



RICHARD WOLLHEIM

# Richard Arthur Wollheim

## 1923–2003

RICHARD ARTHUR WOLLHEIM was born on 5 May 1923 in London, the younger son of Eric Wollheim, of a German Jewish family, and Constance Baker, whose family came from the West Country and for centuries were peasants. His father was a theatrical impresario, who from 1918 acted as the Diaghilev ballet's London manager. His mother was a Gaiety show-girl, who performed as an actress playing to the troops during the First World War, but at her husband's insistence left the stage when she married. In his posthumously published memoir of his childhood, *Germes* (2004), which begins with his tottering out through the front door into the light at the age of two, Richard traces the roots in childhood of a variety of emotions he experienced in later life—resentment against calm, quiet places, the lure of danger, shame at the unreliability of his body, certain fears of inundation—and paints vivid pictures of his parents' opinions, routines, behaviour and character. His father was emancipated and although he embraced no religious faith—indeed, considered all religion to be folly, he insisted that Richard was brought up as a Christian, an encumbrance Richard freed himself from when he grew up, from then on regarding all religions as harmful illusions, and, like Hume and Nietzsche, believing that religions tend to be worse the further they stray from polytheism.

At the age of 13 he went to Westminster School as a King's Scholar. It was the first time that he had been away to boarding-school, something he had been looking forward to but which turned out to be very different from what he had expected. Before he went to Westminster, he later wrote,

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he had lived entirely in books and the past. When he arrived there, he was, by his own account, a prig and physically weak and he did not believe in defending himself. He was very frightened by the boys he found himself among and he quickly sought refuge in the company of a small group of somewhat older boys, the aesthetes, by which he meant those passionate about art. In his first year, influenced by Aldous Huxley's *Encyclopaedia of Pacifism*, one of a number of Huxley's pamphlets that he found one afternoon in the Army and Navy Stores after he had faked illness in order to avoid games, he ardently embraced a qualified form of pacifism and as a result left the Officers Training Corps. This qualified pacifism admitted the possibility of a just war—Richard regarded the Spanish Civil War as a just war—but regarded war as just only in exceptional circumstances. He already detested patriotism, as he did throughout his life. It was over pacifism that he had his first quarrels with his father, who, although he was liberal and speculative in his thoughts about the arts and sciences, was fiercely conservative about life and politics, and had preached to Richard a doctrine of total obedience to one's parents for as long as one continues to live with them. At the end of his first year he discovered politics and soon became a socialist—a life long commitment. When he was 15 he applied to join the Communist Party, but received no reply—a stroke of luck, he remarked, but one of which he was a little ashamed.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, his pacifism was such that he could not believe that a war fought solely by the great imperialist powers could be just. But his mind was changed by the German attack on the Soviet Union and in 1941 he volunteered for war service. This enabled him to spend a year at Balliol College, Oxford, where, on the advice of a friend, he applied to join the Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. After surviving the unpleasant rigours of a friendless pre-OCTU and then an equally friendless OCTU (Officer Cadet Training Unit), he found himself sent to the Inniskilling Fusiliers, the regiment he had in fact been accepted by but which lacked the amusing company his friend had led him to expect in the Dragoon Guards. Soon he was posted to a battalion of a West Country regiment, where he became an object of ridicule and hostility and endured a very miserable time. Things went from bad to worse until an unexpected turn of events provided a solution. An adverse report recommending a change of employment led to his being arraigned in front of the Brigadier. This meeting not leading to a successful resolution of the issue, a few weeks later he found himself up before the Brigadier again. This time, however, the Brigadier sprang a surprise by saying that although it might be the most foolish idea he had ever had, he thought

that he would like to have on his headquarters someone who could talk about Proust. This resulted in Richard's leading, with some misgivings, what he regarded as a rather sheltered war, despite his taking part in the Normandy landings, being captured by the Germans in August 1944 but escaping after five days to rejoin his unit, and, a few months later, rather fortuitously capturing a German officer and corporal.

Returning from war service to Balliol in 1945, he obtained two first class BA degrees, one in History in 1946, the other in Philosophy, Politics and Economics in 1948. His entry into academic life was effected by Freddie Ayer, whom he had met at Oxford in 1946 and saw socially from time to time over the next two years. Freddie, who had become Grote Professor of Philosophy of Mind and Logic in the University of London and Head of the University College Philosophy Department, amazed him by announcing that he intended to give Richard a job at UCL if he did well enough in Schools, and, when he did, promptly had him appointed to an Assistant Lectureship, even though, having read shortened PPE, he had studied philosophy for just four terms. A year later, in 1950, he married Anne Powell, with whom he had twin sons, Bruno and Rupert. Richard was already so well-read that, as Anne told me, it seemed to her as if he knew everything, and, in contrast to his friendless childhood, he now had a wide circle of friends—a circle that continually expanded throughout his life. Richard was convivial and greatly enjoyed conversation and many evenings were spent entertaining their closest friends. John Richardson, one of Richard's most long-standing friends, has written that some of the most stimulating evenings of his life were spent at Anne and Richard's Pelham Crescent house.

His first substantial piece of work, *F. H. Bradley* (1959), notable for the elegance and lucidity of its writing and its unrivalled mastery of Bradley's philosophy, was immediately recognised as the best book on its subject and in the revised edition published a decade later has remained the standard work on Bradley. Nearly everyone has found Richard's interest in Bradley puzzling, especially because Richard acknowledged the obscurity and paradoxical nature of Bradley's thought, some parts of which he confessed to finding incomprehensible. What could have attracted him to Bradley's metaphysics and logic, demanding yet unrewarding, which too often advance extravagant positions or abstruse doctrines by means of entangled, unacceptable arguments? It is true that Richard attributed perennial appeal to the doctrine of Monism, proposing an analogy 'between the metaphysical attachment to the idea of an undivided Reality, and the desire to establish "whole objects" which is of

such crucial importance in infantile development'. And the highly personal style, caustic in Bradley's earlier books, ardent always, clearly appealed to him. But this does not suffice to account for the labour involved in unravelling, expounding and assessing the arguments that issue in Bradley's *Absolute Idealism*. The likeliest explanation comes from one of his friends, David Pears, who occupied the same house as Richard when Richard was switching from *Medieval History* to *PPE*, and who saw Richard as needing some relief from 'the contemporary philosophical diet' and as having 'a taste for unlikely systems with a baroque structure and, with it, a strong sense of the absurd'.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, one part of Bradley's philosophy that Richard certainly admired: his ethical thought—the only aspect of Bradley's philosophy to which he seriously returned. Because he already held that an important constituent of moral philosophy is moral psychology, Richard approved of Bradley's proposing a theory of moral development in the individual. In a later paper he aligned Bradley's reflections on the good and the bad self with ideas of Melanie Klein, arguing for a conception of moral philosophy according to which its central task is 'to explore the nature or structure of that process whereby our propensities, supremely our desires, are modified or selected, our attitudes to them are developed, so that we are then capable of being appropriately moved to moral action', moral action being thought of as self-realisation in the sense accorded it by Bradley—true self-realisation being the realisation of the good, as opposed to the bad, self.

Richard's later thoughts about morality and the proper nature and scope of moral philosophy, which stemmed from his commitment to a naturalistic conception of morality as being primarily a part of the psychology of a person, the norm of development and the vicissitudes it is liable to having been uncovered by psychoanalysis, were both highly unusual and problematic. In fact, he claimed to take seriously the question 'whether there really is such a thing as morality, or whether it is a dream, or perhaps a nightmare'. And in more than one place he wrote of his scepticism about morality. But as it stands this does not accurately reflect his real view. His naturalism about morality maintains that 'morality originates in certain natural movements of the psyche, which do not themselves require reference to morality either to describe or to explain them. More specifically, it originates in our primitive capacity to tolerate certain conditions and our primitive incapacity to tolerate other condi-

<sup>1</sup> Private communication.

tions of ourselves.' From morality's being primarily a part of the psychology of the person, he drew the conclusion that moral philosophy must be pursued as moral psychology, and for him that form of moral psychology that studies the moral sense as it develops in the typical life-history of the individual—diachronic moral psychology—penetrates deepest into the nature of morality. And he held that the central contribution of moral psychology to moral philosophy is its establishing that obligation and value have fundamentally different sources in an individual's psychology, the first—the feeling or thought of being under an obligation—deriving in a particular way from introjection of the figure or figures that form the superego, the second—the conception of something as being good or valuable—arising from a certain form of so-called complex projection in which satisfied love, 'archaic bliss' (the oceanic feeling sensed at the breast) is projected onto an object. Accordingly, evolved morality has a composite character: morality broadly conceived is an amalgam of morality understood in a narrow sense with obligation at its core and the sense of value, of what is good and bad. Morality in the narrow sense, based as it is on the superego, has a number of baneful features—'asceticism', 'inwardness', 'delinquency' and 'moral masochism' (the first two being intrinsic to morality, the second common deformities of it)—which can be weakened but not entirely thrown off, and this is what Richard had principally in mind in claiming that 'morality has a pathological aspect as well as a benign aspect'.

If morality is conceived of as possessing a specific place in the life-history of the individual, the criterion of a person's belief, decision or sentiment really being moral is whether it appropriately descends from the relevant part of the person's psychology. Richard was ready to embrace the conclusion that certain of a person's beliefs, even though the person himself thinks of them as being moral beliefs, and despite the fact that they can be formulated only by using terms drawn from what is often taken to be exclusively the language of morality—terms such as 'duty' and 'obligation'—might fail to satisfy the criterion and so in fact constitute no part of the person's morality. For example, a belief about the proper distribution of goods in a society, acquired by finding a certain argument compelling, might lack the necessary credentials for being a moral belief. And he held that obligation is primarily self-directed in that, whereas the thought that someone morally ought to do something can be appropriate as a self-addressed response since there can be a warrant for it in our psychology, if addressed to others it lacks any psychological warrant and so is always inappropriate—so that thoughts that are genuinely

about what others ought to do, having no clear root in our psychology, do not express obligations. There is, of course, one important thing missing from this account of morality: while it provides a criterion for whether a belief, decision or sentiment is moral—part of the person's morality—it does not engage with the question whether a person's moral judgement or response is acceptable or unacceptable. Richard regarded acceptability as being a psychological notion, but it is to be regretted that he never seized the opportunity to elucidate the idea and indicate what the appropriate criteria of acceptability might be.

Richard considered the intellectual's prime duty to be social criticism. Accordingly, in the numerous radio talks and occasional writings of his earlier years he discussed a large range of social issues: pornography, homosexuality, equality of opportunity, freedom of opinion, advertising, state patronage of artists or museums and galleries and tax benefits for the donation of works to public institutions, private and public education, the environment, religion, universities, feminism, cities, inequality of income, the quality of work, the limits of state intervention in the lives of citizens, varieties of democracy—he considered that John Stuart Mill's case for proportional representation as an essential ingredient of representative democracy remained unanswered—the proper relation of law and morality, the use of violence in a democratic society for political ends, among others. About 1960 Richard, Ayer and Stephen Spender, inspired by a chance remark of Hugh Gaitskell's, started an informal group of intellectuals of the left which dined fortnightly in each other's houses and discussed social issues. But not so much as they hoped for came out of the group. He was a member of the Labour Party Commission on Advertising, which was set up in 1962, and contributed a paper on 'Advertising and Values'. He regretted the fact that the excellent report of the Commission was never properly discussed. He served as a panel-member of the Summerson Council (the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design) in 1962–3 and resigned in disagreement with the Council's policy.

Underlying his concern with social issues was one of the deepest commitments of his life, 'devotion to the cause of socialism', and it is in the final section of his Fabian Society pamphlet *Socialism and Culture* (1961), where he raises explicitly what has been the implicit theme of the pamphlet, that his own conception of socialism becomes clear. Richard understood 'culture' in a wide sense, to mean the quality of life in a society—the relations between people, the character of their work and leisure, their knowledge, their interests, their arts, their freedoms, and so

on—and the question is whether a socialist society should be a culturally single society, or whether it should be multicultural. His answer is that it should be culturally plural, various cultures existing side by side without any social prestige attaching to one rather than another. His argument for this conclusion is twofold. Negatively, he faults arguments for an integrated and cohesive society derived from the nature of culture and from each of the first two of the great ideals of progressive or radical politics, Equality, Fraternity and Liberty. Positively, he rests his case on the third of those ideals, Liberty. For a liberalised society is one in which people fulfil themselves according to their own view of life, provided that in doing so they do not inhibit the self-fulfilment of others, and this requires freedom from the constraints both of established authority and of social pressure, free access to the main ideas about the conduct of life that have evolved in human history, and the freedom to engage in what John Stuart Mill referred to as ‘experiments in living’. Richard distances himself from the view that a socialist reconstruction of the forms of social life will erase human unhappiness and misery, but regards it as being, in a number of ways, conducive to self-realisation, and expresses his belief that ‘the historical mission of Socialism is to introduce to the world a form of society where the individual may realise himself by drawing at will upon the whole range of human culture which is offered up for his choice freely and in its full profusion’.

It would be misguided to attempt to pin down the precise content of his socialism. For although he was certainly a democratic socialist—understanding the first business of a political democracy to be the defence of the rights of all and a socialist government as one ‘that is ultimately prepared to wage war on all those forces in society which cramp and impoverish the lives of man’—and he maintained that inequalities in society could not be justified if the least privileged members of the society did not benefit from these inequalities, he advocated what he called ‘political empiricism’, a political empiricist being one who holds general social principles, the principles of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity, for example, but who is prepared to reject any principle he holds if given proof—proof of its disastrous consequences if applied in its categorical or unqualified form. So the principles of ’89, like the principle of democracy itself, need to be elucidated, applied and tested and possible clashes between them acknowledged and assessed, a lifelong task. What can be said, however, is that Richard perceived his commitment to socialism as being rooted in his belief in a common human nature, the thought of a common human nature giving sustenance to the



principles of '89, whatever elucidation of them and assessment of conflicts among them Richard might have favoured, universal human needs and general desires sustaining liberty and equality (of resources, opportunity, or whatever), fraternity being the acknowledgement of the nature we share with other human beings.

Nineteen sixty-two was a momentous year in his life. It was in this year that, after much hesitation and heart-searching, he took the decision to separate from his wife. Another important development was his entering into a Kleinian analysis with Dr Leslie Sohn, an analysis that lasted for more than eight years and to which Richard owed a great deal, especially the furthering of what he esteemed most in life, 'innermost knowledge of the self'. And in late July, afflicted by various conflicts in his life, with nowhere to live in London, he drove down to a cottage his niece had lent him and began work on his novel, *A Family Romance*, the title advertising to Freud's description of the fantasies a young boy devises to dispute or evade his father's authority, the novel's protagonist engaging in such a refashioning of his mistress's life. It had been a childhood ambition to write a complete novel, an ambition which stretched into maturity. But he had kept this secret; despite strenuous efforts he had been unable to fulfil it; and it caused him to feel shame in the presence of novelist friends he admired. However, this time he was better prepared to succeed, for his thoughts eventually crystallised about a linked set of ideas: the interdependence of form and content; the desire to set down what he had learnt from his analysis, not specifically about himself, but about those patterns of emotion in which our psychology manifests itself and which sometimes we project onto others; the adoption of diary form; the desire that the novel should be fully determined, everything in it having its reason; and the desire to distance himself from a prevailing view of criminal responsibility by illustrating the ideological message that people by and large do what they believe to be right, however objectionable their ideals may be. (He later wrote that in the last difficult days of writing the novel he had tried to console himself with the hope that at least one reader would welcome it as a tract against criminal justice.) This new conception, he felt, would make it possible for him to write a finished novel. When he returned to London in the autumn he had written twenty-seven of the hundred sections of the work, and, devoting to it whatever time he could spare from his teaching duties and philosophical writing, the novel occupied him for another four years, some of his time being taken up in what he described as 'a frenzied cultivation of low life, in which I pursued, for its own sake, an encyclopaedic knowledge of pubs and clubs fre-

quented by prostitutes and young burglars, transvestites and insomniacs', not wanting anything to go on in such places that he was unfamiliar with. *A Family Romance* was finally finished in Cairo in the spring of 1967 and published two years later. The book was fairly well-reviewed but made no real impact and was soon forgotten. Although it has sometimes been described as a *roman-à-clef*, and it certainly lost him friends who seemed to recognise themselves in it, Richard claimed that in each case they were mistaken. He later confessed that he had not wanted the novel to be a very bookish book, but that is what it turned out to be. No later attempt at writing a finished novel was successful.

It was also in 1962 that his acquaintanceship with Adrian Stokes, which until that time had been rather slight, began to develop into very close friendship. He had met Stokes for the first time in 1958 at the private view of the Royal Academy's exhibition 'The Age of Louis XIV', having got interested in his work a few months before; and it was through his review of Stokes's *Greek Culture and the Ego*, which was published that year, that he had come to know Mrs Klein (whom Stokes had been in analysis with), who had only eighteen months to live and whom Richard described as 'the most impressive human being I have known'. But it was only with the start of his own analysis that he came to know Stokes very well. Stokes's house in Church Row, Hampstead, was, conveniently, on what they called 'the analytic route', and Richard called in usually once, sometimes twice a week, to talk with him. Richard greatly admired Stokes's writings on art: he regarded Stokes as the deepest contemporary critic of the arts and, with Meyer Schapiro, the most illuminating (Richard owned paintings by each of them). He later wrote a Preface to Stokes's *The Invitation in Art*; he reviewed three more of Stokes's books; he edited and wrote an Introduction to a selection of Stokes's writings (*The Image in Form*, 1972); he wrote a number of essays about Stokes's work; and he held that nothing could be better on the virtues of architecture than Stokes's *Venice*. Most importantly, he regarded the psychoanalytically inspired Tavistock books as displaying a superior psychoanalytic approach to art to Freud's own in his essays on Leonardo and on the *Moses* of Michaelangelo. Freud's concern, which requires access to material obtainable to the requisite extent only within the process of analysis, is solely with the (alleged) content of a work, a content that it might well share with things that are not art, and so fails to illuminate the work of art *qua* work of art or to engage with the nature of art. As opposed to this is an approach that is concerned with identifying the roots of artistic Form, meaning all the specifically artistic features

of works—an approach exemplified above all in the later writings of Stokes, which exploit the extension of psychoanalytic theory effected by Mrs Klein—and which, construing certain formal characteristics as the natural correlates of certain organisations or relationships of the ego, the structural features of a work mirroring structural features of the person, constellations of feelings and dispositions, has no need of voluminous biographical material. For anyone looking to psychoanalysis to throw light on art, and who, as Richard did, both embraced Klein's development of Freudian theory and held that we can actually *see* the ego-states that correspond to them *in* the formal aspects of art, Stokes's work provides the paradigm, and its effect on Richard's own thoughts about art was marked. He could, he wrote, think of no better words to describe Stokes as a critic of the arts than those of Dante about Virgil: 'Poeta che mi guidi'.

In 1963 Richard was elected to the Grote Chair and became Head of the Department of Philosophy, positions he held throughout the rest of his time at UCL. There had been just three other members of staff when he arrived at UCL, but under Ayer's leadership it had gained in numbers, strength and reputation. Richard continued the transformation of the department, attracting to it outstanding talent and fostering an intellectual climate in which such talent could flourish. Many years later, soon after he had left the department, he paid this tribute to it: 'Throughout the time I have known it the department has always exemplified to a high degree the values that happen to please me most: audacity, toleration, a concern for tradition, and disregard for authority.' The credit for this state of the department was due not only to Richard but, as he would have been the first to acknowledge, to Ayer, whose leadership Richard greatly admired. Richard was made an Honorary Fellow of UCL in 1994.

Richard's first major statement on the philosophy of art and his principal contribution to analytic aesthetics, *Art and Its Objects* (1968), immediately established him as one of the world's leading aestheticians. It is marked not just by its sophistication, the wide range of problems it deals with, its exceptional command of the main terrain of the philosophy of art, the deep understanding and wide knowledge of art and art-historical writing it displays, its comprehensive mastery of the philosophical literature and the lucid style in which it is written, but by the distinctive conception of the philosophy of art it articulates—a conception that was further elaborated in the second edition, which contains six supplementary essays, and in other later writings, especially those collected in *On Art and the Mind* (1973) and *The Mind and Its Depths* (1993).

Richard acquiesced in the view that the central concern of aesthetics or the philosophy of art is to clarify the nature of art. But he rejected all standard approaches to the issue, in particular the simplistic idea that the right way to engage with the question ‘What is art?’ is to search for an illuminating reductive definition of ‘art’ or ‘work of art’, the complexity of the concept of art being such as to make such a search inappropriate. The leading idea of his own approach arises from his rejection of a spectator-oriented aesthetics: to grasp the nature of art it is necessary to see it from two points of view, that of the spectator and that of the artist, these points of view overlapping, spectator and artist not being different classes of people but roles that can be fulfilled by the same person, the distinctive function of the spectator being that of understanding art, the perspective of the artist, which commands pride of place, being a matter of seeing art and the artist’s activity in the light of the intentions that guided his activity in making a work. Hence it is necessary to focus, not on works of art themselves, but on the so-called aesthetic attitude, where this is understood as all that is involved in regarding something as a work of art, which must be seen as linked with the complementary attitude of producing something as a work of art. And what this examination leads to is the suggestion that art is, in Wittgenstein’s sense, a form of life, which requires, for artistic activity and appreciation to be possible, the existence of practices and institutions, and which issues in the conclusion that art is an essentially historical phenomenon, of necessity changing and its changes affecting the conceptual structure that surrounds art.

So there are two aims integral to art. The aim of the artist is to endow his work with a meaning determined by the intentions that guide his activity, the notion of intention being construed generously so as to include more or less any psychological factor—desires, beliefs, emotions, commitments and wishes, for example—that motivates him to work in a certain way. The aim of artistic criticism, the objective study of art, is to understand works of art. To understand a work is to grasp what the artist meant, which requires a cognitive stock that includes knowledge of its ‘diachronic setting’ or the aesthetic tradition of which it is a part, and that will often require very much more—knowledge of artistic conventions, various truths about the nature of the world, certain facts about the artist’s life, for example. And any information, whatever its provenance or content might be, can properly be drawn upon if it enables the spectator to experience some part of the meaning of the work that otherwise he might have overlooked. But to grasp what the artist meant, to retrieve his intention, is not a cognitive achievement that consists in recognising that

the artist intended a spectator to have a certain experience in engaging with the work. Such recognition is unnecessary. If the artist fulfilled his intention, all that is required is that a spectator, in engaging with the work, should undergo the experience the artist intended his work to provide: understanding a work is essentially experiential—it is understanding by acquaintance.

In addition to his psychological account of the meaning and understanding of a work of art, two other psychological accounts figure large in his aesthetic thought. Again and again he returned to two important topics, the nature of pictorial representation and the nature of artistic expression, each, he held, depending on an exercise of both the spectator's and the artist's role, and for each he proposed a psychological account.

From his earliest writing on the topic of pictorial representation, he held two views, one flowing from the other. The first is that seeing an opaque marked surface as a representation involves seeing it in such a manner that one thing (a plane of colour, say) is seen as being behind or in front of another. The second is that pictorial representation is not restricted to figurative representation, for most abstract paintings demand this kind of perception. At first he elucidated pictorial representation in terms of 'seeing as', but later he thought it necessary to replace this with 'seeing in', where seeing one thing in another consists of a conjunction of two visual experiences, one of seeing a surface and one of seeing, in looking at the surface, one thing in front of or behind another. A final change consisted in conceiving of seeing-in as, so to speak, the fusion of these two kinds of experience, so that seeing-in is an autonomous perceptual capacity, an experience of seeing-in being a single experience which has two aspects, one (the configurational) of seeing a marked surface, the other (the recognitional) of seeing in this surface something in front of or behind something else. Now he never sought to give a full explanation of what he took seeing-in to be, believing that since it was such a common experience he needed to do no more than gesture towards it for his meaning to be understood, and he was sceptical that it could be elucidated further than he had done. But adherents of alternative accounts of pictorial perception, based on the idea of perceived resemblance or the idea of imagining seeing something—accounts that Richard continued to argue against to the end and the elements of which he refused to countenance in his own conception—have remained unconvinced that the notion of seeing-in, as Richard thought of it, is coherent, for it appears impossible, given his rejections, to explain the idea of seeing something in front of something else, seeing in a marked

surface ‘things three-dimensionally related’, the ‘awareness of depth’, the ‘effect’ of three-dimensionality, that is intrinsic to pictorial perception. For Richard the recognitional aspect of an experience of seeing-in is a visual awareness of the object depicted, and the crucial issue is whether any reasonable sense can be made of this consonant with his denial that this visual awareness is an illusion, an experience of resemblance or one of imagining seeing something.

His conception of artistic expression—a work of art’s being expressive of psychological states or processes—which always included the idea of the perception of a ‘correspondence’ between a work and a psychological state, the work seeming to us to match what we experience when in that state, received many partial elucidations before finally crystallising into an analysis based on the idea of the projection of emotion onto a work, where projection, again, is not simple but complex, the work’s expressive properties being so-called projective properties. The analysis exists in two forms, the first of which requires the observer to be experiencing the emotion projected onto the work, the other dropping this requirement: in both forms the projected emotion ‘colours’ the observer’s perception of the work. Only the second form is consistent with Richard’s long-standing opposition to the idea that an artist, in creating a work as an expression of emotion, or an observer, in appreciating it as an expression of emotion, must feel the emotion that the work expresses. In any case, Richard was prepared to concede that the crucial concepts involved in his theory, even in its final form, suffer from indefiniteness, so that the theory is merely programmatic (although he wondered, not unreasonably in the case of painting, whether this might well be true of all philosophical theories of expression, the subject being still in its infancy). Although he never explicitly advocated a theory of the evaluation of art, it is clear that he favoured a projective theory of the status of artistic value. But, leaving aside the inadequate characterisation of the notion of complex projection, it is clear that the variety of artistic value would require a more nuanced projective theory than the one proposed for moral value, where what is projected is ‘archaic bliss’. Richard would, I am sure, have acknowledged this.

Of the arts, his greatest love was painting, his memory for paintings that he had seen being exceptional. Nicholas Poussin, whom he discovered at the 1932–3 Burlington House exhibition of French paintings when he was only nine, remained his ideal of art, as the magnificent dust jackets that adorn his books declare. He had a strong feeling for architecture, understanding the perception of architecture—more generally the built

environment, whether of the town or countryside—to involve corporeal projection, fine architecture sustaining the projection of good ego-states, poor architecture encouraging crude aggressive part-object fantasies. And so he considered good architecture to be ‘not a luxury but a necessity’. He had a lifelong love of literature in all its forms, preferring poetry to the novel in his youth, his first love in fiction being Scott, whom he venerated throughout his life, Scott’s novels being full of characters who embrace ideals that consume them, unlike the English novel of shared manners, which he did not favour. He described himself as ‘somewhat unmusical, in some respects violently antimusical’. On one occasion he explained to me that in general he found music too emotional to listen to. But in fact his reaction was more specific than this would indicate. For one of the fears of inundation he suffered from throughout his life was inundation in the sound of music: his experience of music was too often one of drowning in a sea of sound. His struggle to come to terms with music was, he wrote, the hardest battle he had fought in his life. His two favourite composers were Monteverdi and Debussy. Despite his father’s connection with Diaghilev, he was no enthusiast for the ballet, and he regarded the film as having failed to graduate as an art-form.

His marriage to Anne having been dissolved in 1967, in 1969 Richard married the American sculptor and potter Mary Day Lanier, step-daughter of Dwight Macdonald (one of whose books Richard had reviewed), whose artistic and political interests harmonised with his own. Their daughter, Emilia, was born in 1983: Richard adored her throughout his life.

Nineteen seventy-one saw the publication of his principal work on the theory of psychoanalysis, *Freud*, a lucid, precise and economical exposition of the development of Freud’s theory of the mind, displaying an astonishing mastery of the details of Freud’s theories of dreams, parapraxes, symptoms, jokes, neuroses, sexuality and other topics, at each stage of their evolution, indicating Freud’s changes of mind and any unclarities or uncertainties in Freud’s thought, not just expounding these theories but raising and answering objections that have been or are likely to be brought against them, and correcting a variety of misapprehensions of Freud’s thought. It is especially notable for the emphasis that Richard places on the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, a manuscript Freud wrote in 1895 putting forward a theoretical model of the mind and mental processes, both normal and pathological. Richard undertakes the heroic task of extracting from this difficult manuscript the main elements of Freud’s picture of the mind and proceeds to demonstrate its powerful

influence on Freud's thinking throughout the rest of his life and, despite his neither completing nor publishing it, its enduring importance for him. And the work concludes with an examination of a rather neglected aspect of Freud's thought, his reflections on the value of human civilisation—whether, given the conditions essential to the existence of a stable society, the fruits outweigh the burdens, and whether there could be a form of society which so mitigated the renunciations necessary to a civilised life that the outcome would be positive for nearly everyone.

Given his commitment to the leading ideas of psychoanalytic theory as developed by Freud and extended by Melanie Klein, this development being for him 'the most exciting, the most courageous, the most poignant adventure in the history of Western ideas', it is unsurprising that elements of the theory of psychoanalysis came to inform, to a greater or lesser extent, all his writing, lightly touching some works, saturating others, and this greatly contributes to its distinctive character. His knowledge of psychoanalytic theory was unrivalled, encompassing both the contributions of the main figures and the alternatives proposed by the principal 'revisionists' and deviators. In 1982 he was elected an Honorary Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society (the first non-analyst to be honoured in this way), and in 1994 to honorary membership of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute. In 1991 he was given an award for distinguished services to psychoanalysis by the International Psychoanalytical Association.

In spring 1982 he gave the William James Lectures in Philosophy at Harvard, which he revised and greatly expanded into *The Thread of Life* (1984). He held that 'the primary task of philosophy vis-à-vis psychoanalytic theory is to articulate the kind of understanding—the diversity of understanding, we might say—that psychoanalytic theory promises of human nature'. His lectures investigate the nature of the process that mediates between a person and the life he or she leads—the leading of a life—and he conceded that a characterisation of their ideology might identify their aim as a philosophy of mind of a kind that psychoanalytic theory requires. The unargued assumption of psychoanalytic theory and frequent recourse to elements of it dismayed reviewers sceptical of or antipathetic to psychoanalysis. But even if the aspects of psychoanalytic theory that Richard exploits were not to be viable, the book is saturated with thoughts and arguments that derive, not from the theory of psychoanalysis, but from profound reflection on human life—on the significance in the way we lead our lives of imagination, memory, fantasy, self-examination, self-concern, friendship, madness and death—and these and the sophisticated conceptual apparatus through which they are



developed would, by themselves, be sufficient to render it invaluable. He argues for this account of friendship: ‘The essence of friendship lies, I suggest, in the exercise of a capacity to perceive, a willingness to respect, and a desire to understand, the differences between persons. Friendship lies in a response to the singularity of persons, and a person’s friendship extends only as far as such singularity engages him.’ His own talent for friendship, one of his most endearing qualities, illustrates this conception perfectly. Richard was an astute observer of humanity, relishing or tolerating a very wide range of ways in which those he engaged with might diverge from him, and he was unconcerned to control or change them. In return, people were attracted to him by his extraordinarily rich and curious mind, his wit, his humour, his passions, and the attraction was strengthened by their recognition of his interest in and respect for their idiosyncracies. For Richard, as for John Stuart Mill, whom Richard greatly admired, individuality was one of the supreme values in life, a value he celebrated in his teaching: he encouraged students who dissented from his views to articulate their reasons or express their own point of view and accommodated immovable disagreement gracefully, recognising how harmful an insistence on the merits of his own position was likely to be.

After thirty-three years in the Philosophy Department at UCL, the last nineteen as Head of Department, in 1982 Richard left for the USA, residing first in New York as Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, then moving to California in 1985, where he remained, as Mills Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, until 2002, being Chair of the Philosophy Department from 1998–2002, and between 1989–96 splitting his time between Berkeley and the University of California, Davis, where he was Professor of Philosophy and the Humanities.

In November and December 1984 he delivered the Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, which he greatly revised and enlarged into *Painting as an Art* (1987), and which is, arguably, his masterpiece. Richard was not an admirer of the art-historical manner in which painting was currently studied and he hoped that the theory of painting he advances would encourage an alternative approach. In the book he applies his psychological account of artistic meaning and understanding to the art of painting—a painting’s meaning (each painting having one and only one meaning) being visual, revealed in the experience induced in an adequately sensitive and informed spectator who looks at the surface of the painting as the fulfilled intentions of the artist led him to mark it—and argues that a paint-

ing is a work of art in virtue of the way in which the activity from which it issues is practised; he advances a generative conception of individual pictorial style, distinguishing the set of characteristics associated with an individual style from the style itself, the style itself having psychological reality, a practical capacity lying deep in the artist's psychology, having been formed in the artist's mind and causing the characteristics associated with it to be as they are, and enabling the artist to fulfil his intentions; he distinguishes five main varieties of primary pictorial meaning or content that a work can achieve—representational, expressive, textual, historical and metaphorical—each specified with greater precision and a finer sense of aesthetic relevance than had previously been attained, and he identifies what he characterises as secondary meaning, which is what the act of giving a picture its primary meaning meant to the artist; and he illustrates his argument with a remarkable series of challenging interpretations of works by some of the painters he most admired—Bellini, Friedrich, Ingres, Manet, Picasso, Poussin and Titian, amongst others.

On the last page of the book he responds to a self-addressed challenge, asserting that his reply is 'the simplest, and the most important, thing' that he has to say in the lectures. The challenge is to explain what reason there is to believe that, if he has the right sensitivity and information, his own experience of paintings, which has been the basis of his interpretations, gives him a correct understanding of the fulfilled intentions of the artist. His response is to argue that all great art presupposes a universal human nature through which pictorial meaning works: only this can explain the survival of painting as an art. And this elucidates his claim at the beginning of the book that 'all art, or at any rate all great art, presupposes a universal human nature'. And at both the beginning and the end of the book he announces the locking together of two of his deepest commitments, the love of painting and loyalty to socialism, by the common ground in which they are rooted—a common human nature (to the understanding of which psychoanalysis, another of his deepest commitments, has made a major contribution). This locking together, which Richard does not elaborate, should not be misunderstood. In the first place, there is an asymmetry here that Richard does not mention: whereas great art presupposes a common human nature, Richard never argued that this is true of socialism. However, if socialism is derivable from there being a universal human nature, then, given the existence of great art, socialism follows—but only if the elements of human nature through which pictorial meaning works are the same as or imply the basic needs and desires which sustain socialism. Secondly, the locking together

of these commitments did not incline him to embrace the view that a painting should be a true mirror of the social conditions of its age, the art of a socialist society reflecting the distinctive features of such a society, nor the view that the artist should further the cause of the progressive elements of his society. And he explicitly rejected the social explanation of pictorial works of art, that is, the assignment to them of a social function, or a limited set of social functions—reflecting, idealising, criticising or compensating for social conditions, say—one that all paintings necessarily discharge. However, maintaining that it is in the tradition of the great aesthetes—those passionate about art and best able to articulate their response to it—to be social critics, he argued that in fact there is a natural connection between the role of aesthete and that of social critic, so that it is the cases in which an aesthete is indifferent to the conditions of his society that require explanation. For, in the first place, aesthetes have a ‘heightened awareness of the power of the environment upon us, and hence of its significance for us’. And, secondly, there is a natural link between aestheticism and utopianism—the demand that ‘the outer world should exhibit a degree of harmony or integration comparable to that which man tries to establish within himself’—so that those aesthetes who recognise humanity wherever it occurs will be socialists, recognising the harmful forces on ‘many of our fellow human beings’ of ‘advertising, the degradation and disintegration of the urban environment, the survival of religion, the proliferation of partial and therefore crude sexual imagery’.

His final book, *On the Emotions* (1999), a thoroughly revised, rewritten and massively expanded version of the Ernst Cassirer lectures that he delivered in the Philosophy Department at Yale University in the autumn of 1991, offers an account of the emotions, the most sophisticated account we have, which is held up against imagined cases and illustrated by well-chosen literary examples. It ‘repsychologises’ the philosophical study or conception of the emotions, attributing to them ‘psychological reality’—which is to represent them as mental dispositions that cause their manifestations. It assigns to them a particular role within the psychology of the person—that of providing the person with an attitude to the world—and it sketches and then develops in great detail a characteristic history, proceeding from the originating condition to internal and external manifestations and other outcomes, a history not followed by every occurrence of emotion but one the recognition of which is essential to understanding what an emotion is. For two of the so-called moral emotions, shame and guilt, which deviate from the characteristic history, he identifies a different originating condition and outlines a different history,

not just of any instance of them but of the emotions themselves as they develop in the life of the individual, incorporating the psychoanalytic notion of fantasy as an essential ingredient of his account. And in conclusion he proposes the view, although this is not developed sufficiently to be assessed, that the essence of any kind of emotion—what distinguishes it from any other—is its distinctive attitude, the identity of which lies in the character of the emotion's life, formed of the interactions between the world and the emotion. Like all Richard's books, *On the Emotions* has a character that distinguishes it from nearly all philosophical writing of the last century: not only does it display the highest qualities of abstract thought, it possesses great human interest.

In 2003, having for nearly twenty years accepted constantly renewed invitations to teach at Berkeley, he left the USA and returned to London, where he bought a spacious loft in Bermondsey. In Autumn 2002 he had begun to experience pain in one or another part of his body and in September 2003 his condition deteriorated and he was admitted to hospital. At first it seemed that the cause of his suffering might well be secondary cancer from melanoma—in the last couple of years he had had two moles removed from his skin—and Richard accepted the prospect of imminent death sweetly and calmly; but when the diagnosis was changed to multiple myeloma he looked forward to a longer life in which he would be able to carry out further projects. Feeling terribly sick after radiotherapy, he insisted on discharging himself from hospital and soon moved into his flat, which his wife had worked valiantly to prepare for his inhabiting, with his spirits high. But three weeks later he died of heart failure in his home before dawn on 4 November 2003.

Richard was one of the most original, creative and courageous philosophers of his time. It is unsurprising that he attracted invitations to give many of the world's most prestigious lectures. In addition to the three already mentioned, he was the Ernest Jones Lecturer, Institute of Psychoanalysis, London, 1968, the Power Lecturer, University of Sydney, 1972, the Leslie Stephen Lecturer, Cambridge University, 1979, the H. L. A. Hart Lecturer, Oxford University, 1985, the Gareth Evans Memorial Lecturer at Oxford 1996, the Roland Penrose Lecturer at the Tate Gallery 1998, the Werner Heisenberg Lecturer at the Bavarian Academy 2001 and the Lindley Lecturer at the University of Kansas 2001. Two Festschriften in his honour were published, in 1992 and 2001, the second containing his responses to the contributors. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1972 and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1986. He was the greatest aesthetician of his generation and

his contribution to the philosophy of his favourite art, painting, dwarfs all others. In the last fifteen years of his life he wrote regularly about painting (and drawing and architecture), especially for *Modern Painters*, of which he was a member of the Editorial Board, interviewing artists, reviewing exhibitions and engaging in art criticism. Each of his final philosophical publications was on the nature and art of painting. In his last years he had come to focus on the topic of pictorial organisation, about which he intended to write a book, which, in addition to some of his previously published views, would include his thoughts about the organisation of the paintings of Ruisdael, Bellotto and Monet (whose work he adored). It might appear extravagant to characterise the death of an 80-year old man as untimely. But Richard was exceptional: the passing of the years left his powerful and creative mind undimmed, his intellectual curiosity as keen as ever, his passion for painting, both new and old, undiminished. His death has deprived us not just of his company.

MALCOLM BUDD

*Fellow of the Academy*

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