

The Congruence of Enactment in Leavis, Wittgenstein, and Derrida

A French Theologian is rumoured to have said, God gave the English cricket, because otherwise they would have had no concept of eternity. Is the concept of enactment similarly alien, alien to us, Napoleon's nation of shopkeepers and utilitarians?

We start from Leavis's concept of enactment, formulated as follows in *Johnson and Augustanism*:

'Johnson cannot understand that works of art *enact* their moral valuations. It is not enough that Shakespeare, on the evidence of his works, 'thinks' (and feels) morally; for Johnson a moral judgement that isn't *stated* isn't there. Further he demands that the whole play shall be conceived and composed as statement. The dramatist must start with a conscious and abstractly formulated moral and proceed to manipulate his puppets so as to demonstrate and enforce it.' (Leavis, *Common Pursuit*, 1952/1962, p. 110/11)

I now want to tag, leave on the table, so to say, the speech of Antony on 'the swan's down feather', the speech which is Leavis's famous and felicitous illustration of Shakespearean metaphoricity and enactivity in *The Living Principle*, so as to gradually bring into view Leavis's core assumptions ever more sharply:

Antony

The April's in her eyes: it is love's spring,
And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.

Octavia

Sir, look well to my husband's house: and –

Caesar

Octavia?

Octavia

I'll tell you in your ear.

Antony

Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can

Her heart inform her tongue – the swan's down-feather

That stands upon the swell at full of tide,

And neither way inclines.

I was introduced to this Leavisian conception of enactment, as to something uncontroversial, whilst at school, around 1961, via *The Common Pursuit*. It was clearly manifest to a profound extent in Shakespeare and Keats and in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry. I took it for granted, then, as obvious. Only very much later did I realise it is actually very hard to explain or evoke for most people. I gradually realised it constitutes a Rubicon between literary-symbolic, and linear-empiricist, ways of thinking, between, if you like, Coleridge and Bentham.

In 1969 two works came out which centrally focused on concepts of enactment, though neither work used the word.

First: Leavis's Clark Lectures, *English Literature in Our Time and the University*, the nearest to a quintessence of his life work, with very significant bearings on the 'Third Realm' and 'Dissociation of Sensibility'.

Second: an astonishing, almost complete, original new posthumous work by Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, of which Daniele Moyal-Sharrock has given us the near definitive elucidation and systematisation in *Understanding Wittgenstein's On Certainty*, to which I am much indebted, and which has provoked much thought in me. Here are my tattered first editions of these works.

Together, they set me a puzzle, - *prima facie*, that of integrating a philosophical concept, and a literary concept, of enactment, - which has taken me a long time to solve. My difficulties were deepened by another, now equally tattered, book I obtained 19 years later, when on the verge of becoming a psychotherapist, in 1988, Derrida's *The Postcard: from Socrates to Freud*. Whilst I did not then realise that, single-handedly, Derrida had been the destroyer of both university disciplines of philosophy and literature, with a highly ambiguous relation to psychotherapy, too; however, it was clear to me that his writing, equally, was inhabited, all-pervasively, by the presuppositions of Enactment Theory, though, again, not in those words.

I believe that Derrida and Leavis have profound affinities; behind the radically different surface intentional attitudes and postures which so easily mislead us; they are foundational fideistic thinkers of the same type and inhabit the same epistemology.

Wittgenstein's relation to enactment indeed evokes different, - but still complementary, and still fideistic - issues to those which concern Leavis and Derrida. Derrida is, as it were, rhythmically asymmetrical,

syncopated off the beat, with Wittgenstein, whom he seemingly never read. But we should not be deceived by that. Derrida himself makes the same point about the affinity of Heidegger and Freud, who did not read each other.

I should apply to Wittgenstein, what Strawson says of Hume, that, as the ironist of philosophy, he is difficult to place. But, being elusive in this way, he is fitted to, not merely to *discuss* hinge beliefs, but to mediate, to *be a hinge, between two converging dimensions of philosophy and literature*. As such, he can help us bring out how, whilst thoroughly literary, in a sense which will become clearer, both Leavis and Derrida also straddle across into philosophy, and in ways which are analogous. In brief, the difference between these two senses of enactment is the difference between

1. Foundational *Beliefs* as Enactments (Wittgenstein),
- and
2. Apprehensions of *Meaning* as Enactments (Leavis, Derrida).

These, however, converge.

Let's start with an illustration. What is Wittgenstein wrestling with? Let me remind you of a fabulous mythic moment in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Boswell's account of Dr Johnson's famous rebuttal of Berkeley, of which, I think, Wittgenstein would have approved: 'After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I

never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it thus.' This was a stout exemplification of the first truths of Pere Bouffier, or the original principles of Reid and of Beattie; without admitting which, we can no more argue in metaphysics, than we can argue in mathematics without axioms.'

Reid and Beattie are in the position of GE Moore, from whose defence of commonsense ('here are two hands') Wittgenstein takes his departure, but which he is also opposing, in his special, primally fideistic, way. Boswell, disregarding the significance of the enactment, other than in its picaresque aspect, assumes Reid's and Beattie's position is Johnson's too, a knowledge position.

But Johnson, drawing from the Homeric and tragic spirit within him, which from time to time, as here, overturns the 18th Century Enlightenment man and arbiter of taste, is doing something else, something of which Wittgenstein would surely have approved. He is *enacting in his deed* his full and total and painful lived participation in a universe, with which human beings, with the full painful force of their embodied wills, participate, and engage, - and are resisted by. This performance takes Johnson into Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean territory, from which the young Wittgenstein had drawn his initial involvement in philosophy (Schopenhauer, especially) and which remained, - right to the final pages of *On Certainty*, where it is articulated with incredible subtlety, - his touchstone. As he quotes Schopenhauer at a key point in *Philosophical Investigations*, §176: 'The Will is not a Phenomenon'.

It will emerge as an ineffable whole, grasped via consciousness, generative of primal Belief, but rooted in primal life.

So, to start with, - Wittgenstein wrestling with the those dilemmas of foundational thinking near the end of *On Certainty*:

‘§611. Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and heretic.

§612. I said I would 'combat' the other man, - but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)

§613. If I now say "I know that the water in the kettle in the gas-flame will not freeze but boil", I seem to be as justified in this "I know" as I am in *any*. 'If I know anything I know *this*'. - Or do I know with still *greater* certainty that the person opposite me is my old friend so-and-so? And how does that compare with the proposition that I am seeing with two *eyes* and shall see them if I look in the glass? - I don't know confidently what I am to answer here. - But still there is a difference between cases. If the water over the gas freezes, of course I shall be as astonished as can be, but I shall assume some factor I don't know of, and perhaps leave the matter to physicists to judge. But what could make me doubt whether this person here is N.N., whom I have known for years? Here a doubt would seem to drag everything with it and plunge it into chaos.

§614. That is to say: If I were contradicted on all sides and told that this person's name was not what I had always known it was (and I use "know" here intentionally), then in that case the foundation of all judging would be taken away from me.'

But Wittgenstein remains emphatically foundationalist:

§253. 'At the bottom of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded.'

He means an ultimate groundlessness of our certainties, a groundlessness which is the primary thing about them. Primal, in the way evoked by Dr Johnson.

To begin the convergence of with literary apprehension and enactment, I next call up a well-known passage from *Philosophical Investigations*, his relevant comments when he discusses 'the visual room' in (*PI*) §398ff:

"'But when I imagine something, or even actually see objects, I have *got* something which my neighbour has not.'"—I understand you. You want to look about you and say: "At any rate only I have got THIS."—What are these words for? They serve no purpose.— Can one not add: "There is here no question of a 'seeing'—and therefore none of a 'having'—nor of a subject, nor therefore of the 'I' either"?

I think we can say: you are talking (if, for example, you are sitting in a room) of the 'visual room'. The 'visual room' is the one that has no owner. I can as little own it as I can walk about it, or look at it, or point to it. Inasmuch as it cannot be any one else's, it is not mine either. In other words, it does not belong to me because I want to use the same form of expression about it as about the material room in which I sit. The description of the latter need not mention an owner, in fact it need not have any owner. But then the visual room cannot have any owner.

"For"—one might say—"it has no master, outside or in." Think of a picture of a landscape, an imaginary landscape with a house in it.— Someone asks "Whose house is that?"—The answer, by the way, might be

"It belongs to the farmer who is sitting on the bench in front of it". But then he cannot for example enter his house.

§399. One might also say: Surely the owner of the visual room would have to be the same kind of thing as it is; but he is not to be found in it, and there is no outside."

Here Wittgenstein does two things. First, he asserts his bedrock claim throughout his philosophical life, that necessary propositions, 'grammatical' propositions, in his sense – such as my idea that 'only I own, or have, or have got, my inner perception of the room I am in', the 'visual room' – are tautologies, even, in a special sense, nonsense, because they have no possible factual negation. This is parallel to such statements as that:

'Red is darker than pink', of which a negation is unimaginable.

And, the new dimension which we find in *On Certainty*:

§57. 'Now might not "I *know*, I am not just surmising, that here is my hand" be conceived as a proposition of grammar? Hence *not* temporally -
--

But in that case isn't it like *this* one: "I know, I am not just surmising, that I am seeing red"?

And isn't the consequence "So there are physical objects" like: "So there are colours"?

Propositions of grammar, in his sense.

But, with his profound openness to puzzlement, he does something else very interesting. *He compares 'the visual room' to a work of art. Works of art have their own frame identity, in another space than normal*

spatio-temporal reality. This frame identity makes the work of art a 'universal', with instances of it merely replicas or copies (except for contingent elements like autograph copies or unique paint features). He does not pursue or elaborate this, but it is immediately applicable both to art and to philosophical examples, on a far vaster scale than he envisages. It takes the meaning of these kinds of item into another realm.

Actually, it takes us into what Leavis calls 'the third realm', - the Kantian realm from the third Critique, of Judgement, - of disinterested, trans-individual, human sharing. Since philosophy concerns itself with the realm in which one seeks to formulate grammatical rules, and since the realm of grammatical rules is the third realm, which is aesthetic, the realm of philosophy is itself an aesthetic realm. This would make sense in the light of the apparently adventitious, but extreme, beauty and aesthetic fascination of such philosophies as Wittgenstein's own, Nietzsche's, Husserl's, Schopenhauer's, Hume's, Kant's, etc.

Now, regarding the compelling character of the third realm, we next find *Leavis* occupying, in a very short space, and with deep intensity, both the positions or senses of enactment we have so far articulated. What we are calling 'aesthetic' here is a *life aesthetic*, not some precious conception allied to 'art for art's sake'. Leavis is generalising from his discussion of the 'swans's down feather passage'. Ironically, he is critiquing 'Wittgensteinian expositors' in the very passage where he clearly occupies positions parallel to Wittgenstein's:

'Of course we can't escape using analogy. I myself for instance have said that minds meet in meaning – meet in a poem. I don't in any case think

that that use of analogy is open to the objection that the Wittgensteinian expositors' addicted use is open to – that it exemplifies habits of assumption that make intelligent thought about language impossible. Actually 'meet' as I use it focuses an insistence that my book is devoted to conveying – making clear in a diversity of ways the nature of what is pointed to. [first key sentence] *The meaning is not 'there' in space, but, without the possibility of 'meeting' in the meaning, there would be no world for us and no reality.* That is, the 'meet' points, as I insist explicitly, to a unique convergent relation – to such a degree unique that 'relation' is hardly a satisfying word, though I can't think of a better. [second key sentence] *The possibility of such a meeting is assumed in all discussion, the assumption being so inescapable that it needn't be conscious.* Of that kind of meeting no diagram can be drawn; so the 'imagery' with which one tries to call it up into conscious recognition won't have any tendency towards the diagrammatic.' (*Living Principle* p. 104)

The sentences I emphasise, together with the comments on the inadequacy of the word 'relation' and the undiagrammability of the kind of meeting of minds he is speaking of, take us into parallel territory to Wittgenstein's and Samuel Johnson's.

They are ontological, in a way which implies an intrinsic ineffability about such attempts to evoke relation. And this takes them right into Derridean terrain. (It is also that of the British idealist philosopher, FH Bradley, who so interested the young TS Eliot, and whose influence forever permeates the *Four Quartets*.) I shall hold off that connection for

a moment, to further develop the Wittgenstein/Leavis connection in the ontological aesthetic realm.

Ineffability in this sense is not owned by mystics or Heideggerians or the author of the *Tractatus*. It is quite ordinary. Ironically, it is delightfully noticed by the later Wittgenstein himself, in his somewhat sidelong way: *Philosophical Investigations* §610.

‘Describe the aroma of coffee.—Why can't it be done? Do we lack the words? And for what are words lacking?—But how do we get the idea that such a description must after all be possible? Have you ever felt the lack of such a description? Have you tried to describe the aroma and not succeeded?’

Implicitly, here, of course, Wittgenstein is invoking his ‘the negation cannot be envisaged’ criterion.

But this *is* exactly what wine tasters and whisky tasters do do – and they do it indirectly, highly analogically and diversely, just in Leavis’s way about ‘meetings of minds’, by means of metaphor and cross-comparison, as anyone may read in their efforts, often clumsy and amusing, but oddly skilful!

This now brings us right to a pivotal ontological remark of Leavis’s, a profoundly positive, and enormously significant, statement articulated in the midst of his diatribe against CP Snow:

“But there is a prior human achievement of collaborative creation, a more basic work of the mind of man (and more than the mind), one without which the triumphant erection of the scientific edifice would not

have been possible: *that is, the creation of the human world, including language.*”

When Leavis refers, as foundationally prior to science, to *the creation of the human world, including language*, he clearly cannot be positing a representable world *prior* to language, but rather referring to a human world *indissoluble* from language. Not so far from Derrida’s Saussure, who says:

‘Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds *that existed before the linguistic system*, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it.’

And when, notoriously, Derrida refers to "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte", there is no outside-text, it is in parallel to Leavis and Wittgenstein. He would undoubtedly include the ‘human world’ as text, in this wider sense. He is saying that the human world is through and through *made-meaning*, linguistically or symbolically. And whilst the emphasis is different, because of the exasperating features of Derrida’s communication style, to which I am coming, he is nevertheless thus congruent with Leavis – Leavis who emphasises, via Blake, the creativity of perception, against the Lockean Enlightenment perceptual passivity to outside ‘ideas’ (e.g., *Living Principle*, p. 99), and who politically argued in *Nor Shall My Sword* that ‘we create possibility’.

All this broadly aesthetic mode of understanding makes sense of the kind of wonderful example Wittgenstein formulates in *On Certainty*, when he says:

§104. “I am for example also convinced that the sun is not a hole in the vault of heaven.”

Clearly, there is an infinite number of possible such examples, illuminating the background and bedrock, ‘grammatical’ hinge presuppositions, of our beliefs about the world, whose existence other than ourselves we take for granted. Wittgenstein has stunningly opened up for us a whole new unique aesthetic realm.

Part of the fascination is indeed aesthetic – the teeming possibilities of exemplification which this opens up as we contemplate the totality of our possible foundational beliefs..... Many of which he does give as examples, and also evokes, himself, in metaphors....

“Why, would it be *unthinkable* that I should stay in the saddle however much the facts bucked?”

Triggered by GE Moore, but going way beyond Moore, he has made a huge host of actual and potential observations meaningful and live, because of that peculiar foundational or quasi-foundational status they have.

And both the Leavisian and the Wittgensteinian foci are meaningful, not as contingent propositions which may be true or false, but via the comparative realm which they inhabit. When we take them into the realm of evaluations and comparisons they take on possibilities of difference and dispute.

Discussing the ‘swan’s down feather’ image from *Antony and Cleopatra*, in *The Living Principle*, Leavis says:

‘the relevant meaning – the communication in which the the image plays its part – is *created by the utterance as a totality*, and is not a matter of separate local meanings put together more or less felicitously’

This has the consequence that no linear or objective account of this is possible, other than the sidelong elucidatory remarks evoking what is already felt or apprehended. That is, there is something groundless about such elucidations also. This is all now illustrated in the magnificent passage where Leavis articulates how the ‘swan’s down feather’ passage works. Bearing in mind what an extraordinary evocation of excruciating indecision Octavia’s hesitation described by Antony is, we read:

‘If I were intent on developing the theme of ‘imagery’ I might say that ‘the swan’s down-feather’ gives us an image of weight – or lightness (lack of weight) – but I have already made the offer of such a comment absurd. For it is plain that the effective ‘as if’ value depends on our simultaneous sense of the massive swell of the tidal water, and that the effect of both depends on our being made by that word ‘swell’ to feel the ‘full of tide’ as a swell of emotion in ourselves [in Octavia, of course].

There is in fact a complex play of diverse and shifting analogy such as one might – for there is no dividing line – find oneself discussing under the head of ‘imagery’, ‘imagery’ conceived of as that which makes the difference between mere discursive thought and what we require of art. But we find ourselves, without any sense of a break, observing that

movement plays an essential part in the analogical potency of the passage, and we could hardly be happy in bringing that under ‘imagery’. The part played by movement insists on our noticing it in the opening of the speech, and in the closing clause:

Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart inform her tongue

and, after the self-contained ‘standing’ poise of the penultimate line, the lapse into

And neither way inclines.

‘Movement’ here, we note, is determined by the meaning which it serves and completes. (*The Living Principle*, 1975, pp102-3)

And so Leavis also argues with the Arden footnote on the ‘swan’s down feather’ passage:

‘It is not clear’ – it *ought* to be clear; that is the implication. The implied criterion, ‘clarity’, entails an ‘either/or’; does the image mean *this* or *that*? The reductive absurdity of the conception of language behind the criterion thus brought up is surely plain. It wouldn’t be enough to say the image has *both* meanings: no one really reading Shakespeare would ask to which it is, or to what, that ‘the swan’s down-feather’ is meant to apply metaphorically, because it would be so plain that the relevant meaning – the communication in which the the image plays its part – is created by the utterance as a totality...’

It is equally clear that this is an analytical and not an empirical disagreement. Leavis is claiming that the enactive character of the verse

has a double quality, with which I characterise enactments - two principles of enactment,

1. Unparaphraseability, and
2. Perception of the whole being prior to perception of the part.

In the light of the discussion, we may now add a third;

3. The enactments in question are framed within the 'third realm', which, amongst other elements, implies they are 'universals', iterable, occupying the Kantian-Leavisian space of the mutually participatory 'disinterested' reality of the object of contemplation in question (a conception which is compatible, at another level, with the most impassioned 'expression' of dramatic or musical or architectural utterance).

The Arden editor, perhaps inarticulately, is holding that a linear, and part by part analysis is possible. We cannot settle this now, but suffice to say, once more, it is an ancient philosophical-aesthetic argument, which Leavis once upon a time addressed with the JS Mill-led paradigms of Coleridge and Bentham, later substituting Blake for Coleridge.

In the light of all this, please consider a visual parallel, this image from Rothko:

If we look at the Rothko



we can now ask, do we, in Zeno-esque or FH Bradley mode, *hold the difference only in consciousness*? Is it only in consciousness that we hold the transition from maroon to blue? Is all perception subsumed to consciousness? Is not the whole, only accessible in its apprehended difference to consciousness, at the very least only apprehensible transcendently, in some sense? The Rothko puzzle, in any case, manifests classically the Derridean puzzle about *differance* which also goes right back to Zeno.

So then, if asked, about the Rothko, ‘does

“Do we hold the difference only in consciousness?”

count as a negate-able proposition? what would Wittgenstein say? And if it is not, is it meaningful?

“*The top is maroon, the middle blue, the bottom light maroon. We grasp it as a unity-in-difference only in consciousness.*” Is that an empirical proposition? Well, it could not be false. It could be other, but not false,

and, if other, not the same proposition. “It is just what it is”, is a necessary truth here (it is of course true of an infinity of possible and actual instances). Suppose we make a mistake in description (my awareness of my inner experience is not at all infallible). Such are disagreements in aesthetics; they are not empirical disagreements; they are comparative, whether or not evaluative. And of course there is a close relationship with the nuanced nature of disagreements in philosophy, as well as in criticism.

It was Descartes who began the modern appeal to the immediate, the given, with private experience. Wittgenstein reduced that to a (to be sure, as we have seen, aesthetic and infinite) tautology. But he has veritably come full circle from Descartes’ appeal to immediacy. He has designated our very participation in the world and the human world as foundational givenness, as grammatical, in his sense, in its totally circular, mutually supporting character, and thereby based our engagement in it, not on knowledge, but enactively on trust and faith.

This is indeed an appeal to nature, but to a more foundational nature, a ‘grammatical’ one, not one derived from science (the foundations of science and biology *per se* are of course as foundationally before all justification as anything else in *On Certainty*). Strawson confirms this in his later discussion of *On Certainty* and Hume’s *Treatise*, in *Scepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*.

Because, in these senses, the experiences in question are enactive, - unparaphrasable, holistic, and universal or iterable, - there is an element

of ineffability. They are opaque to objectification and they are more primary than science qua science. They are foundational, as Leavis implied about language.

Wittgenstein, here, is suddenly surprisingly close to Nietzsche's 'the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon', and also to the theological aesthetics of Kierkegaard's doyen, JG Hamann. Not to mention, Karl Barth. Indeed, all of our three, Wittgenstein, Leavis, and Derrida, oscillate around an enactive secular faith and theology which terminates in the ineffable and foundational. They are all kenotic thinkers, thinkers from out of the disregarded emptiness of ultimate, pre-knowledge, levels. This, which unites them all, is the fundamental. Writing of Hume to Kant in 1759, Hamann asks:

'The Attic philosopher, Hume, needs faith if he is to eat an egg, and drink a glass of water..... If he needs faith for food and drink, why does he deny faith when he is judging of matters that are higher than sensuous eating and drinking.'

Now for the affinity with Derrida. Much of his writing is too technical, too involuted, too quixotic, too deliberately hidden, to be accessible to the common reader, which is very exasperating. He never wrote his own 'Derrida for Dummies', though he is much more lucid in his teaching mode. But, everywhere in his writing one will sooner or later find things that say, something like, such and such a textuality is founded, not in actuality or presence, but in something prior to actuality and presence, which makes those possible, but without being utterable in our ordinary categories, which are actuality-based categories.

Now this is parallel to Leavis on the irreducibly analogical nature of enactive metaphor, resistant to the diagrammatic, or the objectified, the receptive-data-driven-empirical. Once more, from the analysis of the ‘swan’s down feather’:

‘There is in fact a complex play of diverse and shifting analogy such as one might – for there is no dividing line – find oneself discussing under the head of ‘imagery’, ‘imagery’ conceived of as that which makes the difference between mere discursive thought and what we require of art.’
Etc!

So, in the light of this, I offer the following, from *Freud and the Scene of Writing*, where Derrida is discussing the profound model of the psyche and unconscious text Freud offers in the short paper, *A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad*. It ostensibly deals, among other things, with the deconstruction of authorship, in virtue of censorship, repression, and the psychoanalytic divided self.

But once more it is basically effacing or erasing objectification, actuality, presence, ‘mere discursive thought’, in the way Leavis is implicitly in the passage just quoted:

‘Writing is unthinkable without repression. The condition for writing is that there be neither a permanent contact nor an absolute break between strata: the vigilance and failure of censorship. It is no accident that the metaphor of censorship should come from the area of politics concerned with the deletions, blanks, and disguises of writing..... The apparent exteriority of political censorship refers to an essential censorship which binds the writer to his own writing.

If there were only perception, pure permeability to breaching, there would be no breaches. We would be written, but nothing would be recorded; no writing would be produced, retained, repeated as legibility. But pure perception [that is, in the empiricist sense] does not exist: we are written only as we write, by the agency within us which always already keeps watch over perception, be it internal or external. The “subject” of writing does not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a system of relations between strata: the Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found. In order to describe the structure, it is not enough to recall that one always writes for someone; and the oppositions sender-receiver, code-message, etc., remain extremely coarse instruments. We would search the “public“ in vain for the first reader: i.e., the first author of a work. And the “sociology of literature” is blind to the war and the ruses perpetrated by the author who reads and by the first reader who dictates, for at stake here is the origin of the work itself. The sociality of writing as drama requires an entirely different discipline.’

A total system of relations! Wittgenstein wrote:

§102. Might I not believe that once, without knowing it, perhaps in a state of unconsciousness, I was taken far away from the earth - that other people even know this, but do not mention it to me? But this would not fit into the rest of my convictions at all. Not that I could describe the system of these convictions. Yet my convictions do form a system, a structure.

§103. And now if I were to say "It is my unshakeable conviction that etc.", this means in the present case too that I have not consciously arrived at the conviction by following a particular line of thought, but that it is anchored in all my *questions and answers*, so anchored that I cannot touch it.

§104. I am for example also convinced that the sun is not a hole in the vault of heaven.

§105. All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument.

The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life.'

Raymond Williams commented on Leavis's sense of mystery. And something in all our three authors makes me think of Traherne:

'The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things..... I knew not that they were born or should die; But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places.'

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