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Book Reviews

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The Book, the Ring, and the Poet: A Biography of Robert Browning by William Irvine and Park Honan. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974. Pp. xi + 607. $15.00.

In an article first published in 1967, which deals with the then current state of Browning scholarship. bibliography, and biography, I suggested that the status of Browning biography was such that students of Browning could quite legitimately be moved to ask a form of a question posed on a popular television program: "Will the real Robert Browning please stand up?" The number and nature of biographical studies of Browning, augmented now by the long-awaited work of the late Professor Irvine and Professor Park Honan, is reflective of both the relative rise in Browning's stock on the academic market since 1950, and the particular idiosyncratic views of the poet held by certain biographers.

Griffin and Minchin's *Life of Robert Browning*, first published in 1910, usually cited as the "standard" Browning biography, has long served as a valuable tool for Browning scholars, perhaps more because it offers a compendium of facts than because it reveals much about Browning the man. And, except for Mrs. Sutherland Orr's *Life* (1891), it was, until 1952, the only substantial biography available. Two major studies of Browning's life published by Betty Miller (1952) and Maisie Ward (two volumes, 1967 and 1969), have attempted to remedy the deficiencies of Griffin and Minchin's limited scope by dealing more comprehensively with Browning's family, friendships, and associations, and by referring, interpretively, to the canon. However, as a number of reviews have either implicitly or explicitly noted, the Miller and Ward biographies are, each in its own way, seriously deficient. Mrs. Miller evinces what seems to me to be a substantive dislike of the poet, particularly in his actions and attitudes relating to women. Mrs. Miller's critical leanings are clearly Freudian, and this leads her to some rather grand oversimplifications concerning the relationship between Browning and his mother, Elizabeth Barrett, and Lady Louisa Ashburton. Her tendency to equate Browning's voice with those of his various speakers (Andrea is perhaps the most blatant example), leads her to a number of extraordinary biographical-critical interpolations. Since she quotes extensively from Browning correspondence, but does not cite her sources, Mrs. Miller's biography has been viewed, quite correctly, as an interesting but impressionistic psychological study.

In contrast to Mrs. Miller, Maisie Ward acknowledges in her "Introduction" that she does not "disclaim that warm sympathy with [her] subject once considered desirable in a biographer." (xiii) One senses, reading statements such as the following, that a large part of Mrs. Ward's motivation in writing her biography was to correct the distorted image of Browning created by Mrs. Miller: "The theory of Browning's betrayal [of Shelley] derives almost certainly from Mrs. Miller's book in which Browning, cast as the anti-hero, is portrayed as failing in all the great relations of his life: his integrity to his ideals; his

behaviour as a son, husband, father. Wonderfully ingenious and brilliantly written, the book received the reiews usually accorded a best-selling novel, which indeed it notably resembles." (xi) To some extent she succeeds in correcting the distortion, but with an adulatory tendency which, although it is a contrast in kind, produces an image of Browning which is as extreme in degree as that of Mrs. Miller. The Ward biography is more useful than Miller in terms of the sheer amount of information presented, but it too fails to deal adequately with the distinction between the poet and his speakers, and it all but ignores the large body of scholarship, much of which has been published since Mrs. Miller completed her work, the use of which might have given the study a greater measure of reliability.

Happily for students of Browning and his poetry, *The Book, the Ring, and the Poet* avoids the polar extremes of Miller and Ward in its presentation of Browning the man and poet, and it reflects the authors' understanding of the critical complexity and variability of the Browning canon, as well as the body of scholarship which that canon has generated. Any reader may have reservations about particular aspects of this new biography, but there is no question in my mind that *The Book, the Ring, and the Poet* eclipses all other Browning biographies; only if, and when, large quantities of new information become available, will another biography be required.

The primary reason for the success of this biography lies in its careful and coherent presentation of biographical and critical evidence. Professor Irvine researched and wrote Chapters 1 through 21 before his untimely death. Park Honan then undertook his co-authorship, and as well as writing Chapters 22 through 27, edited the earlier chapters and added substantial portions to Chapters 10 and 17. The result of this combined effort is a work which draws upon all of the most recent evidence available, some of which appears here for the first time. In Browning's particular case, the existence of large quantities of published and unpublished correspondence, and the numerous "memoirs" of friends and associates, aid substantially in the creation of a biographical framework. The extensive but judicious use of these materials results in a work which achieves a careful balance and integration of the three focal points indicated by its title: "The Book"–Browning's poetic achievement; "The Ring"–his courtship of and marriage to Elizabeth Barrett and the reverberations of that relationship during the years following her death in 1861; "The Poet"–the engaging and complex personality of Robert Browning.

Whether or not Professors Irvine and Honan have been successful in their treatment of "The Book" depends upon a reader's predisposed attitude to the nature of biogaaphy. One could complain that the poetry might have been treated more extensively, as poetry, and a more complete representation of critical attitudes might have been included. But in such an enormous undertaking as this choices must be made, and I think that Professors Irvine and Honan made the correct ones. So much criticism has been written in the last twenty-five years that either a full interpretive coverage of the poetry or a more complete inclusion of critical views would seem redundant. The authors have chosen, instead, to treat at greatest length those works such as *Pauline*, *Sordello*, the *Essay on Shelley* and *The Ring and the Book* which are most unequivocally related to biographical materials. Unlike earlier biographies, the discussion of these and

other works indicates awareness of the contemporary literary milieu, the most relevant modern critical commentaries, and a firm grasp of the methods of scholarly analysis.

Because their discussions of Browning's poetry are continuously interwoven with the more predominant biographical material, the authors have attempted, quite properly, to create a sense of coherence and unity by stating and later expanding upon a central literary concept which serves as the basis of Browning's poetic achievement. In Chapter 8, entitled "Impressionism," between two chapters treating Browning's activity in the late 1830's and early 1840's. Professor, Irvine and Honan enunciate their central thesis regarding Browning's basic poetic method:

> The key to [historical] impressionism is the disparagement of reason. To depreciate the ordering power of reason is to emphasize that the mind is continually exposed, as it moves through time and space, to an infinite variety and anarchy of sensations and ideas, and their attendant emotions.
>
> Literary impressionism uses technqiues calculated to emphasize this variety and anarchy—broadly, techniques which present description, narration, or reflection from the point of view of a limited, individual consciousness. . . . . Almost equally important in impressionistic theory is the associative mode of progression. What is informally spoken or written, and what is privately thought or felt—insofar as it is coherent and articulate at all—tends to follow an associational order. . . .
>
> Browning himself calls his poems "dramatic." What, briefly, is the relation of drama to impressionism? Most plays present outward events on a physical stage. An impressionist work—particularly as it emphasizes reverie and recollection—presents inward events on a mental stage. The language may have the racy, colloquial quality of good dialogue, and the action may have conflict, crisis, and reversal—and much graphic concreteness. Thus an inward rationalization may be dramatic, as in "My Last Duchess." But in the long run, inward events are only dramatic insofar as they are vividly and significantly related to an outward situation which is in itself dramatic. Impressionism is undramatic in its tendency to recede into the individual mind.
>
> But the mind can observe as well as meditate. Impressionism can be dramatic in another way. Narrative from the vividly realized point of view of a character makes him a participant. Impressionism may thus brilliantly exploit the drama of recognition and discovery. (117-119)

This series of statements is followed by a discussion of Browning's literary debts—to Burns, Wordsworth, and Byron in particular, as well as to nineteenth-century prose writers such as Godwin, Hogg, and Poe. The result is a precise and intelligent explanation of the basis of Browning's success "in writing the singular little closet dramas to which he chiefly owes his fame."

The genuinely lambent style of this biography, amply exemplified by the above quoted material, is further illustrated by the following statement, which is also the most clearly articulated comment on Browning and music that I have encountered:

> For Browning music was the purest and the profoundest of the arts. As the most subjective, the most provocative of reverie and of "inspirations" from the unknown; as the most passionate and intuitive in content, the most direct and intense in appeal, the most idealistically insubstantial and poignantly ephemeral in medium, it was the peculiar instrument of truth, which was emotion, and of soul, which was the unconscious. In short, music was the sacred art, the "finger of God" writing upon eternity. (7)

The treatment of "The Ring," with the central role that Elizabeth Barrett was to play in Robert Browning's life after 1845, is handled with equal diligence and sensitivity. The correspondence, initial meeting, furtive courtship and secret marriage of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett have over the years, given rise to considerable speculation and discussion—a good deal of which is highly sentimental and much of which seems to verge on the fictional. Considering the cast of characters involved, however, the tendency to fictionalize is quite understandable: the dashing, energetic young poet; the sickly, reclusive and somewhat neurotic dark maiden; the strangely perverse, authoritarian, draconic father who presides over and guards the Barrett household; the faithful and attentive female servant Wilson; and the dog Flush. Irvine and Honan have managed to present this material in a way which makes it humanly understandable, even if, despite the facts, the business of the courtship and marriage strains one's credulity. Certainly the most unbelievable character to emerge from the events of 1844 and 1845 is Elizabeth Barrett's father.

The turning point in Mr. Barrett's life appears to have been a chain of occurrences in the late 1820's and early 1830's. Characterized as "a loving father with a jolly laugh and an infectious gusto and gaiety" he "was also a man of strong canvictions, secret councils, and sudden commands, with a firm sense of his own rights and other people's duties." (158) The death of his wife in 1828 and the financial difficulties of 1830 and 1831, which led to the loss of Hope End in 1832, seem to have led to the suppression of the more positive aspects of his character, at the cost of his humanity. It may well be that the sense of loss which resulted from these events augmented his tendency to protect what remained in his "possession." Hence his strictures to his children regarding marriage, and the absolute rejection of those of his children who dared to transgress this command. Elizabeth was never forgiven.

While all segments of this biography which treat "The Ring" are interesting and thoroughly documented, the most fascinating chapter is the one which treats the developing relationship, through correspondence and visits, between Robert and Elizabeth during the 1844-45 period. The materials used are, for the most part, those used by all who have written on the subject—the love letters. But, for reasons which are attributable only to the skill of the authors, the exchanges between these two highly articulate individuals are presented, with commentary, in a manner which allows the reader to achieve both insight and understanding not accessible in earlier biographies. The same can be said of the rendering of the character and events of the study's main focus—"the Poet," Robert Browning.

Browning's life is characterized by change as well as by continuity. At one point in their discussion of the 1844-45 period, Professors Irvine and Honan suggest that in certain of the letters Browning adopts various dramatic roles in

shifting sequences, partially to dazzle Elizabeth with his point of argumentation and also, one surmizes, to protect the real "identity" of Robert Browning. The increasing intimacy of the lovers made this less necessary, but this tendency to assume roles is evident throughout his life. One can trace continuity and growth in the development of Browning's philosophical, poetic and political ideas, but the biographer faces a more difficult task in defining the essential personality of the poet beneath the layers of disguise.

The available facts indicate that Browning was a precocious youngster, reading MacPherson at five and a half and writing Ossianic imitations. This precocity led shortly thereafter to his removal from school "by popular demand of the other children's mothers, because of his excessive brilliance." (3) We are made fully aware of the religious influence of his mother. and the literary impact of Robert Browning's father's large and esoteric library, which occasions the following unfortunate metaphor: "The Browning cottage was lined from front to back door with a thick interior epidermis of books, in which the family lived as in a kind of stomach or intestine." (6)

We meet Eliza and Sarah Flower, William Fox, Alfred Domett, and others who touch the life of the developing adolescent. The early poetry, with its layers of dramatic disguise, is firmly set in a chronological, personal, and historical context. The middle years, and particularly the 1840's, are, as suggested above, treated brilliantly. As the biography moves to the years following Browning's marriage, we learn a good deal more about his devotion to and frustration with Pen than in Maisie Ward's recent *The Tragi-Comedy of Pen Browning*. And the years following Elizabeth's death are characterized by the poet's numerous, and frequently flirtatious, relationships with various women: Isa Blagden, Miss Julia Wedgewood, Lady Louisa Ashburton, and Anne Edgerton Smith. The role playing, evidently intended in Browning's plans for the poems to be associated with *Pauline* early in his career, reinforced by the dramatic monologue of the middle years and his letters to Elizabeth Barrett, assumes an even wider dimension in the years following 1861. Browning's social and personal behaviour during these years gives some credence to the view expressed by Henry James in "The Private Life" that there were really two Robert Brownings—a solitary individual who sat huddled over his writing table composing, while the other personality wandered the social circuit, attending the soirées held by his various women friends. But not all women were attracted to this literary lion with "brushed silver locks" and "immaculately barbered beard" with his "Picadilly and Pall Mall attire." As Mary Gladstone complained after a hectic evening at Cambridge: "He talks everybody down with his dreadful voice, . . . and always places his person in such disagreeable proximity with yours and puffs and blows and spits in your face. I tried to think of Abt Vogler but it was no use—he couldn't ever have written it." (494) Despite this type of reaction, and despite Browning's tendency to obscure his real identity by assuming disguises and by destroying various letters and manuscripts later in his life, he emerges from the extensive collection of materials upon which this biography is based as a genuinely interesting and humane man.

The Book, the Ring, and the Poet is a singular and significant achievement.

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The Incarnate Word: Literature as Verbal Space by Cary Nelson. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1973. Pp. 285. $10.00

This is an extraordinary book. It begins with a photograph Cary Nelson has constructed, called "Nude from Altair 4," showing a women's body folded on itself, so that the top of the picture mirrors and reverses the bottom, the left mirrors and reverses the right; on the top left a breast (nipple hidden) flows into a tubular form of flesh that flows into the sphere of the mirroring breast. On each side an arm folds and frames the bent body, and the fold opposite the breast seems to be a thigh, with a hip crease concealing the genitals. On the top and bottom of the photograph I can see some hair, the bottom part of a cropped head. I can also see a shoulder that looks like a buttocks from which the arm extends. When I step back to view the whole form, I see an ellipsoid-like shape, self-encircling, a body making love to itself, or holding itself, or trapped in itself, a body that has been decomposed and recomposed autoerotically and autocentrically. It seems fluid and tightly closed, polymorphous and grotesque, sensuous and also formalized into symmetrical impersonality. It attracts and repulses me. How ingenious this picture is, what a trick, to make the body into a free-flowing form, the parts become one another! How formalized this deformed body seems, its bits and pieces an artificial unity!

Cary Nelson's book is like his photograph. From one angle I see bits and pieces: quotations and photographs of paintings under various headings ("Sensual Knowledge," "Self-creation," for example) called "Interchapters," dispersed between essays on the spatial language of various works from *Pearl* to *Paterson*, Shakespeare to Sontag and Burroughs; separate essays as chapters of varied length; body parts as metaphors of whole works; aphorisms hiding in paragraphs; personal associations hiding as normative responses; syntactical writing disguised as aphorisms. There are bits of a hundred poets and critics distributed through the pages, bits of phenomenology, bits of psychoanalysis (cut from Bachelard, Norman O. Brown, Anton Ehrenzweig), bits of moralism, bits of gestalt psychology. At times it seems like an intellectual playpen, scholarship surrealized with a vengeance!

But Nelson doesn't merely isolate spaces or body parts; he makes the bits and pieces resemble or reflect or distort one another. So his book is an ever changing conceptual and physical space. It has a beginning and an end, but it need not be read from beginning to end. The parts may be arguments, but the whole folds on itself, likely fleshly New Criticism. Although the chapters are historically arranged, they do not add up to a conventional form of critical writing any more than the photograph adds up to a recognizable person. *The Incarnate Word* is like a field, or a mixed bag, or a mixture of metaphors of space as metaphors of consciousness. "Field is a metaphor for endless potentiality," Nelson says in the last chapter ("Fields: the body as a text"). Endless potentiality knows no fixed boundaries, mirrors itself.

This book would be sheer narcissism, were it not that Nelson stands outside the body of his metaphors as well as inside. He has tried to transcend what he calls "the impulse toward historical assimiliation" by mapping the experience of reading as it reveals the "formal boundaries" of a work. "Like the land-

scape of dreams, the verbal events of literature are dispersed in the body of the reader. He becomes an actor who stages a universe in the theater of his flesh." Nelson, then, mirrors the formal designs and inner landscapes of literature as he experiences them, and the results are frequently brilliant. He is able to re-create in relation to work after work central dynamic images that we can imagine as the bodily models of the author's consciousness. Although he doesn't quote it, Nelson understands Freud's dictum well: "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego." In his chapter on *The Tempest*, for example, he is able to see how Shakespeare's language, so frequently explicated merely as a formal design, enacts in his mind the magical strategies of its author and his surrogate. "In both of Prospero's symbolic roles–deity and poet–words are acts and speech becomes flesh." And, by taking his metaphors seriously, Nelson is able to express what he feels as the latent sexuality of almost the entire action of the play. Ariel becomes, for example, "the invisible penis of his fertile island-body," and Prospero "fertilizes their minds with the immense organic energy of his island." Nelson doubles in his language the loss of boundaries he finds in the play. Such criticism, because it stays close to the verbal structure of its subject, does often succeed in fulfilling Nelson's ideal project; "it mediates between creative writing and exclusively rational discourse."

At times Nelson reveals a ground or central images already discovered by others, the most obvious example being the chapter on Swift, but even there his imagination of *A Tale of a Tub* outdoes Norman O. Brown in its unremitting revelation of "masochistic violence" in Swift's anti-Christian, intestinal "book-body buggered by its own words." At other times, he seems so determined to find transcendent unity in the image of the body that he transforms his subject into the form of his desire, as with Milton:

> *Paradise Regained* prepares us to regain a perfectly integrated sexuality–a sexuality, cosmic and transcendent, bodied forth in the potency of light itself enclosed in human flesh. The protagonist will be Christ crucified, and his bed will be the cross. Christ's crucified body is the vehicle through which the seed of Eve will be planted in heaven. Symbolically the poem points the fallen reader in the direction of paradise. Its final posture: Christ standing at the still center of the turning world–a stone phallus in the womb of nature.

If a stone phallus in the womb of nature prepares us for integrated sexuality, then the price of this integration is the utter depersonalization of human relations in favor of the pure symbolism that allies Nelson with men like Norman O. Brown, trapped in the body of their metaphors. If the cross is a bed and the bed will be transformed into a womb, then the crucified Christ is a rather impotent phallus. The point is: Nelson sometimes loses the boundary between metaphor and actuality, body-image and body, criticism and "creative writing." Then, instead of mediating between the two modes of language he confuses them.

Both the brilliant formations, frequently aphoristic even in the midst of prose ("The poetic mind harvests the fields of sleep."), and the confusions of fantasy and explication rest, for Nelson, on his idea of the reading process as an "interaction between the reader and the text." In this process "the self of the reader is transformed by an external verbal structure." Although he does not deny the

activity of the reader, "for we are both hunter and hunted," the theory sounds to me like a seduction in which the reader resists penetration and, finally, submits, and then is "reborn to a universe in which we both live and die." "Visionary space is the child born of our cohabitation with the language on the page." Nelson's reader copulates with the page, is impregnated, gives birth, is fulfilled by the experience. Like the body in his photograph, the reader makes "ecstatic and painful" love to himself (herself).

The theory is as rich and ambiguous as Nelson's metaphors. Who is active, who passive, masculine or feminine? It seems that Nelson's reader is androgynous, but through most of the book he/she is a recipient of the text, a *tabula rasa* on whom the text is inscribed. Throughout, we hear the text as the active agent in this mind-fuck: "We are forced," "they force us," "Williams still pulls us down to his page," "we submit," "we are afraid," "It intrudes upon us." Admittedly, such a selection of verbs is partial, but it represents the dominant position of the text in Nelson's mind. Nelson's "reader" is a fiction that enacts an intimate and personal process which he has depersonalized and generalized to include all of us. Substitute first-person statements for the third-person in the following passage and you will see what I mean:

> We approach the page committed to the established boundaries of the self, boundaries which do not yet include the poem. Yet the reading process creates a unique verbal space in which consciousness is identified with the formal properties of the poem. Interaction with poetry gives our consciousness the shape and texture of inhabited space. Confronting the poem as an external object, then possessing the printed page, our consciousness becomes a function of the thing it perceives. Consciousness, then, is known as a thing; for a moment it is a thing with shape and texture, a verbal object subject to contemplation. What we experience at the moment of reading is a verbal object shaped by our interaction with the poem.

Nelson is confused about the location of this process. At one point he says, "Yet once the poem is written, its tensions remain poised forever without our intervention." Elsewhere he reveals his awareness of the *active* re-creative function of the reader: "If a poem is words on a field, it awaits our harvest. And who can say its form is the same once it is dispersed in us." The answer is: nobody can say except ourselves. The reader is always a person, Nelson or me or you. We are the agents of our own experience; we are not the page on which the poem is inscribed. Nelson has, through most of his book, reversed the process, for the thing we perceive is a function of *our* minds, and the images of *our* bodies. Nelson's "reader" is Nelson, not me. To cling to the fiction of the normative reader is to deny the uniquely personal, creative aspect of reading and criticism. Strangely, such a theory denies what is best about this book, the risk Nelson takes in revealing himself in words. To my mind-body, he has written a better book than he thinks.

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Victorian Stage Pulpiteer: Bernard Shaw's Crusade by Allan P. Barr. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973. Pp. 188. $8.50.

"A man who would make so vile a pun," wrote John Dennis, "would not scruple to pick a pocket." If a lapse in linguistic taste heralds an unprincipled nature, what transgression might we not fear from the writer of the following sentence on Shaw as a propagandist: "His deliberate inciting makes him one of our culture's most difficult authors to remain indifferent to"? Even if we do not equate style with moralty, we cannot excuse the author of *Victorian Stage Pulpiteer* from having thrust upon the intellectual community another treatise destined to convince graduate students that the only alternative to elegant attitudinizing is the earnest pedantry exemplified in this comment on the Victorian age:

> The extensiveness of the period and the rapidity with which things happened give us at least the illusion that here, unlike the Middle Ages, we can really see history striding forward. The multitude of conflicting events and ideologies make it possibly often to describe the period in terms of an adjective as well as its opposite. . . .

The awkward syntax, lumpy rhythms, and paragraphs ending unerringly on an anticlimax might be less troublesome if this book had an intellectual density that compensated for its lack of stylistic grace. But *Victorian Stage Pulpiteer* is a simple, methodical work. If it is not foolish, or ill researched, or eccentrically wrong-headed, neither is it sensitive or genuinely illuminating. Its thesis—that Shaw is essentially a crusading evangelist, writing to propagandise his religious doctrine—is at least arguable. Yet the argument fails to convince because its author makes at least two notable miscalculations in the course of its development.

First of all he chooses to treat his thesis in the abstract, as largely separate from the plays. Yet if Shaw is anyone, he is not the proponent of an idea but the creator of those ten or twelve great comedies that are part of the living body of English drama. It is true that Mr. Barr offers a final analytic chapter dealing specifically with the plays, but a perusal of the preceding ten chapters would barely suggest that Shaw was anything but a critic, pamphleteer, and religious thinker. Barr does say early on that he is not undertaking "a full-length treatment or Shaw as a dramatic artist," but surely this excuse is mere fudging. The religious ideas exist for use only in so far as they appear in the plays of the dramatic artist; a work that takes them outside of this context is inevitably peripheral.

A second problem, equally disquieting, plagues Barr's presentation: his argument stops half way through the book and thereafter recurs only fitfully. He embarks well enough, developing his subject, "Shaw as a religious dramatist," through a series of background chapters, and finally halfway through his book entering upon an exposition—quite an adequate exposition—of the theory of Creative Evolution. No sooner is that presentation completed, however, than the bottom drops out of the book. We find ourselves in a chapter on "The Self-Created Persona," being told that the brilliant, iconoclastic public figure, G. B. S., was a conscious creation not identical with Shaw's private personality. The point is hardly to be disputed (though only a skimpy paraphrase of Erik Eriksen's comments on Shaw even hints at the psychological pressure behind

Shaw's public presence), but its relevance to the scheme of the book is obscure. Of Shaw's tendency toward "announcing his own eminence" Barr assures us, very solemnly, that "This perfectly straightforward approach was the one that Shaw used to gain proper respect for his writings." But while the point that Shaw is a propagandist and self-advertiser is being resolutely documented, the subject of religion seems to have disappeared.

It remains largely absent in the following chapter, "The Creative Reader," which deals with Shaw's views on Bunyan, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Wagner, and Nietzsche. Barr demonstrates what few would deny, that Shaw uses these figures to promote his own views, but only in reference to Nietzsche do these particular views seem relevant to religious theories. That Shaw tended "to use his criticism to proselytize" and that as a critic he was "a relentless crusader" is surely true, but Barr seems hardly aware that his terms *proselytize* and *crusader* are as he uses them figurative. To be a propagandist is not necessarily to be a religionist. The some fuzziness persists in his chapter "Prefatory to the Plays" on Shaw's theory of the drama. Hardly more than an anthology of quotations from Shaw and others justifying "preaching" in the theatre, the chapter offers no suggestion that didacticism is in any way to be distinguished from theology.

When Barr comes to his final chapter of analysis, "The Vision Staged," he does make an effort to return to his thesis, but now other problems intrude. For one thing, the chapter barely exists. After taking one hundred and fifty pages to prepare for his discussion of Shaw as a religious *dramatist*, he offers us a grand total of sixteen pages on the plays. But even so egregious an instance or disproportion might offer some illumination. Much can be said about Shaw, indeed about anyone, in a brief compass (e.g. Eric Bentley's "The Making of a Dramatist"). But there is little substance here. By telling us that the Shavian Superman is a charming "diabolonian" who embodies one or more exemplary qualities ("We admire the unhesitating dedication of Anderson and Dudgeon."), Barr reduces these complex and ambiguous figures to symbols of an entirely conventional didacticism. He fails to suggest why the quality of "mercy" embodied in Shaw's Lady Cicely is either more or less religious than that advocated by Shakespeare's Portia. On the subject of conversion in Shaw as a religious symbol, Barr's points are negated by his tendency to be cursory, infelicitous ("Caesar's personality, natural virtue . . . and good sense can be arranged to convert Cleopatra."), or simply wrong-headed, as when he announces that the elder Doolittle's sudden wealth "effectively moralizes" him. Unfortunately Barr is notably insensitive to dramatic tone; he tells us, for instance, that Joan's last tragic question "O God that madest this earth [*sic*], when will it be ready to receive thy saints? How long. O Lord, how long?" ends her play "on a note of exasperation." Finally, as long as some sort of "preaching" is discernible, Barr seems wholly unable to distinguish between Shaw's religious ideas and his social proposals. (Witness the tangled discussion of *Major Barbara* on pp. 161 ff., and of other plays on p. 157, where will also be found a striking achievement in the way of mixed metaphors: "The political and religious farces defrauding our lives are still more relentlessy undressed.")

The entire second part of the book, then, when it is not irrelevant to the supposed subject, fails to treat it competently. The first part is less troublesome. Since it is at least coherent, it may be dealt with as a unit; and since it is for

the most part adequate but undistinguished, it need not be dealt with at length. Throughout this part one senses the presence not of the genuine critic following his perceptions or the scholar creating the structure of his research but of the graduate student diligently collecting citations from the best sources and stitching them together. The very titles of the chapters Barr produces as he plods remorselessly on toward his presentation of the tenets of Creative Evolution suggest academic neatness and acedemic tedium: "The Precarious World of Victorian Christianity," "Shaw's Particular Religious Upbringing," "Shaw's Irish Contemporaries," "The Need for Religon and Religious Education," "The Failure of Existing Religions."

But these chapters, passable though cursory, are only preparations for the chapter on Shaw's private religious system. Ultimately, in fact, the book has only two real chapters: an adequate exegesis of Creative Evolution and an awkward attempt to trace religious elements in the plays. A book so thin in substance and so unfortunate in style is inevitably of less interest in itself than as an example of a kind of academic publication that produces status, tenure, or promotion for the writer but no enlightenment for reader. The author is hardly to blame for being industrious and ambitious, though the Press and its Readers are indeed to blame for the inadequacy of their judgment. Perhaps the new stringency in the budgets of University Presses will produce a double benefit, sparing writers a distressing publicity and readers many hours of sad frustration.

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The Drama of Power: Studies in Shakespeare's History Plays by Moody E. Prior. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Pp. xvi + 410. $12.50.

Moody Prior's *The Drama of Power: Studies in Shakespeare's History Plays* is a model of common sense and level-headed critical judgment informed by a lifetime of scholarship and written in clear unpretentious prose. Its limitations are primarily technical: they concern the book's organization and the author's tendency to over-demonstrate his contentions.

Prior's main thrust is to take issue with scholars like Tillyard and Lilly B. Campbell in his interpretation of the history plays. Tillyard and Campbell see in Shakespeare's two tetralogies a "providential" view of the English past, the kind retailed by Hall and Holinshed. Prior summarizes this "provisional" notion as follows:

> The events from the dethroning and murder of Richard II to the defeat of Richard III take shape in Hall's narrative as a grand moral spectacle in which the retributive justice of God moves . . . to the expiation of the crime against Richard II, and God's beneficient providence provides the happy ending which relieves the English nation of further punishment and results in the founding of a new dynasty by Henry VII. (7)

It is this interpretation that Prior attempts to disprove by showing how the plays in fact make primarily realistic assessments of political situations rather than "providential" ones. The writer suggests that Shakespeare's histories insofar as they seek to explain the past, lean toward an evaluation of "second causes" rather than the attribution of all "effects" to the First Cause. From this standpoint the ideological and moral questions traditionally associated with the plays, those concerning "divine right" or "legacies of guilt," "Nemesis" or the "Tudor myth," play a subsidiary role interpretively. Rather it is the political realities of gaining, holding, and manipulating power which Prior finds most important in his consideration of these plays. The result is a view of the histories rooted in the power struggles that key individuals confront as leaders and as men, and the implications of these struggles in the nationaization of England.

Prior bases his readings on a close analysis of action and language in the texts. He lays a theoretical foundation for his discussions by describing historical schools alternative to the providential one in the Renaissance. Examples of such "new ideas of history" are found in Machiavelli and in Guicciardini's *History of Italy* (1561). Prior says: "The distinctive character of the new history came from its concern for causes construed not in terms of cosmic history and divine justice but in terms of the characters of men and the nature of polity and war, and from its bias in favor of instruction that was primarily political." (16) In England such views find some voice in the *Mirror for Magistrates* (along with providential pronouncements as well); in Hall and Holinshed themselves, who are at points capable of "naturalistically" political pronouncements; and in statements by Sir Thomas More and Sir Francis Bacon.

The section on "Ideas of History" (Chapter II) forms the theoretical foundation for the book as a whole, but in particular it underpins the next two chapters, which explore the historical attitudes in Shakespeare's first and second tetralogies. According to Prior, the emphasis on politics in the Henry VI series "alters the impression of Henry VI from the chronicles as the long-suffering victim of divine judgments for errors of his own . . . to that of a king who came to the throne under circumstances which only a political genius could have overcome, and who by his own ineptness and indecision became a cause of the very evils he deplores." (41-42) Shakespeare nevertheless remains sympathetic to Henry's "saintliness." But for Prior the persistent invocations to divine providence in these plays substantiate not a philosophical view of history, but a character trait: Henry's passive and submissive attitude toward God's will. Prior shows, however, that even Henry has at moments a more realistic perspective on his conduct: "Come wife, let's in, and learn to govern better; / For yet may England curse my wretched reign." (IV.ix.47-48) Prior's suggestion is that Henry's rule *invites* dissention. In his passiveness he will not hold back the Yorkist tide. From this perspective, long-suffering saintliness turns out to be something less than a viable political talent. Prior puts the case very well: "The real issue of this play is the capability of the ruler to maintain whatever claims he does have by the forceful exercise of the powers and responsibilities which belong to the office." (113) Henry's failure to exercise these powers and responsibilities not only loses him his throne, but subjects his nation to "the disruption of all order which this failure has produced."

If Prior is for the most part successful in demonstrating the actual irrelevancy

of the "providential view" of history to the facts of Henry's conduct, his success with Richard III is more limited. In point of fact there are too many elements in *Richard III* that place the play directly in the providential camp. Some of these are the overwhelming number of characters who describe Richard as a scourge of god for their past sinful dissentiousness; the rather extraordinary fulfillment of Queen Margaret's curses precisely in the terms she sets forth; and the appearance of Henry Richmond at the play's end to fight for "God and Saint George" against the tyrant Richard, "God's enemy." Richmond's final speech, during which he swears to "unite the white rose and the red," caps all this, and fully substantiates his role in the traditional Tudor myth. Prior's notion that the play is "a world away from the simplicities" of Hall and the Tudor myth simply is not borne out by the evidence, and is significantly contradicted in a later chapter on Richard III (Chapter VII) in which the author rightly describes Shakespeare's "larger than life treatment of his source" and notices that "the retributive justice of God seems to operate in *Richard III*." (284)

It is part of Prior's theory that the Henry VI trilogy gives one a sense of history's richness, while the next five plays delineate "a comprehensive review of the nature of statecraft and the politics of power." (12) There seems no reason to dispute this. When Prior asserts what emerges from the plays is "not a doctrine, but *understanding*, (99, my emphasis) he seems directly in tune with Shakespeare's dramatic intentions. The brunt of Prior's analysis of political power in the history plays really emerges when he begins discussing the second tetralogy. Not surprisingly, he begins with an assessment of Richard II's reign as the *locus* of a power struggle in relationship to the traditional concept of "divine right." In his chapter on "sovereign power," its foundations, limits, and obligations in regard to *Richard II*, Prior finds that Richard's breach of primogeniture by the expropriation of Bolingbroke's patrimony undermines the claims of divine right at their bedrock and opens the gates to more energetic means of maintaining or gaining power; the threat of force and the use of political talent as demonstrated by Henry Bolingbroke. Prior is right, but he is saying no more than York did. If Richard's power derived from "unimpeachable legitimacy," he sacrifices it by acting illegitimately. What he had in legitimacy he loses by his self-indulgence, his ineptness (as in the case of Henry VI), and, one might add, his conviction that the symbolic power of the crown ought to protect him rather than his protecting it.

But the real strength of Prior's consideration of Richard actually lies in an area other than the political. Prior analyzes him in one of the best chapters in the book ("*Richard II and the Idea of Tragedy*") as an important, transitional, tragic figure in Shakespeare. Richard may not have the grandeur of Hamlet or Lear, but the associations he makes in his own mind with the tragic, victimized kings of the *de casibus* tradition ("... let us sit upon the ground / And tell sad stories of the death of kings"), and Shakespeare's placement of him within a context that invites consideration of his failures as a national leader (somewhat like a figure in the *Mirror for Magistrates*) convey for Prior a sense of movement toward a new idea of tragedy. This new idea is the tragic hero's self-awareness and recognition of responsibility. Prior links the development of Richard's self-awareness (as in the prison scene) to the development of a new tragic concept in Elizabethan dramatic literature. It is a humanizing of the

"fall of princes" that Prior sees. Farnham makes a similar point about the development of tragedy in his now standard *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy*. Prior shows how the fall of a prince as it develops in Shakespeare moves away from both the arbitrary revolutions of Fortune's wheel in the *de casibus* tradition and the rather didactic and cautionary purposes of the *Mirror*. It centers instead on the inner life of the protagonist: "The movement of the protagonist toward awareness and understanding and the emergence in the play of a new idea of tragedy are substantially one and the same." (184)

This is a good insight. But it is less immediate to Prior's thesis than the material found in the four chapters devoted to *1 & 2 Henry IV*. It is here that Prior builds his strongest case for interpreting Shakespeare's histories not according to "the causal scheme and conventional pieties" of any traditional system, but "in the pitiless light of the natural history of politics." (180)

Prior's attitude is grounded on several fundamental notions about the uses of power which had already entered Renaissance thought. One is the general concept of *realpolitik* as posited by Machiavelli, the higher aim of which is the maintenance of power for the purposes of national unity. In conjunction with this is the distinction between public and private morality caught in the idea of *raison d'etat* promulgated by Machiavelli, but appearing, according to Prior, as early as Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Livy. The third is a broader principle, philosophical and dramatic in its nature as well as political: the idea of necessity. It is this last which unites the other two in Shakespear's histories. Or to state it differently, *realpolitik* and *raison d'etat* are aspects of the theme of political necessity that informs the second tetralogy from beginning to end, but which finds its fullest expression in *1 & 2 Henry IV*.

Henry IV is at the crux of Prior's theory because all the vital issues come to a head in the reign and character of this politically adroit and in some ways tragic man. From this standpoint, although we can credit Hal as being the dramatic and thematic center of the play's action, Henry's reign forms the ideological point of contention. Throughout the *Henriad* such concepts as "legitimacy," "divine right," and "divine justice" are evoked and examined; but they are not, at least in this reviewer's opinion, *forces* in the plays that move the conduct of men. It is the post-Plantagenet reintegration and nationalization of England that is the moving historical force in the *Henriad*. England's greater national ends stand at the vital center of this extraordinary national epic. What is rendered unto Caesar remains Caesar's; God's province, the status of the soul, remains God's.

In his evaluation of Henry IV, then, Prior takes a thoughtful and unconventional line. But he makes his case for Bolingbroke convincingly. For Prior, Henry is not simply a political Machiavelli, cunning in his manipulations and immoral in his heart. To begin with, Prior finds that in Shakespeare's two main sources "Henry emerges . . . as neither an unscrupulous, crafty politician, nor a man whose overweening political ambitions drive him to crime." (228) Secondly, Prior feels that Shakespeare himself does not give Henry an unsympathetic presentation, contrary to the opinions of critics of an ironist disposition. According to Prior's view, Shakespeare sees Henry as a man with political ambitions—yes, but one who also, in seeking to maintain his power, effects the reintegration of his country, and who assumes the burdens, military *and moral*,

that such a position requires. As Prior puts it, what Henry illustrates through this "candid and unvarnished presentation" is "the impossibility of reconciling the demands of great place with unsullied private virtue and happiness." (248) From this perspective Henry's *consciousness* of his guilt and unhappiness about the requirements made necessary in his past conduct create a "characterization with tragic overtones." (248) Though at times his conduct is immoral, Prior finds it compelled by the political occasion.

This conflict between traditional moral principles and political ends is never more forcibly illustrated during Henry's reign than with the incident of the betrayal at Gaultree Forest by Prince John of Lancaster in his father's name. Yet Prior appears to be correct in suggesting that although Prince John's betrayal of the rebels' confidence on a verbal technicality is a tarnished and unpalatable act indeed sullying the honor of the king, the lives saved and the order restored politically speaking are a much more viable termination to the whole miserable rebellion than would have been the useless slaughter of thousands of men. In a way the rebels put themselves into the hands of their enemies with a simplicity and trust that is rather surprising—even as Coleville of the Dale on the basis of Falstaff's mere reputation as a soldier surrenders to him. If the king's representatives act despicably, the rebel leaders act foolishly, and this in addition to the self-serving nature of their cause may stop us from romanticizing them.

According to Prior, Prince John's treachery, though we may be reluctant to credit it, remains an act of political necessity and a manifestation, however distasteful, of *raison d'etat*, even as is Henry's decision to meet his commitments against those enemies who were his friends: "Are these things then necessities? / Then let us meet them like necessities." (III.i.92-93) Henry's words might well form a motto for the entire cycle. They are significant not only in relationship to Henry's acts, but, as Prior shows in several chapters, to Hal's as well. Hal's qualifications for rule, his desire *to* rule, his willingness to subordinate himself to the law in the form of the Lord Chief Justice, his rejection of Falstaff, and his depersonalizing himself in order to enter his public role are all issues caught in the hard, bright light of power. They are power questions. Even lineal succession and Henry's desire to establish his legitimacy may be looked upon from this purely practical angle. What Prior has succeeded in showing is that Shakespeare's politics in the *Henriad* develops *toward* a modern conception and away from a medieval one such as that offered by Tillyard and Campbell. It would be accurate to say that the *Henriad* provokes many serious moral questions for consideration, but that it *dramatizes* the political realities of history and shows the forces shaping a modern nation.

Prior's book espouses a position which has been articulated before in the consideration of certain of Shakespeare's histories. But it makes an important contribution in applying its theories to the entire two cycles and codifying its judgments in terms of developing Renaissance thought. Although it objects to the opposing theory as demonstrated by Tillyard and Campbell, it never dismisses it. Instead it tries to place that theory within a context of alternative Renaissance theory, while exhibiting the dramatic conflict between the older and newer views as it politically enacts itself under Shakespeare's scrutiny in his plays. But Prior does not see the plays as allegories. "They give a vivid, comprehensive presentation of the events out of which a new political order sprang forth, and at the

same time they incorporated, in the dramatic conflicts they depicted, important political issues which had acquired fresh significance with the coming of the new era." (11)

The weaknesses in Prior's book have more to do with organization, integration of material, and unnecessary repetition than they do with the implicit value of his thesis or its application. Admittedly the chapters on *Henry V* are less interesting in and of themselves. The play, as Prior admits, is less interesting; but then why go on at such length about it? Conversely, although the final two chapters which discuss *Richard III* and *Henry V* as versions of opposed political myths are valuable in their own right, they form an anti-climax to the more important preceding material. Indeed the organization of the book as a whole seems meant to suggest some sort of grand design, but one which lamentably does not quite cohere. In a way, it might be said that the design almost seems to have been established *after* the writing of the individual essays. The format appears created for work already done; therefore the thesis seems less one that is developed through the chapters than one which is illustrated and re-explained in chapter after chapter. This gives the book a static feeling rather than one of growing illumination. It also involves the author in unwonted repetitions,, summarizings, and unnecessary retrospectives devoted to much pored-over material (an explanation of what the *Mirror for Magistrates* is and does, for example). Finally, one chapter, that on Richard II and the idea of tragedy, really does not fit into any of the major sections; and another, the first on Henry V, meant to conclude Prior's discussion of the *Henriad*, inadvertently attaches itself to the book's last section on the two mythologies. The result of all the preceding is to make the book longer than is really necessary, and to make its organization almost seem the result of expediency, rather than of previous planning.

Still, these are not really damaging flaws in what must be regarded as a significant work of scholarship and criticism, and one which meets the high standards set by Tillyard in his important work. The text is clear and the notes are excellent. Prior's version of Shakespeare's histories may not be every critic's, but every critic will be grateful for his painstaking, thoughtful, and carefully illustrated views. *The Drama of Power* is certainly the most important concerted study of Shakespeare's history plays in some time.

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Rudyard Kipling: Activist and Artist by Vasant A. Shahane. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973. Pp. viii + 157. $6.50.

In the first chapter of his *Kunstlerroman, The Light that Failed*, Kipling's adolescent hero, Dick Heldar, gropes after an occupation that will free him from the torments of his guardian, Mrs. Jennett, and her unlovely, vindictive Christianity. "'I'll be an artist, and I'll do things.'" The name Heldar is a likely portmanteau of the German *Held* or "hero" and "art." Moments like this in Kipling's work and the question in his own life of the place of the artist in the world of empire where the importance of soldiers and civil servants was

clear inspire expectations in the reader as he takes up Professor Shahane's *Rudyard Kipling: Activist and Artist*, a recent addition to the Crosscurrents/ Modern Critiques series under the general editorship of Harry T. Moore.

Since "criticism is extensive and voluminous," (xiii) Shahane finds it necessary to defend a new book on Kipling by emphasizing the significance of his title. To approach Kipling by means of a pair of terms—*Activist and Artist*—is especially felicitous, not only because of his own frequent gathering of stories under titles like *Actions and Reactions*, but also because of the real and imagined dichotomies in the man and in his work. Shahane notes that often "the central reality of Kipling's cosmos, in which contraries such as the real and the ideal, the physical and the spiritual, the cruel and the compassionate are harmonized into art, is overlooked." (22) His intention is to "explore the vital relationship between activism and art in Kipling's total achievement." (xiii) He continues in his brief Introduction to outline his methods and priorities: detailed analyses and explication, "an entire chapter . . . devoted" to *Kim*, and interpretation where applicable "from the Indian point of view, which may be an innovation in Kipling criticism," (xiii) all set against an introductory chapter on the main events of Kipling's life and their relationship to his art and philosophy. Though readers of Kim's adventures along the Grand Trunk Road may be skeptical of *the* Indian point of view, Shahane's intentions are ambitious and promising.

Shahane's chapter of background, "Life and Literary Reputation," reviews the "sharp vicissitudes of acclaim and denunciation" (1) which constitute much of the history of Kipling's critical fortunes. Though in later chapters he acknowledges his debt to the centennial phase of Kipling criticism, he makes no analysis of the effect on Kipling studies of C. A. Bodelsen, Bonamy Dobrée, Elliot Gilbert, Andrew Rutherford, J. I. M. Stewart, J. M. S. Tompkins, and the many others who have contributed penetrating essays in the last decade or so. Charles Carrington's *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* (1955) is praised for meticulous scholarship and found wanting for its "formal strain of an official biography" as Shahane calls for a new biography based on letters and unpublished writings, "marked by empathy as well as detachment, an intense admiration for Kipling's remarkable qualities as well as the frank portrayal of his weaknesses." (7) Shahane encourages standards of scholarship and sensibility that his book does not always approximate. Research at the British Museum and among Kipling papers in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library and pilgrimage to Bombay, Punjab, and Kashmir have not prevented numerous pages of routine biography and scenario reminiscent of the outline series. Aside from the mention of twelve pages of sketches and caricatures (Holograph No. 464 and A 657 of the Berg Collection), which reveal "an aspect of [Kipling's] multiple personality and also his quest for what he really was, his true identity," (16) research has born scant fruit. With the exception of the spectacuar anecdote of Kipling's habit as a young reporter of unconsciously hacking his chair to pieces with a Gurkha "Kukri" as he thought out details for his stories, the student will find little not available elsewhere. Once again Kipling's link with the Pre-Raphaelites through Uncle Burne-Jones is mentioned and abandoned. William Morris, Kipling's Uncle Topsy, is unacknowledged, though Kipling's earliest memory of the heat of creative energy is of Morris chanting the *Njal* saga astride a rocking horse in the Burne-Jones nursery.

Shahane's thesis chapter, "Alienated Activist and Imperialist," sets Kipling against a background of activist Victorian doctrines in which the "longing to extend the boundaries of knowledge and experience ceased to be merely an intellectual doctrine and became a plank for action." (22-23) Goethe, Herbert Spencer, Tennyson (particularly in "Ulysses"), and Carlyle are the principal voices of this major strand of Victorian thought. Shahane's skillful allusions to the fiction and poetry show Kipling's attempt "to project a fusion of the finite and the infinite, the secular and the religious, the political and the moral" as he formulates his concept of the law and the imperialist ideal. Though this is the strongest chapter in the book, it suffers from historical criticism that fails to locate precise literary influences on Kipling. Kipling has said a good deal about his reading. I suspect one can come closer to home than the "impact of Spinoza" in locating the sources of Kipling's "theory of life in which the doctrine of experience and the doctrine of action both play a vital part." (40) Browning is Kipling's poet, and Shahane sounds as if he knows it when he observes that "the business of God's handiwork is projected upon the day's work of man on earth" (30) in Kipling's vision. Kipling set great store by Walter Besant's *All in a Garden Fair*. Many of the books in Cormel Price's study at Westward Ho! are mentioned by title in *Stalky & Co.*

The total neglect of *Stalky & Co.* in a study of Kipling as activist and artist is curious, for this quasi novel becomes Beetle's and Kipling's momentary discovery of occupation in the celebration of a vital activist myth. Dick Four can see that "'Stalky is the great man of his century,'" but Beetle envisions the ubiquitous Stalky: "'India's full of Stalkies–Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps–that we don't know anything about, and the surprise will begin when there is really a big row on.'" Such boasting may not reflect Professor Shahane's just observation that Kipling's "romantic image of the Empire is ruined by many harsh and cruel realities, and what needs to be especially stressed is that Kipling is not blind to these actualities," (36) but *Stalky & Co.* is essential to a balanced view of Kipling's search for an artistic identity as the discoverer of activist voices.

The chapter "*Kim*" is both annoying and illuminating. For twelve pages Shahane seems to be writing for those who do not know the book. His argument that chapter by chapter summary of this "discursive and sprawling" work is useful in "indicating the novel's thematic unity" (56) will convince few readers. A discussion of Buddhism and the Tibetan Lamaism as derived from the Tantric school of Buddhism reveals subtle aspects of the lama's role in Kim's search for answers to his question, "'I am Kim; and what is Kim?'" In examining symbols and imagery to support his hypothesis that Kim alternates between a sense of alienation from the natives and a sense of "individuality stemming, surprisingly enough, from his sneaking affection for India," (57) Shahane's strategy of isolating *Kim* from Kipling's other work may have proved expensive. Why not compare the lama's pencase and Kim's revolver with Dick Heldar's pistol and paint brushes? Shahane also misses the chance to show activists, players of the Great Game of espionage, as alienated artists. Hurree Babu and Colonel Creighton, "moved by like desires," bombard the Royal Society "with monographs on strange Asiatic cults and unknown customs" in quest of the one honor that cannot be won by influence, the right to inscribe F. R. S. after their names.

The burden of dealing with Kipling's "total achievement" in so short a book becomes apparent as Shahane discusses "Minor Fiction" and "Short Stories" with little more than summary and recommendation of more thorough treatments in books and articles. The painterly issues in *The Light that Failed* could support Shahane's argument in interesting ways. Heldar's contempt for impressionism, for example, is an activist's prejudice.

Following the lead of T. S. Eliot in *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*, Shahane undertakes to show that "the poetical qualities of Kipling cannot be dissociated from his characteristics as a skillful writer of prose fiction." (108) A poet who captures Indian landscape in subtle images and who accommodates science and technology to the inner vision, Kipling remains at his finest in his expressions of "the British soldier's sense of community and companionship." (120) I continue to wonder why the obvious relationship between Kipling's poetry and prose—his epigraphs, chapter headings, and prefatory poems—continues to be neglected. Kipling habitually juxtaposes poetry and prose.

The almost infinite number of important turns of character and plot that depend upon Kipling's ear for language will make his readers wish Professor Shahane had given more than eight pages to "Kipling's Idiolect." Perhaps it is enough that he points important directions by assuring us of the authenticity of Kipling's voices and finding him a "true interpreter of Anglo-India." (132)

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