyse this discourse, the psychoanalyst, like the critic, must reveal the unconscious structures of discourse which shape its content. Here Macherey also refers implicitly to Freud's concept of the psychic energy which is said to exist outside the text of the dream, but has direct tranformative effects on the organization of its materials (see Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams 315). It is already apparent that Macherey and Freud share some common ground: the notion of "structure" as absent from its own object, the idea of interpretation as a "scientific analysis," the concept of textual order as unfixed because it does not correspond directly to anything outside itself, and the need to inquire primarily into the "conditions" determining the narrative's construction. As

Freud argues,

> Everything in a dream which occurs as the apparent functioning of the critical faculty is to be regarded, not as the intellectual performance of the dream-work, but as belonging to the substance of the dream-thoughts, and it has found its way from these, as a completed structure, into the manifest dream-content.. . . The judgements which are passed upon the dream as it is remembered after waking, and the feelings which are aroused by the reproduction of the dream, belong to the latent dream-content, and must be fitted into place in the interpretation of the dream. (412; author's emphasis)

Freud's theory of the dream distinguishes between two essential characteristics of the dream-text, a "latent content" and a "manifest content," which are not exact copies of each other. In the process of its translation from a latent structure to a manifest narrative, as related by the dreamer, the language of the dream must go through various stages of manipulation effected by the psychic mechanism before it settles on a particular version or dream-narrative. It is this version that the psychoanalyst deciphers, by unveiling the possible transformations the language of the dream has gone through before becoming a manifest narrative. The dream-text turns into a rebus. For Freud, it is a type of "hieroglyphics, whose symbols must be translated, one by one, into the language of the dream-thoughts" (268). Whereas Macherey emphasizes the mechanisms of literary construction, Freud valorizes the formal manifestation of the dream-narrative. Freud argues that the meaning of "relations between the dream-content and the dream-thought" is traced and understood

"by making the dream itself our point of departure, and asking ourselves: what do certain formal characteristics of the dream-presentation signify in relation to the dream-thought?" (314).

In fact, the relationship between the manifest text and its latent content is also affected by uncertainties of transference so that the exact meaning of the dream may never be reached. Freud indicates that what is available to the psychoanalyst is mainly a set of symbols and words whose "laws of composition" must be sought in the verbal construct offered by the dreamer. In fact, Freud elaborates an idea that lends vital support to Macherey's principle of polysemy and the indeterminate character of the text: "One can never be really sure that one has interpreted a dream completely; even if the solution seems satisfying and flawless, it is always possible that yet another meaning has been manifested by the same dream" (269). Accordingly, during the elaboration of its manifest narrative, the dream goes through certain transformative stages that allow fewer elements of the dream-thoughts to make their way into the dream-content. Other elements are either suppressed, marginalized, or inserted inconspicuously into the manifest text. The dream material goes through four main transformative stages before it takes the form that the conscious individual accounts for. These stages are "condensation," "displacement," "distortion," and

"secondary elaboration" or censoring revision (The Interpretation of Dreams, Chap. VI and passim).

During the elaboration of the latent dream-thoughts, the process of "condensation" works by way of internal selection, omission, combination, and mutual superimposition of the dream-elements. Having as a primary aim the representation of a certain content, but at the same time its disguise, the mechanism of condensation plays with words and images. Some of these are chosen as "nodal points" that connect the network of the dream. For Freud, "not only are elements of the dream determined several times over by the dream-thoughts, but the individual dream-thoughts are represented in the dream by several elements" through a process of free association (274). But since neither one of these transformative processes works independently, "condensation" employs the other mechanisms simultaneously in order to fulfill its task. For instance, parts of different words may be linked together, in a case of "displacement," in order to form a new word or a totally opposite concept. Images are telescoped in order to form a single image, in a case of "distortion." Common in this activity of "condensation" is "paraphrasic assonance"; e.g., "disentry" is called into the dream by "diphteria", and "propyls" is invoked by "amyls" (283).

But the most important activity among these processes, says Freud, is that of "displacement." It plays a crucial role in shifting around the elements of the dream-text and in giving them a different, deceptive order. In a statement that resembles Macherey's idea of the work's structure and meaning as situated "ailleurs," Freud points out:

> That which is obviously the essential content of the dream-thoughts need not be represented at all in the dream. The dream is, as it were, centered somewhere; its content is arranged about elements which do not constitute the central point of the dream-thoughts. (292; emphasis added)

The procedure that the psychoanalyst follows is to locate those misplaced elements of the dream and place them in their right order so as to give a more accurate interpretation of the dream-content. What seems to be overdetermined by the manifest narrative line of a dream may turn out to be insufficiently determined and therefore irrelevant to the exact meaning of the dream.

Accordingly, the mechanism of displacement, in collaboration with the other three, strips the elements of the dream of their intrinsic value, and by "means of over-determination creates new significant values from elements of slight value" (295). Displacement also functions by repetition and by substitution of elements which sometimes take up each other's roles in the dream text. According to

Freud, the repetition of some elements in the dream-text gives the impression of value because repetition denotes emphasis, while in reality, these elements may work in this fashion only as disguised substitutions for other more important elements. This deceptive character of dream language marks every notion of narrative disguise as in literary texts, revealing to the critic what is not meant to be revealed: "dream-displacement and dream-condensation are the two craftsmen to whom we may chiefly ascribe the structure of the dream" (295).

In this process of narrative distortion, the segments of the dream-narrative go through the other transformations simultaneously. In what seems to be behind Macherey's rejection of the idea of an explicit beginning and end of a novel, Freud argues: "A frequent device of dream-distortion consists in presenting the final issue of the event or the conclusion of the train of thought at the beginning of the dream, and appending at the end of the dream the premises of the conclusion" (313). Macherey perceives narrative structures as obeying this rule of distortion. Macherey sees the "récit d'aventures" as "allégorique de l'oeuvre littéraire en général." In other words, the adventure narrative achieves its progression only through a series of false moves, misleading clues, and displaced incidents. Macherey elaborates this point further:

> [Le récit d'aventures] est par la loi de sa nature un récit plein d'événements, donc plein d'imprévu.

> Si tout en lui était donné, inscrit dans le point de départ, il serait infidèle à son genre: rien ne s'y passerait, et la succession des épisodes serait une fausse succession, qui, pour un regard exercé, pourrait être entièrement prévue à l'avance. Lire le récit d'aventures, ce doit être au contraire rencontrer à chaque pas, sinon toujours à chaque mot, l'interdit et la surprise: le lecteur suit le déroulement de l'aventure; il en éprouve les heurts et la nouveauté sans cesse renouvelée. Pour lui, chaque moment du livre doit être un coup de foudre, rupture, apparition (Pour une théorie 55).

The mechanism of distortion exploits the basic character of words and of their ability to carry differential meanings. "A word," Freud says, is "the point of juncture of a number of ideas" (The Interpretation 325). Condensations, displacements, and distortions of the dream-materials tend, therefore, to contribute to this ambiguity: "every element of the dream may represent its opposite as well as itself. One can never tell beforehand which is to be posited; only the context can decide their point" (436). Yet, positing context as the ultimate determiner of meaning does not seem to solve the problem; it cannot escape the fact that this context itself has to be constructed in turn. This is exactly the problematic that Macherey tries to escape.

Enhancing the activity of distortion, "secondary revision" is a psychic process that occurs during the early moments of the dreamer's awakening. It approximates conscious rationality and Freud endows this process with a faculty of creativity that is nearly absent from the other processes.

"Secondary revision" contributes in a fashion unique to dream-formation. It works as a mechanism of censorship which selects elements, smooths the gaps in the dream, and wraps up its story while preparing it for conscious apprehension and narration. At this stage, "the dream loses the appearance of absurdity and incoherence, and approaches the pattern of an intelligible experience. But the effort is not always crowned with success" (453), for it still remains responsible for the blurring, confusion, and absurdity that appear in the final version of the dream. Still, this process of censorship can never hide the distortions from the gaze of the psychoanalyst because the latter knows the mechanism of the dream construction.

Most of these Freudian analytical criteria could be read in Macherey's theoretical formulations. As he says of Balibar, who collaborated with him in refining a "symptomatic" theory of literary production: in her work "Freudian concepts play an important role in the analysis of literary phenomena" ("Interview" [1975] 9). Several examples from Macherey's practical study of Jules Verne in Pour une théorie illustrate this point. Macherey reads the novel's themes as "symbolic images" (Pour une théorie 211) and maintains that "the ideological project" must undergo "au préalable au moins quelques remaniements, une élaboration seconde, [a 'secondary

revision'] qui en sera un objet littéraire" (199). Further, "l'identification des figures singulières ne suffit pas à expliquer le processus d'inscription du sujet" (212). These perceptions of the elements of the text, like the elements of the dream-work, are also necessary for the theorization of literary gaps, absences, and margins. For Freud, the manifest dream-text does not tell us whether the elements presented are to be accepted by the analyst at their face value or metaphorically. The dream-narrative exposes a narrative line that only seems coherent, but which remains at heart silent about all the processes that it has gone through during its elaboration. This character of the dream is not a willful deceptiveness; this is simply part of its nature, from which it will always remain unable to detach itself. Resembling the literary text as it is defined by Macherey, the dream remains silent about its silences and the conditions of its production. As if applying this principle, Macherey proposes: "il faut alors supposer que l'oeuvre a ses marges, ce qui encore en elle ne l'est plus tout à fait, et d'où on voit sa naissance et sa production" (Pour une théorie 111).

Macherey's theorization of the literary work as a structure of absence and "non-dit" has borrowed several of its key concepts from Saussure's structuralist linguistics and Freud's elaboration of the mechanisms of the dream-work (see Alan Wall, "Preface" to the English translation of Pour une

théorie; and Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology 90). In particular, the deceptive character of the manifest dream-content seems to recall Macherey's idea of literary texts as offering ideological, illusory representations of themselves and of reality. As well, behind his perception of the work as production, which is also a Marxist concept, stands the Freudian theory of the mechanisms of "displacement," "distortion," "condensation," and "secondary revision." Furthermore, the difference between the manifest side of the text and its latent content is marked by a break--"une rupture," "un décalage," according to Macherey--that challenges reductionist visions of the manifest text which tend to see it as a direct reflection of a latent meaning. This "rupture" resembles the "distance" that separates the text as "object" from its theory during the process of the text's analysis as discussed earlier. The rupture also establishes a series of discontinuities along the seemingly linear development of the text. In addition, the site of the interpreter's activity is where the laws of analysis are practiced in order to reveal the conditions of the text's production. If the text, according to Freudian principles, is governed by the processes of displacement, condensation, and censorship, its content is bound to be as revelatory of a multiplicity of suppressed meanings as it is of the manifest message. Hence Macherey insists on what the text does not say: its deletions, distortions, and absent meanings. His

perception of the text as a product of a series of transformative operations at the level of its formal structure--of writing--and its symbolic meaning--its content--leads him in turn to question other categories: language, authorship, reality, reflection, knowledge, and ideology.

Thus, any scientific knowledge of the text necessitates a discovery of the text's polysemy and multiplicity of signification, which are generated through the questioning of the mechanisms that have helped in the elaboration of the text and its absences. Resulting from this theorization of the status of the text is a necessary distinction between literary language and the discourse of theory. Literary language differs from theoretical discourse which is the discourse of science. Macherey indicates that "le langage 'parlé' par l'écrivain n'est plus tout à fait le langage tel que nous l'utilisons ordinairement.. . . Une des caractéristiques essentielles du langage tel qu'il apparaît <u>en l'oeuvre</u>, c'est qu'il <u>fait illusion</u>" (56; emphasis added). Literary language deludes, but it is part of its nature to do so. In contrast, the language of theory, since it approximates the language of science, offers less illusion. "Le language de la science et de la théorie," Macherey asserts, "est un langage <u>fixé</u>, ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'il est arrêté, achevé" (71). This type of language is less prone to

mystification or to polysemy. If the language of theory is privileged over the language of fiction, it is mainly because it speaks the truth of the "non-dit" and constructs a science of criticism.

Like the text it constructs and from which it also draws its existence, literary language is anchored in a discursive space of omissions and distortions. On the one hand, the plurality of meanings with which it endows the text is intertextual since it borrows from previous narrative structures. On the other, it is ideological, adopting previous authors' "ideological projects" and representations of particular socio-historical moments. This is why "l'oeuvre ne vient jamais seule," Macherey insists, "elle est toujours déterminée par l'existence d'autres oeuvres" (122). Other texts are always lurking in the work's background. Even the eagle-eyed reader may be unable to reproduce the full intertextual and inter-semic construct of the text with complete certainty. Macherey indicates Jules Verne's <u>L'Ile Mystérieuse</u> as a clear case in point here: "avant même de raconter une aventure vécue, l'Ile mystérieuse est la contestation d'un personnage symbolique: ROBINSON; elle est donc bien roman sur roman" (225). Of course, other cases of multi-levelled intertexuality could be listed here too. For

example, Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Zamyatin's We; Bronte's Jane Eyre and Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea; Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Michel Tournier's Vendredi.

The intertextual character of the work's structure reveals, according to Macherey, its true contradictions, makes it speak its "ideological project," and allows it to subvert "the dominant ideology" it mediates. Commenting on Verne's works, Macherey argues:

> Ce qui pourrait sembler n'être qu'une simple allusion littéraire, le détour par Robinson, permet, mieux qu'une autre forme de conscience,--mise à part bien sur une véritable élaboration théorique, mais alors il ne s'agit plus de conscience au sens strict--, de révéler une situation réelle. A sa manière, si simple et curieusement enveloppée, clairvoyante, et trompeuse, le livre nous montre bien finalement, si ce n'est de la manière qu'il le disait, ce dont il disait parler: les conditions d'une actualité. (Pour une théorie 266)

Like the work's intertextuality, its meanings are likewise multiple. Not only are the words interlaced, but the conceptual and ideological formulations are intertextual, or inter-semic as well. Overdetermined by absences and lacunae, the text's multiple existence turns around an absent center:

> [C]reuse par la presence allusive des autres livres contre lesquels il se construit, tournant

> autour de l'absence de ce qu'il ne peut pas dire, hante par l'absence de certains mots a laquelle il ne cesse pas de revenir, le livre ne s'edifie pas dans le prolongement d'un sens, mais a partir de l'incompatibilite de plusieurs sens, qui est aussi le lien le plus solide par lequel il se rattache a la realite, dans une confrontation tendue et toujours renouvelee. (98)

The role of theory as "scientific" analysis is now limited to the detection of what constitutes this absence as a set of conflicting elements that have made up its meaning. Therefore, in order to know the work, the critic must not only unveil these pluralities, alterities, and radical oppositions that haunt the meaning as well as the linguistic construct of the text, but also decipher the resulting silences, exclusions, and deletions. It is a state of affairs that neither the text nor the critic can do away with. By also situating the work at this level of interplay between the hidden and the revealed, the illusory and the truthful, or between speech and its own exclusion, the critic liberates literature from its traditional constraints. By focusing on the "absence de ce qu'il [the text] ne peut pas dire," theory allows the literary structure to flash its otherness and to be read as "other."

Moreover, because of the intertextual and intersemic character of the work, its external determinations, its authorship, or the sphere of its reading public no longer interfere in a unidimensional way with its existence. The

realm of the social as an epistemological constraint is pushed to the edge of the work's margins. The text thus acquires a sense of polysemic liberty that is imposed on it by the nature of the particular language from which it is constructed. Accordingly, "le langage 'parlé' par l'écrivain . . . n'est réglé par les normes d'aucune conformité extérieure. De ligne en ligne, il avance à sa fantaisie, en toute dépendance: c'est cette interdépendance nécessaire qui caractérise et distingue l'usage qu'il fait du langage (58).

The logical deduction from all these notions of polysemy, intertextuality, and constructional freedom is a skeptical view of the destination of this digressive search for the the structure of absence, the pre-text. How far back can the critic delve into the narrative history of a text in order to make it speak its repressed origin, its absent center? And should analysis be limited to the structure of the analyzed text? Or should it extend its gaze to other discursive manifestations of the text? If we compare Macherey's study of the novel to Bakhtin's, for instance, we note that the latter, through a notion of a discursive "heteroglossia," traces the origins of the Novel as a genre to classical Greek literature (see The Dialogic Imagination 375). Would then a reading of Jules Verne's L'Ile Mystérieuse stop at the Crusoe fable? What would legitimize such a reading? Macherey does not address these questions.

Nonetheless, their immediacy poses crucial problems for his theorization of the structure of absence, for his critical approach, and for the notion of scientificity in critical theory, in particular. A logical conclusion here is that Macherey's initial refutation of essentialism has reinstated, possibly inadvertently, the structure of absence as the essence that precedes all essences.

Through the interplay between linguistic freedom and absence, the work's liberty is curtailed in the end. The work does not "speak" just any meaning arbitrarily because of the work's hidden absence. The work's construction around this absence results from the need imposed on it a priori by certain conditions of existence which have made this contradictoriness within the text a major part of its identity. Thus Macherey argues:

> [C]ette liberté, même si elle est marquée par les apparences de l'improvisation et de la fantaisie, n'est pas une liberté d'indifférence. L'oeuvre littéraire, dans la mesure où elle déplace avec elle le principe de sa véracité institue un certain type de nécessite: cette nécessité se manifeste d'abord dans le fait qu'au texte on ne peut changer un mot. En tant qu'oeuvre, il doit avoir par lui-même une insuffisante tenue pour nous obliger à admettre sa validité. (58-9; author's emphasis)

While remaining a fixed and autonomous linguistic product, the work enjoys its freedom through its floating away from its origins of authority and then its theoretical apprehension.

To illustrate this idea of "liberté" as resulting from the the problematic relationship between the text and its authorship, Macherey cites the case of Radcliffe's novel, Les Visions d'un château des Pyrénées, which has no original English version and is wrongly attributed to her. This kind of authorship, he points out, represents the rule of all other relations between works and their authors. It exemplifies the detachment of literature from its claimed authorial origins, thus confirming the structuralist notion of "the death of the author." As Macherey argues further, "les textes de ce genre, qui sont des faux plus ou moins caracterises, sont souvent les plus representatifs d'un genre ou d'un style" (40).

In what seems to be in line with the logic of the Freudian theory of dream-interpretation, Macherey now perceives the literary work as acquiring some independence from its author, a floating signifier that is repossessed by critical practice. Since authorship is often unaware of its own distortions and silences, as is the case of the dream-text, the author like the dreamer should not claim the orgin of the total meaning of his/her work. Tolstoy is a case in point here:

> Sensible aux conséquences du développement capitaliste. . .il est incapable de caractériser le pouvoir de la bourgeoisie, d'autant plus menaçant dans son oeuvre qu'il s'y manifeste sourdement. Tolstoi est aussi incapable d'appréhender la constitution d'un ordre

> prolétarien, qui est le second terme du conflit latent. Présent à l'histoire, Tolstoi l'est surtout par ses absences: le développement matériel des forces lui est complètement obscur. (Pour une théorie 136)

This relation of the work to history and of the author to his text coincides with the relation between the dreamer and the dream-text which is turned over to the analyst who owns the right tools to make it reveal its hidden truths, unconscious processes of production its "conditions de possibilités", and its silence. Knowing the text then presumes the imperative existence of its autonomy as well as the centrality of its silence:

> [I]l semble bénéfique, et légitime, de se demander à propos de toute production ce qu'elle implique tacitement: sans le dire. L'explicite veut un implicite, tout autour ou à sa suite: car pour parvenir à dire quelque chose, il y en a d'autres qu'il ne faut pas dire.. . . Tout dire, pour arriver à être dit, s'enveloppe de la couche d'un non-dit. Et la question est de savoir pourquoi, cette interdiction même, il ne la dit pas: avant qu'on la veuille avouer, peut-être reconnue? De ce qu'elle ne dit pas, peut-être ne peut pas dire, une parole ne dit même pas l'absence: une dénégation vraie chasse jusqu'à la présence en creux du terme interdit, ne lui donnant même pas son titre à l'absence. (105)

The spatial metaphors of "inside" and "outside," which usually help in identifying meaning, are reversed by the necessity of the work's silence. In this case, traditional notions of "endogenesis" and "exogenesis" (see Todorov, "On Literary

Genesis" 213-14) are abandoned in order to leave room for the centrality of absence, "la presence en creux," which is located around the manifest text, "tout autour." Paradoxically, absence becomes central to the text by being outside it, englobing it, inhabiting the space, wider than that of the manifest network of words, which remains uninhabited, unverbalized.

However, when scrutinized more closely, the meaning of the structure of absence in Macherey's epistemology yields some implications that seem to subvert his theoretical project in toto. For while rejecting the essentialist notions of literary genesis, origin, plenitude, and unity as metaphysical principles leading towards particular "critical fallacies," Macherey now posits absence as "essentiel[le] à toute parole"(105). Instead of subscribing to the dictum "in the beginning was the Word," he offers his own alternative credo: in the beginning was "Silence." Have not many theologies perceived the beginning of the world as rooted in nothingness, itself a form of silence? In fact, both the Bible and the Koran attest to the view that the world was originally created from nothing, that meaning stems from a void. As Frank Kermode notes, Christian philosophy of the thirteenth century had to grapple with the Aristotelians' view that "nothing comes out of nothing--ex nihilo nihil fit," which led to the idea that the world must be eternal (Kermode, The Sense of an Ending

68). Moreover, Macherey's idea of absence seems also to invoke the Sartrean notion of "nothingness" in "being," which implies a problematization not only of textual meaning but of human existence as well. All these implications shed more light on the extent to which this theorization of absence seeks a confirmation of origin rather than a surpassing of the metaphysics of beginnings and origin.

However, the problem that now faces this epistemology of absence is how to theorize meaning scientifically and transcend "absence." Macherey, not unlike Freud who circumvents the thorny problem of interpretation by reverting to the universality of the meaning of dream-symbols, reinstates this essentialist concept of "silence" as common to all literary texts, to literary language, thereby universal: "On dira qu'une parole devient oeuvre à partir du moment où elle suscite une telle absence. Ce qu'il y a d'essentiel à toute parole, c'est son silence: ce qu'elle amène à taire. Le silence donne sa forme au visible (Pour une théorie 105; emphasis added). Silence or absence is the primeval component not only of textuality but of "scientific criticism" as well. By attempting to go beyond both "interpretation" and "description" as two "reductionist" critical methods, Macherey indicates that the site of a theory of literature ought to be silence, perceived as the gap between the interpretive and descriptive methods. To him, "peut-être est-il possible

d'échapper au départ à cette contradiction, en <u>s'installant dans l'écart même qui sépare</u> l'interprétation de la description: il faudrait parler de l'oeuvre en la sortant de ses limites" (186, emphasis added). Theory as a scientific reading of the text, accordingly, places itself in this "écart," this void that marks a distance between theory and its object.

But what exactly is embedded in this silence which is, at the same time, pregnant with a multiplicity of voices and meanings? Nowhere does Macherey offer us a straightforward answer to this question. He follows several detours before finally grounding the structure of absence in the work's "conditions of possibility." As a possible formulation of the exact meaning of this absence, we can only point to it as a <u>site</u>, a locus of meaning, "une zone d'ombre" (103). Yet, through the use of this spatial metaphor, we discover that there is no way out of metaphoric language; the more we try to get around the structure of absence, the more our attempts deceive us. In order for silence to be grasped, it must speak, use language, and thus forsake its silent character. Repeatedly, Macherey himself adopts metaphoric language in order to describe the plenitude and metamorphoses of this structure of absence. He says, for example,

> La reconnaissance en l'oeuvre, ou autour d'elle, d'une telle zone d'ombre est la première

> manifestation de l'intention de la critique. Mais il faut s'interroger sur la nature de cette ombre: indique-t-elle une absence véritable, ou est-elle dans le prolongement d'une quasi-présence? . . .
>
> Ce que l'oeuvre ne dit pas, elle le manifeste, elle le découvre, de toute sa lettre: elle est faite de rien d'autre. Ce silence lui donne aussi son existence. (Pour une théorie 103)

The answer to the question about the content of silence has then to be gathered from the various manifestations that Macherey attributes to the work of art. For him, knowing the text and particularly its absence does not mean finding ways of measuring the intensity of its silence or counting its gaps. Knowing is discerning the myriad of voices that inhabit this epistemological space, "l'ombre." The closest answer we gather from Macherey's various pronouncements about what exactly constitutes this silence of the work is that "Ideology" inhabits textual silence. In his own words, "le seul point de départ pour l'étude particulière d'une oeuvre, non point ce sur quoi elle s'appuie en fait, mais son début réel, son commencement, c'est la validité d'un projet idéologique" (187; emphasis added).

Theoretical investigation of literature ought, therefore, to move from within the structure of silence itself into an epistemological space, "an ideological project," that determines all literary absences, gaps, and other forms of

representation. Yet, according to Macherey, such a move does not mean leaving the text behind: the text's ideological dimension is an internal characteristic. As he confirms in a 1980 interview, "ideology is present in texts as a material from which they are constructed. In this sense, it is something internal" (Macherey and Balibar, "Interview" 50). Not unlike silence, "ideology" sends us back to other analytical categories which are in turn determined by the work's "conditions de possibilité." These stand behind the plurality of voices, the multiplicity of meanings that speak the silence of the work. According to Macherey, such voices are constituted partly by rhetorical elements, partly by epistemological categories, partly by socio-historical realities, and partly by the intrinsic qualities of transformative mechanisms and processes. The silence of the text is, in the final analysis, an amalgam of various categories on which various "critical fallacies," earlier refuted by Macherey, have based their critical principles. But it is an amalgam whose complexity remains unapprehended by any of those approaches. However, to grasp Macherey's abstract definition of silence and ideology, we must seek this definition where it is concretely present, in the practical cases of the literary analyses he presents us with, in his studies of Tolstoy, Verne, Defoe and Borges. As an example, let us look briefly at his reading of Verne's <u>L'Ile</u>

mystérieuse and its "ancestor" narrative, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe.

"L'Ile mystérieuse" Revisited:

In Macherey's textual analyses, the theoretical concept of the structure of absence is no longer a simple abstraction. It is concretely present as a full-fledged material category that bears directly on the socio-political and cultural dimensions of the literary work. The structure of the work has now been metamorphosed into an "ideological project." Its conversion from a latent entity, an absent structure as it were, into a manifest ensemble of thematic elements is now complete, and Macherey's epistemological project of a theory of literary production has reached its telos. In his analysis of Verne, Macherey traces the history of a central "theme" structuring Verne's works. It is that of "the Island," which is also connected with other themes, such as "the conquest of nature," "the Journey," "Man," "the Machine," "the volcano," "science as progress," "colonization," and "providence." Some of these themes are explicit while others are implicit. Macherey points out that these themes are equally important to the development of the work and its understanding, but they all remain subordinate to the theme of "Conquest." Moreover, through these themes, he identifies the work's affiliation with other literary

structures and topoi. For example, Verne rewrites the Robinsonnade in an "anachronistic" way in order to surpass it. To Macherey, these "themes," also called "structural images," are partly formal i.e., poetically constructed through references to preceding literary archetypes, and partly ideological--rethinking an "ideological project" of the conquest of nature that is warranted by scientific progress.

This dual concern for the exact meaning of the "structure of silence" as ideologically constructed does not ignore the formal, purely stylistic, features of the work. To Macherey, these features even constitute the origins of this "ideological project," both at the level of its construction as well as that of its analysis:

> Il s'agit de thèmes individuels qui sont autant des figures symboliques. C'est a ce niveau qu'on trouve véritablement l'oeuvre de Jules Verne, le produit de sa création, au moins dans la littérarité de son contenu; c'est cela qu'il a fait, qui distingue son oeuvre de toutes oeuvres écrites, et qui constitue l'objet final de toutes les lectures possibles: ce sont ces thèmes qui ont nourri la curiosité de plusieurs générations de lecteurs, et donné corps à la représentation qu'ils pouvaient se faire du grand programme de la conquête de la nature. (Pour une théorie 211)

Two important points must be noticed here: "l'objet final de toutes les lectures" and the text as "le produit. . .[d'une] création." By implication, the more the work's structure of silence is concretely formulated here, the further Macherey slips into categories that seem to belong to the discourse he

rejected earlier, and the more "absence" itself disappears from the horizon of theory to become a tangible, concrete entity. Indeed, if the "objet" is finalized ("objet final"), its disparateness, difference, and polysemy are automatically impaired. Such a theoretical move seems to be imposed from without by the telos of the Machereyan approach itself: "the bourgeois ideological project" that the text ought to reveal. Unless we accept these paradoxes as part of this theory itself, it is impossible to grasp fully the notions of scientificity and systematic logic which are claimed to be essential elements of a paradigm of literary production.

However, Macherey does not slide totally into synonymic notions of the epiphanic or the mysterious in Verne's "création." The work is still the product of a certain authorial labour, borrowing its thematic materials from an authorial ideology that is linked to a particular moment in the history of French society of the late nineteenth century. This moment, in turn, constitutes another level of ideological articulation towards which the work takes a position by revealing its limits and its flaws. Without full consciousness on Verne's part of the implications of these themes, the work is said to reveal them through the evolution of its own composition and particularly via the appropriation of the myth of pure origins: Crusoe building his kingdom-Island out of nothing. As if reading Verne's mind, Macherey points out the

moment of beginning for this concrete attempt to construct a narrative leading to the elaboration of that ideological project itself. Macherey contends:

> Verne commence par se poser une question: cette conquête est-elle bien ce qui définit le contenu de l'histoire du monde contemporain? Sensible à l'actualité de cette question, il se demande aussi: comment le faire savoir, comment l'exprimer? La réponse sera: par la fiction. (Pour une théorie 187)

By posing the question in this fashion, Macherey is already stepping out of the terrain of "littérarité" with which his theory claims to be primarily concerned. Yet according to him such a preliminary question is not meant to lead to the reading of the text as a mere document about its author's life; rather it posits the actual motivation for the taking up of the project of writing itself.

Starting from an inquiry into the narrative structure of the work, Macherey moves on to investigate the "history of the ideological theme" itself, a theme that is structurally bound to the Robinsonnade "fable." Accordingly, the significance of Verne's work now lies in the textual movement of this central theme of "la conquête de la nature," whose history must be re-written by the analysis. Thus Macherey argues:

> On se trouverait alors décrire l'histoire d'un thème idéologique: la conquête de la nature, expression d'un phénomène historique qui, s'accélérant dans des proportions non inimaginables, si elles n'ont guère été imaginées,

> a pris une importance manifeste puisqu'il a mis en évidence ce qui restait jusque-là un secret de l'histoire: l'exploitation de l'énergie naturelle. (184)

The history of the theme is, therefore, inseparable from the real history of the society as represented by the book. Form and content are intertwined in order to offer a significant complexity without which the structure of the work cannot exist: "l'oeuvre n'a pas d'autre nécessité que celle, immédiatement immanente, de sa composition, même si l'étude de la composition dépasse les limites étroites d'une problématique des formes" (185). The relationship between the two (form and content) is not that of a direct reflection but of an elaboration on each other, in such a manner that the narrative structure hides the real contradictions of the historical reality it represents. As noted earlier, with reference to the structure of absence, the structure hides contradictions without obliterating them. Thus, the analytic priority is now given neither to the formal elements of the text as theoretically postulated earlier nor to the concept of absence as such but to "history." Verne's work, Macherey goes on to assert, surpasses the formal boundaries of the theme: "l'histoire générale d'un thème implique la mise en avant de l'histoire tout court, sans quoi elle ne resterait à sa pure inconsistance, dans une très idéologique solitude" (184). This "mise en avant," a willful critical act that refuses to allow even "absence" to precede it, must be questioned. Indeed, it

is what makes "l'histoire tout court" a presumed category, deserving to be posited "en avant", i.e. before absence itself, that should be questioned. Articulating absence as such seems to be an impossible endeavor, like articulating silence.

In this history of the "theme," the characters of Verne's work become special carriers of a set of ideological themes, thereby, strengthening the work's disparity, plurality, and decenteredness. What happens to these characters during the development of the narrative is nothing but a variation on the major theme of the conquest. The logic of the theme is the rationale behind the manifestations of its centrality. Macherey notes that in this context, the protagonist, is at the same time a scientist, a scholar, a traveler and a conqueror of the unknown; he is also an inventor of new territories at the level of the imaginary. But the protagonist is never fully declared as such by the story. His real significance, not unlike that of the "theme," remains implicit; hence the importance of the concept of absence and distortions within the formulations of the narrative themes in general. As Macherey esserts, in Verne's works,

> Le thème de colonisation est moins apparent, ou moins souvent mis en valeur: comme si on avait voulu le dissimuler; pourtant le savant conquiert, annexe, déplace le connu vers l'inconnu, projette son pouvoir sur le mode de l'appropriation. (Pour une théorie 197)

Yet, the unconscious of the text, as demonstrated here by Macherey is no longer a silence but an outspoken plenitude. This verbalisation of implicitness and its translation into ideological meaning facilitates Macherey's detours around the structure of absence.

Compared to Boris Eichenbaum's study of Gogol's "The Overcoat" or to Roland Barthes's decoding of Balzac's "Sarrasine" in S/Z, in which both critics offer an inventory of the syntagmatic elements that form each narrative, Macherey's analysis of the formal construction of Jules Verne's novels relegates linguistic codes to marginal importance. Further, his analysis translates narrative elements into thematic and ideational components, and the textual fabric of the work is made subservient to the major ideological theme. Such moves are necessitated in part by Macherey's desire to go beyond Formalist and Structuralist principles, but also in part by a teleological bent in his own theory, a need to formulate a reading of history and society through Verne's literary discourse. At the same time, Macherey must leave room for what he conceives to be the concept that permeates literary discourse through and through: "ideology." Of course, he reiterates the necessity of granting due importance to the formal features of a text, but nowhere does he provide a detailed textual exegesis of the work à la Barthes or à la Eichenbaum.

Furthermore, after having attacked various "critical fallacies" for celebrating notions of unity and coherence among the work's elements, Macherey still argues for a "unity" of these thematic and ideological elements articulating the text's ideological project:

> Il faut donner au récit une unité formelle correspondant au contenu qu'il s'est trouvé, qui le reprenne en charge et l'organise. On rencontre une fois encore le problème de la cohérence entre la forme du récit et son contenu thématique, mais cette fois au niveau du déroulement du récit . . . [C]ette forme est systématique, de même que les images singulières étaient enfermées dans les limites d'un répertoire détermine. (Pour une théorie 212)

On another level, as if trying to abolish this unity of the text, but also to distinguish his concept of coherence from the onto-theological one which he rejects earlier, Macherey establishes an opposition between the formal structure of Verne's work and its ideological project (its "real content"). The fable of Crusoe's island, as a formal structure of Verne's L'Ile mystérieuse, for instance, is identified as a mediation between two principal processes: "representation" and "figuration," which are "deux réalités cohérentes et incompatibles" (216). But despite their incompatibility, they complement each other. Taken as paradoxical but not mutually exclusive values since they enhance the meaning of each other in revealing the truth of the work, "représentation" and "figuration" play the role of unveiling what this structure of the work does not talk about.

Accordingly, Verne's ideological project is realized simultaneously at these two levels. The one is the representational-practical, conceived as a conscious point of departure for the enterprise of writing, indicating the author's relations to publishers, collaborators, readers, his own desire to write a new genre of fiction--"the science novel," etc. The other, "figuration", is expressed through the use of structural images--the units composing the story--and is not directly representative of the first level, i.e. the ideological project. The juncture of these two levels endows the work with an unconscious dimension that only the gaze of the critic can detect:

> Plutôt qu'une contradiction qui s'établit entre des termes placés au même niveau, apparaît donc une incompatibilité réelle entre la représentation du projet et sa figuration.. . . [L]a "forme" trahit le contenu. L'intrigue impose aux thèmes un sens aberrant qu'ils ne possédaient pas nécessairement; donc un autre <u>agencement des signes</u> était possible, par lequel eussent été garanties, à la fois, une nouvelle cohérence et la fidélité au projet initial. (216; author's emphasis)

Accordingly, the analysis of Verne's narratives must not stop at the stage of simply revealing the existence of an opposition --not a contradiction-- between "representation" and "configuration." It must go a step further towards explaining this relationship itself. For Macherey, although there is no direct correspondence between the fable of an unknown island and Verne's initial program of writing fiction,

it is possible to argue that the link between the two levels is that of a betrayal: "la forme trahit le contenu." This incongruous relationship between these two levels of signification contributes to the distortion of Verne's initial project. When passing from one level to the other, the ideology of the project undergoes a series of transformations that reminds us of the process of the dream-work as described by Freud and explored above.

From the conflict between these dual levels of the text there emerges the centrality of the major theme, "the island," both as a formal device holding the diverse elements of the narrative together and as the hidden structure mediating the meaning of the work's ideology. For by borrowing a past fictional form, the Robinsonnade, Verne proposes to solve a problem of his society: "il tente de résoudre la question des rapports de la bourgeoisie avec son propre passé, avec son histoire, et parvient à mettre en évidence au moins certaines <u>limites</u> d'une situation historique (en mettant à l'épreuve son idéologie dominante)" (221). Concurrently, the motif of the island is perceived, at the level of the imaginary, as a territory of scientific experimentation where colonial conquest is presented as natural individual achievement.

Verne's major theme of the island is now an "ideological instrument" par excellence. The meaning it projects is "absolument objectif, il présente en une fois la totalité de ce qui peut être" (221). As such, the structure of the novel, which was previously theorized as "absence," is now converted into a totalizing image, comprising a multiplicity of other themes. Likewise, the margins and gaps of the text are no longer a series of unspecified deletions or lacunae, but are highly communicative images. Furthermore, this structure of the Island-narrative does not lack any lacunae which were initially posited by Macherey as constitutive of the identity of every literary text.

Once the ideological nature of the main theme is established, Macherey moves on to reveal the meanings of the other themes which share in the ideological elaboration of the story. In writing a narrative about the Island, Verne reproduces -- while subverting -- the inherited myths of origins, of the fresh beginning, of the purity of scientific knowledge, and of the intervention of providence in human achievement. To Macherey, Verne's depiction of the mysterious island excludes its own belonging to a nineteenth-century myth of European expansionism that constructed the dream of empty territories. Yet, while marginalizing this history of a myth, the narrative still perpetuates its existence by constructing a reversal of it: a social construction in its own image:

Verne's castaways are shipwrecked "from the sky" like their ancestor, Crusoe who emerges from the sea. This reversal substitutes the society of the castaways, "une famille d'hommes," for that of an individual, Crusoe. If the latter found himself on his island with a box of tools which he loots from the wrecked ship and which represent society outside the island, Verne's heroes possess no such luck. According to Macherey, Verne is careful not to fall into the Robinsonnade myth of absolute beginnings. Instead of a single individual, an image of Crusoe, we are offered an elite of individuals who share the necessary knowledge for the creation of a certain social order. A reading of the social function of each character on the island leads Macherey to distinguish between two existing social groups: "initiateurs" and "executants." As he says, "Il ne s'agit donc pas de la réunion d'individus séparés, mais d'une collectivité véritable, organisée suivant la répartition de ses fonctions essentielles" (Pour une théorie 237). For Macherey, these two main sub-groups symbolically constitute what Auguste Comte termed "les entrepreneurs" and "les opérateurs" (238). In addition to these, Macherey points out the existence of "un prolétariat" (the sailor, the "negro"): "La société telle que la voit Verne dans son degré zéro, tel que si on retranche quelque chose il n'y ait plus de société, garde son prolétariat" (238, f. 42).

Hence by a tour de force, the Machereyan theoretical trajectory has ultimately led us beyond the structure of absence and to a revised version of the sociology of literary interpretation à la Goldmann, to a structure of narrative that symbolizes a structure of the author's society. From the structure of absence one moves to a clearly defined class structure that is defined, nonetheless, through other sociological readings by Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. For Macherey, Verne's narrative construction "ne renvoie pas à l'idée abstraite de société (un ensemble d'individus), mais à une forme précise de société, à un état de société, celui où elle est arrivée au moment où J. Verne écrit" (238). This plenitude of the text secures a plenitude of theory as well.

Concurrently, the model society that Verne projects on the Island mediates a clearly defined ideology. To Macherey, the Island as primitive and virgin nature is to be transformed by the know-how embodied in the chosen elite. Science as this know-how, the right tool to transform the mysterious island into "a new America," concerns us here. Science manifests itself also as the mode of conduct that binds the members of the group. The parallel between Crusoe's and Nemo's worlds is now reformulated in sociological terms rather than in narratological terms. Their significances collide with each other at the political level. Accordingly, the reversal of plots that Verne initially attempted has now

failed. It has turned into a repetition of the Robinsonnade. The richness of the mysterious island, in addition to the shipwrecked chest containing a Bible, is clearly a variation on Defoe's quest for a pure beginning, and Verne's island is turned into a "laboratory" of trials and experiments to test the castaways' capabilities.

According to Macherey, it is this double reversal between the two stories that brings the ideological contradictions to the surface of the text. As if conscious of the meanings of its themes, the narrative presents a conflict between itself and its model predecessor. It problematizes its ideological line and disrupts the succession of its themes series. Absence no longer grants the narrative its real meaning, nor does it constitute it as the primary focus of the critic. Macherey indicates:

> Ce qui donne au livre son vrai sujet, et aussi son sens, c'est qu'à mesure que l'histoire avance, ce schéma est profondément bouleversé, et même renversé. La ligne des réalisations idéologiques est brisée, au moment où elle croise le déroulement d'une intrigue, qui semble <u>plus réelle</u>, dans la mesure où elle force à reconnaître la persistance d'une autre forme de la fiction. Ce n'est pas par hasard si, à ce moment, ce livre aux allures indépendantes renoue avec d'autres livres un lien qu'il avait rompu. Le rapport de la fiction nouvelle avec la fiction passée devient autre chose qu'un rapport critique: un conflit réel. (243)

This repetition of the ideological line of the Robinsonnade is much clearer with reference to Captain Nemo's fate. "Je meurs

d'avoir cru que l'on pouvait vivre seul," he tells the Islanders a few moments before his death. He is both a Crusoe and a God who has failed his mission. His death leads to the destruction of the island itself, confirming the impossibility of absolute beginnings, the dream of the conquest of virgin territories, mastery over nature, and the centrality of the individual to the world, all of which are characteristics of nineteenth-century bourgeois ideology:

> La bourgeoisie conquérante, dont Jules Verne a voulu dessiner l'image fictive, et prometteuse d'un avenir réel, n'était pas ce voyageur qui part en laissant tout derrière lui: justement l'homme nouveau, tel que Verne est parvenu effectivement et positivement à le décrire, ne peut être seul, ni conquérant d'un absolu, défrichant la nature vierge; mais le maître seulement d'un certain nombre de relations. Son trait le plus nécessaire et le plus profond, est qu'il est obligatoirement accompagné: non seulement par d'autres hommes, mais aussi par ce qui donne sens à son projet,--et en présente en même temps la première contestation--toute une histoire dont il est solidaire même s'il veut en perdre le souvenir. (Pour une théorie 262-63)

Thus the narrative, in spite of itself, speaks its own contradictions and subverts its proper ideological project. Such is the ultimate meaning of Verne's L'Ile mystérieuse. The theoretical inquiry leads us to the deciphering of the work as a historico-sociological and political document against its own will. Macherey convinces us that what has been lying behind the manifest text has turned

out to be, in fact, a presence of a tangible ideological meaning. It only needs the critic's gaze in order to bring it to the surface. It has always been there, like Captain Nemo, hiding at the heart of a volcano in the Island and present through his absence. "La lecon du roman," says Macherey, thus ending his analysis in the manner of traditional criticism, which always concerned itself with the didactic functionalism of literature, is that the French bourgeoisie has dreamt a faulty dream of conquest. It is the truth that the text has been unable to hide from us, and which has finally emerged.

However, this reading of Verne's novel reveals a number of incongruities between Macherey's theoretical premises as initially posited and the findings of his interpretation. The scientific theorization of textual absence as witnessed in practice presents us with a series of problems that the Machereyan approach remains unable to resolve. Ironically, not unlike Rousseau's Emile, we are ultimately offered the text as an educational story to teach ourselves about the meaning of a historical moment that Jules Verne has captured so well, and which the text, because of its claimed nature, could not keep hidden from us. Thereby, he grants us some useful knowledge for the future. In addition to the novel's didacticism, textual meaning is halted at a particular place, and with the end of the analysis, the book is closed, its fissures mended, and its Truth placed in the space from

which it has been per force exiled. The gaps and silences were only temporary; they were awaiting the arrival of the competent critic to mend them. Something that was originally posited as natural to the identity of the structure of the work, absence, has now disappeared in order to leave room for the coherence of meaning, a coherence through disparity and polysemy, a meaning that is ideological.

"Symptomatic reading" in the manner Macherey reads Verne's L'Ile mystérieuse has now unveiled all the symptoms in the literary and medical sense of a flawed or "sick" text, and has come up with the right cure: its meaning as historically anchored in a structure of ideological representation, determined by a set of possibilities of existence, and anchored in a history of the class struggle. Elaborating on this medical image of the text, Macherey comments:

> [I]n French, when someone is ill, we say "he's in a critical state." Well, literature is always in a critical state! Literary works appear "healthy," almost perfect, so that all one can do is to accept them and admire them. But in fact their reality does not accord with their self-presentation. Personally, texts please me, I find them beautiful not because they are "healthy" but because they are sick, because within them they express the contradiction of the social reality in which they are produced. ("Interview" [1975] 5)

Thus a "sick" text reflects an incomplete social reality that always lives on contradictions; the homology of structures is confirmed.

It seems that Macherey's theory itself is now unable to face the silences and the gaps that it has originally posited as inherent to textuality. It cannot afford to leave them "gaping" (béantes) because the theory has to close its own system of thought, to produce a scientific knowledge, a coherent sense of both the literary and the 'real' world. Even the intertextual detour that Macherey detects as marking the construction of Jules Verne's work is there only to enhance that sense of closure of the meaning of the text. As Macherey concludes:

> Ce qui pourrait sembler n'être qu'une simple allusion littéraire, le détour par Robinson, permet, mieux qu'aucune autre forme de conscience,-- mise à part bien sur une véritable élaboration théorique, mais alors il ne s'agit plus de conscience au sens strict --, de révéler une situation réelle. A sa manière, si simple et curieusement enveloppée, clairvoyante, et trompeuse, le livre nous montre bien finalement, si ce n'est de la manière qu'il le disait, ce dont il disait parler: les conditions d'une actualité. (Pour une théorie 266)

Therefore, if we reversed Macherey's own idea of the work, we would discover that his "scientific analysis" has reconstructed, re-written, the text by replenishing it with an ideological content. And no re-reading of the original text after Macherey's analysis of it would reinstate to it its lacunae. A necessary detour would have been made then via another text, that of Macherey's critique. Indeed, as is implied here, there is a temptation to insist on the drawing of clear boundaries between theory and fiction because a

theory of absence as elaborated by Macherey in his reading of Verne seems to blur this distinction. Two questions that Macherey does not ask emerge at this stage: how many readings could a text sustain? Would a new reading of Verne in, say, ten years time be valid if it happened to disagree with Macherey's "symptomatic reading"? In answer to these questions, one could argue that an interpretation that bases its premises on absences and distortions should logically and for the sake of ensuring its theoretical consistency leave out other textual deletions and lacunae after having read the text. Otherwise, it would only repeat the error of those "critical fallacies" that have always tried to achieve the plenitude of the text by rewriting its presumed coherence. In fact, it is Macherey himself, not unlike Barthes whom he refutes in Pour une théorie, who initially problematizes this relationship between reading and writing; first, by refusing to endow it with mimetic powers--Balzac's Paris, he says, is not the real Paris--and second by emphasizing the distinction between these two activities.

However, this movement from absence to the meaning of French society and the history of its bourgeoisie as offered by the fictional mode of Verne's island, to ideology, and ultimately to the "conditions of possibility" of the text, indicates the extent to which Macherey's theorization of the literary work reveals a dream of a totalizing knowledge of the

world. Accordingly, literature becomes the repository of all other forms of knowledge whether present or absent. It is a view that Barthes, at a moment when his theoretical trajectory was changing, captured in a phrase: " toutes les sciences sont présentes dans le monument littéraire" (Leçon 18). Indeed, it is because of this desire to achieve totality, manifesting itself in the projected goal of scientificity, that the Machereyan definition of the text remains unable to sustain its commitments to its initial premises of absence, silence, gaps--concepts that, paradoxically, subvert totality and coherence. Literature is upheld as the ultimate abode of a totalizing knowledge, for in order to reveal this knowledge, it must give up the notion of absence itself. Similarly, in order to maintain a systematic conception of scientific knowledge which in principle eliminates all distortions and ideologies, a theory that conceives discourse as comprising absences and gaps must relinquish such a desire for a totalizing epistemology. Scientificity cannot coexist with the notion of absence; they are mutually exclusive.

Conclusion:

Despite the theoretical impasse in which it has found itself, Macherey's scientific theorization of the "structure of absence" has contributed vital critical concepts without which a fruitful theory of literature cannot exist.

Enhanced particularly with this notion of absence, Macherey's theory has problematized various previously unscrutinized notions, such as "unity," "plenitude," "form," "content," "authority," "structure," "writing," and "ideology." His treatment of the relationship between literature and ideology in particular has contributed a great deal to Marxist aesthetics, which until the 1960s had lacked viable theoretical tools to approach the text. Furthermore, by going beyond orthodox determinisms that had kept Marxist criticism subservient to non-literary categories for a long time, Macherey's work has contributed to the revival of materialist criticism. As Tony Bennett says in his review of Pour une théorie, the book "does mark a step of a qualitative kind in the history of Marxist criticism" ("Review: A Theory of Literary Production" 217). One of the major contributions that Macherey makes to materialist critical theory, Bennett adds, is that

> Macherey proposes a radically new way of interrogating the relationship between literature and ideology.. . . [His] position entails a reversal of the priorities which have traditionally characterized Marxist criticism in its concern, within the logic of 'base' and 'superstructure' (no matter how leniently interpreted), to explain the production of the literary text by referring it back to determinations which lie outside and beyond it. Macherey, by contrast. . .is concerned more with the production that is effected by and within the literary text itself. (218)

Indeed, the notion of absence has allowed Macherey's theoretical framework to go beyond various orthodoxies, Marxist, Formalist, and Structuralist because the structure of absence interrogates all the fixed categories that have helped in interpreting the text. He thus has brought literary discourse beyond the boundaries of formalism and into the terrain of ideological theory by questioning the epistemological status of "Literature" as an institution, by refuting mimetic notions of reflection, and by emphasizing the necessity of examining narratives as "silent witnesses" to their determinations and imbued with ideological signification. Moreover, Macherey's insistence on mending the classical Marxist error of ignoring literary forms, of causing base to collide with superstructure, in addition to his ambitious project of formulating the "laws" and "object" of literature in an attempt to construct a science of criticism are all positive directions for critical practice. Indeed, the most important insight of his theory has been the theorization of the structure of absence in the literary text, although this notion has problematized his interpretive system as well as the epistemological status of his claimed science of criticism.

Macherey's trajectory towards a theory of ideology marks his final step in going beyond the structure of absence

and reveals a remarkable shift in the theoretical grounds of his epistemology and critical methodology. This shift must be assessed in the light of its drastic effects on his formulation of a notion of scientific knowledge and a theory of production. This movement also reveals what seems to be a possible distinction between an early Macherey and a later one. The latter stage is characteristic of his writing after Pour une théorie. His later essays in particular are marked not only by a desire to distance himself further from the Formalist character of Pour une théorie, but also by the direct influence on him of the Althusserian theorization of ideology and "Ideological state apparatuses." Consequently, the structure of absence is now pushed to the margins of literary theory in order to leave ample room for the idea of "literature as an ideological form" and as "ideological effect." His attention now focuses more on the function of the text in its wider socio-historical and political contexts, on the production of subjectivity, the serving of ideological interests, and the mediation of relations of power, rather than on the ontological status of the structure of absence. It is not absence but Althusser's theory of ideology and science that finally constitutes the bridge between an early Macherey and a later one and completes his Structuralist-Marxist theory

of literary production. By addressing the question of ideology in Macherey's paradigm next, we witness Macherey's latest phase in which the struggle with scientificity is still alive.

VI. Ideology and Literature: Criticism and the Scientificity of Theoretical Knowledge

> Monde construit autour d'un grand soleil absent, une idéologie est faite de ce dont elle ne parle pas; elle existe parce qu'il y a des choses dont il ne faut pas parler.. . .
>
> La science supprime l'idéologie, elle l'efface; l'oeuvre la récuse, en se servant d'elle. (Pour une théorie 154, 156; emphasis added)

In his pursuit of a "science of criticism" and "scientific knowledge," both of which originate in the constructionist process of textual production, Macherey has followed a theoretical trajectory from form to content and from "absence" to "ideology." Not unlike the structure of absence, the concept of ideology has turned out to be another determining category in literary production, if not akin to the primary process that shapes every meaning that the work utters or abstains from voicing. If the text is governed by its silences and absences, the material that ideology is made of is also its "non-dit": "une idéologie est faite de ce dont elle ne parle pas." Moreover, just as scientificity in Macherey's theoretical framework requires a knowledge of

absence, a scientific criticism necessitates a knowledge of the mechanism of ideology and its function in discourse. Indeed, the complexity of the notion of ideology has heightened the level of theoretical abstraction of the Machereyan reading of literature, but it has also proven to be an obstacle to the fulfillment of Macherey's dream of scientificity in critical thought. For, as "absence" demonstrates its chameleon character by adopting a myriad of faces--form, silence, concreteness, meaning, truth, distance, negation, difference, reality, gaps, margins--, ideology for its part has been even more elusive. Macherey's theorization of ideology takes us across an epistemological space marked by highly abstract concepts that have transformed literary meaning into a "mirage" which eludes us as soon as we think we are about to step into its midst. For Macherey, ideology is simultaneously absence, origin, form, effect, false-consciousness, necessary knowledge, negation of science and history, reflection of historical contradictions, necessary process for the apprehension of meaning, and a natural manifestation of literary discourse.

In Pour une théorie, Macherey defines absence and ideology in direct relation to his other theoretical concepts. Sometimes, ideology is in the margins of the literary work; at other times, it is the materials from which the work is

made or the thought-process that subverts all these categries at once. Thus Macherey argues:

> A la lisière du texte, on finit toujours par retrouver, momentanément occulte, mais éloquent par cette absence même, le langage de l'idéologie. Le caractère parodique de l'oeuvre littéraire la dépouille de son apparente spontanéité et en fait une oeuvre seconde. En elle, des éléments différents, à travers la diversité des modes de leur présence, se contestent bien plus qu'ils se complétent: la "vie" qu'emporte avec elle la parole quotidiénne, dont l'écho se retrouve en l'oeuvre littéraire, la renvoie à son irréalité (qui s'accompagne de la production d'un effet de réalité), tandis que l'oeuvre achevée (puisque rien ne peut lui être ajouté) montre en l'idéologie l'inachèvement. (75; emphasis mine)

The relationship between the work and ideology is not that of reflection but of an unveiling distance that the text, like theory in relation to its object, marks in its relationship to reality. The work keeps ideology in check by distancing itself from it and by producing a representation of it. Hence Macherey rejects the traditional notions of reflection, that is, of the presence of reality in the literary work as in "a mirror held to nature." For Macherey,

> [I]deology is essentially contradictory, riddled with all sorts of conflicts which it attempts to conceal. All kinds of devices are constructed in order to conceal these contradictions; but by concealing them, they somehow reveal them. The type of analysis which I propose is precisely to read the ideological contradictions within the

> devices produced to conceal them, to reconstitute the contradictions from their system of concealment. ("Interview" [1975] 5)

Like the structure of absence, ideology for Macherey is polyphonic, speaking through a variety of motifs and narrative themes. Indeed, in ideology, the real world of daily existence becomes an "echo," a sounding board for the primacy of representation and authenticity, a battlefield of ideological conflicts. Through its attempt to duplicate reality while distorting it, ideology constructs its own reality. Not unlike the work itself, which cannot live without its fissures, ideology always stands incomplete: through its repression of other forms of representation, and via its process of framing particular epistemological domains of reference, it reveals its lacunae, its "inachèvement."

Still, Macherey emphasizes, ideology dissolves all contradictions because it must always appear innocent, coherent, and truthful. For him, "il ne peut y avoir de contradiction ideologique, sauf, bien sûr, si on met l'idéologie en contradiction avec elle-même, si on lui porte la contradiction, dans le cadre, idéologique lui aussi, d'un dialogue" (Pour une théorie 153). By undermining all forms of illusory characteristics, ideology evens the ground over all distortions and conflicts. But the existence of such an ideological process cannot deceive the gaze of the critic. Its reality is revealed by the process of writing itself: The

presence of the work as such undermines the absence of the ideological construct, to the extent that it is "brisée, retournée, mise à l'envers d'elle-même, dans la mesure où la mise en oeuvre lui donne un autre statut que celui d'état de conscience" (155). As well, Macherey points out that this ideological character of the text is governed by the nature of the form that the text takes. Similar to Verne's novel, L'Ile mystérieuse, whose meaning is determined by the formal features of its major motif or theme, ideology is signified by the ensemble of the signifiers of its textual fabric:

> Alors qu'une idéologie, en elle-même, sonne toujours plein, derisoire et abondante, par sa presence dans le roman, elle se met à parler de ses absences. Elle reçoit sa mesure, en même temps qu'une forme visible.. . . Le livre donne à cette idéologie une certaine image: il lui donne des contours qu'elle n'avait pas, il la construit. (155; author's emphasis)

Concurrently, when a work is produced, it moulds the ideological materials it receives from other literary structures preceding the act of writing, thereby creating a double relationship to history and social reality. Ideology in literature becomes a double process; an ideological representation of an ideological perception of reality. The language used in this process, therefore, does not directly reproduce the real; it is a play on the language that constructs the real.

In fact, not unlike Macherey, Roland Barthes has visualized this peculiar set of relationships amongst ideology, its text, and reality in terms of a metaphor of the shadow:

> Certains veulent un texte (un art, une peinture) sans ombre, coupé de l'"idéologie dominante"; mais c'est vouloir un texte sans fecondité, sans productivité, un texte stérile.. . . Le texte a besoin de son ombre: cette ombre, c'est un peu d'idéologie, un peu de représentation, un peu de sujet: fantômes, poches, trainées, nuages nécessaires. (Le Plaisir du texte 53)

For both Barthes and Macherey, the other side of the text is ideology, not reality, and the critic's method of explanation must direct itself first to that complex interrelationship. Barthes goes on to point out, in contrast to Macherey's view, that there is only one ideology, "l'idéologie dominante" (53). Furthermore, Barthes asks, "l'idéologie c'est quoi? C'est precisement l'idée tant qu'elle domine: l'idéologie ne peut être que dominante. . .: du côté des dominés il n'y a rien, aucune idéologie" (53-4). This is an idea to which Macherey would not subscribe because ultimately he maintains the classical Marxist class dualism as central to historical development, though without reducing representation totally to it. His comments on the symbolism of the class structure of the Island in Jules Verne's works, for instance, is a case in point. For Macherey, "une période historique ne produit pas une idéologie spontanée, mais une série d'idéologies

déterminées par le rapport global des forces; chaque idéologie se définit donc par l'ensemble des pressions exercées sur la classe qu'elle représente" (Pour une théorie 136). The problem emerges in Macherey's view here when scientific knowledge is posited as a direct negation of ideology. The critic is led to wonder about the kind of ideology that scientific knowledge must confront since there is "une série d'idéologies."

However, both Barthes and Macherey still agree on similar metaphors by which they describe the concept of ideology. These characterisations are often semi-abstract doublings of a particular entity: Ideology is always perceived as the "Other" of something else. And its otherness is an unfixed signifier that is in continual metamorphosis, sliding underneath other metaphors. For Macherey, it is not identical to the text's shadow. During the process of its production, the work brings its "Other" into the open, through its literary form and ultimately exposes it by fixing its contours and textual limits. Meanwhile, in perceiving the absence of the text as ideology, Macherey reminds us, the critic ought to be wary of falling into the "ideological trap" by presuming that the text undertakes a direct dialogue with ideology. On the contrary, the function of the literary work is to displace its absence, ideology, by revealing it as its other, as non-ideological:

> L'oeuvre a un contenu idéologique, mais qu'elle donne à ce contenu une forme spécifique. Même si cette forme est elle-même idéologique, il y a, par la vertu de ce redoublement, un déplacement de l'idéologie à l'intérieur d'elle-même; ce n'est pas l'idéologie qui refléchit sur elle-même, mais par l'effet du miroir, en elle est introduit un manque révélateur, qui fait apparaître différences et discordances, où une disparité significative. (156)

Through absence as a process of negation of the text's other, its "non-dit", ideology anchors its presence in literature as the opposite of theoretical knowledge, critical or scientific, as a false representation of the "real." In substituting a literary form for this "real," through a detour via language and literary structures, ideology becomes falsehood. Macherey here flirts with and tries to surpass the traditional Marxist view, particularly the Lukacsian definition of ideology as class-bound false-consciousness: "l'idéologie est toujours aussi en défaut," Macherey says, "traquée par ce danger fondamental qu'elle ne pourra jamais envisager en lui-même: la perte de réalité" (153).

More important to Macherey, ideology is not only the opposite of scientific meaning, but it is also unable to know itself as being fundamentally so, as being out of touch with the reality of its own existence. It is unaware of its absences and omissions:

> [L'idéologie] est prisonnière de ses limites. . . Elle est enfermée, et son défaut est de se donner

> pour illimitée (. . .ayant une réponse à tout) à l'intérieur de ses limites. C'est pourquoi une idéologie ne peut former un système. . .; elle est une fausse totalité parce qu'elle ne s'est pas donnée ses limites. Elle est incapable de réfléchir la limitation de ses limites. Elle les a <u>reçues</u> mais elle n'existe que pour oublier cette donation initiale. Ces limites imposées qui demeurent, pérmanentes et définitivement latentes, sont à l'origine de la discordance qui structure toute idéologie: entre son ouverture explicite et sa fermeture implicite. (154)

Ideology in this sense finds its meaning in the plenitude of its void ("son vide") only through the fabric of the literary text. The text grants ideology a deceptive completeness. As noted earlier, this fabric itself is incomplete and lives on its gaps. Nevertheless, Macherey argues, "si une idéologie est toujours par quelque côté. . .incomplète, peut-être les formes littéraires ont-elles, à leur manière, de quoi la compléter" (138). Therefore, since ideology cannot exist except through the productive process of the literary forms which determine a particular work, critical theory must address the question of "la mise en forme" in order to achieve knowledge of the text: "Faire des romans. . .avec l'idéologie, cela implique une certaine idée de ce que c'est qu'un roman, définie par des normes qui ne soient pas idéologiques" (138). Such a view situates Macherey at the crossroads between two major approaches to literature: Formalism and Marxism. For him, literary norms embrace the meanings of both form and content: a totalizing vision indeed. However, it is from this desire to

totalize the definition of ideology that an essential problem in Macherey's theory of scientificity emerges.

The work lives on absences which are inhabited by ideology, itself centering around absence. The result is a double bind situation, a circularity within Macherey's argument which indicates the complexity of the nature of the text and of ideology, as well as the difficulty of providing straightforward definitions of the literary criteria that a "scientific criticism" needs to base itself on. In pursuit of the scientific identity of its literary criteria, the theory of literary production has ended up caught in its own theorization. Through its theorization of both the text and its ideology as absence, this theory is now trapped in its own specularity.

How to escape this vicious circle and the theoretical impasse once again? Macherey tries to go beyond this problem through a series of detours around the concept of ideology in the same way he accounts for the "structure of absence." For him, critical method creates a theoretical distance between the "object" and its analysis. As if in imitation of the text's own relation to ideology, this "radical theory" establishes a distance between itself and ideology. Such a movement out of the circularity of theorizing is effected by a move towards other categories: history,

authority, and the ideological construction of subjectivity. So in order to produce a knowledge of literature, the critic must step out of this labyrinthine character of specularity. To disentangle the text from its ideology and its "non-dit," Macherey argues, the critic must ponder a number of relationships. On the one hand, since forms are themes, their history is the history of their ideology: "L'oeuvre littéraire devra être étudiée dans un double rapport: rapport à l'histoire; rapport à une idéologie de cette histoire. On ne peut la réduire à l'un ou l'autre de ces termes" (137). On the other hand, a distinction must be introduced between the levels of authorial construction of ideological elements and their conditions of possibility, seen as ultimate determining factors. Indeed, this is what allows Macherey finally to move outside the formalist tendencies in his initial stages into his later formulations of literature as "ideological effects" upon concrete individuals. At the same time, it permits him to interrupt the specular relation between his theory of ideology and his theory of absence.

However, although Macherey earlier refused to advocate a hierarchical view of literature by universalizing the structure of absence and by proposing that the adventure novel is the archetype of narrative fiction, he now ranks writers in terms of their perception and representation of ideology:

> L'oeuvre détiendrait son contenu idéologique, non plus seulement à partir d'un point de vue idéologique, mais par le travail d'une forme spécifique: cette forme, qui est le 'talent' de l'écrivain, et qui permet de séparer les 'bons' écrivains d'avec les moins 'bons' et les mauvais, consiste en une certaine façon de 'percevoir' le processus historique, et les motivations idéologiques. (138-39; emphasis added)

It is in this process that writers demonstrate originality, producing their own individual versions of ideology from the ideological materials that exist outside them. Specifically, this originality is located at the level of technical ingenuity, "Device" ("cette forme, qui est le talent"), rather than at the primary level of the reproduction of content:

> [U]n écrivain ne refléte jamais mécaniquement, ni rigoureusement, l'idéologie qu'il "représente," même s'il s'est fixé comme seul but de la représenter: peut-être parce qu'une idéologie n'est suffisamment consistante pour survivre à l'epreuve de la figuration.. . . Toujours il donne à voir (ou à lire) une certaine position (qui n'est pas seulement celle d'un point de vue subjectif) par rapport au climat idéologique: il en fabrique une image particulière qui ne se confond pas exactement avec l'idéologie telle qu'elle se donne, qu'elle la trahisse, qu'elle la remette en question, ou qu'elle la modifie. C'est cela qu'il faut rendre compte en dernier recours, pour savoir de quoi l'oeuvre est faite. Et ce que l'auteur fait, il n'a pas toujours besoin de le dire. (220-21)

At the same time, ideology exists outside the author who gives it its voice and expression. An author's relationship to the text is marked by a set of unconscious

omissions that remain beyond subjective apprehension. In a sense, the history of ideology is outside the author's history, outside his or her story. "L'écrivain n'est qu'en apparence l'auteur de l'idéologie contenue par son oeuvre; en fait cette idéologie s'est constitutée indépendamment de lui. On la trouve dans la vie. . .: les écrivains ne sont pas la pour fabriquer des idéologies" (137). Writers are simple mediators of a thought process that is in continual change. At the same time, authors' representations of ideology figure in the text as versions of reality, but remain distinct from "theoretical knowledge." According to Macherey,

> le grand écrivain est celui qui nous propose de la réalité une 'perception' aiguë. Mais cette notion de "perception" pose bien des problèmes: on ne saurait évidemment la confondre avec celle de savoir théorique; ce que l'écrivain sait de la réalité ne se confond pas avec l'explication scientifique que le parti marxiste donnera de cette realité. (139; emphasis added)

The 'right' theoretical and scientific knowledge of the text becomes therefore a "Marxist knowledge" that is mediated by a political party. Thus scientificity has now acquired its 'real' sense, a theoretical Marxist dimension.

For Macherey, it is possible to get out of ideology, to transcend it, in order to understand its functioning and to analyze the work's meaning, to perceive the real mechanisms of its history in the making. He contends that

"à travers le livre, en passant par le livre, il devient possible de sortir du domaine de l'idéologie spontanée, d'une fausse conscience de soi de l'histoire et du temps" (155). Consequently, the text, ideology, and their common form are brought into the light, and their contradictions unveiled. If ideology is both unconscious of its limits and masks its own conditions of existence, the function of a theory of literary production will be to bring these limits to the forefront of critical understanding:

> La faiblesse essentielle d'une idéologie est qu'elle ne pourra jamais reconnaître elle-même ses limites réelles: à la rigueur elle sera capable de les apprendre d'ailleurs, dans le mouvement d'une critique radicale, non par une dénonciation superficielle de son contenu; la critique de l'idéologie est alors remplacée par <u>une critique de l'idéologique</u>". (154)

Macherey's theory of literature is now more than just a theory of the structure of absence. It is a critique of the "ideological" as full <u>presence</u> in the literary work, perceived especially through the transparency of various authorial, socio-historical, and unconscious manifestations. Through a theorization of ideology, the definition of the literary text has turned out to be a series of metonymic substitutions. Since the theorization of absence has proven the impossibility of sustaining the analysis of an abstract entity, as noted earlier, absence like ideology has to manifest itself in a myriad of forms which shape and are

shaped by socio-historical reality and its variations. It is this rationale that helps Macherey's theory to step out of the labyrinthine specularity of pure theory. As the two major concepts of absence and ideology by themselves cannot provide solid ground for the formulation of a scientific epistemological system, historical reality as class-structured and ideology-bound is introduced in order to achieve this 'scientific' goal. Further, relationships amongst such categories as literary style, absence, ideology, and in particular reality are scrutinized. This involves settling accounts with the question of reflection. This move presents itself as the guarantor of the attainment of scientific knowledge, for ideology must disappear in order to leave room for this epistemological undertaking. Scientificity must take over the territory that ideology inhabits. As Macherey argues, "la science supprime l'idéologie, elle l'efface; l'oeuvre la récuse, en se servant d'elle" (156). Therefore, if the problem of reflection were solved, this particular goal of scientificity would be attained. At the same time, this is the occasion for refining other Marxist notions such as "base," "superstructure," "hegemony," and "(re)production of domination" which Macherey has tried to reconcile with the Structuralist and psychoanalytic principles investigated in <u>Pour une théorie</u> and his later essays.

Beyond Absence: Reflection and Ideology:

The question of "Reflection" deserves closer attention because it is crucially important for Macherey's epistemology and in particular for his conceptualization of absence and ideology. "Reflection" presents the concept of ideology with a serious challenge, especially with reference to the notion of absence. Since its problematization within Marxism during the sixties, particularly as a result of the prominence of Structuralist theories of language, the concept of reflection has become a bone of contention among nearly all major critical approaches. And since reflection problematizes the relationship between the laws of analysis and their object of study, it requires explanation and solid grounding before any claim to a science of literary criticism can be sustained.

Macherey's treatment of this metaphor of reflection during the late 1960s as well as his return to it in the late 70s indicates both the importance of the concept itself to his theory of scientific criticism and its centrality to his theorization of other literary categories. Yet, in questioning both the nature of "reflection" and of "ideological effects," he no longer addresses the nature of the work's ontological structure as he initially set out to argue in the theoretical parts of Pour une théorie. The literary text is now discussed in relation to a social reality from which it cannot detach

itself, but which remains enclosed inside the text through the process of its construction. Initially, this question of reflection appears in Macherey's early work as a problematization of the metaphor of "the mirror." Here, the process of reflecting signification, not unlike ideology or the structure of absence, is overdetermined by a mechanism of distortion. The notion of the mirror is endowed with new dimensions. As Macherey proposes:

> Le rapport du miroir à l'objet qu'il réfléchit (la réalité historique) est partiel: le miroir opère un choix, sélectionne, ne refléchit pas la totalite de la réalité qui lui est offerte. Ce choix ne s'opère pas au hasard, il est caractéristique, et doit donc nous aider à connaître la nature du miroir.. . . Si l'oeuvre est un miroir ce n'est certainement pas par la vertu d'un rapport manifeste à la période "reflétée.". . . L'image de l'histoire dans le miroir ne sera donc pas un reflet au sens strict d'une reproduction. D'ailleurs. . .une telle reproduction est impossible. (Pour une théorie 143)

The image reflected by the mirroring process is, therefore, part of the ideological and architectonic manouvering of the text since there are only contradictions and incongruities between the world of history and the work of art. The concept of the literary device has thus acquired a primordial significance, a theoretical principle which Realism, Naturalism, and classical Marxism, in particular, have marginalized for a long time. In Macherey's revision of the classical Marxist view of "reflection," stylistic construction

and form have displaced unproblematic realistic representation. The traditionally privileged extrinsic relationship between the work and the outside world is replaced by a focus on the architectonic character of the text. Emphasis is more on "production" and technique than on "reflection." As Macherey notes, "le Paris de Balzac n'est pas une expression de [sic] Paris réel. . . .Il est le résultat d'une activité de fabrication, conforme aux exigences non de la réalité mais de l'oeuvre: il ne refléte ni une réalité ni une experience, mais un artifice" (72). How the work is finally produced is not determined by purely non-literary infrastructures. The text is constituted by its own reality, that of its stylistic and rhetorical elements, which are "conformes aux exigences de l'oeuvre." Still, it is not enough, Macherey insists, to stop at the view that literary mirroring is simply the result of formal construction: "il faut l'interpréter [reality] de telle façon qu'elle ne dissipe pas la complexité réelle. . . .[I]l ne suffit pas de dire qu'a travers le miroir la réalité apparaît dans sa fragmentation: l'image donnée par le miroir est elle-même fragmentée" (145). Reflection, like ideology and absence, is marked by a double bind process of fragmentation.

Indeed, mirror-reflection in literature is fragmentary before it is either purely contradictory or simply ideological. By not reflecting reality "en totalité," by

presenting the work's fractured and fissured textual body, this process reflects the contradictions of a world that does not appear contradictory because ideology ensures that all contradictions are smoothed over. Like the text of the dream-work, as already discussed, the literary text needs to hide its fissures and silences in order to implement its ideological effects efficiently. When approached through "scientific analysis," Macherey says, mirror-reflection reveals its true identity, its fragmentation and contradiction. Being complex by nature, the mirror performs a multiplicity of tasks, resulting in textual polysemy:

> Le miroir donne des choses une nouvelle mesure; il les approfondit en d'autres qui ne sont plus tout à fait le même objet. Il prolonge le monde: mais aussi le saisit, le gonfle, l'arrache. En lui la chose à la fois s'accomplit et se sépare.. . . [L]oin d'épanouir, il casse. C'est de cette déchirure que sortent les images. Par elles illustrés, le monde et ses pouvoirs apparaissent et disparaissent, défigurés au moment même où ils commencent à faire figure. (157)

Macherey's account of the mechanism of literary mirroring resembles Hans Christian Anderson's tale of a demon-teacher who invents a peculiar mirror that distorts all its reflected images (cited in Ferguson, et al., "Mirrors, Frames and Demons" 429). The demon is amused by his invention, but his students take the distorted images seriously: "All the pupils in the demon's school. . .ran about everywhere with the mirror, till at last there was not a country or a person

which had not been seen in this distorting mirror" (429). This mirror finally breaks and pieces of glass, each a miniature of the same mirror, fly throughout the world, settling in peoples' eyes and resulting in a strange vision of the world. Now everybody sees the world in distortion, for the mirror has the properties of a hologram. Macherey's mirror is like the demon's mirror. Both effect the same consequences with respect to the world. However, whereas the tale figures the impossiblity of mimesis or truthful representation, Macherey's theorization of mirroring, reflection, and ideology leads into the threshold of scientific knowledge -- beyond ideological distortions in order to confirm the possibility of non-ideological knowledge. For Macherey, understanding the way reflection links textuality and historical reality together is the road to the epistemological space of objectivity and scientificity.

Macherey addresses the process of literary mirroring and mimesis in more depth in his 1977 article, "Problems of Reflection," while taking up anew some of the notions he presented during the discussion of "l'image du miroir" in <u>Pour une théorie</u>. In the article, he levels his critique of traditional views of "reflection" against aesthetics, realism, and classical Marxism. He accuses them of reading art as a duplicate of reality. His aim is to go beyond the <u>simulacrum</u> principle and to find "an alternative notion of reflection

which is both objective and concrete" ("Problems of Reflection" 49). In his search for a "materialist" re-definition of this metaphor, he rejects the "idealist" view of reflection which describes it as an "image. . .defined by its unique property, its similarity" to an outside reality. Instead, he posits a "materialist. . .notion of reflection [that] is essentially a complex one," addressing itself to two major principles: "objectivity" and the "exactitude of the reflection" (49). In its focus on these two notions, this view of reflection transcends both Formalism with its narrow concentration on form, and Realism with its limited focus on content.

While focussing simultaneously on the latter two interpretive strategies, Macherey argues that "in order to get away from the abstract and subjective notion of art as ordered reality, we need to supplant it by a dual study, corresponding successively to the two aspects of reflection: art as <u>ideological form</u>, and as <u>aesthetic process</u>" (50). In this formulation, ideology is reemphasized as the focal point, and the function of its effects on concrete individuals is brought to the fore. In the meantime, the work's structure of absence is relegated to a secondary level of priority, to the realm of the living activity of ideology itself. Yet the forms of ideology and the artistic process of construction are not

totally detached from the other determining categories like history, society, and class conflict, in which the effects originate. In Pour une théorie, reflection is both a presence and an absence of reflection. It is through such a contradiction that knowledge is apprehended:

> En raison des conditions contradictoires dans lesquelles elle est produite, l'oeuvre littéraire est à la fois . . .reflet et absence de reflet: c'est pour cela qu'elle est elle-même contradictoire. Il ne faut donc pas dire que les contradictions de l'oeuvre sont le reflet des contradictions historiques, mais plutôt les conséquences de l'absence de ce reflet. . . [E]ntre l'objet et son "image" il ne peut y avoir une correspondence mécanique. (Pour une théorie 151; emphasis added)

Ten years after this statement was made, Macherey wrote his "Problems of Reflection" in order to redefine and refine the question of reflection as the relationship between the work and historical reality. He came to the conclusion that the work is the primary consequence of material conditions rather than the direct result of absence. Silence and gaps are no longer given priority. As he argues:

> Literature reflects reality firstly because it is effected on the basis of reality: in conditions and in a location which are, if not once for all, materially imposed on it. Its insertion into reality is not dependent upon a formal cause (similarity), but upon a real cause--its material determination, inside a series of concrete conditions which constitute the social reality of a historical period. ("Problems of Reflection" 50; emphasis added)

Here, material determination as an ultimate signifier and signified, an agent of the complex process of representation and reflection in literary discourse, returns to Macherey's frame of reference after having been exiled from it in earlier theorizations of the nature of the text as governed by a structure of absence. The "real conditions" here refer to the "conditions of possibility" that he evokes earlier in Pour une théorie, although the latter "conditions" are "determined" more by architectonic mechanisms and the history of literary motifs than by direct "material determination." This theoretical shift from a determinism of form to "material determination" including both form and economic structures imposes on the concept of reflection both an epistemological space ("a location") and an actantial motive ("conditions"). This shift also distances the concept of reflection from the notion of absence which turns out to be incompatible with any intentions of economic determinism as the locus of all origins or, in Althusserian terms, the determinism of "the last instance." Indeed, Macherey even brings in determinism of the economic structure at the last minute to save scientificity from endless specularity in an attempt to rationalize the origins of its concepts as well as its own beginnings. This is also a way of avoiding any lapse into the notion of "the indefinitely open nature of the work, its radical disorder" (52). Through this move towards the determinism of the conditions of possibility of the work, the notion of

ideological/literary effects is introduced in Macherey's epistemological framework.

Macherey's shift of focus from the notion of "reflection" to that of "ideological effects" is achieved through a consideration of the workings of language as cultural practice. This new direction is shaped, as Macherey acknowledges, by the studies of Louis Althusser, Renée Balibar, Pierre Bourdieu, on language, education, and ideology (see "Problems of Reflection" 50-51; and "Sur la littérature comme forme idéologique" 33-4 and passim). These writers consider the aesthetic features of the literary work not in terms of its purely artistic composition but as an "aesthetic process" that is located primarily at the level of "the educational apparatus, the base of the ideological superstructure" ("Problems of Reflection" 50). Ideological effects, accordingly, relate literature to society through educational institutions, which for Macherey serve the political aim of reproducing particular linguistic, cultural, and ideological practices. In this context, commenting on the seminal work of R. Balibar and D. Laporte, Le Français National (1974), Macherey points out:

> L'objectivité de la littérature, son rapport à la réalité objective, qui la détermine historiquement, n'est pas un rapport à un "objet" qu'elle représente, ce n'est pas un rapport de représentation. Ce n'est pas non plus purement et simplement un rapport instrumental, d'utilisation et de transformation de son matériau immédiat: les

> pratiques linguistiques scolairement déterminées. Précisément à cause de leur caractère contradictoire, les pratiques linguistiques ne sont pas utilisables comme une simple matière première: toute utilisation est intervention, prise de position, prise d'un parti (au sens général) dans la contradiction, et donc contribution active à son développement. L'objectivité de la littérature, c'est son intervention nécessaire dans le procès de détermination et de reproduction des pratiques linguistiques contradictoires d'une langue commune, ou se réalise l'efficacité idéologique de la scolarisation bourgeoise. ("Sur la littérature comme forme idéologique" 35-6; author's emphasis)

Macherey now posits the problematic of literature along the lines of ideological effects, the re-production of the production of linguistic practices, political contradiction, and domination. These categories determine both the relationship between literature and reality and the scientific character of the knowledge these categories yield. His argument is directed against Sartre's "idealist" question about literature: "Cette position du problème abolit la vieille question idéaliste: 'qu'est-ce que la littérature?', qui n'est pas la question de son objectivité déterminée, mais la question de son essence universellement artistique et humaine" (36). By focussing on this question of linguistic production and reproduction, Macherey's complex epistemological framework now becomes concerned with the production of ideological effects as a socio-political and psychological process that shapes subjects and consciousness:

> A study of the literary process is no longer an investigation into what literature is produced

> from, into the basis of its existence, but an attempt to identify the effects which it produces. This question must not be reduced to the one preceding it. ("Problems of Reflection" 51; emphasis added)

The question that has now become more central to the theory of literary production and to the "specificity" of literature pertains to the latter's "own particular effects in a coherent way" (52). Macherey's theoretical trajectory towards a science of criticism has thus been accompanied by a sliding process from one concept or category to another; from "absence" to "ideology" to "effects." The set of categories that form scientific method seem to duplicate each other, transferring meaning from one term to another, while deferring their meanings till the last instance. In fact, Macherey's conception of ideology as "ideological effects" ends in the determinism of material conditions and turns out to be the deferred answer to all the questions about the making of the text, its structure of absence, its process of mirroring, and its role of reproducing ideological relationships among individuals. Indeed, without the materialist determinism of the literary text, as a signifier, the concept of the structure of absence could not lead to this theory of reflection. The transcending of origins through the initial identification of absence as structuring the work has necessitated its being transcended in turn in order to allow for the reinstatement of a different and deferring

rationalization of origins. At this stage, these origins do not form the classical Marxist infrastructure of economic modes of production but the structure of ideology as a material practice which has acquired its own autonomous materiality.

Macherey, Althusser and Ideology:

Macherey's aspiration to a scientific theory of criticism, which started by paying direct attention to the formal features of narrative structures and then developed into a specular theory of absence before instituting ideology and ideological effects as privileged categories of analysis has its own origins elsewhere. In order to complement the analytical tools that Macherey has borrowed from Saussurian linguistics and Freudian interpretation of the dream-work, Macherey has adopted several concepts from Althusser's Structuralist Marxism. In theorizing ideology, Althusser, postulates theoretical knowledge as scientific, thus objective and universal. Not unlike Macherey's rationalization of the material and ideological conditions of literary manifestations, Althusser's theorization of ideology arises from a concern with the epistemological status of theoretical-philosophical discourse itself. Since Althusser grants legitimate currency only to scientific knowledge, conceived as Marxism, an "epistemological break" between

ideological and scientific discourse is posited as a necessary analytical move to break away from ideology: Ideological meaning must be abandoned in literary interpretation in order to grant currency to non-ideological, scientific knowledge.

Early in the 1960s, the debate about Humanism and its relationship to metaphysical conceptions of reality led Althusser and his colleagues to theorize a clear distinction between "Ideology" and "Science" (see Althusser, Eléments d'autocritique 42 and passim). In the journal La Nouvelle Critique, to which Althusser and Macherey were contributors, the argument centered around the role of ideology as a negation of science within a particular epistemological order. Meanwhile, scientific knowledge was addressed not only in emulation of the know-how of the natural sciences but also as a revision of Marxism. Macherey and Althusser attempted to revive interest in Marxist methodology and simultaneously to criticize Structuralism. This meant demonstrating the extent to which Marxism was the science par excellence, thus merging every notion of scientificity with a Marxist interpretation of discourse. As André Daspre notes, citing J. Ibarrola: "Le marxisme est une science. Le marxisme parle mal le langage de l'idéologie" (see Daspre, "Lettre sur la connaissance de l'art" 136). The opposition is therefore not between, say, mathematics or nuclear physics and ideology, but between Marxism as science and ideological representations of reality

as non-science. Being an erroneous mode of representation, ideology must disappear in order to leave the terrain for this "science," where history and discourse find their theoretical significance.

There is, nevertheless, a certain uneasiness on the part of Althusser and Macherey about the relationship between literary and artistic knowledge on the one hand and scientific knowledge on the other. It seems to be a major reason behind the way Macherey's project has developed so far. Such uneasiness finds expression in Althusser's statements about art in general. In his exchange with Althusser over the issue of the relation of art to scientific knoweldge, André Daspre points out that what needs to be taken into account a priori by any theory of art seeking true knowledge is the specificity of artistic knowledge itself, which is distinct from science: "Ce qui rend irremplaçable la connaissance artistique, c'est précisement qu'elle n'entre pas en concurrence avec la connaissance scientifique mais se situe à un autre niveau" ("Lettre" 138). For Daspre, art grants us a special kind of knowledge that is neither scientific nor ideological. He disagrees with Althusser's distinction between science and ideology as the only possible binarism allowing for an account of cultural practice. Daspre further argues that "a partir du moment où l'on a soigneusement défini l'exigence de rigueur qui caractérise la science, tout ce qui n'est pas la science

se retrouve, du point de vue de la connaissance, à peu près au même niveau, celui de l'equivoque, de l'inadéquation" (136). The problem with such a view, he goes on to say, is that it leads us to a "définition toute négative des différents domaines de l'idéologie, qui laisse evidemment échapper l'originalité de l'art" (136). Daspre also differs from Althusser and Macherey in holding that artistic knowledge possesses a prophetic dimension and it has a unique view of the future: "L'art d'ailleurs ne se limite pas à nous donner connaissance du present; il lui arrive de devancer l'Histoire" (137). Art's representation of reality is based on a full understanding of the present, which constitutes its ability to see ahead in time, hence the irrelevance of realism since it perceives art as a mere reflection of the present, limited to its moment of production. Daspre contends:

> En fait l'art n'est jamais, même l'art naturaliste, un simple reflet du réel. L'artiste se livre à un travail d'observation et de transcription du réel qui en presente une interpretation originale. Les informations sur la réalité que nous livrent les oeuvres ne sont pas de même nature que celles de la science; elles ne sont pas non plus une simple description du réel; elles ont au contraire une valeur irremplaçable . . .nous pouvons trouver notre destin inscrit dans l'oeuvre de Picasso. (137; emphasis added)

Daspre never specifies exactly how this special epistemological import that art brings to us is different from scientific knowledge. It is taken for granted that there is a "miracle de l'art" and that it offers us a valuable lesson

about the world: "il m'a paru utile de souligner que, à côté de la connaissance scientifique, l'oeuvre d'art pouvait nous apporter une certaine forme de connaissance du réel dont on n'a pas le droit de se priver" (140). The type of knowledge that art generates seems to be governed by a logic that is intrinsic to art itself. Against Daspre, Althusser argues in his "Réponse" (1966) that intrinsic characteristics do not determine artistic meaning by themselves. Balzac, Althusser states, did not abandon his reactionary ideas in his fiction because of the logic of his art: "c'est parce qu'il [Balzac] les conserve qu'il peut produire son oeuvre, c'est parce qu'il peut produire en elle cette 'distance' intérieure qui nous donnera sur elle une 'vue' critique" (144). Thus the content of art is in part, especially at the level of its distance from ideology, the result of an authorial presence which shapes the meaning of the work and reveals its trangression of the dominant ideology by offering a critique of it. It is this critique, "cette distance," which solves the ambiguous relation between critical knowledge and scientific knowledge in Althusser's view.

However, by emphasizing this notion of "the miracle of art," Daspre underscores the centrality of aesthetics to human thought. Accordingly, this kind of knowledge ought to coexist with scientific meaning because it offers us a "humanist history" of the world: "c'est au niveau de l'homme

"humanist history" of the world: "c'est au niveau de l'homme que se place l'artiste, des rapports vécus entre les hommes .. . . Avec l'artiste l'histoire devient humaine" (158; 139). It must be deduced from this view that scientific knowledge lacks this humanist dimension which only art can provide; otherwise, if science were also to be seen as related to "human" experience, Daspre would have perceived it as akin to art. But Daspre does not allude to that problem. Indeed, he seems to be leveling his critique at the same time against Althusser's anti- humanism which conceives history not to be governed by "Man" but by a set of abstract structures, originating in the class struggle. In answer to John Lewis, who also raises the question of humanism, Althusser asks: "What is this 'man' who 'makes' history? A mystery" (Essays on Ideology 78). Althusser goes on to explain: "One cannot begin with man because that would be to begin with a bourgois idea of 'man', and because the idea of beginning with man, . . .of an absolute point of departure (= of an 'essence') belongs to bourgeois philosophy" (85). However, Daspre insists that artistic knowledge should not try to replace science, reemphasizing thereby the problematic attempt to reconcile science and artistic knowledge. He argues that "ce qui rend irremplaçable la connaissance artistique, c'est précisément qu'elle n'entre pas en concurrence avec la connaissance scientifique mais se situe à un autre niveau ("Lettre" 138-39).

Nonetheless, both Daspre and Althusser agree that a return to Marxism is a way of reclaiming for art its liberty and integrity, but Daspre thinks that such a return is not enough. For him, any form of dogmatism may risk establishing "une sorte de religion de l'art" (140). One of the errors of the proletarian ideology ("le mouvement ouvrier"), he insists, is that art has been granted a secondary position. Listening to the word of the artist only when the latter is in the service of the party has been a major flaw in Marxist views of art. In fact, the situation should be reversed for only through the freedom of the artist can real knowledge, "human" knowledge, be achieved. Thus Daspre's argument, in contrast to Althusser's and Macherey's scientific project, has pushed aside the question of scientificity in literary knowledge.

In his "Réponse," Althusser focuses on two major points: first, whether art is to be considered as ideological; second, the relationship between art and science ("Réponse" 141, 143). Both points are reconciled at the level of the establishment of "une connaissance de l'art," which has "scientific" characteristics. At the same time, Althusser distinguishes between "authentic art" and "non-authentic art," a hierarchization that Macherey ascribes to despite his attempt to keep it out of his framework by offering analyses of non-canonical texts (see Pour une théorie 138-9).

Althusser's inability to go beyond the hierarchization of art creates a theoretical problem for the relationship he establishes between science, artistic knowledge, and art. In a highly controversial thesis, Althusser puts forward his main view of this complex and problematic distinction between "art" and "science" as follows:

> Je ne range pas l'art véritable parmi les idéologies, bien que l'art entretienne un rapport tout à fait particulier et spécifique avec l'idéologie. . . .
>
> [L]'art (je parle de l'art authentique, et non des oeuvres de niveau moyen ou médiocre) ne nous donne pas au sens strict une connaissance, il ne remplace donc pas la connaissance, (au sens moderne: la connaissance scientifique), mais ce qu'il nous donne entretient pourtant un certain rapport spécifique avec la connaissance. Ce rapport n'est pas un rapport d'identité mais un rapport de différence. . . .Le propre de l'art est de nous "donner à voir," "donner à percevoir," "donner à sentir," quelque chose qui fait allusion à la réalité. (142, author's emphasis)

Notwithstanding here the speaking subject "Je" which problematizes any theoretical perspective claiming scientific status, Althusser's statement presents us with four essential propositions: (a) that aesthetic knowledge, which emanates only from "authentic art" is not scientific; (b) that it is not ideology; (c) that it maintains a certain relationship--defined as that of "difference" instead of similarity--with science; and (d) that it is related to ideology without being itself ideological. This set of notions recalls Macherey's categories of ideology, absence, the theoretical distance

between method and its object, and ideological effects, as well as the theoretical problems evoked earlier. For Althusser, artistic knowledge makes us "see," "feel," but not "know" what art alludes to, its ideology. Indeed, it is a tripartite relationship, defined through a series of negations at the level of the representation and apprehension of the real. Art-knowledge only alludes to the ideology in which it "bathes," and from which it takes its origins. Accordingly, art does not seem to concern itself with an exact reproduction of reality or knowledge of the present. Nor does it predict the future as Daspre says. On the contrary, it produces a vision of ideology by alluding to it. Althusser contends that "ce que l'art nous donne à voir. . .c'est l'idéologie dont il naît, dans laquelle il baigne, dont il se détache en tant qu'art, et à laquelle il fait allusion. . .Une vue qui suppose un recul, une prise de distance sur l'idéologie" (142). Indeed, this "recul" which separates art from ideology precedes Macherey's notions of distance and absence and goes beyond art by instituting a privileged epistemological category that negates ideology.

Marked by what Macherey labels a rupture between the object (ideology) and the means it uses in order to present this object to us, "authentic art" assumes a critical position vis-a-vis its object of study. It reveals the contradictions of ideology. Concerning the distance between the object and

its apprehension or representation, both theory and "authentic art" sustain a similar relationship to a third category (ideology) whose truth they reveal. This process renders art, albeit indirectly, a form of knowledge. But since art according to both Althusser and Daspre is not science, it must logically exist outside the purview of scientific knowledge. In other words, "authentic art" becomes "knowledge" while remaining distanced from ideology as well as from science, whose laws are the yardstick for measuring the intensity of real knowledge. This is a paradox that becomes central to Althusser and anticipates Macherey. While revealing an impasse that is similar to the one Macherey faces when theorizing the structure of absence and ideology, Althusser's theory of ideology and science must seek ways of grasping that epistemological signifier which cannot be signified except through other signifiers. It must anchor the epistemological status of art elsewhere: in an origin that pretends to be a negation of all origins. First, it roots artistic knowledge in the ideology from which it remains detached. Second, it approaches "scientific knowledge" via its ability to offer ways of knowing ideology, therefore implying its rapprochement with the latter as the locus of its genesis. Third, through a movement towards the evocation of "ideological effects," it perceives ideology as part of a system's reproductive means of ideological production within a social formation (see Althusser, Positions 73 and passim).

Hence, Althusser's and Macherey's shared reversion to the reinstatement of final signifiers as ultimate explanatory terms--after having originally attempted to abandon a series of commonly adopted categories within both traditional Marxist and non-Marxist aesthetics--reveals the impasse at which the theory of ideology arrives. The various explanations given to ideology become effected mainly through synonymic and metonymic constructions. And since essentialist meanings are initially assumed to be metaphysical, Althusser, like Macherey, is left basically with signifiers referring to each other. Thus art is not ideology but refers to it; it is not science but approaches it; it is not life ("le vécu") but resembles it. This specularity of theorizing artistic concepts ultimately necessitates, as in the case of Macherey, a necessary appeal to materialist determinism as the telos of the scientific discourse sought. In his search for an exact definition of ideology in opposition to science, Althusser relates ideology to other categories, both abstract and concrete, to living experience, human existence, and theoretical structures ("généralités"). He moves from concrete, material entities towards abstract, theoretical criteria in order to show the character of scientific knowledge as a theory of structures. But he also moves from abstract notions of "break", "distance", and "absence" towards concrete notions of "effects," "interpellation," and "subject

ideology. In order to identify the material manifestations of ideology, both Althusser and Macherey follow a trajectory towards an account of individual subjects perceived as revelatory signs of the effects of ideological structures. This move also theorizes lived experience by emphasizing experience as a central frame of reference for the notion of ideological effects. Althusser argues:

> Quand on parle d'idéologie, nous devons savoir que l'idéologie se glisse dans toutes les activités des hommes, qu'elle est identique au "vécu" même de l'existence humaine: c'est pourquoi la forme dans laquelle l'idéologie nous est "donnée à voir" dans le grand roman a pour contenu le "vécu" des individus. Ce "vécu" n'est pas un donné, le donné d'une "réalité" pure, mais le "vécu" spontané de l'idéologie dans son rapport propre au réel. ("Réponse" 143)

On the one hand, the focus on effects leads Althusser to perceive ideology as being closer to spontaneous representations of the world than to "reality." There even exists an identical relationship between ideology as such and the lived experience of individual human beings. This link establishes a dichotomy of form and content within the domain of ideology itself. It is this dichotomy that Macherey subscribes to initially because he perceives content itself as a manifestation of form. Accordingly, Jules Verne's novels, for instance, represent and transcend their ideological character through their themes, especially the motif of the "island." The dichotomy is not a replica of the lived experiences of real individuals. It merely alludes to them. In

experiences of real individuals. It merely alludes to them. In accordance with the same view, Althusser considers that the form of "great fiction" has as its content the "lives of individuals." To him, the content of discourse is not reality but a spontaneous apprehension of what it pretends to be.

On the other hand, by differentiating art from science, Althusser notes that science deals with another dimension of the real: its abstraction into a series of structural types. He indicates that "la science aurait affaire à <u>un domaine</u> de la réalité (disons, en opposition au 'vécu' et à l'`individu': l'abstraction des structures)" (143). Science is accordingly theoretical whereas art, like ideology, is not. And in order to achieve the same status of scientificity, art must be transformed through critical theory so as to generate abstract, structural categories. In a similar fashion, ideology will be superseded as a spontaneous vision of the world. However, despite these differential interrelationships between art and ideology, all the categories that constitute both of them may become equal subjects of scientific inquiry. They can be assessed through this method in order to generate a unified type of knowledge: "le savoir scientifique." Indeed, As Althusser contends, "l'idéologie est aussi l'objet de la science, le 'vécu' est aussi l'objet de la science,

l'«individuel» est aussi l'objet de la science" (143). If we considered the last term as a metaphor (see Olson, Science as Metaphor 3), we could say that the final signifier that transcends all other signifiers is "science." It seems that only Althusser's proposed "science" does not reflect on itself in order to reveal its own origins, absences, contradictions, and teleology. Nor does it seem to necessitate the theorization of its own epistemology. "Science" now transcends history for it becomes fixed in time, negating all possible negations of its own institutionalization and rationality.

As a result, a plurality of elements yields a unifying method, a single epistemological process, to account for an "object," which is constituted by a varied ensemble. This move builds up a unifying mode of thought out of a multiplicity of categories, thereby banishing any form of pluralism within this proposed theory of knowledge itself. Such a view is consistent with the Althusserian telos which, not unlike Macherey's, reinstates the monolithic paradigm of economic determinism "in the last instance," thereby excluding all notions of repression, absence, and difference from the propounded theory itself. In a sense, the Althusserian theory of science and ideology assumes the contradictoriness of its "object" but transcends that same character within its own analysis by rejecting it as a possible attribute of its own

rationality. In fact, its account of the relationship between art and Ideology excludes every other analytic methodology that could emerge out of absence in the object, and which might refute Althusser's structural economism itself. This is why the difference that Althusser notes between art and science remains ambiguous. If "l'art nous apport[e] effectivement autre chose que la science," as he argues, and if "il n'y a pas d'opposition entre eux, mais une différence" ("Réponse" 145), how can the thesis be sustained that only "scientific" knowledge is legitimate? Perhaps the dichotomy itself must be surpassed in order to allow room for possible contradictions and absences within even the most privileged form of human thought, such as Althusser's and Macherey's scientific theory of literary production.

For Althusser, art and science remain different in crucial ways. They do not represent the world to us in the same fashion; only science approximates the real meaning of the world. Art has to go through another stage of analysis via the scientific method in order for it to release this knowledge. It is the nature of this scientific method in particular that should be questioned. Althusser goes on to argue:

> La vraie différence entre l'art et la science tient à la forme spécifique dans laquelle elles nous donnent, de manière tout à fait différente, le même objet: l'art dans la forme du "voir" et du

> "percevoir" ou du "sentir", la science dans la forme de la connaissance (au sens strict: par concepts). (143)

Accordingly, as art remains unable to handle concepts, it is bound by its nature to live within ideology and marks its closeness to ideology by exploiting the latter's language, allowing it to speak to us. This is why, Althusser advises, art must seek ways of abandoning this closeness by detaching itself from ideology and severing all ties with it in order to acquire the epistemological status of scientific thought. Art must try to reach towards science through theory, analysis, and criticism. Through criticism, both art and ideology relinquish their spontaneous tendencies and move towards the status of scientific knowledge:

> Comme toute connaissance, la connaissance de l'art suppose une rupture préalable avec le langage de la spontanéité idéologique, et la constitution d'un corps de concepts scientifiques pour le remplir. Il faut avoir conscience de la nécessité de cette rupture avec l'idéologie pour pouvoir entreprendre de constituer l'édifice d'une connaissance de l'art. (145)

It was the absence of such an ability to effect this "rupture" with ideological spontaneity that marked the Classical Age. According to Althusser, the self was then unconscious of its own existence because it lacked the critical capacity to theorize its own existence. It is an idea that recalls Hegel's view of the early stages of development of humanity before the human spirit is moved into full

consciousness. Indeed, Althusser maintains this notion in his reading of ideology as spontaneous apprehension of individuals' existence and their relationships to each other. In his review of Bertolazzi's play, El Nost Milan, he comments:

> Qu'est-ce que l'idéologie d'une société ou d'un temps, sinon la conscience de soi de cette société ou de ce temps, c'est-à-dire une matière immédiate qui implique, recherche, et naturellement trouve spontanément sa forme dans la figure de la conscience de soi vivant la totalité de son monde dans la transparence de ses propres mythes? ("Le 'Piccolo': Bertolazzi et Brecht" 144-45)

Thus every form of ideology represents a consciousness of a society's view of itself through its own representations, resulting in a form of alienation. A break away from this ideological consciousness of meaning is, therefore, made necessary by the nature of scientific knowledge which intervenes in the discourse of ideology in order to dispel it and liberate consciousness.

Yet, when scrutinized closely, this necessary move is mainly a condition for the next step in Althusser's attempt to make this type of knowledge his privileged model. Having established a priori Marxism as a "science," Althusser's task is now to establish the nature of its opposite form of consciousness, which is labelled ideology. This is only a stage in the process of apprehending the

ultimate origin of knowledge, situated at the level of "ideological effects." Althusser contends that "s'il s'agit de connaître l'art, il faut commencer nécessairement par 'la réflexion rigoureuse sur les concepts fondamentaux du marxisme': il n'y a pas d'autre voie" ("Réponse" 145). It is a path, a theoretical orientation ("une voie") that exists only to the exclusion of all other paths that can be taken by theoretical inquiry, hence limiting future developments of theory itself, especially if this theory develops along anti-Marxist lines. By fixing the evolution of history at the level of a particular theoretical model, Althusser's theory expells difference from a site that generates it. Once the scientific plenitude of the sign is achieved, there is no need to look for something else. Even absence and its collaborative distorting processes are no longer active. The text has become a coherent totality of meaning, mediating a single truth about the spontaneous representations of lived human experience.

The main Althusserian thesis which has shaped the theoretical trajectory of Macherey's theory of literary production and led it towards a view of the "aesthetic effect" as the origin of ideology, absence, and textuality, is formulated around the construction of subjectivity as effected by "Ideological State Apparatuses." The primary role of these "apparatuses," according to Althusser, is to produce particular individuals as "subjects" destined to serve the

dominant order. This process is achieved mainly through the "Educational Apparatus," which inculcates ideology as non-science into the minds of individuals from an early age and makes them members of a particular social order. The aim of such a politico-ideological phenomenon is to ensure the reproduction by ideology of the relations of production within that order. In this process, the schooling system is a major ideological apparatus which works in alliance with all the other "State apparatuses," such as the courts, the Church, the police, asylums, etc. Literature, as a manipulator of language and ideology, is part of this ideological mechanism. These propositions remain consistent with the essential binary opposition that Althusser establishes between "Science" and "Ideology" and characterize the practice of ideology as deceitful in opposition to scientific thought which is truthful and liberating.

In "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'Etat," Althusser proposes his major thesis: "l'idéologie interpelle les individus en sujets," thereby constructing them as imaginary apprehensions of what they really are:

> [L]a catégorie du sujet n'est constitutive de toute idéologie, qu'en tant que toute idéologie a pour fonction (qui la définit) de "constituer" des individus concrets en sujets. C'est dans ce jeu de double constitution qu'existe le fonctionnement de toute idéologie, l'idéologie n'etant rien que son fonctionnement dans les formes matérielles de l'existence de ce fonctionnement. (Positions 110; emphasis added)

Through their effects, ideological apparatuses shape individual consciousness without the individual's being aware of such a process. The apparatus employs cultural materials in order to fulfill the role of subject production. According to Althusser, we must make a distinction between the "Subject" and the "subject," the latter standing for any concrete individual in society whereas the former represents a "unique," abstract entity such as God or the Father or the "Symbolic Order" in Lacanian terms. The individual subject is "sujet par le Sujet et assujetti au Sujet" (118). A good example of this complex relationship of subjectivization that Althusser offers is that of "l'idéologie religieuse chretienne," which interpellates all Christians through the voice of the Lord. Althusser maintains that as individuals, Christian subjects must obey a set of commandments in order to qualify for the right subjectivization ("assujettissement"), in order to become "des (bons) sujets" (120). This process of subject production is essential to the functioning of a religious ideology and its apparatus. In the same manner, no other ideological apparatus can survive without this mode of subject processing. This theoretical formulation of the process of "assujettissement" provides the framework of literary analysis for the later Macherey, in particular, when he characterizes literary meaning as governed by its "ideological effects."

Macherey, "Ideological Effects" and Scientificity:

In "Sur la littérature comme forme idéologique," Macherey and Balibar apply the Althusserian theory of ideology and subject construction in their analysis of literary/ ideological effects, which fall into three categories: the "aesthetic effect," "the ideological effect," and "the fiction effect." As Balibar and Macherey maintain: "déterminer la littérature comme formation idéologique particulière, c'est poser un tout autre problème: celui de la spécificité des effets idéologiques produits par la littérature, et du mode (mécanisme) selon lequel elle les produit" ("Sur la littérature" 37). The aesthetic effect becomes ideological when literature mediates a particular process of identification of the reader and the audience in general with the characters of the text. It is a process through which "se constitue a la fois la conscience fictive des personnages et la conscience idéologique du lecteur" (40). Enhancing this aesthetic effect is the fiction effect that literature, as a fictional and imaginary production of reality, produces: "Le texte littéraire produit en même temps un effet de réalité et un effet de fiction, privilégiant tantôt l'un et tantôt l'autre, interprétant l'un par l'autre et inversement, mais toujours sur la base de ce couple" (42). Literature is

therefore not only a fiction but a production of fictions as well as a processing of consciousness.

But Macherey and Balibar insist, the literary effects--aesthetic, fictional, and ideological--must not be reduced to the purely ideological for it is part and parcel of all social functions whether they be of a judicial, political, or religious, as well as other non-literary practices. Literary ideological effects are therefore only part of the plethora of what Althusser has named the Ideological State Appartuses. The imbrication of literary effects in this wider ideological framework turns them, according to Macherey and Balibar, into effets of hegemonic power and ideological domination:

> Un tel effet doit donc finalement être décrit à un triple niveau, selon les trois aspets d'un même procès social et de ses formes historiques successives: comme produit sous des rapports materiels déterminés; comme un moment du procès de reproduction de l'idéologie dominante; et par consequent en lui-même comme effet de domination idéologique. (44)

This view of the literary effect as serving ideological domination, "le texte littéraire est l'opérateur d'une reproduction de l'idéologie dans son ensemble" (46), offers us a monolithic reading of the function of literature (See Thomas E. Lewis, "Aesthetic Effect/Ideological Effect" 10). Such a reading prescribes a literary/ideological space that is devoid

of conflict and contradiction. The assumed class struggle is located outside this space between ideology and science. Indeed, Macherey and Balibar, like Althusser in his theorization of ideology, seem to be oblivious to the potential role of literature as resistence to effects of ideological domination. They seem to uphold a view of the subject, the individual who is subjected to the aesthetic effects, as passively responding to literature and ideological domination. However, in practice, a particular literary project or ideological program hardly achieves the total support of its addressees; consensus is not easy to come by in the domain of ideological struggle. Often an ideological project may generate an opposite reaction, sometimes even a refutation of the ideological message intended or initially imparted. There is never a unanimous agreement on a particular meaning of a literary text. This is what makes literature a complex phenomenon, its significance and effects everchanging and unpredictable.

However, situated within the framework of scientific knowledge and criticism, Macherey's theory of ideological effects invites a number of questions that disturb his theoretical model as a whole: (a) would the "scientific culture" need to interpellate individuals in the same way a religious apparatus would, and through the use of its own cultural "apparatuses" transform individuals into "subjects"?

(b) do concrete subjects conversely affect the working of these apparatuses as well and thereby escape the process of their "assujettissement"? (c) do we need other apparatuses in order to change the existing ideological apparatuses? If so, what would be their subjectivizing nature? Can one talk about the effects of theory and science and their process of subject "interpellation" à la Althusser? Since affirmative answers to all these questions are possible, the boundary that Macherey after Althusser draws between "science" and "ideology" is blurred and the status of scientific knowledge in the literary domain is problematized further. At the same time, belief in the truthfulness of "science," conceived of as Marxist epistemology, makes the problem even more complex: to know art, "il faut commencer necessairement par '<u>la réflexion rigoureuse sur les concepts fondamentaux du marxisme</u>'" (Althusser, "Réponse" 145).

This privileging of Marxism by granting it all the positivistic characteristics that are usually attributed to the natural sciences has led Pierre Bourdieu to question the epistemological status of a Marxist theory that remains oblivious to the effects of theory itself. He argues:

> . . .il reste que seulement après Marx et même après la constitution des partis capables d'imposer selon la théorie de la lutte de classes que l'on peut en toute rigueur parler de classes et de lutte de classes. Si bien que ceux qui, au nom du marxisme, cherchent les classes et la lutte des classes dans des sociétés précapitalistes, et

> prémarxistes, commettent une erreur théorique tout à fait typique de la combinaison de réalisme scientiste et d'économisme marxiste à chercher les classes dans la réalité même du monde social, souvent réduite à sa dimension économique: paradoxalement, la théorie marxiste, qui a exercé un effet de théorie sans équivalent dans l'histoire, n'accorde aucune place à l'effet de théorie dans sa théorie de l'histoire, et de la classe. (Bourdieu, Ce Que parler veut dire 158)

Bourdieu's critique here of classical Marxist theory refutes as well Althusser's and Macherey's priorization of ideological effects for they ignore the effects of their own theoretical practice. In fact, Bourdieu extends his critique to any theory that privileges its practice and perceives it as effecting innocent subjectivizing processes. In this context, Bourdieu goes on to point out: "la science sociale doit englober dans la théorie du monde social une théorie de l'effet de théorie qui, en contribuant à imposer d'une manière plus ou moins autorisée de voir le monde social, contribue à faire la réalité de ce monde" (100; emphasis added). However, despite this critique, Bourdieu remains on the side of Althusser and Macherey by advocating the necessity of analyzing "ideological effects" as a primeval category of theoretical knowledge.

However, in addition to the "ideological effects" which halt the search for the final meaning of the structure of absence in Macherey's project, it is worth noting two last points in this discussion of scientificity. First, Macherey's

idea of Marxism as science raises the question of the optimistic view of science. Inadvertently, this view marks a continuation of a particular view of scientific knowledge and the world, one which dominated the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Jordanova, The Language of Nature 30, and passim; Eichner, "The Rise of Modern Science" 8-30; and Levy-Leblond, L'Esprit de sel 25-30). Second, the Althusserian conception of science seems to underestimate the dictum which says that every 'science' may turn, one day, into a 'non-science' if it has not already done so; i.e. that in every proclaimed science, there are ideological elements without which no science can exist and which often sustain scientificity itself. Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigm shifts which documents the role that "communities of scientists" play in shaping the history of the natural sciences lends strong support to such a critique of Althusser's and Macherey's view of Marxist science. Further, the cases concerning Lyssenko's genetics in the Soviet Union in the 1940s (see Lecourt, Lyssenko: histoire réelle d'une "Science Proletarienne") and of Mendel's 1866 expriments on hybridization, which were not recognized until 1900 as a result of the priority dispute among three scientists (see Shrader, "The Evolutionary Development of Science" 283), prove the extent to which some fraudulent theories may thrive for a long time as "Scientific" before they are refuted (see also Medawar, "Scientific Fraud" 5-6). As Shrader says, the point is,

> . . .selection pressures on scientists can shape the development (and evaluation) of scientific theories. In so far as we are prone to believe that scientific theories should be judged independently of their possible ideological implications, we should perhaps seek to remove pressures which favour a scientist or a theory on purely ideological grounds. ("The Evolutionary Development of Science" 295)

Another problem arises when Althusser, like Macherey, introduces the notion of scientificity to implement the process of the subject's distanciation from ideology in order to achieve theoretical, scientific knowledge, the latter being a higher stage of consciousness. Atlhusser reveals this problem in two propositions: that "l'idéologie est éternelle", and that "proper" knowledge is "subjectless" ("un discours scientifique (sans sujet)") because it detaches itself from ideological representations through theoretical abstractions (Positions 100). As Macherey after Althusser argues, "la science supprime l'idéologie, elle l'efface" (Pour une théorie 156). The juxtaposition of these two positions generates a pressing question: How could a system of thought "efface" or "suppress" an "eternal" thought-category? As a way of disentangling this paradox, Althusser argues:

> [R]econnaître que nous sommes des sujets, et que nous fonctionnons dans les rituels pratiques de la vie quotidienne la plus élémentaire. . .nous donne seulement la "conscience" de notre pratique incessante (éternelle) de la reconnaissance idéologique,--sa conscience c'est-à-dire sa reconnaissance,--mais elle ne nous donne nullement

> la connaissance (scientifique) du mécanisme de cette reconnaissance. Or c'est à cette connaissance qu'il faut en venir, si on veut, tout en parlant dans l'idéologie et du sein de l'idéologie, esquisser un discours qui tente de rompre avec l'idéologie pour risquer d'être le commencement d'un discours scientifique (sans sujet) sur l'idéologie. (Positions 112-3; emphasis added)

According to this formulation, a theory of knowledge undertakes as its primary goal a "break" away from ideology. This break effects the theoretical distance, which differentiates critical practice from artistic activity. The break or "rupture épistémologique" Althusser notes elsewhere can be effected also within Marxism itself, between the works of the young Marx and those of his later years:

> La "coupure" entre la science marxiste et sa préhistoire idéologique nous renvoie à tout autre chose qu'à une théorie de la différence entre la science et l'idéologie, à tout autre chose qu'à une épistémologie. Elle nous renvoie d'une part à une théorie de la superstructure, où figurent l'Etat et les Idéologies.. . . Elle nous renvoie d'autre part à une théorie des conditions matérielles (production), sociales (division du travail, lutte des classes), idéologiques et philosophiques des procès de production des connaissances. (Althusser, Eléments d'autocritique 115)

The epistemological break marks the transition from an ideological mode of signification to a scientific one and sends us to other levels of signification in which final meaning is anchored. These levels connect the text to a plethora of determining factors that range from the political to the cultural and the economic. All these categories and

levels of signification form the base-superstructure metaphor which has attracted wide such attention in Marxist theory. For Althusser, as for Macherey, going beyond ideology in order to institute the scientificity of meaning is a necessary move. This can be achieved only through a scientific (Marxist) analysis of the process of ideological "subjectivization" as it manifests itself in the cultural mechanisms that relate the base and the superstructures. Similarly, at the level of literary theory, ideological effects must be analyzed in order to know the text, unveil its truth (its ideology), replenish the gaps of its structure of absence, and apprehend its non-ideological substance. But if we accept the proposition that a science can exist at a particular historical moment of its development as a non-science, i.e., as an ideology, for example the young Marx, or a "scientific fraud," to use Medawar's expression, we may conclude that the scientificity of a particular meaning cannot be sustained transhistorically (see Herbert, "Remarques" 74; and Canguilhem, "Qu'est-ce qu'une idéologie scientifique?" 13). Perhaps, instead of trying to abandon the realm of ideology in search of a set of "scientific" criteria that can exist diachronically in a non-ideological epistemological space, we may consider staying inside that realm of ideology and expanding it further in order to incorporate in it scientificity itself as an ideological metaphor. We will then need to theorize texts in their relation to a plurality of

ideologies instead of a polarizing scientific and non-scientific types of knowledge.

Conclusion:

Macherey's theorization of absence, ideology, and scientific criticism has led him to address ideological effects as the origin of literary meaning and as the telos of his scientific project. To finalize the meaning of scientific criticism, Macherey is forced to go beyond the category of absence. In what seems to be a search for an edenic epistemological terrain beyond the territory of ideological representation in literature and of ideological interpretation in criticism, Macherey's formulation of a set of critical categories the laws of literary criticism, has necessitated the surpassing of the structure of absence which he initially posits as essential to the nature of the text. He "interrogates" ideology in order to force it to yield a non-ideological meaning, a science. Macherey says that "en interrogeant une idéologie, en lui faisant passer un interrogatoire, on peut constater l'existence de ses limites, parce qu'on les rencontre comme un obstacle impossible à franchir; elles sont là, mais on ne peut les faire parler" (Pour une théorie 155). This view does not admit that "un interrogatoire" by itself does not yield all the significances of the absence about which ideology must remain silent.

Further, the "interrogatoire" of a critical method practiced to extract a certain scientific knowledge needs to be questioned in turn because it tends to impose its own frame of interrogation on the object of interrogation. In fact, during an interrogation, the extracted information has to do as much with the means of interrogation as with the communicated message and other potential, undeclared messages. Therefore, it may not be correct to say that "pour savoir ce que veut dire une idéologie, pour en exprimer le sens, il faut donc sortir de l'idéologie; l'attaquer de l'extérieur, dans l'effort de donner forme à ce qui est informe" (155). The thought of having evaded ideology may turn out to be ideological itself. For an ideology may never be attacked from outside, since by doing so, yet another frame of reference, another method, is sought and adopted in order to shape the "formless" form of this refuted ideology.

Thus, Macherey's theoretical project of a science of criticism has developed from a theory of the text's structure of absence to a theory of ideology and its effects, by way of Saussurian and Freudian methodological categories. His rationalization of the question of scientificity and his attempt to surpass ideology have led him to an epistemology that does not scrutinize its own "scientific" premisses. On the one hand, the notion of absence has proven to be incompatible with scientificity and, therefore, has to be

abandoned as well in order to ground the Marxist and Structuralist categories Macherey adopts. On the other hand, scientificity is turned into a positive concept that has a function or a mission: to defend Macherey's re-reading of Marxism and to accommodate it to the domain of literary studies. Hence Umberto Eco's statement fits Macherey's project quite accurately: "it is more 'scientific' not to conceal [one's]. . .motivations, so as to spare. . .readers any 'scientific' delusions" (A Theory of Semiotics 29).

PART FOUR: Macherey after Leavis, or the Ideology of Scientificity in Criticism

> There are no "facts" in science, only an infinity of possible differences among which to choose, and one's choice of a particular difference cannot not be determined by one's "hypotheses.". . . "[P]ure" knowledge as such has no value. ALL KNOWLEDGE, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, IS INSTRUMENTAL. In the scientific terms of information theory: information is everywhere, but knowledge can only occur within the ecosystemic context of a goal-seeking adaptive system. If this is the case, then we are REQUIRED to ask what the knowledge is being used for and by whom. (Wilden, System and Structure xxi-ii; author's emphasis)

The idea of scientificity in criticism as it has been challenged by F.R. Leavis and theorized by Pierre Macherey reveals the extent to which this metaphor has turned out to be a central concept in the development of twentieth-century literary criticism, both on the right and the left. As an epistemological phenomenon, scientificity has manifested itself not only in literary studies but in the other disciplines of the humanities as well, mainly in philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology, historiography, and linguistics (see Winch, The Idea of a Social Science; Rousseau, "Literature and Science"; Muller, Science and

Criticism 257-68; and Cullis, "Science and Literature" 96). Scientificity is not, therefore, a phenomenon restricted to the domain of criticism. In literary studies, in particular, whether opposed or defended, scientificity has had a broad impact on the framing of critical standards and systems of value. It has contributed especially to criticism's response to and emulation of the hegemonic discourses of the natural sciences. This metaphor has also provided several critics with methodological and theoretical notions which have helped them sharpen their critical tools to combat rival critical strategies. Such a situation has forced scientificity to engage in ideological battles, as the cases of Macherey's scientific project and the Leavis-Snow controversy well illustrate. But at the same time, this state of affairs seems to have robbed scientific criticism of its claimed innocence and the purity of its knowledge. By throwing the metaphor of scientificity into the terrain of ideology, the criteria and principles on which the scientific project has based its epistemological framework has been made problematic.

Hence, a major problem emerges from the study of the various metamorphoses of the metaphor of scientificity, with reference to Leavis and Macherey. This problem is the potential affiliation of any proposed scientific criticism with ideology. For while Leavis perceives the pursuit of scientificity to be a futile exercise, if not a fatal ideal

because of his clearly stated ideological positions which center around the notion of "the organic culture" and "technologico-Benthamism," Macherey offers a "scientific" theory of literary production as the only way out of the world of fallacious interpretations and ideology. Thus, by arguing that "la science supprime l'idéologie, elle l'efface" (Pour une théorie 156), Macherey seems to theorize scientificity unproblematically, without submitting it to the same theoretical scrutiny to which he exposes the concept of ideology. But as discussed earlier, and as Tony Bennett lucidly points out in his critique of the Althusserian project, "the distinction between science and ideology" that Marxist criticism propounds "can only be drawn within a particular science as a line dividing those statements which conform to the canons of scientificity proposed by that science and those which do not" (Bennett, Formalism and Marxism 140). This view, which refutes Macherey's unproblematic opposition between science and ideology, does not opt for a Leavisite theoretical alternative, one which--as we have seen--negates science and technology and privileges a spiritual realm anchored in a quasi-primitivistic order. Bennett's view, held also by other critics and cultural theorists (see Larrain, "Ideology and Science" 211; Canguilhem, "Qu'est-ce qu'une idéologie scientifique?" 12; Marcuse, One-Dimentional Man 159; and Habermas, La Technique et la science comme idéologie 55), questions the nature of

scientific knowledge itself and probes its affinity with ideological power and hegemony. It is, therefore, necessary here to consider the implications of the pursuit of scientificity in literary criticism. This will shed light on the type of knowledge Macherey offers us as well as on the notion of scientificity itself. However, the critique of scientificity, in addition to the theoretical impasse that confronts Macherey's project, presents us with methodological and epistemological problems that cannot allow Leavis's critical principles to be brushed aside so easily.

In his Criticism and Ideology, Eagleton rejects Leavisism in favour of Macherey's "scientific" criticism. Eagleton writes:

> [A] vein of commonplace English empiricism runs throughout Williams's work, inherited from Scrutiny.. . . [H]is work betrays a muted strain of anti-intellectualism which has played its role in his quarrel with Marxism--a mistaking of scientificity for positivism which links him not only with some of the most myopic aspects of Scrutiny, but also with the Romantic "anti-scientism" of Lukacs and the Frankfurt school. (Criticism and Ideology 32; emphasis added)

Eagleton reproaches Leavis and Williams, among other things, for their inability to theorize ideology and to formulate a science of criticism. This "science" consists of a revision of dialectical materialism that Eagleton discovers mainly in the writings of Marx, Althusser and Macherey. Against Leavis and

Williams, Eagleton posits a "science of the text" that addresses the ideological relationships which link the text to its specific literary history and its wider socio-historical context. According to him,

> The guarantor of a scientific criticism is the science of ideological formations. It is only on the basis of such a science that such a criticism could possibly be established--only by the assurance of a knowledge of ideology that we can claim a knowledge of literary texts. This is not to say that scientific criticism is merely an "application" of historical materialism to literature. Criticism is a specific element of the theory of superstructures, which studies the particular laws of its proper object; its task is not to study the laws of ideological formations, but the laws of the production of ideological discourses as literature. (Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology 96-7)

In pursuit of scientificity in literary analysis, Eagleton--like Macherey--has brought criticism into direct confrontation with the question of ideology. He situates the scientific categories of his method within a Marxist epistemological framework and posits Marxism as the science that yields the knowledge that criticism must seek. In analyzing literature as a complex network of ideological formations, he postulates six categories that constitute the methodological tools of his "science of the text." These are: "General Mode of Production"; "Literary Mode of Production"; "General Ideology"; "Authorial Ideology"; "Aesthetic deology";

and "Text" (Criticism and Ideology 44). Indeed, these categories reveal Eagleton's faithfulness to Macherey's Marxist project, but one is surprised to note the omission of Macherey's central category of "absence" or "non-dit" from this list of categories. Because of its centrality to the whole Machereyan project, "absence" needs to be addressed as a separate category.

Eagleton's marginalization here of Macherey's crucial notion of "the structure of absence" reveals an important difference between the two critics for Eagleton tries to revise Macherey's theoretical framework, but remains unable to go beyond its scientistic character. Although Eagleton takes "absence" into account when theorizing the mechanism of text production (see his Marxism and Literary Criticism 35-6; and Criticism and Ideology 92-3), he does not grant this notion the full attention it deserves, especially in relation to the significance of the scientific knowledge the literary text can yield, and which the application of the six categories above can derive from it. While acknowledging the importance of the notion of "absence," he says that it betrays Formalist and Hegelian tendencies in Macherey's criticism and imposes "an essentially negative conception of the text's relation to history" (Criticism and Ideology 92-3). Nonetheless, by adopting these Marxist categories in critical analysis, criticism according to Eagleton fulfills its task of

placing the text in the domain of scientific knowledge. Rephrasing Macherey's idea about "silence" and the function of criticism, Eagleton says that the task of criticism is mainly

> to show the text as it cannot know itself, to manifest those conditions of its making (inscribed in its very letter) about which it is necessarily silent. It is not just that the text knows some things and not others; it is rather that its very self-knowledge is the construction of a self-oblivion. To achieve such a showing, criticism must break with its ideological prehistory, situating itself outside the space of the text on the alternative terrain of scientific knowledge. (Criticism and Ideology 43)

Not unlike Macherey, Eagleton grants "scientific criticism" the power to explain the text's silence and to "dissolve" ideology in literature. Ideology is thus located inside the literary text, for it constitutes the material from which the text is made, but it is outside the purview of scientific criticism which cannot be ideological. If literature, according to Eagleton, after Macherey, reveals ideological manifestations, criticism's task is to eradicate them and instate a scientific knowledge that is not ideological. Like Macherey, Eagleton brings scientificity face to face with ideology. However, in Eagleton literature acquires a special status in relation to scientific knowledge, a status that situates it half-way between ideology and science:

> Unlike science, literature appropriates the real as it is given in ideological forms, but does so

> in a way which produces an illusion of the spontaneously, unmediatedly real. It is thus more removed from the real than science, yet appears closer to it. Like science, literature appropriates its object by the deployment of certain categories and protocols--in its case, genre, symbol, convention and so on. As with science, these categories are themselves the elaborated product of perception and representation; but in the case of literature that elaboration is not carried to the point of producing concepts--rather to the point of certain forms which, while performing an analogous function to that of conceptual categories in science, tend simultaneously to conceal and naturalise themselves, standing in apparently intimate, spontaneous relation to the "materials" they produce. . . The function of criticism is to refuse the spontaneous presence of the work -- to deny that "naturalness" in order to make its real determinants appear. (Criticism and Ideology 101)

The crux of Eagleton's argument bears on a number of points: first, an urgent concern with ideology; second, a clear privileging of scientific knowledge; third, a unidimensional theorization of the relationship between ideology and science; and fourth, a defence of Marxism as the only scientific approach that the literary critic must seek. Accordingly, literature becomes opposed to scientific knowledge because it produces ideological material as lived experience and cannot work with "concepts" or scientific laws. In contrast, science contains no ideological apprehension of real experience: "Literature presents itself in this sense as 'midway' between the distancing rigour of scientific knowledge and the vivid but loose contingencies of the 'lived' itself" (101; emphasis added). Such a representation of scientific knowledge in particular is problematic because it absolves scientific

epistemology of contradiction and attributes to the notion of science objective, "distancing rigour" which is an aspect of the methodology of the empirical sciences.

Here Eagleton seems to ignore one of his major dicta, that "criticism is not an innocent discipline, and never has been" (Criticism and Ideology 17). For him, this statement does not apply to scientific criticism--Marxism--as he and Macherey conceive it. Indeed, if criticism in general has a history, as Eagleton adds in the same book, scientific criticism should also possess a history that explains its genesis, development, and raison d'être. When this criticism admits to its historicity, to the productive process of its scientificity, it imperatively acknowledges its affiliation with ideology. As Jorge Larrain points out, "ideology resorts to the name of science to cover up its distortions.. . . While in feudal times ideology legitimated itself in religion, in capitalism ideology seeks to do it in science" ("Ideology and Science" 189). However, the appropriation of the idea of science by ideology is not restricted to the culture of capitalism, as Larrain maintains. For as the case of Lyssenko's "proletarian science" and Nazism's "national physics" demonstrate, any ideology can claim the scientificity of its epistemological framework in order to legitimize itself. The notion of scientificity, especially in the humanities where "human mediation" (Larrain) is present

with more force, acquires a rationalizing and legitimizing function. Thus the exclusion of ideology from science, especially Marxist science, leads to a theoretical error that situates science outside history.

Tony Bennett's critique of Althusser's distinction between science and ideology applies accurately to the views that Eagleton offers us here. Bennett points out that "in speaking of a 'literature'" as situated half-way between ideology and science, "we are in no sense speaking of a fixed body of texts which, naturally and spontaneously, exists in some objective, socially available space between science and ideology as equally natural and pre-given forms of cognition. It is rather Marxist criticism itself which does the placing" (Formalism and Marxism 141). It seems that the validation of Marxist literary theory, as historically situated, necessitated the appeal to scientificity in its ideological struggles in order to rationalize and legitimize its system of valuation in critical thought. As a philosophical and political phenomenon of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Marxism has posited itself as a science set out to defeat rival modes of thought, particularly in economics, philosophy, and religion. For Althusser, for instance, "the history of the sciences is the history of the defeats of irrationalism"; with Marxism--as science--assuming the

role of liberating the proletariat and human consciousness in general (cit. Larrain, "Science and ideology" 196). This function of liberation at the level of thought and practice is actually the role that Macherey and Eagleton attribute to a scientific theory of literary production. By abolishing ideology from interpretation, criticism accordingly assumes the politicized role of liberation. Nonetheless, by positing such a positive conception of scientificity, Marxist literary criticism turns out to be arguing--in part, at least--along a major theoretical line common to all those critical approaches that have defended the metaphor of scientificity. This line consists of a rationalization of critical practice through a positive representation of the notion of science. In this context, Eagleton and Frye, despite their political divergences, both celebrate the necessity of a science of literary criticism. To rationalize criticism, a systematic defence of scientificity becomes, therefore, an imperative. Thus, when situated historically, scientificity is apprehended as a modern phenomenon whose task is to replace those "non-scientific" modes of literary exegesis; a phenomenon seeking to lend legitimacy to the currency of particular literary, cultural, and political practices.

Hence, instead of translating criticism into objective knowledge during its attempt to go beyond ideology, "scientific" critical discourse seems to have led

scientificity into the epistemological territory of legitimization and rationalization--of ideological struggles. This character of scientificity is an important characteristic of positivism, which parallels scientific criticism in the way Macherey and Eagleton have describe it. As Larrain points out:

> The decisive feature of the positivist treatment of the relationship between ideology and science is the fact that ideology appears as pure "otherness," the antithesis of the latter. Even when the validity of ideology is not judged, science appears to confront it with an absolute character or, at least, with an entirely different nature which permits it to supersede ideology. Science appears a special sphere of knowledge exempt from ideological distortions as long as it complies with its method. Science assumes an abstract and non-historical character which insulates it from the actual economic and social organization of society. The relationship between science and society is lost or distorted, and science acquires a self-supporting special status, immune to historical contingencies. (Larrain, "Science and Ideology" 193)

Although Larrain here is not directly concerned with the distinction between science and ideology within the domain of "scientific" literary criticism _per se_, his statement is highly illuminating for those concerned with the fate of scientificity in this domain. In fact, scientific criticism seems to have appropriated the same role as the one Larrain attributes to positivistic thought. By perceiving itself as non-ideological--as an innocent eye and a "disinterested" subject--scientific criticism has masked the implications of the social and historical role it has played in advancing and

shaping particular worldviews. The proclaimed innocence of its methodology and epistemological premisses is only part of its ideological make-up and historical conditioning.

A better understanding of the significance of scientificity in literary criticism, requires therefore addressing it as part of the conditions of its own emergence as a metaphor and its relation to the process of legitimation and rationalization that underlies its functioning in society and history. For "scientific criticism" to refine the premisses of its scientific project and its theoretical practice, it must address these aspects of scientificity in their complexity. Indeed, the question of rationality and legitimacy comes to the fore when one considers how the metaphor of scientificity is adopted, as Antony Wilden says, "instrumentally" by several critics and scientists alike within "the context of a goal-seeking adaptive system." When taken with a grain of salt, the discourse of scientificity turns out to be a metalanguage about the language of literature--no matter what concepts, metaphors, images, and arguments are used--with its own determining conditions, its ambitious dreams, and privileged epistemologies. In this context, Felperin is correct in his argument against Macherey and his followers when he says:

> The repeated recourse. . .to mathematical metaphors, to pseudo-geometrical imagery. . .

> reveals not the scientific rigour of [the] discourse, but quite its opposite, its longing for a language of scientific rigour. This recourse to metaphors borrowed from 'pure' or 'hard' science inadvertently calls attention to itself as figurative rather than literal language, as literary rather than scientific discourse, and no sustained or formulaic repetition of them can succeed in magically translating them from one domain of discourse into the other, just as no sustained or aggressive repetition can turn a marxist construction of history into a 'real' or 'true' history. (Beyond Deconstruction 64)

Such an objection to the scientific-Maxist project is to the point, but Felperin's position remains also problematic because he defends Leavis's privileging an aesthetic realm in which artistic intuition is the purveyor of meaning, and favours linguistic play as the most privileged concern of literary practice.

Indeed, Leavis's opposition to theory, science, and abstract knowledge in favour of "intuition" and artistic genius cannot be accepted as an innocent position, nor a 'better' conception of criticism because it always lacked the courage to engage in theoretical battles. As developed in the first chapter, the worldview Leavis defends is rooted in a reformist dream to retrieve an "organic" universe that had disappeared, with its moral values, institutional hierarchies, and even prejudices. But as Leavis's defence of "critical standards," "precision of thought," empirical attention to "the words on the page," and especially his appeal to a number

of scientists whom he perceived as practicing 'real' science--as opposed to destructive science--demonstrate, his hostility to scientific discourse does not totally preclude his borrowing from this discourse's terminology in order to formulate his own critical system. Nonetheless, Leavis remains like Macherey committed to the search for an innocent and objective vantage point--an attitude that makes them both contribute to criticism's search for legitimacy in modern culture.

However, for a critique of modern scientific rationality in its instrumentalist tendencies, as addressed partly by Leavis, Wilden, and Felperin, one can turn to the work of Habermas on the intimate relationship between science and ideology. His thesis on modern scientific discourse as developed in his La Technique et la science comme idéologie (1968) offers a more theoretically refined perspective from which the metaphor of scientificity and Macherey's scientific project in particular could be assessed. His thesis also allows us to re-read the science/ideology dichotomy from a different angle while calling for a theory of ideology in a way that renders Macherey's theorization of scientific criticism problematic.

In La Technique et la science comme idéologie, Habermas offers his major thesis on modern scientific

rationality, which actually refines Max Weber's and Herbert Marcuse's critiques of modern science and technology. Habermas attributes to scientific progress and technology a double function -- as a productive force and as ideology. He maintains that "la science et la technique. . .aujourd'hui assument aussi la fonction de donner à la domination ses légitimations" (37). He also insists that what characterizes modern industrial societies is a particular "scientificisation de la technique" (43) that has merged scientific knowledge with the instrumental and institutional interest that legitimates the dominant practices of the technological society. Especially when scientific research and progress become subservient to public and State funding, both in the East and the West (92), there is "une fusion entre technique et domination, entre rationalité et oppression" (11). This state of affairs has led to the metamorphosis of both science and ideology in the sense that they have become intertwined with domination. Habermas explains this phenomenon as the outcome of a long historical process that has led to the total transformation of rational thought, fusing ideology and science together while giving each term special significance. He maintains:

> La principale force productive, c'est-à-dire le progrés scientifique et technique une fois pris en main, est devenue elle-même un principe de légitimation. Cette nouvelle forme de légitimation n'a plus, à vrai dire, la forme ancienne de l'idéologie.

> D'un côté, la conscience technocratique est «moins idéologique» que toute les idéologies antérieures, car elle n'a pas la puissance opaque d'un aveuglement qui se contente de donner l'illusion d'une satisfaction des intérêts. D'un autre côté, l'idéologie aujourd'hui plutôt transparente qui domine implicitement à l'arrière-plan et fétichise la science est plus irrésistible et va beaucoup plus loin que les idéologies de type ancien parce que, masquant les problèmes de la pratique, elle justifie non seulement l'interêt partiel d'une <u>classe déterminée</u> à la domination et que concurrement elle reprime le besoin partiel d'émancipation d'<u>une autre classe</u>, mais encore parce qu'elle affecte jusqu'à l'intérêt émancipatoire de l'espèce dans son ensemble. (55)

Accordingly, as modern science and ideology have become fused, the effects of ideology have consequently become more penetrating and difficult to resist or eradicate. The two notions of scientificity and ideology have become slippery and often interchangeable.

Like Weber and Marcuse, Habermas situates his critique of advanced industrial society and its scientific rationality within a revisionist Marxist perspective. The special character of modern technological society necessitates, according to Habermas, a revision of the classical Marxist categories of science, ideology, and class (49; 70). Modern science can no longer claim the purity and objectivity of its rational thought. Ideology is no longer the only mode of thought that perpetuates false-consciousness and legitimates hegemony. Habermas's view here lends clear support to Leavis's argument against science and technology, but there

is still a difference between them. Leavis calls for a total abandonment of the scientific project whereas Habermas calls for a radical reform of scientific and technological culture. More important than his revision of Marxist and Weberian theories of modernity, Habermas does not relinquish the notion of scientificity totally as, for example, Leavis does. Because Habermas does not believe in Leavis's idea of the intrinsic negativity of science and technology, he conceives scientific knowledge as still required for human development and progress, but only when this knowledge takes a new form: it must relate critically to its function and to the uses to which science and technology are put in real practice.

As an alternative to modern scientific/technological rationality, Habermas posits a systematic fusion of science, technology, and the totality of human experience. As he says, "l'alternative d'une Science nouvelle devrait comporter aussi la définition d'une Technique nouvelle" (13). He explains further,

> s'il est vrai que la technique procède de la science, et je pense tout autant aux techniques permettant d'influencer le comportement humain qu'à la maitrise de la nature, <u>la réflexion scientifique est d'autant plus nécessaire à la reprise de cette technique au sein du monde vécu de la pratique</u>, au rattrapage de cette disposition technique de domaines spécifiques dans et par la communication des hommes en train d'agir. (87; emphasis added)

Habermas's reformulation of scientificity within a revised Marxist epistemology parallels some of Macherey's and Eagleton's views on the subject of scientific criticism, but he differs from the latter two by calling for the transformation of science itself as a living human practice, rather than for a total abandonment of its rationality. This view invites a reassessment of Macherey's scientific project in such a way as to leave room for ideological presence in scientific criticism itself. In his assessment of Habermas's work, Larrain confirms this point, saying that for Habermas, "a more rational society. . .should do without technological rationality as we know it. In other words, the social revolution should be necessarily accompanied by a revolutionary transformation of science itself" ("Science and Ideology" 205). Such a critical view of science--as knowledge and a system of thought--is lacking from Macherey conception of science.

However, the fact that Habermas does not give up the idea of a science in the end is highly significant, especially when we situate his position in the global movement of the pursuit of scientificity not only in literary criticism but also in the humanities in general. His attempt to integrate the metaphor of scientificity within a new domain of rationality still prsents another problem which confronts Macherey as well. It is the potential metamorphosis of this

'new type of scientificity' itself into an ideological form and thus into a new form of legitimation of another epistemology, allied with another form of domination. For there is nothing to guarantee that the postulated alternative does not one day become ideology in turn as have many sciences. Thus Habermas's embrace of scientificity in the form of a new revolutionary science perpetuates the problematic distinction between science and non-science (ideology) and the belief in the complete disappearance of ideology in the future. It is as if Habermas had pulled the rug out from under his own feet by relinquishing the critical force of his theoretical framework. A critique of science as he suggests should not take us back to science, but should ideally lead us towards a perpetual critique of the dream of scientificity as being itself a form of ideology.

Nevertheless, Habermas's critique of scientific rationality allows us to consider Macherey's defence of the scientific project and Leavis's rejection of it from a different angle. While Macherey's unskeptical belief in the possibility of science without ideology reveals the limitations of his theoretical framework, Leavis's rejection of scientific knowledge is legitimate--considering the negative effects of science and technology which he points out --but remains narrow-minded. Leavis's categorical rejection of science along with philosophy, theory, and all forms of

abstract thought reveals striking theoretical limitations. But one can detect a convergence between Leavis's and Habermas's views, especially at the level of their critique of scientific rationality. But while Macherey takes Marxist scientificity for granted as the purveyor of truth, Leavis seems to throw the baby out with the bathwater: being unable to see the relevance of theory and the engagement with the pursuit of a scientific criticism.

One essential question now facing literary criticism is whether the metaphor of scientificity is to be abandoned totally since it has proven to be so problematic, unreliable and amenable to fusion with ideology, or whether it should be accommodated with the new requirements of a critical rationality which still believes that the pursuit of scientific knowledge can eradicate ideology forever. Indeed, this is the question that has constituted the cornerstone of most twentieth century critical debates--Formalism, New Criticism, Structuralism, Sociocriticism--around the raison d'être of criticism and of Leavis's and Macherey's works in particular. In response to the first part of this question--whether the humanities should abandon the idea of a science--Peter Winch, who is concerned with the relation between science and philosophy, answers affirmatively. In his The Idea of a Social Science (1958), he maintains that the empirical sciences and the humanities have their separate fields and

methods and should by no means be confused. He rehearses, in a sense, part of the argument developed by Felperin in his critique of Macherey and Eagleton when he says that criticism cannot escape being a metalanguage. For Winch, "the notion of a human society involves a scheme of concepts which is logically incompatible with the kinds of explanation offered in the natural sciences" (72). This view lends strong support, though indirectly, to the Leavisite position and reiterates the argument in favour of the maintenance of the gap between the "two cultures" that Snow maintains as well, Winch adds:

> Science, unlike philosophy, is wrapped up in its own way of making things intelligible to the exclusion of all others. Or rather it applies its criteria unself-consciously; for to be self-conscious about such matters is to be philosophical. This non-philosophical unself-consciousness is for the most part right and proper in the investigation of nature (except at such critical times as that gone through by Einstein prior to the formulation of the Special Theory of Relativity); but it is disastrous in the investigation of a human society, whose very nature is to consist in different and competing ways of life, each offering a different account of the intelligibility of things. (107-8)

Accordingly, by maintaining a clear distinction between pure sciences and the social sciences, whose epistemologies are relegated to philosophy, Winch offers a view of scientificity that absolves it from any possible affiliation with ideology or contradiction. Scientific knowledge for him is, therefore, outside history. Compared to Canguilhem, who is also a philosopher, Winch reveals striking theoretical limitations

in rationalizing the nature of scientific knowledge. Canguilhem writes: "à ne vouloir faire que l'histoire de la vérité [scientifique] on fait une histoire illusoire.. . . [L]'histoire de la seule vérité est une notion contradictoire" ("Qu'est-ce qu'une idéologie scientifique?" 13). This is what the scientific project in literary criticism--Marxist, Structuralist, Fromalist--has tried to achieve, to write the history of truth, often the truth of literature.

Thus to avoid any scientific pretentions, "scientific" literary criticism must relinquish the belief in the pursuit of scientificity as the only form of knowledge that is worth investigating and instituting. By committing itself monolithically to the metaphor of scientificity, criticism risks falling into ideological and legitimizing practices, thereby forsaking its primary function, that of perpetual critical scrutiny and open interpretation. At the same time, "scientific" criticism must beware of any anti-scientific romantic thought that preaches the ideology of "primitivism" and seeks the institution of an "organic universe." Thus between scientificity and ideology, literary criticism cannot choose because these two categories are not mutually exclusive. Criticism should turn to the theory of ideology whenever the principle of scientificity is postulated

as an a priori. As Robert Young reminds us, "the establishment of a critical, even scientific, vocabulary is bound to produce falsification--for criticism, as language, has no ground from which to view its object, language, objectively" (Untying the Text 7).

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