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Talent and the Individual's Tradition: History as Art, and Art as Moral Response

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For(e)bearance

In his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot said that "not only the best, but the most individual parts of [the poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously."[1] The poet's ancestors are those to whom he is indebted for all that he has inherited—his language, his sensibility, his outlook, and his standards of conduct. He acknowledges his debt by letting these forebears speak through his work. Paradoxically, the more freely and fully he allows them to speak—which is to say the less he self-indulgently tries to make his work appear original with him—the more completely his work bears the stamp of his individuality. Tradition provides discipline; out of the discipline springs the unselfconscious and uncontrived quality of all good writing, which in this essay we will call "spontaneity."

Eliot wrote this essay before he was converted to An-

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glicanism. He thought he was describing a general cultural phenomenon, which is that a cultural tradition (for example, that of Europe) could liberate the artist who assimilated it. We agree with Eliot's thesis, but only if it is taken to its proper conclusion. That conclusion is that tradition will liberate the artist only if he becomes a guileless and self-forgetful individual, and we believe self-forgetfulness is possible only by yielding one's heart to God.

Why are assimilation of the tradition and personal self-forgetfulness indispensable qualities of a genuine artist? Why do we add this to Eliot's thesis? Because the artist's talent is more than flair and ability that he possesses naturally. It is also a sensitivity to the ways and heritage of his people; probably without being aware of it he speaks for them, because he uses the language and images bequeathed to his people by its forebears. So, in significant part, his talent is something entrusted to him by others, and it is just for this reason that using this talent self-servingly is forbidden. If he does (and nonuse, too, is a kind of self-service), what he will produce will be artificial. On the other hand, the tradition is given fresh life in and through artists who magnify their talents without self-regard. Nowhere else does literary tradition live. Nowhere but in such artists can a living past be encountered. Without them, ritual petrifies and folk art becomes sentimental or vulgar.

We have inverted the title of Eliot's essay because we want to express this modification of Eliot's thesis. The inversion expands the usual connotations of the terms "talent" and "tradition." It suggests that there is a strong sense in which talents are fully employed by individuals only when they do not regard them as their own (or simply, do not regard them), and that there is an equally strong sense in which tradition exists only in the form of individuals in whom it is reincarnated. We use this word rather than "transmitted" because it suggests that tradition is not

merely transported intact by individuals along the passageway of time, but renewed and revitalized.

Eliot was thinking of the literary tradition in a way that comprehends the whole of that tradition, including the writing of philosophy, criticism, drama, social tracts, psychology, and history. What we have to say about the historian in this essay might be said (with appropriate adjustment of detail) about any practitioner of any literary art, and this is a point that needs to be kept firmly in mind if our thesis is to be intelligible. For our motivation in thinking about the subject is not accusatory. We would do ill to write of other people, present or past, as if their plight were not ours. Indeed, we have keenly felt the moral hazards that beset historians in our own disciplines of philology and philosophy.

The discipline that must be acquired in order to assimilate one's tradition is more than an accumulation of information. In the historian's case this discipline is a matter of care, in every sense of that word: carefulness in studying the random residue which past people have left of themselves and caring for them even though they are no longer with us. Without careful discipline there can be no incarnation of tradition, and without incarnation there is no individuality.

By defining the historian's discipline this way, we want to distinguish it from method. Method can be mastered and misused. For some practicing historians (philosophers, psychologists, and so forth), this is just what happens; their method is not simply the thoroughgoing care with which they set out a story of the past. Instead it is an affectation, a style deliberately adopted with an eye for professional legitimacy and success. In the writing of the disciplined historian who is absorbed in what is to be done rather than in any social advantage that might accrue from doing it, there is unmistakable freshness, individuality. On the other hand, the historian who employs method

and style for social recognition's sake cannot duplicate these results. The reason is, in seeking recognition he is withholding part of himself from his work, controlling his response as a whole human being to historical situations in favor of what he thinks is an ideal response of a historian. However he may try to make it "original," his work will be stylistically stereotyped. He will produce less than he understands in order to conform to the accepted canons of historical writing. Method and rigor are necessary for the sort of historical work we want to praise, but not sufficient—just as the law is honored by all who live the gospel, but not all who live the law honor the gospel. Our subject, then, is the abuse of method which might be thought of as an academic analogue of self-righteousness. And our thesis is that those who are in the historian's profession primarily for themselves will, like the self-righteous, make sounds of brass.

Until recent years, stylistic anonymity among historians for self-promotional purposes masqueraded as "objectivity." But the issue is not an epistemological one about the possibility of telling the past's story "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*," even though historiographers may have thought otherwise for decades. The issue is a psychological one about the quality of the historian's motivation. With the breakdown of philosophical positivism in our century, many historians have disclaimed any profession of objectivity, yet even some of these still assess one another's work against (largely tacit) methodological and stylistic norms. It is not the objectivity/subjectivity axis that should command our ultimate historiographical concern, but the purity-of-heart/impurity axis. The question is not whether the historian, like other craftsmen, colors what he makes with his own personality, for inevitably he does. Rather, the question is what sort of colors he gives it. Does he discolor it by harboring self-seeking intentions?

We have no disposition to pick on historians. Philos-

ophers are probably even more self-crippling, because the modes of philosophical thinking are more explicit, canonized, and coercive than the modes of historical thinking. For example, many philosophers assume that, except in its most extreme speculative reaches, contemporary logic defines not only the standard of one type of discourse among others, but the single type of discourse in which certain kinds of truths may be stated. Historically, logic was no such standard; instead, it was considered a branch of rhetoric—and that in fact is what it is. To speak with philosophical precision is to adopt a very narrow register of human speech in which much that human beings experience cannot be expressed or described. Why would anyone speak so artificially? Why would anyone be willing to censor his responses as a whole person in deference to narrow philosophical canons of expression? Recent work in the rhetoric of scientific discourse suggests that at least some of the motives are self-assertion and professional legitimacy, and if there are others, we do not know them. So philosophers and historians alike make myths when they take themselves too seriously: when they promote themselves in their work. (Of course, this means not taking themselves seriously enough as individual human beings—trusting the canons of their discipline more than their own sensibility.)

Believing that a disciplinary method is a mode of knowing rather than a heuristic device for arranging material for specific purposes may not be simply an error. It may be a sin. The historian or philosopher who uses his discipline self-promotionally finds immediate promise of exoneration in the view that the discipline can validate his work independently of his intentions. He clings to the idea that his social purposes are professionally irrelevant. By this means, he provides himself with an alibi if his conscience accuses him of seeking his own interest. How can he be accused of coloring his materials, he insists, when

his constant aim is to rid them of coloration? Preoccupation with technique and method fits Plato's definition of sophistry and pinpoints the self-seeking in it: one sends out a highly controlled signal in order to elicit a highly manipulated response. One can sin in scholarship as anywhere else. It is wrong in writing to do anything but write what is in us to be written.

Understanding Past People

The problem of understanding people in the past, including their policies and institutions, is only a form of the problem of understanding people generally. By setting out certain features of our ability to understand our contemporaries, we may illuminate the claims we are making about historical knowledge. Consider the following points:

Knowing *about* people is not knowing *them*; that is, it is not understanding them. One cannot but withdraw from other human beings—and thus render them humanly unreal—if one concentrates on what properties they have, for that construes them as objects. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Buber, Polanyi, and Levinas have all taught us this by numerous cogent insights. When we know a person, we know more than we can tell; and supposing otherwise is a mode of pushing that person away. Understanding people, as opposed to knowing about them, comes in the course of being with them unselfconsciously; it is a residuum of living in a sharing, trusting, and caring community with them. *Hence to observe people in order to know about them rather than to respond unguardedly to them is to withdraw from the conditions which must obtain if they are to be understood.*

Thus, acting as if one is an observing center rather than a person does not mean one is disinterested. Such action is an apparent self-obliteration in the form of a perceptual and stylistic anonymity which is actually an intense preoccupation with guarding, vindicating, and advancing the self. It is an intense form of self-assertion.

A historian can live with and understand past people only if he regards the accoutrements of his profession (the habits, the jargon, the frame of reference, and so forth) as inferior to, and less valuable than, himself as a man and any man as a man. Only then can he enter with unself-conscious empathy into others' situations.

The Historian as Tradition Incarnate

Contrast the self-seeking, depersonalizing writer of history with the guileless one. The former imposes generalizations and theories upon "the data." The latter expresses patterns of selection in his work that go beyond what he can deliberately produce or even completely comprehend. These living patterns of selection taken together are an expression of what he is as one who by historical study has assimilated tradition through his language, in his interaction with his immediate forebears. This tradition then expresses itself in his unselfconscious writing and teaching. And therefore what he produces is right. It is not false to what he transforms. When he speaks or writes it is as if history is finding one expression of its accumulating truth in his responses to that part of the world which has preceded him. The self-serving historian, on the other hand, stylizes what he comprehends of the past and thwarts the flow of tradition through him. He is untrue to the living tradition that has enabled him to become both a person and a historian.

If a historian accepts the gospel, he is adopted; he gains a new ancestry; a fresh heritage becomes active in him. His open, artless, and fresh way of seeing and speaking about the past will be a correlative, an expression, of the new person he has become. If purely motivated, he gives the history he has absorbed a spontaneous—that is, an unguarded and guileless—expression. That kind of expression is wisdom. On the other hand, the self-deceived historian performs something extraneous to the purpose of

the history which had made him what he is, and he is thereby unfaithful to himself. And if he knows anything about the gospel, he is unfaithful to the Lord. He does not produce wisdom.

Let us further contrast generalization and wisdom. Generalizations are generally valid for general purposes; they are not valid for specific purposes. We may induce a generalization from a number of specifics, but when we have done so we find that it does not completely apply to any of them. Perhaps in natural science it could (or could it?), but historically it will not. Any generalization to be valid has to be one arising totally from a total specific situation, not a generalization inductively arrived at over many instances.

This is where the word "wisdom" comes in: We read history in order to gain the great historian's wisdom. In him we encounter a unique historical situation alive in a living, interfusing, and blending individual, the historian. And we discover in the nature of that unique totality something of the nature of all other unique totalities—something which cannot be expressed in any list of generalizations, however lengthy. That is why history is an art rather than a science (we are assuming, we suspect incorrectly, that there are in fact sciences, the essence of which can be expressed in a theory, i.e., in an adequate and consistent set of generalizations). It is why a fine history, like a Baucis-and-Philemon pitcher, is inexhaustible (though not unfathomable). There is no essential difference between the way in which Herodotus and Thucydides use their material and the way in which Aeschylus and Sophocles use theirs. The Swedish philosopher, Hans Larsson, said in 1892 (in spite of the shadow of Herbert Spencer) that social scientists should not ignore the fact that literature has given them far more subtle exemplars of human behavior than they themselves describe. (The converse is also true: When social scientists describe behavior well, they write litera-

ture; Adler is not literature but Freud is, and that is the only reason why Freud is worth more attention.)

The historian can be true to the history reposited within him only if he endeavors to give it the form that suits the whole of it, and not merely parts of it. In doing this, he is doing the same thing as someone who makes a poem. He should from this point of view recognize himself as an artist and realize that his totality of knowledge should be expressed through a totality of means. The historian who has a style that is true to him will produce history that is also true to him, and because it is true to him in this naive sense it will have truth in it.

This is a patently different sense of "truth" than is current among many social scientists. It is predicated upon the view that contact with history is not contact with the past as such but with the historian who embodies the tradition in his own unique way. The book he writes is only an aspect of what he has achieved in human terms and cannot be understood apart from that achievement. The historian whose style is true to him will be one in whom the tradition will have been truly incarnated; style and what we are calling "incarnation" are but aspects of the same thing. And if the style is wrong, the history written will be wrong. There is no question of the style's varying independently of the "facts"—of the style's being wrong and the "facts" right or of the style being right and the "facts" wrong. To think otherwise is to have a befuddled—an objectivist—view of factuality. In the light of this personifying view of truth Gibbon comes off as a great historian, for his style expresses himself. The same can be said of Thucydides, Herodotus, and Livy; it could not be said of those nineteenth-century historians who were eager to put rational order onto the material; or of those twentieth-century historians who consider it imperative to order the material professionally and impersonally. There is

never a more significant result of the study of history than the historian himself.

Historical Uniqueness and Moral Universalizability

These three things happen together if they happen at all: the author is self-forgetful, the historical situation is captured in its uniqueness, and—we have not mentioned this yet—the history written serves as an inexhaustible fund for moral lessons. Yet it is not didactic in any ordinary sense of that term. Only a history that in the first instance tried to abstract out the moral content of a past situation would in the second instance be compelled to try to reimpose it in the form of cautionary conclusions.

A situation captured in its uniqueness has moral relevance because it is a whole situation like our own situation. We are free to see it in any of indefinitely many ways, including those most instructive for us. But when the historical situation is subsumed under a generalization, it is seen in just one way, and we can easily exclude ourselves from it. Many similarities between that situation and our circumstance are artificially suppressed. (This is one of the great lessons of Nietzsche's doctrine that all events, including the propagation of ideas, have multiple genealogies.) We let our preoccupation with discrete personal properties and comparisons become a pseudo-Mosaic alternative to conscience. (Why aren't we led by everything we see to have a broken heart and contrite spirit? Certainly it is not because we don't have ample cause.) But letting the story tell itself in all of the completeness with which we spontaneously apprehend it is tantamount to a repudiation of this pseudo-Mosaic context. The reader is left to face up to the whole of the matter—to be impressed by moral dimensions and standards inherent in the story, dimensions which even the author may not suspect are there.

Take the example of David. David is not just any oriental monarch. He has been chosen by the Lord to be the leader of Israel. He has shown himself obedient in every particular to the Lord. He has not tried to hasten or evade the Lord's plan for him; he has not anticipated the time when he is to take over the kingdom; he has left the shape and direction of his destiny to the Lord. He spares Saul's life more than once. He makes his way faultlessly to the throne. Who else in history ever did that? Only after he has achieved the throne does he fail, and the story of his failure, down to his last bloody deathbed utterance, is told in more detail than the story of his success. Now to make the moral point of the story of David other than the way in which Nathan did would be to hide that point. That is, to impose a superficial moral generalization on the story would be to rob it of its moral applicability to every reader—its moral universalizability. What Nathan did was to set David a trap by presenting a parable, and David fell into the trap. The climax of David's life is Nathan's statement: "Thou art the man." This climax is not set out in detail and the moral point is not put in a proposition: it could not be. We cannot even say that the story shows the moral point (i.e., the punishment for adultery and murder). That is too cut and dried and limited a characterization, for the punishment does not "fit the crime": the crime's consequences are its punishment—to be an adulterer is the punishment for adultery. Instead, the history's moral point pulsates throughout the whole of it, as through a parable, and cannot be abstracted from it. And we in our own individual and different ways—in ways apposite to our individual cases—draw the parable's conclusion—a conclusion which may well differ from what we may discover upon returning to the story later, after further experiences have altered us. We are allowed to experience David's life totally, to sense its emotive tides, to work out the ironical implications of the account. The inspired historian has pro-

duced, in a language of the whole man which uses all the devices of rhetoric (including juxtaposition), a better biography, a finer account, than any other anywhere. It is written for a spiritually educated and subtle people. It goes as far as history can go, which is to re-create the story of a past human being in the terms in which it is lived and valued, which is to say, in predominantly moral terms.

The closest a self-deceiving historian can come to morality is this: "There but for the grace of God go I." This effort at self-decontamination is not found in a historian who produces pure history, precisely because his acknowledgment of impurity has been for him a path to purity. The response of the guileless historian is therefore, "Lord, have mercy on me, there go I also." This is what the prophet Nathan, speaking for the Lord, meant when he said, "Thou art the man." And for us, in all of the pages of history, there is implicit in every line the unarticulated reminder: "We are the men."

Thus does the response of the guileless historian place him in community with the past people he encounters in his work. He understands them as people. It is remarkable that only as we become more individual, rather than less, can we live in community with one another. And conversely: Only as we live in and through one another in our individual uniqueness—the historian taking past people to understand and they taking him to be understood by—is it possible for us to partake of each other's strengths and be individually richer for it. Otherwise, our relation to one another is manipulative: we treat ourselves and each other as replicable—indeed, as artifacts which in our social interaction with one another we ourselves are continuously producing. For those of us who insulate ourselves from one another by using each other, even the present is a sort of past, cadaverized, an unbridgeable distance away; whereas for the pure even the past is present, vivified and immediately felt. This is in the spirit not only of the gospel

but of thinkers like Heidegger, who have tried to clear away the intellectual debris from our modern mentality so that we might receive the revelation from God if only it were to come.

What Shall It Profit a Man?

It cannot profit a person to *try* to be individualistic in his way of perceiving others' situations or in his way of writing about them. It is as unprofitable as trying to be nonchalant or sincere. One who does not feel exigencies in his present situation is nonchalant; one who tries to be nonchalant is tense. One who is concentrating wholly on something other than himself in what he is doing is sincere; one who is trying to be sincere is concentrating on himself, no matter how hard he pretends he is not. Taking thought to make ourselves or our work *be* some particular way or other is in principle self-defeating.

Another reason why it is profitless to try to be an individual is that taking thought to make ourselves is self-delimiting. Taking thought for the morrow in any way at all means trying to conform to an anticipated pattern of self which in principle is too simple to be a self. The more we conform to that pattern, the more we make of ourselves not an individual but rather a replicable artifact—our own artifact. And the work we produce is also too simple to be the work of the self, for behind it was the motivation to produce that which will reflect a character too simple to be a self.

A third reason why we cannot by taking thought add a cubit to our stature as historians: By trying to conform ourselves to a replicable model of what a historian should be we block our own creativity. How? Taking thought for the morrow means substituting an imagined tomorrow for the one that is really going to be there. And as we do not know the one that is really going to be there, we prepare ourselves for a number of hypothetical tomorrows that will

never come. We do this instead of being ready, by merely being ourselves, for any tomorrow that will come. When we wake up in the morning, we don't readily pick up the thread of the day that awaits us, for we have determined in advance where it will be, and therefore we do not see where it really is. Alas for Benjamin Franklin, planning his day at 5:00 A.M., how he will manipulate various Philadelphians! He must compulsively and obsessively try to extrude many threads, to manipulate many clues to the labyrinth in order to convince himself that he is on the right track. And Franklin's kind of planning for the future is simply the mirror image of the self-serving historian's planning for the past. The generalizations the historian has convinced himself are the right guidelines for interpreting history preclude him from discovering new patterns in the history he encounters; he is only able to gather more details.

Here is a fourth reason why writing the kind of history we have suggested is not something a person could possibly set out to do: To try to get for ourselves in any fashion is to be anxious over the treasure we seek, and to be thus anxious is to forfeit the freedom and spontaneity or openness necessary for a total response to a total situation. That is a message of W. H. Auden's poem, "The Bard."

> He was their servant—some say he was blind—
> And moved among their faces and their things;
> Their feeling gathered in him like a wind
> And sang: they cried—'It is a God that sings'—
>
> And worshipped him and set him up apart
> And made him vain till he mistook for song
> The little tremors of his mind and heart
> At each domestic wrong.
>
> Songs came no more: he had to make them.
> With what precision was each strophe planned.
> He hugged his sorrow like a plot of land,

> And walked like an assassin through the town,
> And looked at men and did not like them,
> But trembled if one passed him with a frown.[2]

The moment we start to care about succeeding we forfeit every possibility of it.

Auden's bard was, to begin with, a servant; later, a slave. At first he did not regard himself as being original. He did not repeat himself at all. Instead he expressed what came to him to be expressed and thus passed on an oral tradition. Later, he insisted on his originality and individuality and suffocated his creativity. In the first phase he was a classicist; in the second, a romantic. A Milton landscape is a characteristic landscape – it is a typical landscape; yet at the same time it is Milton's landscape. He did not *try* to make it his: it is his because in looking in another direction than himself he did not obstruct the expression of his personality in and through it. It is only the inferior artist who feels a need to make a highly individual response in order to be able to do something original, new, and different. The result is strained. The result is precious. The result, ironically, is replicable: the original of the piece is already a stereotype. For his part, the classicist is never concerned with individuality for its own sake. He is concerned with tradition. Were we living in 1798 and afflicted with tremors of insecurity about whether what we were writing would be regarded as individual, we might take exception to this statement, because our contemporaries would be interpreting the tradition as a means of throttling individuality. But the truth is that tradition can liberate the person who interacts with it.

Almost any moderately intelligent human being could produce something highly individual and profound if he took no thought for what was in it for him, provided he had assimilated a good deal of the tradition. The old statement that everyone has at least one book in him is relevant

here; and, indeed, we have had occasional examples in English literature of a peculiar pellucidity appearing just once. John Woolman's *Journal* is an example. Compare it with Franklin's *Autobiography*. The inadequacy and arrogance of Franklin resemble the explanations of the knights in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. They are murderers who rationally explain away their act. (Whatever books there may have been in Franklin, he murdered them.) It is not beside the point that in creating the rationalizing knights Eliot was satirizing Shaw. Shaw's plays are appealing to many, for they offer an easy clarity, and (like many psychiatrists and psychotherapists and like Eliot's knights) a facile—a *reasonable*—mode of explaining away personal guilt. The witch doctor, the advertiser, and the politician make similar offers—reasonable offers.

These offers are quackery. An essential feature of this kind of quackery is its respectability. The offers come in the guise of a virtuous practice to be followed, an approved technique or method, with all of the half-suspected quasitheory shared by the people who endorse it. The quacks rail at historicism and point to the history Hitler wrote as a misuse of history. That is a way of establishing *their* respectability by comparison. Their doctrine is almost irresistible when made so respectable—so decently indecent. From that point they can perpetrate immoralities in an atmosphere of legitimacy, as in the contemporary theater where lewdness frolics on the stage without being condemned as such because, besides being immoral, it is also dishonest about what it is. Was not Hitler partly seduced by the wrong kind of history that he read?

For a person to be a historian—a genuine historian—is for him cheerfully to run the risk that he may never be acknowledged as such. He will also have to concede in advance that he himself may discover what he has had to say after, rather than before, he writes his words. He will

draw his identity at a source different from the well of his peers' opinions.

Enthusiasm

We have been advocating what used to be called "enthusiasm." Contrary to what some would have us believe, enthusiasm has nothing to do with romanticism; and if they think it historically has nothing to do with classicism, it is because they tend not to consider the classicists, like Milton and Dante, who were enthusiastic Christians.

We acknowledge that nothing could be more alien to the intellectualist ideal of calculated impersonality. It is true that this ideal seems not altogether unwarranted, for historical instances of enthusiasm have been justifiably attacked. There is this danger in enthusiasm, that impure people, like Hitler, will yield to an impure spirit. Our thesis in this paper is that by the same token, there is an equally horrifying danger in the repudiation of enthusiasm—namely, in the protection which some erect against novelty and spontaneity in themselves—a disguised form of demonism in which seizure by the Holy Spirit is precisely what is resisted. The one alternative to being possessed by some sort of devil is to yield to—voluntarily to let ourselves be taken over by—God's Spirit. The depersonalizing "wisdom" of the age, like the so-called wisdom of ages generally, will when unmasked be seen to be only the self-protective smoke screen of a professional clique so fearful of self-revelation through their productions that they have yielded themselves up proudly to the demon of reasonableness.

> What was to be the value of the long looked forward
> to,
> Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity
> And the wisdom of age? Had they deceived us
> Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
> Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?

The serenity only a deliberate hebetude,
The wisdom only the knowledge of dead secrets
Useless in the darkness into which they peered
Or from which they turned their eyes. There is, it
seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been. We are only
undeceived
Of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm.
In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure
foothold,
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment. Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.
The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

—T. S. Eliot, "East Coker"[3]

If you ask us to point to a historian who represents much of what we say, we can readily do it: Hugh Nibley, of whom we thought as we wrote. Who among us has been more completely absorbed in peoples of the past and less occupied with impressing anyone with his style? Who has expressed his own personality so well, with so little thought for it? Who has better inspired us to care about and learn from the vast population of historical souls who have intrigued and delighted him over the years? And he has done this not by exhortation but by his example of wonder and absorption in his constant learning and his gracious acts of sharing it with us.

Notes

1. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, new ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), 4.

2. W. H. Auden, *A Selection by the Author* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1958), 60.

3. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), 184-85.