



**F.R.Leavis as a Moral Critic with Special Reference to
Leo Tolstoy**

الناقد فرانك ليفز بوصفه ناقداً اخلاقياً مع اشارة خاصة لتولستوي

Prepared by:

Angham Jamal Damra

Supervised by:

Prof. Sabbar S. Sultan

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Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in English
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Department of English Language and Literature

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Middle East University (MEU)

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Middle East University

Authorization

I, Angham Jamal Damra, hereby authorize Middle East University to supply copies of my thesis to libraries, establishments or individuals upon request.

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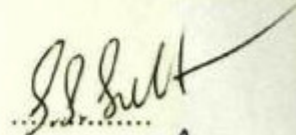
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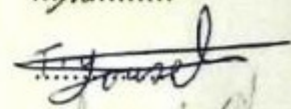
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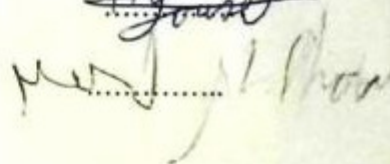
Prof. Tawfiq Yousef

Internal Examiner



Prof. Mahmoud Al-Shetawi

External Examiner



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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, who helped and supported me a lot.

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Abstract

This study investigates and explores the works of the British critic F. R. Leavis with great emphasis on his moral criticism. The thesis describes and analyzes his works in order to achieve the objectives of the study; highlighting the nature of moral literary criticism on F. R. Leavis's works, emphasizing the view that his moral standards guide his orientations, and showing his deep concern in social, culture, moral matters, and Tolstoy's ideas.

The study shows that there are eight main elements which determine Leavis' vision on moral criticism: the conception of art and life, the role or function of the artist, fiction, poetry, the reader's position in his arguments, man-woman relation, the nature of critical discourse and education. The study, suggests several ideas for further research to show the effect of moral criticism on other writers and the result on their works.

Keywords: F.R.Leavis, Leo Tolstoy, criticism, moral criticism, literary theory, Anna Karenina.

الناقد فرانك ليفز بوصفه ناقدا اخلاقياً مع اشارة خاصة لتولستوي

اعداد

أنغام جمال ضميره

اشراف

الاستاذ الدكتور صبار سلطان

ملخص البحث

تستعرض هذه الدراسة وتبحث في طبيعه النقد الادبي ل الناقد البريطاني فرانك ريموند ليفز مع تركيز خاص على نقده الاخلاقي . تصف هذه الرساله وتحلل اعماله من اجل تحقيق اهداف هذه الدراسه وهي تسليط الضوء على طبيعه نقده الاخلاقي مع الاهتمام بدرجة خاصه على ميوله الاخلاقي وتوجهاته واهتمامه العميق بالامور الاجتماعيه والثقافيه والاخلاقية مع تاثره بالكاتب تولستوي.

تعرض الدراسه ثمانية محاور رئيسيه لتحديد نظرته الاخلاقية وهي : تصوراته عن الفن والحياه ودور او وظيفه الفنان وارانته في الروايه والشعر وموقف القارئ في طروحاته وعلاقه الرجل بالمرأه والتربيه وطبيعه خطابه النقدي. تقترح الدراسه جملة افكار عن البحوث اللاحقه في هذا الموضوع مثل طرح دراسات معمقه عن تاثير النقد الاخلاقي عليه من قبل كاتب اخر ونتائج هذا العمل .

الكلمات المفتاحيه: فرانك ليفز، ليو تولستوي، النقد، النقد الاخلاقي، النظريات الادبيه، أنا كارينينا.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This section is devoted to the study of moral criticism as one important criterion that distinguishes one work from another according to moral content. It is the study of what is right and what is wrong and how humans judge each other according to their own moral standards. In addition, this section gives an idea about the moral criticism of Dr. Frank Raymond Leavis and his significant position in the contemporary literary theory. Dr. Leavis emphasized the role of moral criticism, which, as will be shown in the following pages, is reflected in social, cultural, and moral aspects when dealing with literary or artistic works. Furthermore, this study pays special attention to the effects of Tolstoy, the Russian writer, on Leavis in his works. In this particular side, the present research will explore the moral content of the works of Leavis in addition to showing the effect of Tolstoy on his judgments.

1.2 Biography of Leavis (1895-1978)

Leavis received his education at Perse School and Cambridge University. Virtually he spent his whole life in the Cambridge University town. He used to

have high admiration for it. In other respects, he was attached deeply to his father, a cultivated, sensitive, deeply musical person who had musical instruments shop in Cambridge. After he served in the Ambulance Corps in the period of World War I, Leavis earned scholarship to Emmanuel College. During his undergraduate study, he specialized first in history but transferred later to English. The specific works which affected his thoughts about culture, society, and literature were those composed by Ford Madox Ford, T.S.Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and George Santayana.

In 1912, and as schoolboy, he subscribed to *'The English Review'* of Ford. He was attracted to Ford's thought that in the concurrent industrial world, the superb cultural values ought to be kept by small minority, which should, however, resist distracting itself from life. Later as student at Cambridge University, he was entranced by teachers like I. A. Richards, the advocate of 'Practical Criticism', and Mansfield Forbes. He was much impressed by the 'The Calendar of Modern Letters' periodical, which emphasized keeping high critical standards.

Leavis wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1924 on the 18th century periodical literature, "The Relationship of Journalism to Literature: Studies in the Rise and Earlier Development of the Press in England." In 1925, he started English literature tutoring at Emmanuel College and in 1927 he worked as assistant lecturer. He pursued teaching at Cambridge until retirement in 1962.

As lecturer, he used to challenge establishment with his theories on literature and university. In the 1930's he disturbed the English faculty when he started lecturing to his class on contemporary writings like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

Leavis believed strongly that English literature is an indispensable discipline in the university and wrote many essays defending his position. In one of his last books published posthumously, *The Living Principle* (1998), he argued that the study of English literature is a discipline of rigorous thought, not merely an exercise of emotions. In 1930, he published his first book and kept producing various essays, reviews, and books, until two years prior to his death when he published the last book of his. Among his most significant and influential literary studies are *Revaluation* (1936), *The Great Tradition* (1948), *The Common Pursuit* (1952), and *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1972). All of these are studies that evaluated works of the writers whom he considered as the most important in English literature.

On the other hand, Leavis was closely associated with the launching of the influential literary journal *Scrutiny* in 1932. He was actively involved in it as editor and contributor throughout the life of the journal and contributed the valedictory issue in October 1953. In addition, he collaborated in numerous critical studies with Queenie Roth, whom he married in 1929 and who, as Q. D. Leavis, published many works of her own.

What characterizes the achievement of F.R. Leavis as a critic is that he devoted all his time and energy to the academic life and teaching students the principles of serious criticism. In this regard, it has been found out that:

His long academic procession which is sprinkled with endless feuds and fights and sporadic periods of unemployment shows a sincere and unquestionable desire to take criticism as a career worthwhile all the sacrifices and strip it of the second prizes often attributed to it. (Sultan, 2008, 11)

During the 1960's, Leavis was involved in a controversy with C. P. Snow, the scientist-novelist, over the relationship in contemporary society between the scientific and the literary cultures. Leavis hated Snow because in his view Snow is simply an intruder whose original domain is science, not art or literature. Thus, the dispute between them led to production of books and reviews about culture and criticism. Leavis outlined his position in *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow* (1959), which is the most famous of his social essays, and in which he unsparingly attacked Snow's idea of a scientific culture distinct from the traditional humanistic culture.

The title of his polemic book *Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P.Snow* is interesting and actually shows the type of criticism he is famous for. Often it tends to be aggressive when it comes to raising moral questions and their position in the critical controversy. He condemns “the class and materialistic vision of the future”. After rejecting this bleak perspective of what will happen in the future if Snow’s perception of culture is uncontained, Leavis calls for “a collaborative creative third realm ...more a world of shared values and significances exemplified in the study of literature.” (Jarvis,2005,18).

No doubt the debate that went on between Snow and Leavis reveals, among other things, that moral criticism as practiced by Leavis, knows no limits and can be a vital weapon used to attack social and moral evils, especially in the fields of culture and education. This is because their impacts are wide-ranging and very influential.

Hence Leavis’ serious concern with the directions, they follow and the unpredictable consequences they may lead to, if they are not keenly observed and checked.

In his famous Rede lecture, Snow defends his firm attitude toward having two cultures in modern civilization science and art are essential for development of mankind. He asserts his views through the following justification:

The reasons for the existence of two cultures are many, deep, and complex, some rooted on moral historic, some in personal histories, and some in dynamic of the different kinds of mental activity themselves. But I want to isolate one which is not so much a reason as a correlative, something which winds in and out of these discussions. It can be said simply, and it is this. If we forget the scientific culture then the rest of western intellectuals have never tried, wanted or been able to understand the industrial revolution, much less alert it. Intellectuals, in particular literary intellectuals are natural hadiths'. (Snow,1988,22)

In 1966, Leavis undertook a lecture tour of the United States. He later held visiting professorships at the Universities of York, Wales, and Bristol. Several universities, including Aberdeen, Belfast, Delhi, Leeds, and York, awarded him honorary doctorates. He was made a Companion of Honor in 1978, just prior to his death on 14 April 1978.

For Leavis, literature and literary criticism do not operate in a social vacuum; they derive from a concern for maintaining cultural standards. He envisioned English literary studies as a distinct discipline at the center of the intellectual and cultural life of a civilized society, with evaluation of the text as its principal function. The focus must always be the “words on the page.” In this regard,

Leavis rejected the concentration on literary biography and history that was still prevalent at the beginning of the twentieth century. He stressed the need for firm, decisive assessments while allowing room for disagreement and collaboration. In providing decisive and insightful literary evaluation, Leavis believed that the critic helps to educate the public and to shape contemporary cultural and intellectual life. In his studies of the novel, Leavis argued that the great novels affirm “the possibilities of life” – a quality which he regarded as a fundamental criterion. This quality unites the diverse writers who, in his judgment, constitute the “great tradition” of the English novel, like Jane Austen, George Eliot, Charles Dickens, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence. Indeed, much of Leavis’s praise of Lawrence, with whose work he was preoccupied throughout his career as a critic and whom he considered the greatest novelist of the century, has to do with the affirmative values he perceives in Lawrence’s work.

Both as a man and as a critic, Leavis was not stranger to controversy, and by the end of his life he was a deeply embattled figure. Nevertheless, he made lasting contributions to the study of English literature and is perceived by many as the most influential British critic of the twentieth century. Leavis’s advocacy of close, analytical reading of the text combined with a firm awareness of the value and importance of what it has to say about life established the dominant

pattern of British criticism and the dominant approach to English literature in many universities until the 1970's.

This close reading which Leavis championed all his life is one of the foundation of a successful analysis and appreciation of the given text. This proper and fruitful reading would lead to a sound judgment which is the hallmark of Leavis' criticism. He puts it in his *Revaluation*, this judgment should not be arbitrary or haphazard. Rather it should be convenient, real and to the point. In his own terms, judgment is:

A real judgment, or it is nothing. It must, that is, be a sincere personal judgment, but it aspires to be more than personal. Essentially it has the form: "This is so, is it not? But the agreement applied for must be real or it serves no critical purpose.
(Ford,1962,90)

1.3 Contribution of Leavis to Moral Criticism

As a critic, Leavis was highly controversial, and in certain ways unpopular, to many of his generation. He is frequently cited as one of the highly important and effectual literary critics of his time. He was committed fully to the belief that literature is some important moral and social force and

persuasively argued that study of literature ought to be viewed as vital quest. Additionally he stressed that critical study of literature requires disciplined investigation. In his opinion, historical, biographical, and emotional approaches to criticism of literary disclose only little about the given text. He used to feel that instead the literary inquiry calls for careful examination of texts and a searching critical intelligence. In other words, close reading of the text is necessary to reach to a good and successful critical analysis.

Leavis's idea of the writer having "an intense moral interest of her own in life that is in the first place preoccupation with certain problems that life compels on her as personal ones" (Leavis, 1948, p.16). His contribution to moral criticism derives from Plato's moral criticism of art in *The Republic* which has traditionally been presented as moralistic, that is, evaluating the quality of a work of art in terms of its good or bad moral consequence. A work of art, as a work of beauty, has moral consequences because it addresses people and affects their sensibilities and understanding. That is what Leavis asserted in his criticism. There were great works of literature and, therefore, Leavis expressed his opinion with a moral sincerity, asserting that literature represents life and texts are to be assessed according to the content and the author's moral position.

Aristotle also had his position in Leavis's criticism; Aristotle developed elements of organization and methods for writing effective poetry and drama,

known as the principles of dramatic construction. Aristotle believed that elements like "...language, rhythm, and harmony..." (Aristotle, p.1-2) influence the audience's catharsis (pity and fear) or satisfaction with the work. Moral excellence is concerned with pleasure and pain; because of pleasure we do bad things and for fear of pain we avoid noble ones. Aristotle's *Poetics*, though regarded as a theoretical system now, began as a commentary on particular instances of drama that Aristotle had witnessed. In other words, the theory did not come first but the experience did. The emphasis, for Leavis, is always on the inductive approach, something that connects him with critics as far back in literary history as Aristotle.

Samuel Johnson (1707-1784) is too known for his strict association of morality and literature. Throughout his works, he developed numerous vital arguments. One of the most debatable, and maybe of the most powerful, is his belief that the author pledges to be some ethical compass for her/his audience. This audience can be affected strongly by what it reads or watches. He says in 'The Rambler, No. 4' that "These books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduce, and introductions into life" (Johnson, p.16). From Johnson's perspective, the literary work must depict its characters acting in morally-acceptable manners so as to have positive effects on an audience that is commonly impressionable and young. For Johnson, literature is moral by being didactic, but Leavis's essays on

Samuel's criticism argue that he does not hold a didactic view at all in his thoughts about the creative use of language and involvement in creation of value: "Johnson was representative in his inability to appreciate the more profoundly creative uses of language" (Leavis, 1952, p.12). Nonetheless, Lan Robinson argues in *The Survival of English* that:

... It is not unprecedented for English literature to be dominated for a while by a critic. Dr. Leavis's position has of late been comparable with Dr. Johnson's at the end of the eighteenth century, except that Leavis has yet to attain Johnson's general recognition (which itself says something of the place of imaginative literature and criticism in the world. (p.236)

Critic William Hamilton as reported by James Boswell at re end of *Life of Johnson* (1791) points out the great position Johnson deservedly engages not only in scholarship and creative literature but also in criticism. He finds that Johnson:

Has made a chasm, which not only working can fill-up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up – Johnson is dead. Let us go to the next best: - there is nobody; -no man can be said to put you in wind of Johnson."

(Lingham,1993,p.1)

Like Matthew Arnold, the 19th century English critic Leavis shows great literature as a moral exploration. Arnold was the first modern critic who stated that the purpose of literary criticism was to know the best that is known and thought of in the world, and by making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas.

Arnold's criticism actually paves two way for what is called nowadays as "cultural criticism". By implication, one can argue that Arnold, interests as a critic are various and multiple. He investigates in his critical essays the roles assigned to religion, politics, culture, arts and literature. As such, his contribution to western criticism cannot be overlooked. Indeed critics of the 20th century keep referring to and quoting Arnold's views and judgments which cover wide fields in life. This is summed up in the following judgment:

Arnold not only models the positive of the public intellectual in its recognizably modern form, but he also sets the terms and parameters for much of the subsequent critical discourse from his 'function' of criticism and apology for "culture", to his chastening of Greek paideia against the encroachments of scientific systematizes, his advocacy of undogmatic religion, and so forth. (Caufield,2012,15)

He has influenced a whole school of critics including ‘New Critics’ such as T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, and Allen Tate. As a critic, Arnold is essentially a moralist. He articulated that poetry of indifference to moral ideas is poetry of indifference to life.

Leavis was one who closely mirrored some of Arnold’s ideas for both writers and critics. His analysis of the moral tradition in the English novel produced his classic work *The Great Tradition* (1948), which maintained that an understanding of life presented in fiction depends wholly upon the moral or religious background of the writer.

The reciprocal relation between art and life is always a principle he has kept all his life as a very valuable thing. In his view, James Austen’s achievement rests the two. Indeed Leavis’ choice of her name in his narrow list of the few novelists that can be rightly included in the “tradition”. It is within this content that Leavis perceives and judges her novel, *Emma* and justifies his admiration of this novel. As he suggests:

When we examine the formal perfection of *Emma*, one finds 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 that is combined miraculously with the truth to life can give no adequate reason for the view that

Emma is a great novel, and not intelligent account of its perfection of form (Leavis,1936,8-9)

Arnold's position in the criticism of Leavis extends to different sides of his critical achievement. Apart from the moral issues and the necessity of locating criticism within its social and cultural background, one could refer to the fact that Leavis' impressive work on Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* has something to do with Arnold; seminal insights and judgments of it. The seeds of Leavis' critique have been suggested in Arnold's own works:

Anna Karenina in first introduced to English readers by Matthew Arnold in an article, Count Leo Tolstoy, in *The Fortnightly Review*, vol.48 (Dec. 1887). It has been reprinted in *Leo Tolstoy: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Handy Gifford. (Tolstoy,1983,xxix)

From Arnold he learned the importance of maintaining moral standards for criticism and in his criticism he included a great admiration for Arnold:

we make (Arnold insists) Our major judgments about poetry by bringing to bear the completest and profoundest sense of relative value that, aided by the work judged, we can focus from Our total

experience of life (which includes literature), and our judgment has intimate bearings on the most serious choices we have to make thereafter in Our living. (Leavis, 1932, p.93)

From T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) he developed his concepts of tradition: living not morally in the present “but the present moment of the past.” The foundation of moral judgments is not only about literature but also about life. In his critical essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot asserted that literary criticism must be supplemented with moral and religious criticism. He further contended that morality is a constituent part of literature and that good literature must be moral. Aesthetic and moral pleasure must not be divorced: a purely "aesthetic" judgment is totally wrong.

F.R.Leavis shows in his early writing great admiration of T.S.Eliot's articles, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, not only for its moral and serious perceptions of life and art. In fact he also identifies artistic judgments which he personally shares with Eliot. He is quoted to be judging Eliot in the following:

How do masterpieces arrive? Gifted individuals occur, inspiration sets in, creation results. Mr. Eliot, all of whose early prose may be said to have been directed against the Romantic tradition,

which till then had not been affectively challenged, lays the stress on other things(or some of them) besides individual talent and originative impulse ...

Something like the idea of Tradition so incisively and provocatively formulated by his plays, I think, an essential part in the thinking of everyone today who is seriously interested in literature. If I say that idea represents a new emphasize on the social nature of artistic achievement, I ought to add at once that the word social, probably doesn't occur in the classical essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (the word that takes Mr. Eliot's stress is "impersonal" (Bilan,1979,88)

Sometimes Leavis' moral attitudes and judgments can be very controversial, especially when the reader remembers his great bias to D.H.Lawrence and his fictional world. Needless to say, there are many obscene and outrageous situations that have aroused the disapproval and resentment of many scholars and critics. Despite all this negative judgment of D.H.Lawrence, Leavis has self-confidence and rightness of judgment to keep his view of D.H.Lawrence as a man who has daring denounced the hypocrisy and rotten decay of the bourgeois culture Leavis could state in his D.H.Lawrence:

Novelist:

He is the great creative genius of our age, and one of the greatest figures in English literature. (p.303)

Also he goes on to conclude that

Lawrence is incomparably the greatest creative writer in English in our time...; he is one of the greatest English writers of any time.(p.18)

Leavis actually published essays on four major critics, the last in the series being on Eliot. The essays were published over the course of twenty years, from 1938 to 1958. There is perhaps some significance in the order in which Leavis proceeded in writing and thinking about the critics. The subjects of the essays which he produced, in order from earliest to latest, were: Arnold, Coleridge, Johnson, and Eliot. There is a great deal of importance to the essay of Eliot being published as late as 1958.

Leavis is regarded as one of the outstanding figures of 'New Criticism' in England. In his contribution of 'New Criticism', he focused strongly on the words on the page. His key ideas were that (i) the study of literature has a civilizing mission to humanize people and provide values which, in the modern world, cannot be obtained elsewhere, and (ii) criticism should make an objective judgment. At the same time, the reader must demonstrate sensibility to the text, which happens naturally. Close reading involves the intense scrutiny of a piece of prose or poetry, concentrating on the words on the page, and disregarding the

work's context. The literary text has an intrinsic artistic worth, transcending all particularities of time and space. There is a canon of authoritative list of great works of literature that everyone with sensibility should study and admire. Leavis's outstanding contribution of combining moral criticism with 'New Criticism' appeared in his concern with the problem of explaining how poetry communicates what cannot be expressed in any other ways. One of his many distinctions is having provided a comparable explanation of how novelty functions. The work as a whole, he insists, conveys the moral quality.

Leavis's form of moral criticism is compatible with the traditions of 'Practical Criticism' which developed during the 1930s under the guidance of the 'New Criticism'. A writer's moral seriousness is always enacted in literary language and is never merely an expression of moral ideas.

The fact of the matter is that Leavis is a critic who didn't maintain a single approach in criticism all his life. His critical insights and judgments are in line with his experiences and studies. For instance, what has already been said about his association with the practices of New Criticism is only a stage in his critical career. Gradually he shifts to other domains in criticism, especially moral and culture criticism. In his early stage, one notices very strict judgment, of the famous British novelist, Charles Dickens. It is no surprise to find Leavis classify Dickens as simply an entertainer. Thus he "excluded all but one of Dickens' novels from his *Great Tradition*. Echoing Henry James's disparagement of

Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, he found most of Dickens teeming with” irrelevant life”. (Kennedy,2000,338)

1.4 Influence of Leo Tolstoy on Leavis

In Leavis’s relationship with Eliot, readers have a snapshot of the history of literary criticism, if not of thought in general. To explain, the student attends patiently and carefully to a teacher, learning the basic principles from which to proceed. Afterwards, in becoming a distinctive individual, the student repudiates the teacher, thinking of himself as more sophisticated, advanced, stronger, subtle, radical, and progressive.

The relevance of Tolstoy to Dr. Leavis concerns the novel, which brings the same moral awareness, the same many-sided interest in man as a social being. *Anna Karenina* is one of the greatest novels ever written as Leavis said in his book *Anna Karenina and Other Essays* (1967). In this essay, Leavis attempted to disprove James’s critical attack and to show the nature of the composition that makes *Anna Karenina* a great work of art. James found Tolstoy’s novel lacking in composition and architecture but Leavis answered

that whereas a limited and clearly concerned interest determined the composition of a Jamesian (relative to James) novel:

The relation of art to life in Tolstoy is such as to preclude this kind of narrowly-provident economy. It is an immensely fuller and profounder involvement in life on the part of the artist, whose concern for significance in his art is the intense and focused expression of the questing after significance that characterizes him in his daily living ... Tolstoy might very well have answered as Lawrence did when asked, not long before his death, what was the drive behind his creating; One writes out of one's moral sense, for the race, as it were. (Leavis, 1948, p. 123)

There is a wealth of books, chapters in books, and articles in journals about *Anna Karenina*, covering this great novel with analysis of all of its aspects. However, Leavis gave this novel a special attention and he nominated it not just as a great novel, but as the European novel. He came to his judgment on various grounds. There is the sincerity which paints this novel, the ethical questioning at its core, and the variety and range of humanitarian experiences going with vividness and depth in rendering. However beyond this, there is pronounced 'involvement in the life on the artist's part'. More clearly, the book

was for Leavis not a sole drawing of life, nor did it plainly document varied facets of life. Rather, the book is actually embodiment; virtually it says, “This is life” (Leavis, 1963, p.13). Leavis shows us that greatness of *Anna Karenina* rests in the extent to which it tells some representative breadth that presents general facts about life. Tolstoy demonstrates all this with such greatness and resource that it is not easy to find a match for it. Somewhere else, Leavis contends in his talk that *Anna Karenina* comes to ‘a deep, spontaneous lived question’ and reaches to the conclusion that the book ‘in its human centrality, gives us modern man; Tolstoy’s essential problems, moral and spiritual, are ours’ (Leavis, 1963, p.9).

To be more exact, Tolstoy novel has driven many scholars and critics, Leavis included, to view the attitudes and conduct of Anna Karenina from different angles, according to their perspectives. Especially is this evident when critics raise the question of Anna’s adultery and its implications. The following is just an example of the incompatible reactions this famous Russian heroine has showed among readers and critics, especially when the reader realizes the gap between the author’s intention and realization:

On the plane of the unconscious there is still more evident an intention to contrast the respective destinies of the moral and the

immoral. Vronsky and Anna, unbelievers, living for the pleasures of the senses, egoists enslaved by their own passions, are “punished”, are cast into the purgatorial fires of spiritual unrest. Kitty and Levin, on the other hand, rise to heights of purification. For the first time the author, hitherto incorruptible, takes a side for or against the creatures of his own fancy. (Mintz,2012,80)

In view of the foregoing discussions, the researcher underlines that the present study provides critics with different opinions and critical thinking that include looking for universal truths in the moral works of Leavis, with special reference to Tolstoy. However, although Tolstoy and Leavis belong to totally different cultures, languages, and norms, they share basic views concerning the primary function of literature, i.e., illuminating, instructing, and edifying. Moreover, Leavis himself wrote about Tolstoy’s famous novel, *Anna Karenina*, which is evidence of the common moral grounds which the two share, despite the barriers of distance and time.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical literature

If Matthew Arnold had thought that Literature must replace Christian religion as the source of spiritual solace and education, because religion as a system of thought could no longer satisfy us, Leavis seemed to think that literature embodies a kind of moral thinking which could never have been embodied in any religious framework, and which is crucially important just because it escapes both codification and institutionalization. (Cordner, p.80)

Leavis was known as a moral critic among the long list of critics according to Eliot's criticism in his essay "To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings" (1965). Eliot called him the specialist critic on account of his special study. He said:

And another critic of importance, Dr. F. R. Leavis, who may be called the critic as moralist? The critic who is also tenant of an academic post is likely to have made special study of one period or

one author but to call him a specialist critic would seem a kind of abridgement of his right to examine whatever literature he pleases. (Eliot, 1965, p. 13).

According to this classification, the researcher concentrated in this study on Leavis as a moralist so that the studies reviewed and highlighted herein can support and satisfy the objectives of the study.

Matthews (2004) had written about the effects of Leavis while presenting lectures in his apparent spontaneity of tone and use of affective language like a storm-center:

Leavis is a storm-center. He stands for definiteness and precision, of a kind that is either admired or denounced. The danger is that his students tend to become Leavis-stooges, placeable by their jargon and method immediately once they open their mouths.(p.11)

Storer's (2009) starts by raising the urgent question about Leavis' contribution to criticism. It's summed up in the important question, "Why Leavis?" The answer to this covers the multiple and various areas that his criticism has covered and successfully explored. Thus the present argument shows that:

His interest with in English literature and its relation to modern culture; and he is often described as one of the most important figures in English literary studies in the twentieth century. Why he was important, and what this description could mean, is something that this book as whole will explore. The first thing it usually means is that during his lifetime Leavis was very influential. His career began at an exciting time for literary studies, and he is often grouped with other writers and teachers who played in this. But Leavis' influence was more concentrated, more carefully sustained, and in the end more widely disseminated, than that of any of his contemporaries (p.1)

In other respects, Steiner (1962) asserts that "Leavis has sought to bring time to a halt in a pastoral, Augustan dream of order" (p.393). It is only fair to acknowledge that Leavis would probably disagree with the view that he is living in the past, which, of course, does not make him necessarily right. He could, for example, point to the fact that he was an early champion of Eliot, Pound, Hopkins, and Lawrence; that he has endeavored to improve the state of modern criticism.

On the other hand, Samson's (1992) book portrays Leavis as the efficient cause in the establishment of university English as a critical, or more accurately

a diagnostic, enterprise. At an early professional cost, Leavis was denied faculty appointment at Cambridge for five years. He helped cut English curricula free from philology, languages, and classical studies, a responsibility which Samson partially explains by connecting Leavis's motivating principles back through Matthew Arnold to Dickens and Carlyle, and even to Reverend H. J. Rose, who was a leading figure in the foundation of King's College in London, and who declared a sermon delivered in 1826 that "literature teaches 'the wisdom of men better and wiser than ourselves' and prepares for the 'examination of those moral and intellectual truths which are not only the worthiest exercise of our reason, but most concern our future destiny' (p.12).

Gupta's (1999) concentrates heavily on the principle of judgment and evaluation and their practical value in criticism. Many critical approaches are content with the analysis and dissecting the different sections and relations of two text. Thus one comes across this useful emphasis on these two constituents of the critical process:

Judgment of evaluation are the two terms most commonly resorted to by critics to define their task, and the clusters of metaphors which they carry with them ... of words and tribunals, of value and debasement ... are not at all arbitrary. They register real sources

from which criticism Leavis, from outside; its status; real forces which impinge upon their production and reception of literary works. (p.140)

Mathieson's (1975) asserts that the literary made Leavis propounded, therefore, he assumed the character of a crusade and gathered around him a band of enthusiastic disciples. His belief that an educated public "could be produced only by a minority of people who spread the word only strengthened the cult-consciousness among his disciples and was a very effective way of evangelizing teachers" (p.340), based on which he proposed to extend his influence to all branches of education.

The poet D. J. Enright, one of many students whom Leavis taught during his 30 years as an English don at Downing College in Cambridge, described Leavis as "strong medicine" (Ellis, *Memoirs of a Leavisite*). In "Memoirs of a Leavisite: The Decline and Fall of Cambridge English," David Ellis, a student at Downing 20 years after Enright, recalled a milder man, "endlessly indulgent to the slothful, philistine and half-educated creatures who sat before him" (p.65). However, there was no doubt about his seriousness as regards defending his students at Downing – or, from 1932 to 1953, the readers of his journal *Scrutiny* – against the scientific rationalism that he called the "world's present sickness."

He was not just involved in a critical process but a "critical-hygienic" one, in which books he considered "culturally sanative" played a dominant role (p.123).

In his essay *F. R. Leavis: Moral critic*, Jane Gledhill (1978) said that Leavis' background on literature was a stringent appreciation of moral function of literature as it affected the whole of life. His analysis of the moral tradition in the English novel produced his classic work *The Great Tradition* (1948) which argued that an understanding of life presented in fiction depends wholly on the moral or religious background of the writer (*Third Way*, p.16). Leavis even refused any separation between literature and life. Samson carefully traces this development in Leavis's general theory in order to bring out its easily-overlooked implication for the social position of a literary academic. She quotes this crucial passage from Leavis:

The critic . . . is as much concerned with the health of the mind as any doctor with the health of the body. To set up as a critic is to set up as a judge of values . . . For the arts are inevitably and quite apart from any intentions of the artist an appraisal of existence.
(pp. 15-16)

In line with this, Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002) stated that:

A Leavisite approach might focus on the evident conflict of values in the story between 'art' and 'life'. The central point of commentary and interpretation might be the moralist argument that true value lies in the 'lived life' of the unique individual, and that it is disastrous for the artist to fail to recognize a necessary subservience of art to a communal reality. Further, when artists begin to see themselves as Faustian super-heroes who are able to cross all boundaries of taste, taboo, and conduct, and even to assume the god-like role of creating and sacrificing life itself, then a hubristic act is committed which ultimately dries up the sources of the life of art itself. Hence, the artist in this tale in his isolated turret, feeding vampire-like on the vital energies of his sitter, is an emblem of a debased and degenerate form of art whose values are of the purely aesthetic 'art for art's sake' kind and has no reference to any wider notion of personal and psychic health.(p.28)

As regards poetry with reference to Leavis and moral criticism, in 1997, Richard Stotesb wrote his essay *F. R. Leavis: The Critic as Moralist*, which gave explanations for the moral critics and the techniques that must be followed to become moral critic like Leavis. Stotesb believed that there were great literature works, thus proving to be a story supporter of a present canon.

Moreover, he believed that poetry ought to voice some personal thing about the poet and that the poet ought to be involved emotionally with the poem. In addition, he concentrated on the text in terms of its words and how they are related to each other.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is considered by many to be one of the greatest novels ever written. In her study of its morally-ambiguous protagonist, Mary Evans (1989) said in her work *Reflecting on Anna Karenina* that Leavis in his essay on *Anna Karenina* , one particular vivid example of the self-revaluation that can occur. Leavis preoccupation was to demonstrate a moral continuity in the realist novels of nineteenth-, and twentieth-century Europe (p.4).

R. P. Bilan in his 1976 essay '*The Basic Concepts and Criteria of F. R. Leavis's Novels and Criticism*' said that Leavis's works were a contribution to modern literary criticism. He argued that his works are indebted to Eliot, who concentrates extensively on poetry. But George Steiner confirmed that *The Great Tradition* (1948) is one of those rare books of literary comment "that have re-shaped the inner landscape of taste" (p.229). Then, Bilan adds some basic criteria of Leavis's novel criticism; first, there is a particularly close relation between the novel and morality. Second, those great novels present an affirmation of life. His concepts of the novel are that it is a moral myth, dramatic poem, and a notion of moral legislation and moral exploration. That means the basic element of any novel, according to Leavis, is the moral concept

to be a great novel and a great author as he classified the authors in *The Great Tradition*, depending on their greatness to present morals in their novels:

Brought to an intense focus, an unusually developed interest in life. For 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. (p.18)

In sum, the novelist must gain enough experience in living and the ability to understand and judge that experience. The “marked moral intensity” is the ability of the novelist to maintain that difficult process of reflecting upon, and criticizing, our thought, living, and language.

2.2 Empirical Literature

From 1930 through to 1978, and even afterwards, Leavis's thought, arguments, and judgments dominated literary criticism, and even affected culture in England in general. In his essay, *Word in the Desert* C. B. Cox described Leavis and his influence on his students when he said “and undergraduates imitate his mannerisms, affect his turns of speech, and argue,

argue, argue about his opinions” (p.25). This appears to be the nature of his character to launch strict and intolerant personal attack to make people know that he is always right.

Scrutiny was Leavis’s journal published in 1930. It stood for about a decade after the modernism. It was promoting understanding of new difficult literature, not formulating new concepts of criticism. *Scrutiny* offered real education, a living concern for the value of literature. In *Re-Reading Leavis* (1996), Gary Day explored the reasons why there has "been no sustained post-structuralist account of [Leavis work" (p.10) and clarified that:

Why there has been no post-structuralist reading of Leavis is a subliminal awareness that there are similarities as well as differences between the two positions, and to confront these would undermine post-structuralism's claim to be a radical departure from the kind of thought associated with Leavisian literary criticism. To put it simply, Leavis shares with post-structuralism the ideas that works are not explicable in terms of their author's intentions; that the meaning of works is not fixed but changes over time, and, perhaps, most importantly, that reality is an effect of language. (xi)

Leavis's strength is that he used not to succumb to create systems which are then applied to literature; Leavis's lifelong refusal merely to systematize his arguments is a sufficient cause for returning to his work, because it represents a strong contrast to the state of criticism at the present time. If nothing else, Leavis teaches us what it means to make distinctive individual judgments. In *The Great Tradition*, Leavis had shaped our understanding of the history of the English novel. Greenwood's notion that Leavis's book can help us find our attitude in prose fiction is significant. His judgments are not infallible, but his ideas provoke thinking and arguments. George Steiner, a critic who disagreed with Leavis on many occasions and severely criticized him, reinforced Greenwood's observation that:

Undoubtedly, Leavis' principal achievement is his critique of the English novel. *The Great Tradition* is one of those very rare books of literary comment (one thinks of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* or Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*) that have re-shaped the inner landscape of taste. Anyone dealing seriously with the development of English fiction must start, even if in disagreement, from Leavis' proposals. Whereas much of what Leavis argued about poetry, moreover, was already king said around him, his treatment of the novel has only one precedent - the essays and prefaces of Henry James The assertion that after the decline of the epic and of the

verse drama the prose novel has concentrated the major energies in western literature ... is now a commonplace.... More than any man except James, Leavis has caused that revolution. (p.41)

Hence, Steiner makes clear the importance of Leavis as a critic of the novel. One must confront Leavis' arguments in attempting to make sense of the development of the form. Leavis was one of few critics, if not the first, to make and declare major judgments about the novel.

One can add here a further note regarding this complex relation between these two intellectuals (Leavis and Steiner). In his casual references to the critic's successful stand in dealing with his literary artistic material, Steiner refers to the proper position adopted by the critic in dealing with his topic. It is the right distance to be taken in perceiving the text, a point that applies very well to Leavis' position:

The critic argues his distance from and towards the text. To "criticize" means to perceive at a distance, at the order I remove most appropriate to clarify, to "plazcement" (F.R,Leavis' term), to communicate intelligibility. The motion of criticism is one of stopping back from in exactly the sense in which one steps back

from a painting on a wall in order to perceive it better (Steiner, 1984,68)

Lord David Cecil (1970), who was an ‘Early Victorian’ Novelist, may be the only other critic who attempted to make the kind of judgments which Leavis articulated. That perhaps explains Leavis's quarrel with him in the first chapter of *The Great Tradition*. It is clear by now that Cecil no longer matters, whereas Leavis's judgments still provoke responses from readers and critics.

In other respects, Michael Pursglove (1973) asserted in his essay *The Smiles of Anna Karenina* that the smile in *Anna Karenina* was a physical trail to express the inner emotion. This conception made a critic after critic note the importance of physical appearance in Tolstoy’s methods of characterization. In his book *A Karenina Companion*, C. J. G. Turner (1993) mentioned that *Anna Karenina* was described by Leavis as “the European novel.” The geographical context of this novel and, progressively, its cultural and temporal settings, make it some foreign novel to the majority of its readers. He included Leavis’s point of view about this novel and said that:

F. R. Leavis (1967) found that, beside range, depth, and vividness, Anna Karenina had another quality that he found hard to define: it engages the whole man in necessary incomplete attempt to solve comprehensive questions. (p.200)

Edwina Jannie Blumberg (1971) asserts in her essay *Tolstoy and the English Novel: A Note on Middlemarch and Anna Karenina* that this essay agrees with the views of Leavis in that the English novel traditionally conveys a sense of orderliness, propriety, and happiness in marriage and home. It has an English style in the whole story.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Introduction

This study follows the descriptive and analytic methodology to investigate the moral criticism in Leavis's works with special reference to the related works of Leo Tolstoy. It describes and analyzes the moral criticism in the works of Leavis as a distinguished critic writing on different topics. It also analyzes his concentration on application of the moral value, which guides his orientations, in his social life and the cultural matters. It assesses his moral achievement in criticism and highlights influence of Tolstoy on him.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample of the current study is the proponent of the moral criticism: the Cambridge critic, Dr. F. R. Leavis, with concentration on his work *Anna Karenina and Other Essays*, without paying any attention to geographical boundaries or time barriers. To verify the main assumption of this research, the

researcher makes a serious attempt to examine his judgments on cultural and literary issues.

3.3 Method of the Study

This study follows the descriptive and analytic methodology to investigate Leavis as a moral critic and explore his vision of moral criticism. The researcher utilizes analytical and descriptive approaches to fulfill the objectives of the study, focusing on moral criticism as a standard to analyze Leavis's works and show their relations to the works of Tolstoy.

3.4 Procedures of the Study

The researcher followed the following steps in conducting this research:

- 1- Reading a number of previous studies that are highly related to moral criticism from Plato until Leavis.
- 2- Formulating the research objectives and the questions which will be traced to verify the presumptions of this study.
- 3- Reading the biography of Leavis.
- 4- Reviewing books on *Anna Karenina*, with special emphasis on *Anna Karenina and Other Essays*.

- 5- Analyzing the effects of moral criticism on Leavis.
- 6- Discussing the results and providing answers to the questions which this research raised.
- 7- Drawing conclusions from the main research findings.
- 8- Presenting some recommendations for future studies.

3.5 Statement of the Problem

Leavis is one of the pillars of moral criticism in the 20th century. All the books he wrote and the journal (*Scrutiny*) he edited concentrate on moral issues. The effect of Tolstoy as a moralist is great on Leavis. It is these points that the present research set out to investigate.

3.6 Questions of the Study

Through this work, the researcher attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

- 1- What is the nature of literary critic in the works of Leavis?
- 2- How does morality influence the works and perceptions of Leavis?
- 3- How does Tolstoy affect Leavis' work as far as moral criticism is concerned?

3.7 Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are:

- 1- Highlighting the nature of moral side of Leavis's critical works.
- 2- Emphasizing the view that moral standards of Leavis guided his orientations.
- 3- Showing the deep interest of Leavis in social, cultural, and moral issues, as well as in Tolstoy's ideas.

3.8 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in shedding light on the moral works of the English critic Leavis with particular reference to Tolstoy's effect on him.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The present study concentrates exclusively on morality as viewed by Leavis in his works and on his critical judgments. It also explores Tolstoy's effect on him. Therefore, findings and conclusions of the present study may not be generalized to his other works.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Main Argument

4.1 Introduction

In this section the researcher tries to investigate the presence of moral questions in Leavis's works and thought, in addition to the influence of Tolstoy's ideas on him in terms of moral issues. The purpose of this is to assert the elements and facets of moral preoccupation arguments in Leavis's criticism in a number of points that will be discussed in the following pages.

4.2 Art versus Life

Emphasis of Leavis on the importance of life in the great novels supports his argument against the kind of art that is "art for art's sake." For Leavis, a "profoundly serious interest in life means that an author cannot stand away from life as from a leprosy" (Leavis, 1972, p.17). The novelist should not apply a form or style to a subject, but allow the form and style to develop in relation to the subject. Leavis makes his position clear through the rhetorical question:

Is there any great novelist whose preoccupation with 'form' is not a matter of his responsibility towards a rich human interest, or complexity of interests, profoundly realized? - a responsibility involving, of its very nature, imaginative sympathy, moral discrimination, relative human value? (p.4 1)

For a novelist to have a "profoundly serious interest in life," Leavis insists that the novelist does not, and cannot, enjoy a "freedom from moral preoccupations"(p.17). For Leavis, art and life are completely interconnected; the novelist's art is an art of language, making the interconnection undeniable. Language enables our thought and our living, so the novelist's inquiry into the problems involved in our thought and living is simultaneously an inquiry into Language. Consequently, the most important authors are those whose works are critical of human life and conduct, and whose works dramatically enact evaluations and judgments about human thought, living, and language. According to these criteria with morals as a basic matter, Leavis categorized four authors as great: "the great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad" (p.9). In view of this, the relation between *Anna Karenina* and life, according to Leavis's criticism, is "involvement in life on the part of the artist." What he means by this is that the book was embodiment of

life with presentation of general truths about life, which were exemplified by Tolstoy. Therefore, by following Tolstoy's theory, he evaluates novelists on the basis of how they conduct their criticism of life, that is, how the problems of thought and living are manifested in language.

4.3 Role or Function of the Artist

Leavis selected the artists in his work '*The Great Tradition*' according to two main criteria: (i) their relation to life and (ii) moral issues. But what should be the role, or the function, of those artists for them to be great in Leavis's criticism? Or, why are Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence the major novelists?

Judgment and valuation are important in Leavis's criticisms. However, the most important messages which Leavis tries to convey are dedicating the moral message, championing seriousness and moral depth in literature, and characterizing the writer who fulfilled the moral role in her/his writing. Leavis used to argue that it is the very pressure of living that is manifested in the artistic process. Creativity is a product of living, of having to make moral judgments in living. That pressure of living is absent in the works of Eliot, and his capacity for moral judgments is disabled because art is elevated above life; the judgments become merely aesthetic and disconnected from life.

For Leavis literature is an affirmation only by first being an exploration. This is the control point he makes in discussing Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina*: "while what makes itself felt as we read *Anna Karenina* is decidedly a positive or creative nisus, it affects us an exploratory effort towards the definition of a norm" (Leavis, 1967, p.25). In other respects, the creativity and intelligence of the artist are inseparable from the creativity and intelligence of the critic. But Leavis found a fault in Eliot's conception of the artist that reveals the weakness of his intelligence; Eliot's argued that "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates" (Eliot as quoted by Leavis, 1976, p. 180). Leavis draws attention to what he calls "a wholly arbitrary dictum" because of the false separation which he suggests is necessary between art and life; between the artist who creates and the man who lives.

4.4 Fiction

Leavis's critic of prose fiction, *The Great Tradition* (1948), shaped his common comments on the English novel. He presented strong case for ethical seriousness as the imperative measure for incorporation into any list of the best

novelists. His perception of the main English tradition in novels moves deep to drawing up his own history of fiction map.

Leavis did not deny that there are works of art with a limited formal concern, but his point is that they are not the greatest kind of fiction. This point is made most clearly, perhaps, in his essay on Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* in which Leavis attempted to disprove James's critical attack and to show the nature of the composition that makes *Anna Karenina* a great work of art. James found Tolstoy's novel lacking in composition and architecture, and Leavis clarified that whereas a limited and clearly-concerned interest determined the composition of a James's novel, the relation of art to life in Tolstoy's works is such as to preclude this kind of narrowly provident economy:

It is an immensely fuller and profounder involvement in life on the part of the artist, whose concern for significance in his art is the intense and focused expression of the questing after significance that characterizes him in his daily living... Tolstoy might very well have answered as Lawrence did when asked, not long before his death, what was the drive behind his creating; One writes out of one's moral sense, for the race, as it were. (Leavis, 1948, p. 123)

In the previous quotation, Leavis asserts the importance of morals in any novel, which differentiates him from other critics and makes him the creative critic. *The Great Tradition* is full of Leavis's characteristically-strict rejection of styles of fiction that he found lacking in moral intensity, and, in consequence, he argued that certain authors, such as those descending from Shakespeare in *The Great Tradition*, can help us confront, and think about those moral problems.

4.5 Poetry

Leavis's essays on four major critics from 1938 to 1958 appeared in order from earliest to latest as follows: Arnold, Coleridge, Johnson, and Eliot. These essays represent an important opportunity to see how Leavis, as the major critic of the twentieth century, used to examine and understand his relationship to the tradition of criticism that had been established in the two centuries before him. Leavis made a critical examination of his major predecessors, judging some of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as some of their successes and failures. It is not a surprise then that Leavis got himself engaged with these writers. Having undertaken major revaluations of poets and poetry from the sixteenth

through to the early twentieth centuries, Leavis makes a similar kind of reevaluation of critics and criticism. In the introduction to *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry* (1936), Leavis argued that the reasons why these revaluations are necessary include:

An account of the present of poetry, to be worth anything, must be from a clarify realized point of view, and such a point of view, if it is critically responsible, must have been determined and defined as much in relation to the past as to the present. (p.1)

In this regard, it is apt to refer to one of the prominent advantages of Leavis' criticism of poetry. It is his reconsideration and evaluation of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins which has not been rightly judged before Leavis' attempt in his *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932). His judgment of Hopkins is summarized in the following:

Leavis declared that Hopkins' genius comprised "technical originality... inseparable from the rare adequacy of mind, sensibility and spirit that it reaches far. The various devices of Hopkins's style were not mannerisms but functional in intensifying the poem's meaning. Leavis was therefore emphatically denying

charges of lack of thematic seriousness and of verbal appropriateness. (Roberts,1987,24)

As with poetry, Leavis realized that his accounts of the present of criticism cover the relation of a modern critic, like Leavis, to those critics who have made major statements in the past. However, Leavis as a great critic did not leave the criteria of the great poet. His criticism gives the feature of good or bad poet. In the first step, the poet must be a creative writer. For Leavis, literary criticism is "a creative or re-creative process" (Leavis, 1986, p. 278) and the analysis performed by a critic:

Is a more deliberate following-through of that process of creation in response to the poet's words (a poem being in question) which any serious reading is. It is a re-creation in which, by a considering attentiveness, we ensure a more than ordinary faithfulness and fullness. (Leavis, 1986, p.278)

That is to say, criticism is creative in that the critic is faced with similar problems of thought, language, and style as the poet. The critic, like the poet, must find a language and structure to form the style in which to realize his own pressing moral questions and problems:

I am not, then, an idolater of Eliot. I do all the same think about him as unquestionably a great poet; he is our last great poet - I mean, the last great poet we have had: that, whatever differences there may be regarding later claims and reputations, will hardly be disputed. There has in fact been in our literature no manifestation of major creativity since that which, culminating in *Four Quartets*, gives classical status to T.S. Eliot- (Leavis, 1936, p.129)

Indeed, it could be argued that Leavis's criticism of poetry is a development from, and practical application of, the theories that Eliot elaborated on in his early critical books such as *The Sacred Wood* (1920). His criticism manifests some of that capacity for reverence and wonder, as well as the ability to be disturbed by life, that can only be found in the great writers of the English language. Those qualities are rare enough in the great poets, dramatists, and novelists.

In Leavis' book, *The Common Pursuits* a title which Leavis borrowed from Eliot's criticism and the function assigned to the critic, he finds himself in a different position when it comes to Eliot's own judgment and appreciation of romantic writers like Milton. In a chapter entitled "Mr. Eliot and Milton, Leavis

shows his disagreement with Eliot in matters pertaining to the latter's judgment of Milton:

Mr. Eliot's paper Milton ... was widely acclaimed as a classic of recantation – an authoritative and final piece of criticism, vindicating Milton against “errors and prejudices” propounded by the same critic in his less discerning days, and slavishly taken up by his followers. On me, however, the paper has the effect of showing that Mr. Eliot found himself unable to bring to Milton any but perfunctory interest (...). In saying this I intend on score against Mr. Eliot. In what I judge to have been his best days as a critic, the interest was inadequate to his purposes (...). (Leavis, 1952, 1)

Nonetheless, Leavis thought that there were outstanding literary works, thus staying as strong advocator of existing rules. Furthermore, he shaped ideas about what was, and what was not, poetry. He was not reluctant to drop numerous famous authors as non-poetic, and Browning was of those whom he dropped as writing in poetic manner but not writing real poetry. He supported that poetry ought to state some personal thing about the poet and that the poet ought to be involved emotionally with the poem. In addition, Leavis used to believe that the poet should be an enlightened being and affected by life profoundly. In his book *New Bearings in English Poetry*, he says: “poetry matters because of the kind of poet who is more alive than other people, more

alive in his own age” (Leavis, 1972, p. 19). The poet must in addition possess the “power of making words express what he feels” (Leavis, 1972, p. 160) and this needs to be “indistinguishable from his awareness of what he feels.” He needs to be “unusually sensitive, unusually aware, more sincere and more himself than any ordinary man should be” (Leavis, 1972, p. 14). When some poet and her/his work did not comply with the ideas of Leavis, the poem would not be poetry at the minimum, let alone being outstanding poetry. In this regard, some of the authors who, as he felt, produced real poetry were De La Mare, Yeats, Hardy, and Eliot.

F.R.Leavis’ criticism of poetry is so comprehensive that sometimes he even judges the recitation and the poet’s ability to read his poetry in a way that could affect its audience. Indeed he finds all this missing in T.S.Eliot’s way of reading his own verse. His judgment of this side can be seen in the following excerpt:

Mr. Eliot, if a great composer, is not a great or good, or even a tolerable executant. His voice, is he uses it, is disconcertingly lacking on body. One wouldn’t wish him to elocution in the manner of Mr.Robort Speaight but a capacity for some strength of tone is clearly desirable. Mr. Eliot’s reading is of course not unintelligent and insensitive in the actor’s way, but it is not positively intelligent and sensitive in the way are would have expected of take poet himself. (Leavis,1968,88).

4.6 The Reader's Position in the Arguments of Leavis

In his strategy of reading texts, Leavis concentrated on close reading, which was a method of reading literary texts that involved detailed analytical interpretation as if the words of the page spoke directly and profoundly to the reader. In *Scrutiny*, he asserted that “there is a necessary relationship between the quality of the individual's response to art and his general fitness for a humane existence” (Mulhern, 1981, p. 129). The teacher's and critic's goal, therefore, was to help readers develop their responses to literary texts by teaching them a particular way of reading. This reading lesson, however, was not for everyone as Leavis argued that:

In any period it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgment. They are still a small minority, though a larger one, who are capable of endorsing such first-hand judgment by genuine personal response. (1930, p. 18)

In the view of Leavis, teaching of the reading skills is the English teacher's principal responsibility. He used to support that if students of history are trained to be readers, then the continuous insistence and assorted exercises

in analysis should be training in close reading, which he regarded as the basic skill in which all the criticism of literature lies. In this respect, Leavis wrote about importance of reading in *Education and the University* (1943) saying:

To have gone closely into the poetry is to have had quickening insight into the nature of thought and language; a discipline of intelligence and sensibility calculated to promote, if any could, real vitality and precision of thought; an education intellectual and moral. (Leavis, 1943, p.17)

It is an encounter with the text where students really focus on what the author had to say, what the author's purpose was, what the words mean, and what the structure of the text tells us. That is where Leavis sought to develop and assert in his arguments, still in line with the seriousness and moral content which are the foundations of his critique.

Furthermore, Leavis used to teach readers to think of criticism as the attempt to reveal different relationships between many different kinds and degrees of thought, manifested in the discussion of relationships between words, ideas, passages, styles, genres, and other forms and expressions of language. In this regard, Leavis determined the kind of reading, whether it is the analysis of a literary critic or the response of a casual reader, by clarifying that reading:

Entails value judgment. You can't, as some scholars seem to suppose you can, have the poem in a kind of neutral possession, and then proceed to value it or not as you choose - or leave the critic to do the valuing. A reading of a poem that takes it as a poem involves an element of implicit valuation. The process, the kind of activity of inner response and discipline by which we take possession of the created work, is essentially the kind of activity that completes itself in full explicit value judgments. There is no such thing as neutral possession. (Leavis, 1986, p.279)

To sum up, as Leavis makes readers recognize, any use of language involves valuation. The very act of identifying a poem as a poem and not as something else involves valuation. No use of language can be neutral. Language cannot be separated from significance and meaning. Leavis also teaches readers to understand that critical standards, principles, and judgments must be formed in practice, and constantly re-evaluated and tested in relation to our life and living.

4.7 Man-Woman Relation

In his essay *Morality and the Novel*, Lawrence debates that for humanity the outstanding relation will be always the relationship between woman and man and that the relations between woman and woman, parent and child, and man and man, will, at all times, be secondary.

It is through the novel than man can enter different worlds related to his existence and his partner (woman) and the various feelings associated to it. In his statement, “the novel is the high complex of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered. Everything is true in its own time, place, circus stone, and untrue outside of its places, time, and crinum stone.” (Squiresd Cushman, 1990,109)

However, the relationship between woman and man will keep changing forever, and will be the new central due to human life forever. It is the relationship itself which is rapid and central due to life, not the woman or man, or even the children resulting from the woman-man relation, as contingency. With reference to relations between men and women, especially in marriage, Leavis argues that Lawrence has a ‘peculiar’ sense of the “Paradox of personal relations, especially of those between a man and a woman which make and validate a marriage; the insistence that, the more intimate and essential the

relations, the more must be the intimacy itself, for the two lives that are brought into so essential a contact, a mutual acceptance of their separateness and otherness. Love for Lawrence is no more an absolute than sex his religion. What, in fact, strikes us as religious is the intensity with which his men and women, hearkening to their deepest needs and promptings as they seek "fulfillment" in marriage, know that they 'do not belong to themselves', but are responsible to something that, in transcending the individual, transcends love and sex too" (Leavis, 1955, p.129).

As an explanation of Lawrence's intelligence, the passage is extraordinary. Leavis captures a true sense of Lawrence's ability to perceive the complexities of the relations between men and women, especially in marriage. Intelligence, and not just in Lawrence but in general, must be able to perceive the simultaneity of "intimacy" and "separateness" of "marriage" and "otherness." Leavis realized that Lawrence's intelligence as manifested in his ability to think about relations between men and women, marriages, and family life in general is an indication of his reverence for life. Leavis therefore argued that it is in passages where Lawrence explores the relations between fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, and every other relation possible:

That we realize with special force how inseparable from such creativeness as Lawrence's, how essentially of so un-Flaubertian an

art, is the un-Flaubertian attitude towards life: the reverence that, in its responsiveness, is courage and vitality. (Leavis, 1955, p.151)

For all that, Leavis showed an interest in women's writings many years before 'Feminism' as a movement came into existence. He classified such feminist writers as Jane Austen and George Eliot as two of the five greatest English novelists. He saw in their moral seriousness the origins of the modern tradition and, consequently, he criticized them according to their works away from any masculine bias. He used to often argue that Eliot is important for the novelists as well:

[George Eliot] has too full and strong a sense of the reality, she sees with a judging vision that relates everything to her profoundest moral experience: her full living sense of value is engaged, and sensitively responsive. (p.106)

There is much to be said regarding this point. Leavis' excessive admiration of George Eliot : fiction springs from both thematic and technical brilliance. Leavis sees that George Eliot has a keen psychological insight in probing the deep recesses of her characters. Also she makes no attempt to be didactic. If there is anything to be inferred from the novel, it is not done directly by the author. It has been viewed :

Leavis identifies George Eliot moral intelligence; which he claims cannot be discounted as Victorian deduction. The great novel does not preach but, through profound psychological analysis, enact its moral significance. The probing of the depths of the psycho seemingly too ignoble far tragedy moves Leavis, as it had moved James. (Levine, 2001,204)

All the same, Leavis delivered positive criticism of Tolstoy's work *Anna Karenina* as a great work stating that it gives an example of women who should be mothers and caretakers as they are biologically capable of giving birth and have the spirits fundamental to bearing children and looking after sick people. His criticism was intended to express the idea that woman's first responsibility is to be for her family. *Anna Karenina* is a morality novel that handles the damaging impacts of morality on Anna and Vronsky. It is a novel about meaning of life and about the place in which happiness does, or does not, play, and meditation on death and the lessons which it teaches. These are the major facets which Leavis addresses in his criticism.

4.8 The Nature of Critical Discourse

The critical discourse as presented in the works of Leavis is marked by strict, tough, and intolerant views because of his beliefs that he is right. His critical thought, words and ideas such as culture, the function of criticism, disinterestedness, judgment, moral, standards, and criticism of life all have significant effects on his criticism. He would attack anyone who did not agree with those ideas.

He often involves himself in heated debates and controversies. The polemic subjective aspects of his arguments are memorable and sometimes seen as a topic of interest and uncommon practice. For instance :

He engages polemically with lord David Cacti's judgment that Austen "satisfied the rival claims of life and art! This inflames Leavis, for whom there is no such rival claim; literature, if it is great, embodies life. For Leavis, Austen's greatness is precisely in that the moral concerns of her life insists themselves upon her as intensely personal ones; thus; aesthetic value is inseparable from moral significance.(Rebellato,1999,23)

Leavis's criticism is based on close reading and comparative literature. His unique system, methodology, dimensions, and concern with life, human nature, and morality, can serve as a frame of reference in the effort to reconstruct his critical discourse. Leavis's argument has a dual importance. First, he emphasizes that judgments are comparative, valuations are made through relational knowing. Second, every work must be related to works other than itself for comparison. Comparative judgments are the basis of literary criticism, being interconnected with the critic's business of making and perceiving relations among things:

To define the criteria [Arnold] was concerned with, those by which we make the more serious kind of comparative judgment, was not necessary, and I cannot see that anything would have been gained by his attempting to define them. His business was to evoke them effectively.... (Leavis, 1932, p. 93)

Comparative judgments form the basis of Leavis's critical thought. The most important element in his arguments is that he does not think about any of the novelists in isolation. In every chapter he compares and contrasts the language and thought of the different novelists. For instance, in the beginning of the chapter on George Eliot, Leavis contrasts her with Austen and Conrad (42-

45) and then at the end with Tolstoy (146). Thereafter, and throughout the remainder of the chapter, he invokes James as a collaborator in criticizing her works.

However, in Leavis's rejection, the most common example to show his nature of critical discourse is his attacks on Snow and Shakespeare in some points. As an example, he launched a violent attack on Snow, particularly on Snow's famous description of the split between the "two cultures" of science and literature. Leavis' attack provoked a more heated intellectual controversy than any that England has witnessed for some time, but the issues involved extend far beyond specifically English concerns: "There can be no two opinions about the tone in which Dr. Leavis deals with Sir Charles. It is a bad tone, an impermissible tone." Lionel Trilling had greatly agreed in finding the style and address of Leavis's scathing criticism to be self-defeating.

Leavis' attention toward the so-called Bloomsbury Group, established by the British novelist Virginia Woolf and her husband and a group of artists and critics is characteristic. He attacked this group for its excessive aestheticism and excluding the real need and interests of readers and writers alike. This campaign waged by Leavis was supported by his influential critic, Q.D.Leavis. Thus both:

Set the tone for the literary and cultural and moral criticism of
Bloomsbury that became the standard attitude in Britain when
Leavis' disciples spread across the educational and cultural

field[...] Leavis saw 'the charmed circle of Bloomsbury as' an unforgivable departure from the great tradition of powerful representative Cambridge men of their time- Sedgwick and Leslie Stephen, Maitland and Dr.Leavis. (Rosner, 2014,205)

4.9 Education

Leavis should be thought of primarily as a teacher whose arguments were intended to guide students in their reading and help them to formulate their first understanding of the authors they confront in order to become distinctive individuals capable of making their own judgments. More than anything else, Leavis is important because he teaches us that we cannot rely on others in making our judgments about thought, living, and language, but must learn to make those judgments ourselves. Leavis is a compelling example of an individual willing, and able, to make judgments. One must remember that Leavis is a teacher, and that *The Great Tradition* is, above all, meant to be read by students of English literature. Leavis's essays are moral in that they are meant to provide practical lessons in criticism:

Her moral judgments are unmistakably vital judgments; they express a moral sense that speaks out of fullness for life and is at the same time a fine sense of what makes for that and what makes against it. (Leavis, 1955, p.91)

As a teacher, Leavis had a major influence over shaping university English courses, repeatedly offering arguments about the importance of specific poets and novelists in *New Bearings Revaluation*, *The Great Tradition*, and other books. “English students in England today are leavisites whether they know it or not” (Eagleton, 1984, p. 3). This is how the contemporary Marxist critic Terry Eagleton assesses the great role that Leavis played in education and university life.

Leavis was impassioned about education and centrality of English in education. However, he did not conceive criticism and teaching as being synonymous. In one of the earliest books of his, *How to Teach Reading: a Primer for Ezra Pound* (1932), he wrote:

Everything must start from the training of sensibility, together with the equipping of the student against the snares of “technique” It should, by continual insistence and varied exercise in analysis, be enforced that literature is made of words, and that everything worth saying in criticism of verse and prose can be related to judgments concerning particular arrangements of words on the page. (p120)

Leavis' significant contribution to criticism explores the different domains and fields of life and culture. If Arnold tackled this issue in his book, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Leavis has his own view about this issue as seen in his *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930). As such, it is not surprising to find that scholars tend to see the two names together in their common interests and perceptions of these cultural issues:

Arnold and Leavis saw Culture as beauty the preserve of an elite minority, and they regarded their own values expressed by literature, music and art acted as defense against the anarchy that would fall upon the adoption of the corrupt, vulgar values of the uneducated masses. (Corbett, 2003, 26)

Indeed, these judgments remain part and parcel of the moral heritage that Leavis and Tolstoy did their best to defend and clarify. Leavis is a critic whose criteria emphasize the relation between art and life. His criticism analyzes and shows why certain works are great and what makes them so.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief summary and short discussion of the findings of the three research questions which were raised earlier. The chapter includes recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 What is the nature of literary critic in the works of Leavis?

As a critic, Leavis is essentially a moralist and has very definite ideas about what the critic should and should not be. As an advocate of moral ideas, he is fully committed to the belief that literature is an important social and moral force. While analyzing and examining his works according to moral perspective, this study could identify eight main points that characterize as a moral critic. It was necessary to find the purpose and value of art, education, reading, poetry, fiction ...etc.

The nature of critical discourse has also been investigated with particular reference to Leavis's emphasis on rightness and seriousness in moral concepts. Moreover, the researcher finds it necessary to refer to his understanding of the role assigned to woman in society and family life. All this has been judged by moral standards.

It has become evident that F.R. Leavis is a critic with wider ranging interests. His criticism tackled almost every field in culture and life in general. His insights and arguments cover different literary genres such as the novel, poetry, drama and criticism itself. In all these his criteria in discussing these are essentially moral and culture. However, his achievement does not stop here. His debates and seminars also raise the question of rendering proper and its effect on the final recognition and appreciation of the work given. Nowadays, of course, one can see the proliferation of the reader-response criticism and its famous advocates such as Wolfgang Iser, Robert Janus, Roman Holland and Stanley Fish. Seen from this angle, Leavis' contribution can be considered seminal and invaluable for paving the way for such writings. The same holds true to his perception of the critical criticism that seeks to locate the critical activity within wider social, moral, and political contexts.

5.2.2 How does morality influence the works and perceptions of Leavis?

Depending on morality and its domain, Leavis argued that the moral responsibility of the artist is to make his work understandable and helpful to most people. His judgment has its positive role in literature and art by illuminating the reader's life and culture. All of his works depend heavily on moral issues. So, he was known as a moral icon in criticism. He believed that reflection of the aspects of life must depend on moral criticism. In the nature of critical discourse, he was tough and ruthless to assert his moral judgments and guiding principles.

5.2.3 How does Tolstoy affect Leavis' work as far as moral criticism is concerned?

In the previous chapters, it has been shown that Leavis was influenced by many critics and authors who share the same points on moral criticism from Plato to Tolstoy. As far as Tolstoy is concerned, the researcher found that the influence of Tolstoy is great in guiding and supporting Leavis' judgments. Both critics believed that literature should be closely related to criticism of life and that, therefore, the first duty of the critic or writer is to assess works according

to the author's and society's moral position. Thus, Tolstoy and Leavis show that despite the differences in culture and race, they have many common points about civilization, art, culture, education, and the roles of woman in the family and society.

The significance of Tolstoy's influence can be felt through Leavis' devoting a whole book to the controversial novel, *Anna Karenina*. This is by itself evidence of the great admiration Leavis has to the Russian writer. Usually Leavis brings different names in a single book as seen in his *The Great Tradition* or *New Bearings in English Poetry*. If he writes a single book about the reconsideration of Charles Dickens' fiction, the reason is that he felt it is necessary to rectify some of his earlier judgments of the Victorian novelist when he concentrated on the artistic and technical weaknesses of his fiction. Thus Tolstoy's fiction as well as impressive article, 'What is Art' has played a vital role in Leavis' intellectual and moral perceptions. Already there have been references to earlier writers such as Matthew Arnold, T.S.Eliot and Samuel Johnson who have left their deep impact on Leavis' views and judgments. Tolstoy can be considered as an equal force in Leavis' cultural and moral understanding of literature and art. It is for all these reasons that one is justified in raising these issues in the present study.

5.3 Recommendations

The current study has analyzed and discussed moral criticism as practiced by Leavis. It has addressed his type of literary criticism with special reference to Leo Tolstoy. In light of the results, the researcher gives the following recommendations:

1. Conducting more studies about the effect of moral criticism on other writers and on their works.
2. Studying the relation between Leavis and any writer whom he influenced.
3. Reviewing and analyzing further studies about Leavis in order to identify any uncommon perspectives he used to adopt in his moral criticism.
4. Studying the works of Leavis in detail and analyzing them to guide future critical directions.

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