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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*What Coleridge Thought* by Owen Barfield. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1971. Pp. xii + 285. \$15.00.

In the first edition of *Romanticism Comes of Age* (1944), Owen Barfield collected some of the essays and lectures he had written, mostly for an audience composed of his fellow students of Rudolf Steiner in the Anthroposophical Movement. They had been written over a period of a good many years, years in which Barfield's time for reading, serious thought and writing had to be fitted to the exacting demands of his profession (from 1931 to 1959 he was a practicing solicitor in London). In the Preface to that book Barfield wrote of some of his misgivings: "... I see that the area of subject-matter over which they [the essays] directly or allusively range must appear wide, its communications tortuous and its boundaries ill-defined. I seem to have chosen a continent instead of a country, for a rather haphazard walking-tour."

With feelings at least somewhat analogous to those of Barfield on that occasion, I am undertaking to speak of Barfield's book, *What Coleridge Thought*. The source of these feelings? Though it is but one book of which I am attempting to write, that book is concerned with an extraordinarily rich and extensive subject, and it demands more authentic intellectual energy from its reader than most books one is likely to encounter.

I will begin by referring again to *Romanticism Comes of Age*: to the Preface to the revised and enlarged edition of 1966. At the close of that Preface, Barfield referred, rather diffidently, to an essay he had written in 1932 and which he had decided to include in the collection:

Altogether the scholarly work that has been done in this field and the fullness of thought that has been given to it in many quarters make me rather ashamed of the inchoate and skeletal lecture on *The Philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* which I delivered in 1932. I have left it in its place here partly because, though there are plentiful allusions to him elsewhere in the book, a collection of this nature without one essay on STC would be too much like Hamlet without the Prince; partly also as a kind of 'trailer' for the amends I hope to make before long in the shape of a full-length book on Coleridge, wherein the whole issue of the 'dynamic' philosophy will be taken up on lines not hitherto, as far as I know, attempted.

*What Coleridge Thought* is that book. I feel about as capable of "reviewing" it as I feel capable of giving a brief digest of the *Bhagavad-Gita* or a short view of the Grand Canyon. Weak analogies both, but if they give some feeling of immensity, they will serve. *What Coleridge Thought* is immense, though it is by no means physically large.

I am seldom "awed" by books. I have more than my share of that general irony with which we protect ourselves from awkward reverence. But I am

nearly "awed" by this book—the result of 40 years of Barfield's experience concentrated on the still, somehow, inexhaustible fertility and suggestiveness of the mind of S. T. Coleridge. Perhaps I owe it to the reader to say that since I began reading Barfield some eight or ten years ago, his work has become one of the most important elements in my mental life. So I could be thought guilty of reading the general significance that Barfield has had for me into my experience of this book. But I don't think this is the case.<sup>1</sup> If I am right, *What Coleridge Thought* is not only the most important book to appear on Coleridge for a long time, it is one of the more important books on any subject one is likely to discover. One thing is certain, beyond any quibbles of opinion or personal prejudice: it is a unique book. Nothing remotely like it on Coleridge has ever been done.

In what qualities does this uniqueness inhere? Many could be mentioned. There is the range of Barfield's references and knowledge, cutting across the fields of orthodox philosophy and psychology, scientific theory, exoteric and esoteric theology, philological and semantic theory, literary history, and a good many others; his intimate acquaintance with the large and often unwieldy canon of Coleridge's writing; his great knowledge of the traditions from which Coleridge himself drew; perhaps above all the subtlety of Barfield's intellect, the depth of philosophical acuity, and the firmness of argument which plays through and around every paragraph. I shall speak further of some of these qualities, but for now it may be said that the peculiar quality which distinguishes *What Coleridge Thought* from the many other books—often very good books—which have been written on Coleridge is this: Barfield's work is *organic with Coleridge's own work* in a way that not even the most successful of other books on Coleridge have been. Barfield's thought occupies precisely the same spectrum as Coleridge's own (though of course he also knows the textures of western culture *since* Coleridge's time, and that is one of the important things about this book).

Another way of putting this might be to say, quoting Howard Nemerov's comment on the dust jacket, that "it is not too much to say that in Barfield, Coleridge has met a mind, penetrating, coherent, lucid, that he could have acknowledged as the equal and complement of his own." This sounds like a piece of conventional puffery, but it is not. Or take the book's very title. Cannot one detect a certain implicit arrogance? By what right does this man presume to expound "what Coleridge thought"? Would it not have been more seemly to call the book *The Shape of Coleridge's Mind*, or *Coleridge and the Idealist Tradition*, or even *An Introduction to Coleridge's Thought*? To the former question I would respond, by something akin to the right of connaturality—thus going even further along that line than Mr. Nemerov. To the latter: such more orthodox and academic titles would give no sense of the way in which Barfield presumes to talk, nor of the commitment he has to his subject. Perhaps there is a certain "arrogance" in presuming that one has penetrated so far into as complex a mind as Coleridge's as to be able to speak without the usual

<sup>1</sup> Though I ought to point out that, while this book can certainly stand on its own, it gains immeasurably in richness if the reader has some knowledge of Barfield's earlier work: not only *Romanticism Comes of Age*, but *Poetic Diction*, *Saving the Appearances*, and all his earlier books are relevant.

devices of "perhaps" and "it seems to me" and "it appears to have been the case"; but if any book ever vindicated its claim to authority, this is it.

Barfield asks in his Introduction whether there are any qualities which the many excellent studies of Coleridge share, and he responds: "Yes, there are two—the predominance firstly of what I would call the biographical/comparative approach and secondly of the biographical/psychological approach; and I should hope that the terms I was using were reasonably self-explanatory." A little later, speaking of the limitation of the biographical/comparative approach (in language that might apply, in a slightly different manner, to the psychological approach as well), Barfield comments that:

Its learned debates have something in common with the water of Lethe. To become immersed in them is to risk forgetting that one at least of the interesting questions about almost any thought is the question whether it is sound or unsound, valid or invalid, true or untrue. If I find it depressing when a distinguished literary critic complains that 'Coleridge has little insight into the incompatibility of different trends of thought,' it is because this seems to me to betray a deplorable inability to distinguish between philosophy and talking about philosophy. Philosophy is, to my mind, not much concerned with 'trends' of thought. It is concerned with thought. Is it seriously suggested that Coleridge was incapable of detecting the incompatibility of one *thought* with another? Or with proven fact? If so, let us first be shown the point or points at which this occurred. Time enough then to start investigating the confused borrowings, or the unconscious motivation, that seduced him to it. (7-8)

What questions are here raised! They are so obvious, and so difficult. We are asked to consider not where the thoughts originated, but whether they are true; not how Coleridge's poor damaged mind managed to fit them together, but whether there are any compelling reasons to pay attention to them. No one has, I think, ever *begun* to talk of Coleridge in this way (with the possible exception of J. H. Green, who was his "disciple" in a way that Barfield certainly is not); very few writers on Coleridge—or, indeed, any other subject, ever *arrive* at it. The paralyzing simplicity of questions like: is it true? how does it force us to change our mode of thought? raise a whole series of issues which it is far easier to sidestep or never to raise; it is easier to maintain aloofness, a cultivated and dispassionate suspension of judgment.

Given this approach, Barfield evades some of the dearest "Coleridge problems" in ways that might infuriate more orthodox scholars; he may even lead some to think that he is also sidestepping issues. But there is a pervasive and laconic wit in the exposition which demonstrates that had Barfield cared to address these issues more fully he could have; but he *chose not* to: there are more important questions. On the vexed issue of Coleridge's "plagiarism": "Verbal plagiarism, as a labour-saving breach of the law of copyright, is a matter of demonstrable fact, and there is not much doubt that, as the law now stands, Schelling could have sued Coleridge in respect of one or two pages in the *Biographia Literaria*." (6) (This is the lawyer speaking, and one who knows something of such issues.) This is not the only place where Barfield touches on the plagiarism issue: he lets us know, briefly, that he is not remotely convinced

by any "case" against Coleridge, and turns aside to the larger questions.<sup>2</sup> Or take the almost equally celebrated issue of Coleridge's obscurity: his maddening circumlocutions and labyrinthine parentheses, the digressive footnotes, the exotic vocabulary (frequently of his own coinage). At one particularly tricky point in his exposition of Coleridge on Imagination and Fancy, Barfield pauses to remark: "the object of this book is, not to contend that Coleridge invariably expressed himself in the way least calculated to confuse his readers, but to disclose, if possible, what he in fact thought." (83)

Or another issue: more important than those raised in the paragraph above. That issue is the one clustered around the words "organic" and "organicism" and the phrase "organic metaphor." Now Barfield by no means evades *this* issue (nor does he "evade" the others in any conventional sense); he faces it squarely and at length. But he does so in a way that may cause those of us who are accustomed to thinking of Coleridge along some such lines as the "first major exponent of organic philosophy in English," or as the one who introduced the "organic metaphor" as a means of talking not only about a kind of literary language but of the nature of the human mind, to feel as if we had been suddenly stood on our heads. Precisely *what* is meant by an "organic" view of the human mind or poetry? That the mind—or poem—grows and develops in a manner analogous to organic life forms, as contrasted with "inorganic" matter? That, says Barfield, is totally misleading: the usual separation between "organic" and "inorganic" will not do to describe Coleridge. If we say, with M. H. Abrams, for example, that we find in Coleridge "organic metaphors of the mind," then we have completely missed the point:

'Metaphor of mind' signifies an extra-mental process described because it is separate from, but analogous to, a mental one, which latter it may therefore lead us to apprehend. Now not only is this not what Coleridge himself thought he was giving us in his psychology and his critical theory; it is what he spent a substantial part of his time and energy explaining that he was *not* giving us. (59)

If Coleridge was *not* giving us a "metaphor of mind"; if the phrases "organic metaphor" and "organic theory of poetry" are usually misleading; if in fact his "organicism" is something quite different from what most orthodox scholarship has taken it to be (and Barfield affirms all these things)<sup>3</sup> how shall we begin

<sup>2</sup> Thomas McFarland's *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford, 1969) contains the fullest, and probably the best, discussion of the plagiarism issue that I have read.

<sup>3</sup> One must not conclude that he scorns "orthodox scholarship." Far from it, though he *does* think Coleridge scholars have seldom penetrated the real dynamics of his thought. He has a great respect for much scholarship, and frequently acknowledges debts to it. For example, he admires the work, among others, of J. A. Appleyard and M. H. Abrams, and his book is dedicated to Kathleen Coburn. In one note to Abrams' *The Mirror and the Lamp*, while disagreeing with crucial points, Barfield nevertheless says that the book "is a sort of paradigm for me of what such a book should be, and one which I have no hope of nearing myself. But that only adds to the importance of what I am saying. The point is, not that Professor Abrams falls short in this respect, but

to understand it? And with this question we have really come to the heart of the matter. There is no easy way to answer the question, though we can begin by making a point which seems central. For Barfield, Coleridge's fundamental premises concerning the nature of life, the relationship between the human mind and the larger world, were so radically different from those of his contemporaries (including many—like Immanuel Kant, for example—with whom one would have *thought* to find him in agreement), that there was little common ground for a meeting between his views and more orthodox ones. And if this was true of Coleridge's relationship to his contemporaries, it is generally even *more* true of the relationship between Coleridge and the major traditions of thought since his time.

If this is indeed the case, and I think that it is, where shall we make our entry into Coleridge's mind, and what must we try to understand before we are in a position to decide whether or not to take him seriously? Do his views on man and nature, literature and science, and many other topics have anything of value in them? Is there indeed an alternative view of reality in Coleridge, a mode of thought important enough to take seriously? Now, Barfield answers these questions, but it would be foolish to try to reproduce his argument, which is coherent, consecutive, and at all points demanding. I can touch a few of his points only, and anyone who decides the subject is worth taking seriously will have to read Barfield for himself (as well as more of Coleridge than the customary few chapters from *Biographia Literaria*).

At this point I must say that anyone who wishes to study Coleridge from a purely "literary" standpoint is going to find Barfield's book hard going; though if he persists he will discover that Barfield casts more light on "literary" questions than narrower approaches have done. It is not until his sixth chapter, for example, that the "familiar" territory of Imagination and Fancy appears directly in Barfield's exposition. Instead, he begins with what was, for Coleridge, the central fact, issue, theme: the question of consciousness. But it is *not* consciousness considered as a philosophical subject in the usual sense: it is the *act* of consciousness, the actual experience of *thinking*, that preoccupied Coleridge. It was in the action and energy of *thinking* itself, rather than in thought, or consciousness considered as mere object, that Coleridge grounds all he has to say on other issues. Indeed, although the point is subtle and requires more discussion than I can give it, it is crucial that this distinction between thought as an object and the activity of thinking be discerned. Nearly all of Coleridge's leading principles will be discovered to be involved with what was to him a central truth: that the *will* is involved in all our thinking, even though we may be unconscious of that involvement (If this sounds to us like a contradiction, as it did to Coleridge's contemporaries, we must remember that not only was he one of the great shapers of our modern preoccupation with "consciousness," he was in

that *even* Professor Abrams does." (210, n. 3) Incidentally, it is altogether fitting that in a book on Coleridge, that voluminous note-writer, Barfield should have put much of his best material into his notes, often lengthy and important discussions. There are 73 pages of notes to 193 of text. While many of these are bibliographical citations, many others contain important, and occasionally crucial, materials.

some ways practically the discoverer of the *unconscious*.) Barfield emphasizes how essential for an understanding of Coleridge these matters are:

Coleridge will continue to be called 'cloudy' even by his admirers, because he will continue to be misinterpreted by readers who are not willing to grasp, and to remember once they *have* grasped, the elementary principles which consciously permeate almost every other sentence he constructs. . . . These are: first, that thinking is an act. Secondly, that it is normally, though not necessarily and always, an unconscious act. Thirdly, that though we are not normally conscious of the act, we *are* normally conscious of the product of the act (which we call 'thoughts'), and indeed it is this, which actually constitutes our self-consciousness as human beings. (21)

From this discussion of the question of consciousness, which we might call the psychological and epistemological foundations, Barfield moves on to those ontological and metaphysical questions that underlie the problems of consciousness. That is to say, he moves on to Coleridge's view of nature, and life itself. Do those seem large questions, overly philosophical for those who merely wish to deal with STC the literary critic? Well, they *are* large, but they are also vital; and it is part of the burden of Barfield's book that Coleridge offers a comprehensive view of human experience, and there is no way to understand adequately his views on literature without seeing the larger continuum.

He opens his discussion of Coleridge's views on the constitution of nature by prefacing his second chapter with a quotation from David Bohm's *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*. Bohm is an extraordinarily interesting physicist, and the reference to him here is a reminder of how deeply Barfield himself has been interested in the philosophy of science, and how unified and how wide a spectrum his views cover. (One of the later chapters is called "Coleridge and the Cosmology of Science," and while it is foolish to select certain portions of the book as being "more significant" than others, this chapter is full of the most far-reaching implications.) Barfield's point in introducing Bohm and modern physics is to anticipate a point he will develop later: there are some interesting relationships between the dynamics of Coleridge's thought and some recent developments in physics. But it is no part of Barfield's purpose to praise Coleridge by drawing attention to some interesting parallels or happy congruences. On the contrary, he is quick to point out that Coleridge

. . . takes a further step which differentiates his concept of nature sharply from that of most, if not all, modern physicists. To investigate scientifically the nature of Nature is to investigate the nature of phenomena as such. It is to ask the question: What is a phenomenon? (23)

And to this question, the Coleridgean reply is, in part: "the solution of phenomena can never be derived from phenomena."

Where then must one look for a "solution of phenomena"? The brief answer is: not in *natura naturata*—or phenomenal nature—but in *natura naturans*—which might be called "productive nature," though any single phrase of this type is bound to be misleading. Barfield's analysis of the relation between *naturata* and *naturans* leads us to the point of recognizing that Coleridge was challenging the entire Cartesian orthodoxy of modern philosophy and science, and that he was

attempting to penetrate what he called the "lost dynamics" of the relation between mind and world that had been ruled out of order—"occult," in the precise sense of that word—by the rigid separation of subject from object characteristic of modern western philosophical traditions. Modern science, of course, does not recognize any phenomena that correspond to Coleridge's *natura naturans*. To which Barfield's (and Coleridge's) answer is simple: of course it does not. How could anyone recognize as phenomenal that which by nature is *not* phenomenal? Coleridge's *naturans* is not phenomenal and to dismiss it because it is "not phenomenal" is to beg the question; for it is the very power, the energy, the force, which makes phenomena possible.

And how does "it" do this? Here we are very close to the heart of Coleridge's thought, and Barfield's book. The "answer" is that, at the heart of *natura naturans* lies the law of polarity: that power which, while one in itself, nevertheless gives rise to a successive duality, which duality in turn strives toward reunion (and if one says, that is only the Hegelian dialectic, one has again misunderstood). These few phrases can give no idea of the importance of this conception, but it must be stressed that the law of polarity is in a sense the *pons asinorum*; it must be contemplated deeply if either Barfield or Coleridge are going to make sense. The trouble is, this is the language of exposition, abstract logic, and book reviews. One cannot "make sense" of the concept of polarity; although through contemplation one might arrive at its import, for it is something that can be apprehended only by the imagination. But one must interject that it is not necessarily that to which we (often loosely) refer as the "poetic imagination" that alone can grasp the reality of polar relationship: it is imagination in any of its roles—philosophic, literary, scientific. It is one of the virtues of Barfield's book that he extends the significance of "imagination" far beyond the notions usually held by literature scholars, though not beyond Coleridge's *own* conceptions (except insofar as Barfield is a twentieth-century man, and Coleridge lived in the nineteenth century).

Polar. Polarity. It is a word we use all the time. Poles. At opposite poles. Polarised. We understand it well enough, for it is part of all our vocabularies. But *do* we? Whatever it is we may understand by "polarity," I think it safe to say that there can be very few readers—perhaps none at all—who will understand anything like the range of implications which *polarity* carries for Barfield (I might add that this is especially true in this book on Coleridge, but the observation also applies to the whole of Barfield's work). And here I must do a little quoting from Barfield:

Polarity is dynamic, not abstract. It is not 'a mere balance or compromise,' but 'a living and generative interpretation.' Where logical opposites are contradictory . . . polar opposites exist by virtue of each other *as well as* at the expense of each other; 'each is that which it is called, relatively, by predominance of the one character or quality, not by the absolute exclusion of the other.' Moreover each quality or character is present *in* the other. We can and must distinguish, but there is no possibility of *dividing* them.

But when one has said all this, how much has one succeeded in conveying? How much use are definitions of the undefinable? The point is, has the imagination grasped it? For nothing else can do so. (36)



The relation of polarity, then, exists at the very heart of *natura naturans*. It is that "productive unity," that "separative projection" by which the familiar forms of phenomenal nature are continually produced. But "polarity" runs through every phase of Coleridge, and ultimately it is the "secret" which underlies man's relation to the rest of nature, to his society, to God. For it is his conviction of the reality of man's polar relationship to nature that leads Coleridge to affirm, in context after context, that the productive power of nature and the principle of human intelligence are essentially of one kind. As Barfield puts it:

The productive power, then, which *in* nature acts *as* nature, is nevertheless 'essentially one (that is, of one kind) with the intelligence, which is in the human mind above nature.' This is where Coleridge's concept of nature, and of evolution, differs so sharply from the one we are accustomed to that its usual fate with his commentators is to be ignored. For, after all, how can it be so? How can the life-force operative out there in nature—how can *any* 'force'—be of one kind with the intelligence in the human mind? (61)

Barfield is right in his comment, and in his questions. This *is* the crux. This is so radically different from all we have ever been taught to believe that there are very few people who do not find it "outlandish." Perhaps the philosophically sophisticated will speak of "standard idealistic arguments" (though they would be wrong). Very few modern readers can find themselves capable of taking it seriously, except in an archaeological sense—one more curiosity dug up from the past: interesting for what it tells us of an era, a man. But not to be taken as a viable mode of thought.

And this is a very great mistake. Coleridge's thought, and Barfield's subject matter, is not merely something to flesh out our picture of the Romantic movement and the early nineteenth century. Read seriously and contemplated carefully, Barfield's book is capable of transforming the way we think of literary criticism, of science, of theology—any area, literally, one could name. But as Barfield says (speaking here of science), "We cannot begin to determine Coleridge's relation to science without first proceeding to the somewhat unacademic extreme of making up our minds whether or not we must agree with something he said." (142) To which it must be added: And we must first find out what he said.

This book is the real thing, one of those books that appears only very rarely that is capable of genuinely altering the way one thinks. If anything I have written above seems in the least adulatory, I can only insist that it is not at all so, in view of the subject. *Nor* should anything I have said be taken to imply that Barfield's book is in turn adulatory of Coleridge—that it blinks his weaknesses, his confusing terminology, his fragmentation; that Barfield is not very much his own man, capable of recognizing Coleridge's shortcomings. Should this be the case, I will have failed to make clear the essential nature of the book, and failed to portray adequately its fundamentally radical character. "Radicalism" may seem a strange quality to impute to Coleridge, but it is a valid one; and it is even more valid to impute it to Barfield himself.

Where does Barfield locate the significance of Coleridge (and, by inference, of his own book)?

It will become apparent to anyone who has the patience to reach the end of this book that I find the relevance of Coleridge's thought to our time where he himself located its relevance to his own. It resides, above all else, in his radical critique of one or two major presuppositions, upon which the immediate thinking, and as a result the whole cultural and social structure of this 'epoch of the understanding and the senses' (*including supposedly radical revolts against it*) is so firmly—or is it now infirmly?—established. As long as this is ignored, I doubt if he has much to say to us, whether as a philosopher or as a sociologist. (11-12, italics mine)

You can't get much more *radical* than that, for it digs down into the roots of thought itself.

\* \* \* \* \*

I want to close with a publication note. Wesleyan University Press has now published five of Barfield's books in their American editions: in addition to *What Coleridge Thought*, these are: *Romanticism Comes of Age*, *Unancestral Voice*, *Worlds Apart*, and *Speaker's Meaning*. They are in the process of bringing out a new edition of his early, invaluable, and out of print *Poetic Diction*. There is at least one person, and I presume there are others, who feel a debt of gratitude toward Wesleyan for making available the work of a writer like Barfield. I would feel myself even more grateful if some way could be found to make *What Coleridge Thought* available in a cheaper edition.. I realize the difficult economies of book publishing, but this book ought to be more widely available, in spite of its ostensibly difficult subject matter. One wants to recommend it to friends, to students. I have done so, but \$15.00 is just too much for many of them to pay (It has been made a Scholar's Library selection by MLA; which helps, but it still isn't enough.) It ought to be available: it is not a book to be confined to the shelves of university libraries and a few Coleridge specialists.

R. K. MEINERS

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*The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China: 1919-1925*  
by Bonnie S. McDougall. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1971. Pp. xii + 368. No price.

This is a detailed, well-documented work, especially useful in the sense of an annotated bibliography. Dr. McDougall has surely fulfilled her object which "was simply to identify, analyse and compare those Western concepts which were undoubtedly present in the thinking of the [Chinese] writers themselves." (p. 264) She is at her best when with patience and care she relates the salient points of a lengthy article. She commands impressive, wide-range information for her (sometimes unwieldy) source materials.

Even more remarkable is the author's unprejudiced attitude. The six years covered in this study were a period during which the inchoate Chinese writers,

like most of their compatriots in the other fields, craved for new—or rather, Western—models. The character *hsin* (new) was ubiquitous; besides “New Culture” and “New Literature,” the two most sacred intellectual movements at the time, scores of journals and newspapers sported *hsin* in their titles. From the hindsight of nearly a half century, it would be easy and convenient for McDougall to follow the trend of some scholars to mock or patronize those Chinese neophytes frantically trying to import “advanced” foreign literary ideas. McDougall’s fair-mindedness and power of understanding are evidenced when she ends the book with her “personal admiration for the great energy and independence of spirit of the youthful pioneers of the Literary Revolution.” (p. 268)

Rather than portraying an over-all picture, the approach throughout the book is to concentrate on some of the contemporary Western literary theories that happened to find their way into China. Thus, apart from such familiar names as Oscar Wilde, Georg Brandes and Kuriyagawa Hakuson, we learn that the influence of Prof. C. T. Winchester who “was not an historian but more of a connoisseur of literature, . . . spread in many directions.” (p. 57) On the Chinese side the author likewise emphasizes the works of the most energetic transmitters, with only desultory references to the contributions of the others. For example, Lu Hsün, translator and editor of Russian criticisms, appears mainly in connection with his 1907 essay “Discourse on Demonic Poetic Power.” The Marxist literary thoughts, already being introduced into China before 1925, are hardly mentioned.

In the “preface” McDougall states that her concern is “the first decade of the New Literary Movement (1917-37).” (p. v) Actually, as indicated in the subtitle, only the years from 1919 to 1925 are included, and there is no explanation, either for the discrepancy or for the particular dates. This seems to me an unfortunate oversight. It is true that 1919 is familiar to most people as the year of the May Fourth Movement (Another notable event is the inception of the magazine *Hsin Ch’ao* or *The Renaissance*, one of McDougall’s primary sources.). But I rather doubt many people today can recognize any significance in 1925. It turns out to be the time when the so-called May Thirtieth Incident took place and shocked the Chinese people into painful awareness of the national crisis under Japanese persecution. It is largely for this reason that Shen Yen-ping has marked these six years as the first stage in the history of the New Literature.

After 1925 the leftist literary movement began to pick up momentum, culminating in the founding of the League of Left-wing Writers in 1930. It is interesting to note that among the seven or eight “introducers” considered most important by McDougall, Shen Yen-ping and T’ien Han became active Communists and played leading roles in the Leftist League, and Kuo Mo-jo and Cheng Chen-to also soon turned to the left. (This point is touched upon by McDougall; see p. 216.) The literary theories they had transplanted with such zest were gradually forgotten and discarded, and by 1934 Shen, perhaps the most prominent figure in this book, saw fit to write in his *Hua hsia-tzu* (*Chatter-box*, a collection of literary essays that McDougall appears to have not consulted.) that “the literary theories of the May Fourth era already failed to take root in the minds of the young people in the May Thirtieth period. Now they are being even more scorned.” While Shen might have been a little sweeping

in his dismissal of the historical, path-paving contributions of the years between the two incidents, I cannot help wishing that Dr. McDougall had chosen to investigate a longer period in a more comprehensive manner (even at the cost of the summaries of foreign sources, which sometimes run into excessive length anyway; e. g. pp. 108-18, 149-58). In any case, I would like to conclude by hoping that she would go on to write about the post-1925 period (say 1926-30 or 1926-36). With her erudite background and her meticulous scholarship, the result would surely further benefit all students of modern Chinese Literature.

H. C. CHUANG

*University of Southern California*

*Anne Bradstreet: "The Tenth Muse"* by Elizabeth Wade White. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. Pp. xiv + 410. Illus. \$12.50.

A literary biography of Anne Bradstreet has long been needed. As the first published poet of colonial America, and as the first woman poet of any significance to write in English, Anne Bradstreet has fascinated critics since the publication of her first book, *The Tenth Muse*, in 1662. The only study of any length before Miss White's book was Josephine Piercy's *Anne Bradstreet* (Twayne, 1965), a monograph surveying the poet's spiritual and artistic development. But since Miss Piercy's book was essentially a critical study of the poetry, it left a thorough biographical study of Anne Bradstreet still to be done.

Both as biography and as literary criticism Elizabeth Wade White's study makes some significant contributions to the study of Anne Bradstreet and of Puritan poetry and aesthetics. A more thoroughly documented examination of Anne Bradstreet, her times, and her poetry would be almost impossible to write. Unfortunately, however, the very thoroughness of the book weakens its effectiveness as biography. Miss White is so concerned with documenting every conceivable event, person, or place that has even the remotest connection with the colonial poet that we lose a sense of Anne Bradstreet as a living woman behind the accumulation of data. In short, there seems to be a confusion of purpose in Miss White's book, for she deals with peripheral genealogical and historical issues which are interesting and significant in themselves but which destroy the unity of the biography as biography.

Any biography of Anne Bradstreet must necessarily rest on a good deal of conjecture and speculation based on what we know about women of her historical era, social class, educational background, and religious loyalties; for the primary biographical materials are severely limited. Aside from Anne's own writing (including her poems, prose meditations, and brief spiritual autobiography) and some genealogical records, there is little else to go on. There are almost no contemporary memoirs, letters, or other data which record how people felt about her, what kind of personality she projected, or how she fared in her pioneer environment. It is no doubt this sparseness of pertinent data that led Miss White to fill out her biography with so much peripheral genealogical and historical information. Miss White admits in her Preface that it is highly unusual

to devote so much time in a biography to questions of ancestry. But she defends that concentration because of "the light that it may shed on the psychological attitudes of a founder and governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony and of his daughter who was the founder of American literature." The trouble is that subsequent analysis does not justify that explanation. Miss White does some detective work that is relevant to a genealogical study of the Thomas Dudleys; but aside from establishing on firmer ground than other biographers have done that Anne is indeed a descendant of Sir Philip Sidney, the whole discussion bears little relevance to a study of Anne Bradstreet.

There are other similarly peripheral or irrelevant matters: a description of the boyhood and education of Anne's father, Thomas Dudley; a long discussion of the political and religious affairs of Dudley and his contemporaries, particularly those relating to the emigration to Massachusetts Bay; and a good deal of specific information concerning various early political and religious leaders of Massachusetts Bay. All of these things are indirectly related to Anne's life in the New World, and so to her poetry; but none of them deserves the extended treatment Miss White gives them.

Although Miss White focusses more clearly on Anne and her poetry in the later chapters than in the earlier, we are often left with the feeling that Anne is serving as an illustration of historical events, rather than the historical events serving to illuminate Anne and her poetic development. For example, in Chapter Eight, which discusses the publication of *The Tenth Muse*, there is a twenty-page digression on published women writers before Anne. The total length of the chapter is 42 pages, so that the digression, together with a great deal of specific bibliographic data on the publication of the book, and a discussion of the identity of the authors of some prefatory tributes to Anne, constitute the bulk of the chapter. Only a few pages are given to a conjectured discussion of how Anne herself, as a person, fared in this most momentous event of her life.

If digression and peripheral matters of bibliography, genealogy, and history tend to obscure the living image of Anne Bradstreet, Miss White's book nevertheless offers a wealth of information about Anne and her poetry. Her analyses of individual poems are thorough and perceptive. One of the most valuable aspects of Miss White's study is the critical perspective from which she discusses those poems. She focuses on the tension in Anne's poetry between her vocation as a poet and her status as a woman in Puritan New England, without falling into the trap of so many critics of colonial literature—namely the mistaken notion that the Puritans were opposed to poetry on theological grounds. On the contrary, Miss White makes the interesting suggestion that "Anne Bradstreet wrote more freely, and with less self-consciousness, in the sharp fresh air of Massachusetts than she would have done in the more conventional atmosphere of the mother country."

Similarly revealing is the discussion of Anne's probable reaction to the publication of Michael Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* in 1662 (a necessarily conjectural opinion since there is no contemporary record of Anne's reaction). Miss White very convincingly argues that Anne would not have liked Wigglesworth's best seller, not only for literary reasons, but for theological ones as well. She points out that the extreme Calvinism preached by Wigglesworth was not the motivating force for all Puritans: "The God whom [Anne] worshipped

with devotion, trust, and a constant awareness of the blessings and mercies He had vouchsafed to her . . . was a far different Being than the vengeful and relentless Judge of Wigglesworth's poem."

Miss White's criticism is thus free of misconceptions about Puritan aesthetic theory. She shows that whatever hostility Anne's contemporaries might have felt to her writing poetry was the result not of Puritan theology but of the simple need for survival in a hostile pioneer environment that left little time for the luxury of belles-lettres. Her being a woman, too, would have caused some negative reaction, and it is Anne's role as a woman which Miss White focuses on as the most dynamic source of tension in her poetry. She avoids, however, any special pleading for Anne because of her being a woman; rather she evaluates the poetry itself on aesthetic grounds, with no overemphasis on either her femininity or her Puritanism. In short, the balance is perfect. Anne comes across as much an Elizabethan as a Puritan, as much a human being as a woman.

In spite of some weaknesses, then, Miss White's book deserves a careful reading. It is a mine of valuable information about Anne Bradstreet and her poetic career. Even though Anne as a distinct personality does not dominate the book, as much of Anne as we do see is portrayed in a balanced and objective manner, as a personality in tension between her two vocations—as wife and mother on the one hand, and as poet on the other. The career of the tenth muse comes through strongly enough to remind us that the Puritans were lovers of good poetry and that a pioneer environment could indeed give birth to a poet of power and grace.

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*Libro de buen amor* by Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, ed. Raymond S. Willis with introduction and English paraphrase. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972. Pp. xcvi + 479. \$20 (cloth); \$9.50 (paper).

Raymond Willis' edition of the *Libro de buen amor* aims at a variety of goals; it brings a new text of Juan Ruiz' fourteenth-century masterpiece along with a facing English paraphrase, and an introductory essay of some seventy pages. To overcome some of the initial difficulties faced by his readers, Willis offers a regularized Spanish. Forms like *sossegat* are changed to their modern equivalents (*sossegad*), and the imperfect and conditional forms ending in *-ié* are normalized to the modern *-ía*, an ending also recorded in the text. In addition, the reader has the aid of a facing paraphrase which both offers an accurate translation of the verse and allows for the inclusion of explanatory material. This translation, unlike the prose translation of Rigo Mignani and Mario Di Cesare (State University of New York Press, 1970) or the project nearing completion by Saraly Daly and Anthony Zahareas (to be published by New York University Press in the late spring) which extend their approaches to non-Spanish readers, is designed for readers of modern Spanish who may require assistance with the archaic forms and vocabulary of Old Spanish and who, one hopes, will eventually bring new insights to discussion of the work. Willis' introductory essay focuses on the critical as well as the philological issues prominent in *Libro* studies.

The usefulness of Willis' scheme of text and facing paraphrase is evident in the concluding *copla* of the Toledo MS. of the *Libro*.

Era de mill e trezientos e sesenta e ocho años  
 fue acabado este libro, por muchos males e daños  
 que fazen muchos e muchas a otros con sus engaños,  
 e por mostrar a los simples fablas e versos estraños.

The paraphrase clarifies two points—the date and the use of “fablas”—which may escape the reader coming to the *Libro* for the first time: “In the year of the Era of Caesar Augustus, one thousand, three hundred and sixty-eight [A.D. 1330], this book was finished, for many evils and wrongs that many men and women do to others with their deceits, and to display to simple people exemplary tales and ingenious verses.” Like the Archpriest's, the aim here is didactic; and, again like the poet, Willis plays multiple roles which seem to conflict with each other. As an editor he wants to establish, in his phrase, the work's “pristine text.” At the same time he is a reader with important things to say about the poem. Because of these roles, the introduction is by turns infuriating and insightful. At times it seems out of control, burying provocative critical statements under basic information and editorial judgment.

The *Libro* survives in two distinct versions. The first, dated 1330, is preserved in the Gayoso and Toledo MSS. (designated *G* and *T*). A later manuscript from Salamanca (MS. *S*), dated 1343, makes a number of additions to the text: a prose prologue and ten stanzas which precede the original opening; several episodes about further amorous adventures; and a group of final pieces (lyrics, a complaint to Fortune, and the Song of the Clerks of Talavera) which are not related to the narrative. Willis' editorial argument is that MS. *G* represents the “pristine version” (again his phrase) of the *Libro*. But is a pristine version a genuine question? And for whom? The poet himself gives one view in *copla* 1629:

Qualquier omne que l' oya, si bien trobar sopiere,  
 puede más afiedir e emendar lo que quisiere;  
 ande, de mano en mano, a quienquier que lo pediere;  
 como pella las dueñas, tómelo quien podiere.

Willis' paraphrase: “Whoever hears it, if he knows how to compose poetry, may add more to it and emend whatever he wishes to; let it pass from hand to hand to anyone who may request it; as ladies catch a ball, let him catch it who can.” One value of a definitive text lies in the possibilities it presents for understanding the author's concept of his work and for understanding the shape he seeks to give his creation. Yet the poet's own statement makes clear that he sees his book as public property, as part of an animated and popular culture which may damage but never can distort his work.

This animation is apparent throughout the narrative, but nowhere more so than in the adaptation of the *Pamphilus de amore*, a pseudo-Ovidian scholastic comedy which Menéndez y Pelayo once termed “a cold erotic abstraction.” In Juan Ruiz' tale the characters lose their classical names and become Melón (‘melon’ and ‘badger’), Endrina (‘sloebeerry’), and Trotaconventos (‘convent runner’). The narrator himself speaks as Don Melón de la Huerta, the badger in the garden who devours the sloebeerry, and Endrina seems to identify him for

the audience in speaking of "mi amor de Fita" [sc. Hita]. He also seems the inheritor of conversations between the two women to which he has not been privy and about which the reader has been shown that his one source, Trota-conventos, is unreliable. Beyond the use of a first person narrator and the changes in names (La Rama 'the branch' is a typically witty one for Endrina's mother), Juan Ruiz inflates the dimensions of the lovers' passions by placing them in the social context of what amounts to a bourgeois comedy of seduction, grief, reproach, and eventual resolution. At this point he tells the audience that he is not Don Melón and that the story is exemplary, not personal.

The conflict between arbiter and critic exists at yet another level. If we concede the possibility of a definitive text in this book, then why is it regularized? The variety of forms in MS. G is certainly as much a part of the text as the highly structured narrative which Willis sees in the original version, and preserving those forms would seem necessary to maintaining the integrity of the first version. So the instructive aim of the book works at cross purposes with the editorial goal. The contradiction here could have been resolved by expanding the sections on morphology and language in the introduction to include a table of variant forms while retaining those forms in the text. The reader would thus have a faithful text in front of him as well as a paraphrase to guide him through difficult passages.

Another conflict, between the editor and the critic, runs deeper and probably cannot be resolved within the scope of this book. The statements that make the introduction often provocative are critical positions. One, for example, goes directly to the issue of a controlling pattern in such a diffuse narrative as the *Libro*: "The structure of the poem may seem to be random and disjointed, but not if we see the work as originally an organic poetic whole whose texture is the quintessence of fluidity and mutability: every passage flows into the next, poetically if not logically; everything can be transformed into something else, just as the rhymed narrative constantly turns into song or parable." (p. xlvi) The various identities of the authorial "I" and the metamorphosis of Love as first abstraction, then personification, and later Don Amor are, as Willis maintains, illustrations of an essential process. But the phenomenological argument is not contingent on this style of textual criticism, that is, on the establishment of one MS as the authentic version of the *Libro* and the consequent judgment of the later version as destructive. If fluidity and mutability characterize the original work, then the fact that there are additions only testifies to a continuing process.

The roles Willis attempts to fulfill as guide, translator, editor, and critic ultimately involve a multi-volume work or, better, a series of independent studies. What his book does give us at the moment is a badly needed text for an audience of promising readers whose primary interest is not in philology.

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