

Literary Criticism (From Plato to Leavis)
Dr. Merin Simi Raj,
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
FR Leavis's "The Great Tradition" (Session 2)

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high-road and some in the bed-chamber, and so on. But we haven't read a very large proportion of *Ten Jones* in order to discover the limits of the essential interests it has to offer us. Fielding's attitudes, and his concerns with human nature, are simple, and not such as to produce an effect of anything but monotony (on a mind, that is, demanding more than external action) when exhibited at the length of an 'epic in prose'. What he can do appears to best advantage in *Joseph Andrews*. *Jonathan Wild*, with its famous irony, seems to me mere hobnobbing (much as one applauds the determination to explode the gas-guns here), and by *Amelia* Fielding has gone soft.

We all know that if we want a more inward interest it is to Richardson we must go. And there is more to be said for Johnson's preference, and his emphatic way of expressing it at Fielding's expense, than is generally recognized. Richardson's strength in the analysis of emotional and moral states is in any case a matter of common acceptance; and *Clarissa* is a really impressive work. But it's no use pretending that Richardson can ever be made a current classic again. The substance of interest that he too has to offer is in its own way extremely limited in range and variety, and the demand he makes on the reader's time is in proportion—and absolutely—so immense to be found, in general, prohibitive (though I don't know that I would sooner read through again *Clarissa* than *A la recherche du temps perdu*). But we can understand well enough why his reputation and influence should have been so great throughout Europe; and his immediately relevant historical importance is plain: he too is a major fact in the background of Jane Austen.

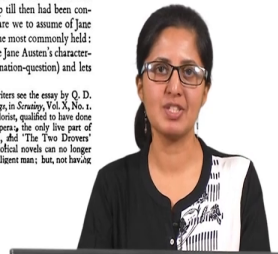
The social gap between them was too wide, however, for his work to be usable by her directly: the more he tries to deal with ladies and gentlemen, the more immitigably vulgar he is. It was Fanny Burney who, by transposing him into educated life, made it possible for Jane Austen to absorb what he had to teach her. Here we have one of the important lines of English literary history

provides an exceptionally illuminating study of the nature of originality, and she exemplifies beautifully the relations of the individual talent' to tradition. If the influences bearing on her hadn't comprised something fairly to be called tradition she couldn't have found herself and her true direction; but her relation to tradition is a creative one. She not only makes tradition for those coming after, but her achievement has for us a retroactive effect: as we look back beyond her we see in what goes before, and see because of her, potentialities and significances brought out in such a way that, for us, she creates the tradition we see leading down to her. Her work, like the work of all great creative writers, gives a meaning to the past.

Having, in examination-papers and undergraduate essays, come much too often on the proposition that 'George Eliot is the first modern novelist', I finally tracked it down to Lord David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novel*, ii. In so far as it is possible to extract anything clear and coherent from the variety of things that Lord David Cecil says by way of explaining the phrase, it is this: that George Eliot, being concerned, not to offer 'primarily an entertainment', but to explore a significant theme—a theme significant in its bearing on the 'serious problems and preoccupations of mature life' (p. 29)—breaks with 'those fundamental conventions both of form and matter within which the English novel up till then had been constructed' (p. 288). What account, then, are we to assume of Jane Austen? Clearly, one that appears to be the most commonly held: she creates delightful characters ('Compare Jane Austen's characterization with Scott's'³—a recurrent examination-question) and lets

³ For the relation of Jane Austen to other writers see the essay by Q. D. Leavis, *A Critical Theory of Jane Austen's Writings*, in *Scrutiny*, Vol. X, No. 1.

⁴ Scott was primarily a kind of inspired folk-hero, qualified to have done in fiction something analogous to the ballad-epic; the only live part of *Robinson Crusoe* now is 'Wandering Willie's Tale', but 'The Two Doctors' remains in esteem while the heroics of the historical novels can no longer command respect. He was a great and very intelligent man; but, not having



Hello and welcome to yet another session of this course on literary criticism. We are looking at FR Leavis' work *The Great Tradition* which became very fundamental in laying the foundations of modern literary criticism, and also for professionalizing literary study in multiple ways, that was something that he had been doing from the 1930s onwards. We find the continuing influence of Eliot's idea of the tradition in his notion of literary tradition as well. And we had been looking at how he had primarily focused on just a hand full of select English novelists to talk about the great literary tradition that novel has. And while talking about Jane Austen which is what we shall be looking at in this current lecture, he talks about her relationship with tradition as a created one.

We find that just like Eliot did in his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, here also Leavis is taking a very interesting look at the idea of the tradition. It is not in the traditional sense that he wants to look at tradition, but as something which is in continuity, which is in flux, something which has the power to encompass the past and the present, in that sense, while he is taking about the relation that Jane Austen has with tradition.

This is what he says: “She not only makes tradition for those coming after, but her achievement has for us a retroactive effect: as we look back beyond her we see in what goes before, and see because of her potentialities and significances brought out in such a way that, for us, she creates the tradition we see leading down to her.” So, we find a certain sense of continuity, and also about the way in which the past and the present and the future ahead, merges in a certain kind of a historical streamline.

“Her work, like the work of all great creative writers, gives a meaning to the past.” So, when we are looking at the oeuvre of Jane Austen, it is just not about her own work, her body of work gives meaning, gives potentialities, gives a trajectory, gives a positioning to the writers who went before her. Like Leavis was trying to establish in the previous passage as well, all the other great fiction writers, the pioneers, who went before her, their stature, their positioning and their significance becomes more accentuated when we look at how Jane Austen has used this tradition to her advantage. Jane Austen here is being seen as someone who gives meaning to the past writers.

Jane Austen's work becomes significant not just for the present era, not just in setting a standard for the future, but also for us to make sense of the kind of writings, and the kind of work that went before her. This continuity, this historical sense that Leavis gives to tradition, the understanding of tradition is something that we find him taking from Eliot's time onwards, and that is also extremely important in our understanding of canon formation, and our understanding of the ways in which particular writers are positioned, and their significance getting accentuated at various points of time.

As mentioned before, Leavis had worked extensively towards the professionalization of literary studies. As part of that, we find this 1948 work contributing much towards the canon-making process, towards solidifying many things in terms of curriculum, in terms of university teaching. We do find him using some of the text, and using certain kinds of frameworks, which would be useful for framing the ways in which this discipline has been emerging as well. This is what he says at the opening of the next paragraph: “Having, in examination-papers and undergraduate essays, come much too often on the proposition that ‘George Eliot is the first modern novelist’,

I finally tracked it down to Lord David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists*.” We find him trying to reassess the canon, we find him trying to engage with history, engage with the canon-making process, and also reassessing the works based on the framework that he is proposing. “In so far as it is possible to extract anything clear and coherent from the variety of things that Lord David Cecil says by way of explaining the phrase, it is this: that George Eliot, being concerned, not to offer ‘primarily an entertainment’, but to explore a significant theme, a theme significant in its bearing on ‘the serious problems and preoccupation of mature life’—breaks with ‘those fundamental conventions both of form and matter within which the English novel up till then had been constructed.’” Based on that, he is asking, “What account, then, are we to assume of Jane Austen? Clearly, one that appears to be the most commonly held: she creates delightful characters.”

Now, after having told us extensively how he would like to position Jane Austen, and how she is very conveniently positioned in such a way that her presence, her body of work, gives a sense to the past, he now goes on to the examine Jane Austen's works in detail. First of all, he agrees with other critics who have mentioned the same thing: that she creates delightful characters.

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Why not? A man's mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine,—as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm—and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality. Sir James might not have originated this estimate, but a kind Providence furnishes the faintest personality with a little gum or starch in the form of tradition.¹

The kind of irony here is plainly akin to Jane Austen's—though it is characteristic enough of George Eliot; what she found was readily assimilated to her own needs. In Jane Austen herself the irony has a serious background, and is no mere display of 'civilization'. George Eliot wouldn't have been interested in it if she hadn't perceived its full significance—its relation to the essential moral interest offered by Jane Austen's art. And here we come to the profoundest kind of influence, that which is not manifested in likeness. One of the supreme duties one great writer can owe another is the realization of unlikeness (there is, of course, no significant unlikeness without the common concern—and the common seriousness of concern—with essential human issues). One way of putting the difference between George Eliot and the Trollopes whom we are invited to consider along with her is to say that she was capable of understanding Jane Austen's greatness and capable of learning from her. And except for Jane Austen there was no novelist to learn from—none whose work had any bearing on her own essential problems as a novelist.

Henry James also was a great admirer of Jane Austen,² and in his case too there is that obvious aspect of influence which can be brought out by quotation. And there is for him George Eliot as well standing between. In reading him in an English translation I can



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New England ethos in its last phase, when a habit of moral strenuousness remained after dogmatic Puritanism had evaporated and the vestigial moral code was evaporating too. This throws a good deal of light on the elusiveness that attends James's peculiar ethical sensibility. We have, characteristically, in reading him, a sense that important choices are in question and that our finest discrimination is being challenged, while at the same time we can't easily produce for discussion any issue that have moral substance to correspond.

It seems relevant also to note that James was actually a New Yorker. In any case, he belonged by birth and upbringing to that refined civilization of the old European America which we have learnt from Mrs. Wharton to associate with New York. His bent was to find a field for his ethical sensibility in the appreciative study of such a civilization—the 'civilization' in question being a matter of personal relations between members of a mature and sophisticated Society. It is doubtful whether at any time in any place he could have found what would have satisfied his implicit demand: the actual fine art of civilized social intercourse that would have justified the flattering intensity of expectation he brought to it in the form of his curiously transposed and subtilized ethical sensibility.

History, it is plain, was already leaving him *détaché* in his own country, so that it is absurd to censure him, as some American critics have done, for pulling up his roots. He could hardly become deeply rooted else, here, but the congenial soil and climate were in Europe rather than in the country of his birth. There is still some idealizing charm about his English country-house.³ In *The Portrait* only work shows Hawthorne as a major influence—⁴ the major influence.



“Compare Jane Austen's characterization with Scott's—a recurrent examination question.” He is also making his discussion in alignment with the discussions within the classroom, as far as this discipline of English literature is concerned. And then, having said that, he also dwells at length

on some of the comparisons that Cecil also makes, in terms of the comparisons between George Elliot and Jane Austen. And he also quotes some passages on which we will not be spending much time.

Then he moves on to say that Jane Austen's plots and her novels in general, “were put together ‘very deliberately and calculatedly’ (if not ‘like a building’). But her interest in ‘composition’ is not something to be put over against her interest in life: nor does she offer an ‘aesthetic’ value that is separable from moral significance.” Here we come to the most important point that Leavis is about to highlight about the moral preoccupation that he thinks Jane Austen had. And that, according to Leavis, elevates Jane Austen above all the other writers, and this is how he goes on to talk about her craft.

“The principle of organization, and the principle of development, in her work, is an intense moral interest of her own in life that is in the first place a preoccupation with certain problems that life compels on her as personal ones. She is intelligent and serious enough to be able to impersonalize her moral tensions as she strives, in her art, to become more fully conscious of them, and to learn what, in the interests of life, she ought to do with them. Without her intense moral preoccupation, she would not have been a great novelist.”

He is here underscoring what he thinks is the greatest contribution, the greatest quality that made Jane Austen a great novelist—her intense moral preoccupation. And this is something that Leavis continues to emphasize on throughout this discussion of the great tradition. “This account of her would, if I had cared to use the formula, have been my case for calling Jane Austen, and not anyone later, ‘the first modern novelist’.”

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THE NATURE OF THE PREOCCUPATION OF JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS IN RELATION TO THE RELATION BETWEEN 'ART' AND 'LIFE' AS IT CONCERNS THE NOVELIST—ARE VERY REPRESENTATIVE. (Its consistency with what has been said about George Eliot earlier in the same essay isn't obvious, but that doesn't disturb the reader by the time he has got here.)

'It is also easy to see why her form doesn't satisfy us as Jane Austen's does. Life is chaotic, art is orderly. The novelist's problem is to evoke an orderly composition which is also a convincing picture of life. It is Jane Austen's triumph that she solves this problem perfectly, fully satisfies the rival claims of life and art. Now George Eliot does not. She sacrifices life to art. Her plots are too neat and symmetrical to be true. We do not feel them to have grown naturally from their situation like a flower, but to have been put together deliberately and calculatedly like a building.' (p. 322)

out his own form and break away from the bad tradition of the eighteenth-century romance. Of his books, *The Heart of Midlothian* comes the nearest to being a great novel, but hardly is that: too many allowances and deductions have to be made. Out of Scott's bad tradition came. It spoiled Fenimore Cooper, who had new and forward interests and the makings of a distinguished novelist. And with Stevenson it took on 'literary' sophistication and fine writing.

'"As for the revolt against Nature," he continued, "that, too, has its uses. If it conduces to the cult of the stylized, the conventionalized, the artificial, just for their own sakes, it also, more broadly, makes for civilization."

"Civilization?" I asked. "At what point between barbarism and decadence does civilization reign? If a civilized community be defined as one where you find aesthetic preoccupations, subtle thoughts, and polished intercourse, is civilization necessarily desirable? Aesthetic preoccupations are not inconsistent with a wholly inadequate conception of the range and power of art; thought may be subtle and yet trivial; and polished intercourse may be singularly uninteresting."

—L. H. Myers, *The Rose and the Flower*, p. 48.
Myers hasn't the great novelist's technical interest in method and presentation; he slips very easily into using the novel as a vehicle. That is, we feel that he is not primarily a novelist. Yet he is sufficiently one to have made of *The Rose and the Flower* a very remarkable novel. Anyone seriously interested in literature is likely to have found the first reading a memorable experience and to have found also that repeated re-readings have not exhausted the interest.

interest of her own in life that is in the first place a preoccupation with certain problems that life compels on her as personal ones.⁹ She is intelligent and serious enough to be able to impersonalize her moral tensions as she strives, in her art, to become more fully conscious of them, and to learn what, in the interests of life, she ought to do with them. Without her intense moral preoccupation she wouldn't have been a great novelist.

This account of her would, if I had cared to use the formula, have been my case for calling Jane Austen, and not anyone else, 'the first modern novelist'. In applying it to George Eliot, Lord David Cecil says: 'In fact, the laws conditioning the form of George Eliot's novels are the same laws that condition those of Henry James and Wells and Conrad and Arnold Bennett.' I don't know what Wells is doing in that sentence; there is an elementary distinction to be made between the discussion of problems and ideas, and what we find in the great novelists. And, for all the generous sense of common humanity to be found in his best work, Bennett seems to me never to have been disturbed enough by life to come anywhere near greatness. But it would certainly be reasonable to say that 'the laws conditioning the form of Jane Austen's novels are the same laws that condition those of George Eliot and Henry James and Conrad'. Jane Austen, in fact, is the inaugurator of the great tradition of the English novel—and by 'great tradition' I mean the tradition to which what is great in English fiction belongs.

The great novelists in that tradition are all very much concerned with 'form': they are all very original technically, having turned their genius to the working out of their own appropriate methods and procedures. But the peculiar quality of their preoccupation

⁹ See 'Lady Susan' into 'Mansfield Park' by Q. D. Leavis in *Scrutiny*, Vol. X, No. 2.

¹⁰ D. W. Harding deals illuminatingly with this matter in *Requiescat Hæret: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen* (see *Scrutiny*, Vol. VIII, No. 4).



So, he is departing her from one of the point that Cecil made where he calls George Elliot as a first modern novelist and here Leavis begs different and he says according to him the first modern novelist would be Jane Austen and in applying it to George Elliot he finds it very problematic that Cecil applied to George Elliot and by the end of this paragraph he almost concludes and categorically states Jane Austen, in fact, is the inaugurator of the great tradition of the English novel and by great tradition. I mean the tradition to which what is great in English fiction belongs.

So, here this is a 1948 work and novel still a young genre but as we discussed in the early outset of this essay Leavis finds it very imperative to take stock of the work and also to pronounce some greatness to this young genre which had been seen as something without the baggage tradition, here he is trying to establish.

He is trying to construct a tradition into which the other novelist could be included. Now, he is discussing about the integral part of fiction form. The great novelists in that tradition are all very much concerned with form they are all very original technically having turned their genius to the working out of their own appropriate methods and procedures.

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with 'form' may be brought out by a contrasting reference to Flaubert. Reviewing Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*, D. H. Lawrence 'addresses Flaubert as figuring to the world the "will of the writer to be greater than and undisturbed lord over the stuff" he writes'. This attitude in art, as Lawrence points out, is indicative of an attitude in life—or towards life. Flaubert, he comments, 'stood away from life as from a leprosy'. For the later Aesthetic writers, who, in general, represent in a weak kind of way the attitude that Flaubert maintained with a perverse heroism, 'form' and 'style' are ends to be sought for themselves, and the chief preoccupation is with elaborating a beautiful style to apply to the chosen subject. There is George Moore, who in the best circles, I gather (from a distance), is still held to be among the very greatest masters of prose, though—I give my own limited experience for what it is worth—it is very hard to find an admirer who, being pressed, will lay his hand on his heart and swear he has read one of the 'beautiful' novels through. 'The novelist's problem is to evolve an orderly composition which is also a convincing picture of life'—this is the way an admirer of George Moore sees it. Lord David Cecil, attributing this way to Jane Austen, and crediting her with a superiority over George Eliot in 'satisfying the rival claims of life and art', explains this superiority, we gather, *à la* freedom from moral preoccupations that he supposes her to enjoy. (George Eliot, he tells us, was a Puritan, and earnestly bent on instruction.)

As a matter of fact, when we examine the formal perfection of *Emma*, we find that it can be appreciated only in terms of the moral preoccupations that characterize the novelist's peculiar interest in life. Those who suppose it to be an 'aesthetic matter', a beauty of 'composition' that is combined, miraculously, with 'truth to life', can give no adequate reason for the view that *Emma* is a great novel, and no intelligent account of its perfection of form. It is in the same

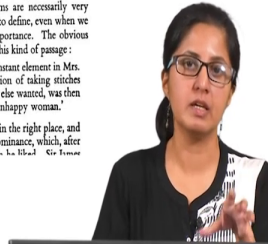
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interest in life. Far from having anything of Flaubert's disgust or disdain or boredom, they are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity.

It might be commented that what I have said of Jane Austen and her successors is only what can be said of any novelist of unqualified greatness. That is true. But there is—and this is the point—in English tradition, and those great classics of English fiction belong to it; a tradition that, in the talk about 'creating characters' and 'creating worlds', and the appreciation of Tolstoy and Mrs. Gaskell and Thackeray and Meredith and Hardy and Virginia Woolf, appears to go unrecognized. It is not merely that we have no Flaubert (and I hope I haven't seemed to suggest that a Flaubert is no more worth having than a George Moore). Positively, there is a continuity from Jane Austen. It is not for nothing that George Eliot admired her work profoundly, and wrote one of the earliest appreciations of it to be published. The writer whose intellectual weight and moral earnestness strike some critics as her handicap certainly saw in Jane Austen something more than an ideal contemporary of Lytton Strachey! What one great original artist learns from another, whose genius and problems are necessarily very different, is the hardest kind of 'influence' to define, even when we see it to have been of the profoundest importance. The obvious manifestation of influence is to be seen in this kind of passage:

'A little daily embroidery had been a constant element in Mrs. Transome's life; that soothing occupation of taking stitches to produce what neither she nor any one else wanted, was then the resource of many a well-born and unhappy woman.'

'In short, he felt himself to be in love in the right place, and was ready to endure a great deal of pre-eminence, which, after



But the peculiar quality of their preoccupation with form maybe brought out by a contrasting reference to Flaubert. So, form becomes extremely important here when Leavis is discussing and even over here there is a superiority that he is able to attribute to Jane Austen as we see towards the end of this paragraph.

The novelist's problem is to evolve an orderly composition which is also a convincing picture of life this is a way an admirer of George Moore sees it. Lord David Cecil attributing this way to Jane Austen and crediting her with a superiority over George Elliot in satisfying the rival claims of life and art explains the superiority we gathered by a freedom from moral preoccupations that he supposes her to enjoy.

So, there is a certain fine balance also which is being brought over here, there is a intense nor preoccupation because of which he Leavis argues that Jane Austen is best fit to inaugurate this tradition and she is considered as a great novelist and she is considered as the, as someone who has set this tradition in place but there is also a certain superiority of form that is being attributed to her. And he goes on to talk about the formal perfection of Emma and about the aesthetic matter a beauty of composition that is combined miraculously with truth to life.

So, there is aesthetics and life coming together and if you recall the definition that Henry James also attributed to fiction it is something which is competing with life fiction, something which is forever competing with life there is a way in which fiction tries to overtakes life, stimulates life,

imitate life and there is a very strong competition in real life. So, having said that truth to life and this perfection of form both become extremely important in Leavis framework as well.

And now, Leavis is also conscious about a certain flipped side of this (genre) friction. It might be commented that what I have said of Jane Austen and her successors is only what can be said of any novelist of unqualified greatness. Truth of life or perfection in form or this preoccupation of moral intensity this could be very loosely identified and attributed to any novelist perhaps. So, what is it about Jane Austen and this great tradition that he identifies what is very significantly different about them but there is and this is the point an English tradition.

So, this is extremely important look at the way he has italicized, so there is and this is a point an English tradition, and these great classics of English fiction belongs to it. A tradition that in the talk about creating characters and creating worlds and the appreciation of Trollope and Misses Gaskell and Thackeray and Meredith and Hardy and Virginia Woolf appears to go on unrecognized.

So, we find this trajectory fully forming, fully developing over here, there is an English tradition then this assertion this is very very important, this is very very important to further the ambitions in terms of the literary tradition this is very very important in order to separate a particular kind of an English tradition as far as novel is concerned and from being a genre without any baggage of of tradition he is here able to nativize this tradition Leavis is able to provide a very nativist kind of tradition to the emergence of novel an English tradition could be identified regardless of the other important writers who existed in different languages and different cultures and what Leavis here is concerned is about this tradition.

This sentence it is a very categorical statement it is not ambivalent it is very very assertive in its quality. But there is and that is this is a point an English tradition and these great classics of English fiction belong to it. And there is no debate this is not an open-ended thing that he proposes before us. The presence of an English tradition or something that he is able to assert, that he is able to position here beyond any kind of debate and the annealing politics of this and the many biases which are inherent in this that something that we should take a look at after we have gone through the first chapter.

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The kind of irony here is plainly akin to Jane Austen's—though it is characteristic enough of George Eliot; what she found was readily assimilated to her own needs. In Jane Austen herself the irony has a serious background, and is no mere display of 'civilization'. George Eliot wouldn't have been interested in it if she hadn't perceived its full significance—its relation to the essential moral interest offered by Jane Austen's art. And here we come to the profoundest kind of influence, that which is not manifested in likeness. One of the supreme duties one great writer can owe another is the realization of unlikeness (there is, of course, no significant unlikeness without the common concern—and the common seriousness of concern—with essential human issues). One way of putting the difference between George Eliot and the Trollopes whom we are invited to consider along with her is to say that she was capable of understanding Jane Austen's greatness and capable of learning from her. And except for Jane Austen there was no novelist to learn from—none whose work had any bearing on her own essential problems as a novelist.

Henry James also was a great admirer of Jane Austen,¹ and in his case too there is that obvious aspect of influence which can be brought out by quotation. And there is for him George Eliot as well, coming between. In seeing him in an English tradition I am not slighting the fact of his American origin; an origin that doesn't make him less of an English novelist, of the great tradition, than Conrad later. That he was an American is a fact of the first import-

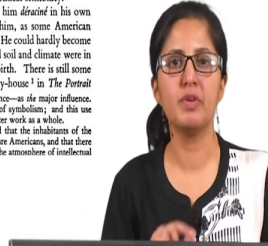
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New England ethos in its last phase, when a habit of moral strenuousness remained after dogmatic Puritanism had evaporated and the vestigial moral code was evaporating too. This throws a good deal of light on the elusiveness that attends James's peculiar ethical sensibility. We have, characteristically, in reading him, a sense that important choices are in question and that our finest discrimination is being challenged, while at the same time we can't easily produce for discussion any issue that have moral substance to correspond.

It seems relevant also to note that James was actually a New Yorker. In any case, he belonged by birth and upbringing to that refined civilization of the old European America which we have learnt from Mrs. Wharton to associate with New York. His bent was to find a field² in his ethical sensibility in the appreciative study of such a civilization—the 'civilization' in question being a matter of personal relations between members of a mature and sophisticated Society. It is doubtful whether at any time in any place he could have found what would have satisfied his implicit demand: the actual fine art of civilized social intercourse that would have justified the flattering intensity of expectation he brought to it in the form of his customarily transposed and sublimed ethical sensibility.

History, it is plain, was already leaving him *détaché* in his own country, so that it is absurd to censure him, as some American critics have done, for pulling up his roots. He could hardly become deeply rooted else, here, but the congenial soil and climate were in Europe rather than in the country of his birth. There is still some idealizing charm about his English country-house³ in *The Portrait* early work shows Hawthorne as a major influence—as the major influence. The influence is apparent there in James's use of symbolism; and this use develops into something that characterizes his later work as a whole.

¹ Though it has in justice to be remembered that the inhabitants of the house in *The Portrait of a Lady*, the Touchetys, are Americans, and that there is critical significance in the difference between the atmosphere of intellectual



Again, while talking about the greatness of George Elliot. We find the way in which that is again connected to Jane Austen, look at this one way of putting the difference between George Elliot and the Trollopes whom we are invited to consider along with her is to say that she was capable of understanding Jane Austen's greatness and capable of learning from her.

So, this is another significant thing about tradition one great writer is able to recognize the greatness in another writer. One great work is able to imitate or follow or set way itself in the greatness of other. And in that continuity he also states and expect for Jane Austen there was no novelist to learn from none whose work had any bearing on her own essential problems as a novelist.

This is very very important and in George Elliot's identification of Jane Austen as a only novelist from home anything could be learnt this effective tradition further accentuated and here Leavis is also not loving certain other kinds of dialogues to exist over here there is not inherent greatness that is being attributed to Jane Austen for her essential moral preoccupation for the perfection of form for one for characters that she created and for her ability to imbibe from the past and also, more importantly, her ability to stand as an imitable figure her ability to stand as this pillar of tradition which the others can imitate which the others can amulet and take off from.

So, Jane Austen here becomes not just the first great novelist but also someone on whom this entire foundation dress not just her appearing, but the past, the present, and the future. Henry

James, he says, also was a great admirer of Jane Austen and his case too there is that obvious aspect of influence which can be brought out by quotation and there is for him George Elliot as welcoming between.

In seeing him in an English tradition I am not slighting the fact of his American origin an origin that does not make him less of an English novelist of the great tradition than the Conrad later. That he was an American is a fact of the first importance of the critic and as mister, Yvor Winters brings out admirably in his book *Maule curse*.

Mister Winters discusses him as a product of the New England Ethos in its last phase when a habit of strenuousness remained after dogmatic puritanism has evaporated and the vestigial moral code was evaporating too. This throws a good deal of light on the illusiveness that attends James's peculiar ethical sensibility. I want you to see the politics over here the very evident imperialist politics which is also talking about the nation about nationalism whether the way it attributes and we find literature in spite of its humanist tradition in spite of this aspiring look that it seems to advocate there also a certain way in which ownership is being taken in terms of nationality in terms of ethnicity.

And, the base in which this dialogue is being able to, this dialogue is being promoted over here and two writers are being discussed over here writers of English origin, writers of American origin and there is a way in which the American writer the American critic has also been appropriated into English tradition.

And this is what I want you to see in terms of the idea of the tradition that Leavis is trying to foreground and you may also here very conveniently recall that even Elliott was of American origin and there is a way in which some kind of appropriation takes place when it comes to the framing of tradition and we find that finally at work over here as when Leavis is trying to establish an English tradition when he says there is an English tradition and that is something which is not open for any kind of a debate and based on that assumption he moves forward with the other kinds of discussions as well.

And here it is also amazing the way in which within the context of literature many of these things are coming together it is not just about aesthetic it is also about the politics, it is also about the

politics of the identity and we find all of this coming together in this discussion of canon formation that Leavis undertakes in his work the great tradition.

So, with this, we wrap up today and then we will continue discussing this text and we should also look at the implications of this work in forging this great tradition and implications of this work not just in terms of understanding the tradition of English fiction but also how this provided larger frameworks, how it provided ample methodology for other cannon formations for other processes of canon formation to take off from twentieth century onwards. So, with this we wrap up the discussion over here and I look forward to seeing you in the next session. Thank you for your time and attention.