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# Book Reviews

Criticism Editors

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*Anatomy of Criticism* by Northrop Frye. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957. Pp. x + 383. $6.00.

This book on the theory of literary criticism is at once radical and traditional, bold and academic. It begins with a concept of the function of criticism that recalls Aristotle's aim to build up some rational order in the realm of art. Mr. Frye boldly rejects interpreting and evaluating particular works as a primary aim of criticism; this aim seems to him not only endless but futile because it merely reflects changes in the history of taste, instead of building up a body of coherent fact about literature. His view of criticism as an autonomous field of knowledge leads him to treat the most highly regarded critics in the English tradition as mere good readers, not "genuine critics." A critic like Arnold only "represents the reading public at its most expert and judicious" (p. 8). The genuine critics are the literary students of all kinds who make permanent contributions to our knowledge. His complaint about literary scholarship is only that it has stopped short of its potentialities. He revives the hope of a few generations ago that literary criticism may develop much farther than it has done as a science. He willingly gives up the conscious evaluative function of criticism; and yet he believes that literary criticism establishes the canon of the tradition and the content of literary education without conscious evaluation of particular works.

Mr. Frye thinks of the critic's function as the systematic study of literature as a whole, of seeing each work only as a part of that "total order." He accepts as profoundly true and as a germinating critical idea the suggestion of T. S. Eliot that the existing monuments of literature form an ideal order among themselves, and he attempts throughout his book to describe this order. He seems to think of it not as being constantly modified by new works, as Eliot did, but as a fixed order which new works only make manifest in different ways. Mr. Frye seems academic in his rejection of any such aim as "to correct taste" or to influence the future course of literature. His ideal critic "describes and co-ordinates," and unlike most practicing poets who have been critics his critic progresses toward great catholicity of taste based rather upon knowledge and understanding than upon personal likes and dislikes. These ideas suggest why Mr. Frye calls his introduction "polemical," but his attitude to all criticism, as to all literature, is catholic.

He would accept all kinds as useful, and in his four substantive chapters (modestly called "essays") he attempts to see four different kinds of criticism in perspective, from his own point of view. He describes first the historical "modes" which he defines; then the kind of criticism which interprets and evaluates symbols; third, archetypal forms of imagery and narrative; and finally, "rhetorical criticism"—the treatment of the verbal surface of literature. His

own approach leads him to the principal questions of literary theory. His method in each chapter is to take a broad view of the whole body of literature, to make broad discriminations, and to order and classify what he sees. Illustrative references are plentiful, and often very suggestive, but particular works are seen only as from a distance, and particulars are deliberately overlooked. Mr. Frye, like a draughtsman sketching from nature, seems to half close his eye in order to see the main outlines more clearly. It is these alone that he wants to see.

Mr. Frye is explicit in not rejecting any approaches to literature, and he tries rather to open the way for fruitful exchange and cooperation between various kinds of literary students. Yet his concept of the function of criticism seems inevitably to throw a special emphasis on what he calls "archetypal criticism," and the third essay, with this title, seems the most richly suggestive in the book. Archetypal criticism, as he describes it, studies the forms which are repeatedly embodied in literature as patterns of imagery or narrative. In his view, the literary structures which continually and significantly elicit our deepest responses are best studied in the archetypal myths. And these myths are present, though seemingly "displaced," even in sophisticated literary works. Archetypal criticism, which Mr. Frye recommends especially (p. 104), would involve careful and objective comparisons of literary works in all times and places in the way that traditional ballad forms, for example, have been traced and studied. He describes five categories of archetypal images and four categories of narrative. The first range from "images of the highest human aspiration" and desire to "images of all that desire rejects." Mr. Frye's classification and description is intensely interesting, but he admits (p. 158) that in a particular work the archetypal images may be only "latent" and that this latent meaning, though "one factor," is not the "real content" of the work. The archetypes are presumably of paramount importance not for the interpretation of a literary work, but for understanding "literature as a whole," and for explaining the appeal of particular works.

The treatment of archetypal narratives—tragic, comic, romantic, ironic—is again impressive, and perhaps more suggestive for concrete analysis than the descriptions of archetypal symbols. Tragedy, for example, is discriminated from comedy as a story of the hero's alienation from his society; comedy being a story of his integration. Without rejecting the insights of Aristotle, Mr. Frye follows a Christian tradition in considering Adam's fall as the archetype of tragedy. His fall led to a loss of freedom, and Mr. Frye treats this as the characteristic theme of all tragedy. Christian tragedy is possible, he would say, because the Christian view of life includes the tragic, though it does not stop with it. He treats the quest-theme as characteristic of the romance narrative, which includes, like the Christian epic, both tragedy and comedy. These general discriminations are extremely interesting and suggestive for the analytical study of particular works. But their value and truth perhaps cannot be known until they have been so tested and applied. In simplifying the structures of particular works for his classifications, Mr. Frye seems to assume that what creates the powerful response of the reader and audience is not the rich, complex, and unique qualities of a work of art, but the underlying structure beneath this complexity, a structure which it shares with innumerable other works. He seems to suggest that the most important part of meaning is understood subconsciously. It is clear that

his thought is indebted not only to Aristotle but to modern anthropologists and psychologists, especially Jung.

Mr. Frye defines "ethical criticism" as the "study of the literature of the past with a view to its value in the present," and it is in this criticism that the critic is concerned primarily with meaning and value. It seems characteristic that he relegates these aspects of criticism, theoretically at least, to only one of his four essays. And the most interesting part of this essay, again significantly for his approach, is the "Mythical Phase: Symbol as Archetype," a level of meaning in which the work is seen as a myth which "unites ritual and dream." In this essay Frye treats literary convention and originality. Like Eliot he stresses the impersonality of the artist, but he seems to go further than reason suggests in belittling the importance of the artist's personality and experience. Poems are made out of other poems, he would say, and the "new poem manifests something that was already latent in the order of words" (p. 97). The poet, the producer of culture, is thought of principally as a master of technique, and an important part of his product is unconscious (all technique "is a habitual, and therefore an increasingly unconscious, skill" [p. 88]). In a similar way, Frye later writes, "while the production of culture may be, like ritual, a half-involuntary imitation of organic rhythms or processes, the response to culture is, like myth, a revolutionary act of consciousness" (p. 344). In culture the role of the artist is made to seem subordinate to the role of the critic. The "true father" of the poem is not the poet but the "form of the poem itself . . . a manifestation of the universal spirit of poetry" (p. 98). And it is only the critic that determines what are works of art.

The "order of words" seems to have for Mr. Frye an existence in an ideal realm, beyond its existence in speech and literature. Though most of his book is concerned with the definition, classification, and description of literary phenomena as he finds them, he is led to postulate some "total form," fixed and unmoving, beyond the concrete manifestation. It is like the Prime Mover in Aristotle's concept of physical nature. In his conclusion, admittedly speculative and tentative, Mr. Frye thinks of literature as "an autonomous language . . . in a measure independent of that common field of experience which we call the objective world, or nature, or existence, or reality" (p. 350). "In reading a novel we have to go from literature as reflection of life to literature as autonomous language" (p. 351). He then develops an analogy with another "autonomous language," pure mathematics, which has a relation to the physical world like that of literature to the world of experience.

The strengths of Mr. Frye's book are inseparable from what seem to be weaknesses. He looks at the whole body of literature with rare breadth of knowledge and imagination, and in his efforts to define and classify he expands our awareness of the extent to which literary forms can be rationally and objectively described. But the achievement inevitably involves the creation of large abstractions and some deliberate simplifications. His book, and even his concept of criticism, leads the critic farther and farther from the particular literary work, and from the reading experience. One of his aims as a critic is to avoid the prejudices of contemporary taste, which, he feels, have always distorted the views of critics who set up as judges. One wonders whether his emphasis on "archetypal criticism" is not itself a reflection of contemporary taste. The prominence of

mythical elements in Joyce and Kafka suggests to him some kind of natural law by which the last of his historical "modes"—the ironic—returns to the first—the mythical. But these elements in Joyce and Kafka may only reflect the same contemporary interests in psychology and anthropology which are reflected in Mr. Frye's book.

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*The Flaming Heart* by Mario Praz. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958. Pp. 390. $1.25.

Professor Mario Praz in *The Flaming Heart* publishes a collection of essays with a single theme—the literary relations between Italy and England from Chaucer to the present. A general introduction is followed by a series of separate essays, some centered on English authors—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Crashaw, and T. S. Eliot—and some on Italian—Machiavelli, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso. Dante has a prominent place, especially in the treatment of Chaucer and T. S. Eliot, the hiatus between being felt by Mr. Praz to represent the course of Dante's English reputation. Though most of these essays have made earlier appearances, many now appear for the first time in English, and the one on Petrarch, with a valuable survey of the continental origins of the sonnet, appears for the first time. "An author's fortune," Professor Praz writes, "is not so much measured by a tabulation of quotations, as by the impulse his work gives to original creation, or else by the place he occupies in popular imagination as a legendary figure" (p. 288). In these various ways, he feels, Italy contributed to the establishment of an original literary tradition in England. Though many lines of Chaucer, of course, are indebted to Boccaccio, Professor Praz believes the influence of Dante is "more deeply interfused and widespread" (p. 78). According to Mr. Praz the idea of the framework of the *Canterbury Tales* may well have been suggested by Dante's pilgrimage on which he met people of all classes; and if some of Chaucer's characters are historical we should remember that the "idea of mixing history and fiction is eminently Dante's idea" (p. 77). The presence of Dante in his mind may be responsible for some of Mr. Praz's strictures on Chaucer. As to his "displays of erudition," for example, in which the modern reader detects irony, Professor Praz suggests that compared with Dante and Petrarch Chaucer "fell into grotesque, parvenu-like crudity" (p. 59). What we take for humor was often not so intended, Mr. Praz says.

The influence of Machiavelli in the Elizabethan drama seems to Professor Praz mainly that of a legendary figure. Although Marlowe, Jonson, Chapman, and Kyd clearly knew Machiavelli's work, Mr. Praz argues that they used it like Cinthio in Italy only to bring the Senecan tyrants up to date (p. 116), and most other Elizabethans merely exploit for sensational effect a fictional Machiavelli, the product of political and religious prejudice. Although Professor Praz traces this prejudice mainly to anti-Italian feeling in sixteenth century France, one may wonder if it was not due also to the weight of the tradition in which the ruler was studied in a moral not an amoral context.

A different kind of influence is felt to be present in *Volpone* which Professor Praz feels is "inspired"—in its writing, its atmosphere, and in Volpone himself—by Aretino (p. 182). A similar "spiritual affinity" is found between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ariosto (p. 301). In observing the representation of a real Italy by Shakespeare and Jonson in comparison with a fantastic one imagined by other Elizabethans, Professor Praz may be observing not a more direct influence, but only the superior imagination of Jonson and Shakespeare. From books, and from men like John Florio, as Mr. Praz suggests, they were able to imagine a real world, while most of their contemporaries merely repeated clichés about Italy. But of course, the Elizabethans had no need or intention of reproducing local color realistically. Though he comes to sensible conclusions, Mr. Praz devotes perhaps too many pages to irrelevant questions about the reality of the Italian settings of Elizabethan drama. A striking illustration of Shakespeare's imaginative use of Italian literature is his shaping of Romeo's speech from the Petrarchan sonneteering tradition. Mr. Praz suggests he does this because Romeo is an Italian, but it may well be only because he is a lover.

The major Italian influences came before 1700, after which the center of European culture had completed its shift northward. In the period from Chaucer to Milton, and especially in the sixteenth century, Mr. Praz stresses the importance of Italian literature in establishing a native English tradition. The sonnet, blank verse, the Spenserian stanza, euphuistic prose, tragedy, comedy, the religious epic, the Pindaric Ode—each begins in England with some Italian connection. Its importance may vary and, especially for major authors, may be easily exaggerated, but Professor Praz's survey is a valuable reminder of its pervasive presence before 1700.

The important essay on Crashaw appears in English for the first time, more than thirty years after its original appearance. It finds in Crashaw the "quintessence of the seventeenth century," the literary counterpart of Reubens, Murillo and El Greco, and of Baroque architecture. Professor Praz sees in these aspects of the seventeenth century some decadent "exaggeration" of medieval attitudes (p. 207), but one would have liked more discriminations between this "Baroque sensibility," as Austin Warren calls it, and that of the more English Donne and Herbert. One may feel that the cultural lag in England made it closer to medieval tradition than Italy was in the seventeenth century.

The final essay, "T. S. Eliot and Dante," is an extension of one published in 1937. The subject is rich, and students should be grateful for this suggestive introduction to it. Professor Praz emphasizes Eliot's debt to Pound for his reading of Dante—a reading profoundly important to him both as poet and critic, inseparable rôles for him. The Italian reader, Mr. Praz suggests, finds Eliot's use of Dante "curious." It seems "curious," for example, that Eliot should find Dante's language simple and direct in comparison with Shakespeare's. But Mr. Praz thinks that Eliot may be responding rather to the general qualities of the Tuscan language than to Dante's special use of it. There is the implication that Eliot's reading, as that of a foreigner, is limited, and yet Mr. Praz never denies that the qualities Eliot finds in Dante are there. Both Pound and Eliot read Dante "as if he were a contemporary poet" (Pound is quoted as saying), and their reading may reflect not so much a foreign reading, as Mr. Praz implies, as a modern one. What makes Eliot's reading and use of Dante seem "curious"

to the Italian appears finally due to its being unexpected and untraditional. Mr. Praz's main point is that Eliot's use of Dante is varied, imaginative, and subtle, and he makes this clear. Though the subject of Eliot and Dante may be expected to exercise future students more than any other in this book, there are many details of our literary history that may well be reëxamined in the light of Professor Praz's informed suggestions of broad and varied debts to continental literary traditions.

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*The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* by Walter John Hipple, Jr. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957. Pp. 320. $7.00.

For those interested in literary criticism, this work on the eighteenth-century beautiful, sublime, and picturesque is difficult, no less because it deals with aesthetics, the philosophic foundations of criticism, than because its style is poor. The theoretical assumptions and arguments, deductive and inductive, of the well-known figures of eighteenth-century criticism from Joseph Addison to Archibald Alison and Dugald Stewart and the writers on the picturesque, Gilpin, Knight, Price, and Repton, are canvassed anew. Curiously, however, a first-rate original and highly influential thinker like Hartley, as well as his disciple Priestley, is practically unmentioned, while Blair, a second-rate derivative, is placed on the same level of importance with others like Burke and Reynolds.

Literary criticism as such is not considered in this study: the critical implications for the arts are avoided. Just exactly what contributions to scholarship Mr. Hipple has made in this survey cannot be easily assessed unless the reader were to follow him patiently and carefully through his tortuous analyses of the original texts. My impression is that many of the eighteenth-century treatises (with the possible exception of the essay on tragedy by Hume, who is the only really subtle philosopher of the period) are not half so complicated, dense and difficult as they appear to be in Hipple's turgid prose. For example, Alison's *Essays on Taste*, based on a simple induction, is most perspicuously written, a work that has the typical lucidity of eighteenth-century good writing. But Hipple's summary of Alison's contribution to aesthetic thought cannot be considered quite so simple and clear:

> Hume, Gerard, and Alison had, of these writers, the most complete grasp of the kind of logic appropriate to an analytic system, recognizing that neither deduction from principles of human nature (whether these be indemonstrable or established inductively) nor induction from the raw data of taste is alone adequate for proof in aesthetics, wherein plurality of causes and intermixture of effects abound. Both deductive and inductive inference must be used, and their consilience alone constitutes proof. But since the powers and sensibilities of human nature which enter into aesthetic response are several, and their operations more than ordinarily

> subtle, the deductive process can not be pursued safely without some view of the law towards which demonstration is to be directed; and such view is afforded by empirical generalization from the data of taste. Here is the use of consensus: to suggest empirical laws which can serve as hypotheses towards which the ratiocinative part of the process can be oriented. The ratiocination is the principal part of the proof, and that part from which the bulk of the doctrine will be evolved . . . (pp. 316-317).

Hipple's thesis is simple, if his style is not. He reviews the whole aesthetic system of each philosopher of the period, organizing the remarks on physical and moral beauty and sublimity, standards of taste, and the picturesque. He restates the argument and exposes the logical framework, his commentary largely dealing with the logical consistency of the texts. His method is often exceedingly technical and sometimes needlessly obscure, especially when he refers to the logic of John Stuart Mill as a measure of the logical structure of works written in the eighteenth century. I should think that a logic with which these philosophers might have been familiar—perhaps one like the enormously popular *Logick* (1725) of Isaac Watts—could have been used as a measure rather than deliberately to commit an anachronism.

But the chief methodological defect of this ambitious study is its purism—that is to say, its concern with aesthetics exclusive of the cultural history in which theory operates and, for most of us, takes recognizable form. References, for example, to the findings in a work like Beverly Sprague Allen's excellent *Tides in English Taste* (1937) could have given substance to the highly abstract analyses. It is as if the aesthetic systems that Hipple recreates are tightly closed, entirely unaffected by the social and cultural climate and having no critical implications. A comprehensive historical resumé such as this ought to have been written in accordance with a consistently maintained historical point of view.

Moreover, it may well be asked, what is the significance of the aesthetic systems that are re-presented? Hipple does not supply an explicit answer to this question, assuming that they have an intrinsic and autonomous value, irrespective of any possible relationship with artistic practice. The reader may occasionally wonder—as he does with the contemporary "new criticism"—if *extra*-aesthetic values do not provide these abstruse theories with the charge that lends them human significance.

Yet the a-historical method that Hipple has adopted does have one strong virtue. Because the thinkers of the period are not regarded with the usual preconceptions concerning eighteenth-century aesthetic trends, Hipple can see them for what they are, or may really be, without reference to an assigned position in the orthodox cultural histories. For such is Hipple's purpose: to preserve the integrity of the philosophic text—to examine without refraction through alien theories and on their own merits eighteenth-century theories of beauty, the sublime, and the picturesque, and so to restore to them some measure of philosophic respectability. Thus we may evaluate whole systems, rather than the usual single parts extracted, simplified, and perhaps distorted, as in Samuel Monk's classic work *The Sublime* (1935).

This novel approach leads Hipple to two interesting conclusions. One is that

there is no clearly defined evolution of eighteenth-century thought on beauty and sublimity. But, despite this negative conclusion, it is curious to see how Hipple himself indicates how a synthesis does finally evolve in the eclectic aesthetics of Dugald Stewart at the turn of the century.

Another conclusion, somewhat more significant, is that there is no neat dichotomy between objective and subjective aesthetic views. It simply is not true to see an increasing subjectivism in eighteenth-century aesthetics, Hipple demonstrates again and again. A distinction such as this is an illusion without meaning for these philosophers.

> [Burke's] program is not, as some moderns have seen it, a step from the objectivism of the neoclassic to a psychological and subjective view; this whole dichotomy, applied to the aestheticians here examined, is an illusion—all the aestheticians from Addison to Kant and onwards conceive of the sublime as a feeling in the mind caused by certain properties in external objects. The real differences among these men are to be sought in the methods of argument and the causal principles which they employ (p. 84).

Hipple thus attempts to destroy what he believes is the false dialectic of neoclassic-objective vs. romantic-subjective.

> It is a curiously perverse tendency among modern scholars to argue that the philosophical critics of the eighteenth century, by tracing aesthetic responses to their roots in passions, senses, faculties, and association, subvert the neoclassical system of rules and absolutes, and thus open the way for rampant subjectivism. . . . Setting aside the fiction of neoclassical rules, arbitrary, absolute, and objective, it is apparent that each philosophical aesthetician of the century subscribed to the idea of a standard of taste superior in authority to individual predilections; each supposed himself to be placing the admitted standard on its just foundations. All found the standard connected in one way or another with human nature, a nature universal and in some sense fixed. The derivation of the standard from human nature could, and did, take many courses (p. 119).

True, as it is extremely easy to demonstrate, the writers of this period have grounded their theories on psychological principles derived from their understanding of human nature. Hence they have been identified with empiricism. But it is also possible to consider all of them subjective because they are so obviously concerned to explain the causes of "agreeable emotions," the emotions of taste. Yet if the subjective-objective dialectic does not make sense, then surely the neoclassic-romantic dialectic, or at least something like it, does. But Hipple, pressing his own thesis hard, despite the fact he avers that he has no preconceived thesis, ignores the data of cultural history and refuses to admit the possibility of trends in critical theory as well as artistic practice. Perhaps, then, Hipple's close examination of the texts signifies, as René Wellek and A. O. Lovejoy have shown, that we have yet to be entirely accurate and logical in our sense of classifying terminology and criteria for an intellectually satisfying understanding of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century literature.

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*Critical Moments: Kenneth Burke's Categories and Critiques* by George Knox. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1957. Pp. xxiii + 131. $3.50.

Kenneth Burke's literature-oriented philosophy has been informed by an effort so to manipulate diverse and antithetical terms as to uncover their ultimate principles of unity. Burke argues: "You can't properly put Marie Corelli and Shakespeare apart until you have first put them together. First genus, then differentia. The strategy in common is the genus." The concept of "strategy," by which Burke means one's manner of dealing with life, engenders difficulty in the principle here stated, for one must go on to say that the strategy of writing plays is not to be put apart from voting until these actions have been put together, nor can one distinguish the urge to vote from procreative urges until these have been put together. Moreover, Burke delays the synthetic statement by persistently seeing the intelligibility of any given action, A, in its otherness, its non-A significations. To his Hegelian metaphysic one can attribute his divergence from those who reduce a work to the humane value of its content and from those who, like the "Chicago Critics," initiate and explore critical systems to discover individuating principles of forms. Burke would neither construct a critique syncretically nor evaluate instrumentally; he would establish antithesis as a metaphysic. What distinguishes him from the New Critics, whose method he approximates, is his versatility and range of analogy and, more important, the fact that the usual reductive principle of his critique–action–is very fruitful.

Unfortunately, it is a difficult task to explicate, as Mr. Knox intends, a system which is a procession of syntheses. He realizes this (the "risky game" of placing Burke), but he is zealous for Burke's reputation and would "establish a Burkean semantics" for the "uninitiated" reader. With this task and this audience, Knox chooses to define Burke's terms by "contextualization"; that is, in order to reveal their proper meanings, he offers various contexts in which Burke used the terms. At the same time he tries to trace Burke's development, from "tentativeness toward systematic uncertainty." We need know further only Knox's concept of the determinative whole of Burke's critique to understand his task and method.

Here we are left in some confusion. In his introduction and elsewhere, Knox sees Burke as essentially a propaedeutic, heuristic critic. His grasp of this aspect of the critic's work is revealed in his coherent, though because of his method repetitious, sketch of Burke's procedures, which he provides in the last three of the seven short chapters of his book. The first of these three defines the Burkean "comic" attitude. Typically, Knox does not define the term itself, but depends on our knowledge of Burke (which makes his exposition superfluous) or on our ability to infer its meaning from the discussion. A comic attitude is that of an ambivalent, ironic, witty mind which tumbles words to see if accidentally giving them new definitions or values will help them help us to discover new perspectives on reality and art. This attitude prepares for ever new syntheses by exploring ever new antitheses created by terms thrown into the depository of public knowledge.

"Pliant perspectives" are the product of such an attitude. In his sixth chapter Knox suggests that the principle of this pliancy is Burke's awareness of how the interests and preconceptions of the critic and the terms he uses interact to determine what will be discovered in the matter being treated. One wishes that

Knox had explained in terms of Burke's philosophical commitments why he tends to be a "Coleridgean" critic (one who elaborates systems of terms to which he adjusts poems) rather than an inductive critic of the "neo-Aristotelian" kind. For it is not simply that Burke has the modern linguistic consciousness, an analog of scientism, which treats words as though they were tools determining mechanically the nature of the work done, although this is partially true. (Why not, incidentally, "basic element" words—pity the critic who hasn't an adequate supply; "catalyst" words to cause relationships among others; "litmus paper" words to detect these relationships?) Nor is it sufficient to account for his method pedagogically, as Knox does when he writes that Burke

> wants to be known as a 'student of strategies,' and would show his detractors that his terms are perspectives. . . . He is always working up some large program, such as 'dramatism,' which includes not only a method for charting forces within a work but also a theory of personality and sociality. Consequently, he has to go beyond purely exploratory (heuristic) purposes.

This explanation is inadequate, for example, to account for Burke's "cluster analysis" approach, which Knox outlines in his seventh chapter. For it is in his practice of analyzing poems by isolating clusters of image-symbols that Burke's dialectical preconceptions show their influence. An image in a poem is often quietly itself but always noisily something else. Thus the "equations"—patterns of similar relationships among various images—Burke charts in a poem somehow indicate transformation: the patterns discovered are, typically, polar otherness, synecdochic otherness, ritualistic change of identity, surrogation. Again, the heuristic principle does not clarify the subject-matter-form identification which explains how Burke can discover the structure of an action simply by associating images.

Nor does the pedagogical emphasis make Knox's own explication wholly coherent, since by devoting four chapters to Burke's basic concepts before discussing his method, the latter is made to seem a consequence of the former. A radical incoherence, then, mars the work and makes it, frequently, a series of disjointed assertions.

The first four chapters, although they would make tortuous reading for the uninitiated reader, survey Burke's important terms. The introduction outlines his concept of a poem as an action which, like every practical or verbalized action, occurs in some scene and is caused by some agent who is or uses an agency for some purpose. Five ingredients compose Burke's basic "pentad." Actions are verbalized in order, first, to utter or express the poet (psychoanalysis and biography are important here); then to communicate (rhetorical considerations); then to become consummated when the linguistic framework alters (ritually transforms) the first two strategies and makes them serve itself, becoming pure act.

Since all men are actors, there are universal forms or ways of acting—permanencies. Knox's first chapter outlines these basic forms, which can exist on three levels: biological, personal-familial, and abstract-civic. All three levels interact: the body and mind "posture" in parallel. (Thus, for example, an abstract argument against socialism might be conveyed in a personally vindictive style using images

of excretion.) The action of each poem symbolizes attitudes toward or adjustments to life. Although the poet uses material proper to him, the basic adaptations —for example, expiation, rejection, lamentation, purification—are universal. Forms of acting in one sphere (say sexual rape) are analogously expressed in another (say a political coup), and our grasp of the principle of unity in the diversity of actions is due to the principle of "hierarchy" in our minds. Undergoing transformation in the transcendent experience of synthesis—this is catharsis.

After giving us a catalog of the basic diverse forms, and a description, necessarily as indefinite as Burke's own, of "hierarchy," the principle of unity and transcendence, Knox treats in his second chapter of Burke's concept of what happens when basic forms of action become symbolized in the verbal gestures of poems. For one thing, they are altered by the recalcitrance of the material (a sonnet form distorts the original motive for writing the poem). Another such factor is the inevitable human need to communicate (thus elements of appeal enter into the activity). But, as Knox points out, these elements also transform practical actions, so "we are still left with distinctions to be made between symbolic acts in the practical world and those of art."

Because the poem, an action of the author, activates the reader as well, the form of the work can be seen as the way the author's act is reenacted by the reader. In his third chapter, Knox sketches the ways by which poems progress into shape: as an argument—syllogistic progression; as a gradual inducement to accept certain qualities—qualitative progression; and so on. Nonetheless, we are to grasp the form of the work, not first by detecting the author's needs behind the symbolic gesture, or by detecting the pattern of emotional expectations and satisfactions offered to the reader, but by investigating the "logic" of the whole action. Again, one would wish Knox had studied this "logic," which is the dialectic.

Had he done so, perhaps the perceptive delineation, in his fourth chapter, of Burke's struggle with the "intrinsic" nature of works would be explained rather than described. What Knox observes is that Burke, in his practical criticism, adjusts the reader's vision not by pointing to the work's whole structure, but by creating a thick field of extrinsic data, usually biographical, from which, somehow, the intrinsic figure is expected to stand out.

Burke's analogies and propositions, sometimes absurd, often honor reality in being various and subtle; they respect many sciences by ingeniously employing their discoveries. One could wish for any exposition of Burke now possible. Unfortunately, in spite of Knox's evident familiarity with Burke's more persistent words and statements, this work, because it is incoherent and often jargonistic, is not a valuable piece of expository writing.

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