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Book Reviews

Coleridge, *The Damaged Archangel* by Norman Fruman. New York: George Braziller, 1971. Pp. xxiii + 607. \$12.50.

Among Coleridgeans this book will produce waves of discussion. Up from the ranks of the compatriots will come defenders of Coleridge's originality (at once raising the question as to what it is to be original), while the *unser Shakespeare* tribe of Germanophiles will announce that here at last we have the proof that most of STC's important ideas, especially those involving the psychology and metaphysics of art (theory of imagination), the aesthetic distinction between organic and other types of form, the magisterial importance of Shakespeare as ultimate author—and perhaps other ideas I have forgotten to mention—derive almost word for word from various German critics, chief of whom must be August Wilhelm Schlegel, younger brother of Friedrich Schlegel. A battle *pro* and *contra* will surely take place, and its field will have been staked out, however roughly, by Norman Fruman's *Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel*.

Fruman has once again gone over the ground harrowed by René Wellek, who for many years now has been insisting that Coleridge was a weak philosopher and, since philosophy of some kind was his pretended contribution to English studies, by the same token a weak critic. On any estimate Wellek's Coleridge is a badly tarnished angel, if not completely fragmented. Fruman, of course, does not intend his damaged archangel to be thrown into the junk-shop. Rather, he wants a cleaner critical and historical approach to Coleridge, cleaner and also, oddly, more commonsensical, than has hitherto been easy or likely. He has done what Wellek, under suspicion as a continental polymath of strong Germanic leanings, could hardly afford to do without incurring the anglophiliac wrath: he has put together "against" STC a great big book of evidence for an indictment of grand larceny, widespread embezzlement and gross, disingenuous bad faith. The case has many angles, and it looks bad for the defendant. On the other hand, only a skillful prosecutor will be able to steer such a rich indictment past the pretrial publicity of the Coleridgean Establishment. Fortunately for the spectators, Norman Fruman is a very active, theatrically impressive D.A.

The present "review" is, unfortunately for the expert who will certainly want to examine Fruman's case more closely, a mere courtroom sketch, written by a journalist, and smuggled out of closed sessions in the hope of suggesting what the trial is like. I leave it to others who have gone adequately into the critical work of the German romantics and specifically of A. W. Schlegel and Schelling to determine whether *The Damaged Archangel* has respected all the main rules of evidence. Rather I shall be giving my impressions of an indictment, without any clear confidence about the final sentence.

In compiling massive documentary evidence to show how, time after time, one of Coleridge's more "inspired" moments was in fact a piece of shop-lifting,

Norman Fruman has had to write a big book. He notes, with Callimachus, that "a big book is a big misfortune." But how could it have been otherwise? Smallness of compass, imposed by other interests, was exactly what made it difficult for Wellek to get his case against Coleridge to stick. (In the vast corridors of Wellek's *History of Modern Literary Criticism* Coleridge could only have a chapter; there were others to consider, among them the very sages and seers whose pockets the English visitor so calmly rifled.) At least one reaction to Wellek on STC's thefts from Schlegel or Schelling was animated by the continuing thought that, well, there was another side to the whole business—perhaps after all Coleridge *may* have thought of Shakespeare in what amounted to Schlegelian terms, before going to Germany at the turn of the century, and if so, then the "debts" to the German critic were complex, delicate and probably of no final importance. And anyway, one added as an afterthought, Schlegel didn't really count for much as a literary critic—who, in the English-speaking world, had even read him? As a learned and luminous modern scholar put it: "[Coleridge] also studied, and probably over-rated, the German Shakespeare criticism of the preceding half-century."

Perhaps the right antidote to unthinking adulation of Coleridgean originality (defined as perfect literal independence of previous authors) would be, besides the massive dose provided by Fruman *in toto*, a comment which he quotes from the remarks of William Hazlitt, who, in December 1820, wrote a "Conversation on the Drama with Coleridge." In this imaginary conversation Hazlitt has Coleridge say: "'But a French play (I think it is Schlegel who somewhere makes the comparison, though I had myself, before I ever read Schlegel, made the same remark) is like a child's garden set with slips of branches and flowers, stuck in the ground, not growing in it.'" This is double-edged, to be sure, striking at the "organicism" of the romantic school as much as at STC's foible of unacknowledged free-loading. Fruman's note (page 488, no. 69) continues in the same vein: "Elsewhere in this neglected essay Hazlitt has Coleridge remark of the French: 'Their style of dancing is difficult; would it were impossible.'" To this Hazlitt appends the footnote: "This expression is borrowed from Dr. Johnson. However, as Dr. Johnson is not a German critic, Mr. C. need not be supposed to acknowledge it." Hazlitt, in short, like Wordsworth before him, and like De Quincey, knew that their acquaintance, Mr. C., was something of a grifter. Had they read Lowes' *Road to Xanadu*, they would surely have said, "You don't know the half of it." It would seem that, in one way or another, the damaged archangel thought little of heisting large shipments of (preferably German) ore, which without acknowledgment he then led his readers to believe that he, STC, had mined in a heroic assault on the darkness of the lower depths.

One aim of Fruman's large biographical essay is to show just how varied was this borrowing, snatching, grabbing, remembering, copying, lifting and petty theft. The story itself provides considerable entertainment. Its plot is: where will the angel strike next? Because Fruman has a novelist's interest in the psychology of Coleridgean kleptomania, he can carry us through the dismal long terrain, in whose fearful passage the doomed poet/critic often approaches madness. Throughout Fruman remains empathetic, if not sympathetic. There are times when even his negative capability toward STC seems to have been strained—the relations commonly thought to have existed between STC and Wordsworth

he finds unfairly weighted, so as to hurt Wordsworth's reputation. It appears to Fruman that Coleridge learned, that is, took, more from his austere friend than critics have been willing to admit. And there are times when, almost abstractly, without regard to the hurt imposed on some unacknowledged "source," Coleridgean plagiarism seems to offend Fruman's moral sense. And it offends his sense of history. Criticism relates closely to science, and in science priority of discovery is a recognized achievement, since science assumes the reality of material progress. From the scientific angle the question is interesting, if not finally crucial. Simultaneity of scientific discovery suggests that the determination of critical "originality" will be a tricky matter. Yet it remains well worth studying.

The question of originality thus raised has, however, a dimension which Norman Fruman seems either to have dismissed for strategic reasons, or not to have envisaged. In its more general form this dimension of the problem may be stated as a question: if the critic lifts other critics' words, phrases and paragraphs *en bloc*, without acknowledgement, in what way, precisely, does that lifting detract from the critic's presumed originality? The question obviously has two halves, neither of them very definitely circumscribed. On the one side there is the lifting itself—what are we to say about it? Is what is plagiarized itself a sort of *objet trouvé*, or is it "stolen property," and if the latter, does the theft become significant because it violates the letter or the spirit of copyright law? And on the other side, how shall we define the nature of a critical "originality?" *The Damaged Archangel* certainly provides much detail to indicate what kinds of things Coleridge would lift, the most famous of them being the passage on Imagination in the *Biographia Literaria*, a direct steal from Schelling, according to most authorities.

But the book does not ask that framing, double-edged question, and in this, to be fair, the case against Coleridge is flawed. From *The Damaged Archangel* one would never guess that our recent period has been one of acute, often rather painful recognition that Coleridge, like other critical minds seeking a wider basis for criticism, was often working in areas beyond the confines of "academic source studies." Such studies are usually underrated; they require great skill and endless patience, with wide reading. Fruman would appear to be a masterful source-hunter. Yet his lack of a theory of intellectual origins leaves his demonstration of certain or less than certain, but still probable, thefts settled perilously on the edge of massive irrelevance. To repeat, it is not without interest or importance for us to learn that Coleridge (or any other critic) has stolen this or that from some prior worker. But in the case of Coleridge *the critic himself* had already raised, in a hundred ways, the question as to what poetical and intellectual originality really is. His manifest method of creating poems out of a mosaic of his own reading already suggests part of the problem, namely that he possibly (granting for the moment that Fruman's and Wellek's evidence holds up, a matter on which only experts can judge), very possibly, located poetry and criticism close to each other, and applied the same rules of composition to the one as to the other. It is only *after* determining if and how this is or is not so that one can then proceed to create the case in a strict evidential demonstration.

To be quite brief about it, Coleridge probably took a "Renaissance" attitude toward his thefts. While he may indeed have felt guilty about them, he found

them necessary for his work, as Shakespeare found it necessary to take whole speeches, not to mention story-lines, etc. from other authors. The example of Shakespeare may have been impressive to Coleridge. Since he regarded the Bard's work as practically "scientific," he may have assumed for himself a license he well knew his model to have practised. The guilt that accompanied the thefts belongs in part to STC's own extremely complex web of private fears and anxieties, and at the same time could well be a product of an early 19th-century rise in attention to the private, saleable property of authors. But the guilt needs to be distinguished from the act itself, which could have reasons of its own, based on a theory of invention closely resembling that of the Renaissance poets and critics, who rarely acknowledge each other's materials, while taking them over and putting to new uses and displaying them in new settings—in translations, for example. This may be associated, as a theory of invention, with Shakespeare, while it is opposed to the attitudes and behavior of Ben Jonson, who remains a determined minority voice, always willing (perhaps because proud of his book-learning) to "acknowledge his sources."

One aspect of the Fruman inquest is particularly moving, in the light of this problem of the theory of plagiarism. To his subject Fruman is stern, but entirely (or almost entirely) forgiving. He is attempting to be understanding, as Gertrude Stein would put it. This attempt gives this book a sense of search for its own *raison d'être*, for it follows that if STC was such a rank plagiarist, as this indictment makes him appear, then we as critics are left wondering how to relate to (a) the plagiarized material and (b) its plagiarist. Both relations to the divine kleptomane will be complex, and Fruman gives many, and many times very expressive, examples of this complexity.

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The first source of complication lies outside Coleridge himself, even outside his work. It is the bias, the Anglo-German rivalry, the general ignorance of German materials which pervades the English literary scene, the tendency toward isolationism along lines of national literature rather than European community—in short, the whole atmosphere under which debate about STC and his literary relations must occur. A final estimate of his indebtedness to others will owe a good deal, I should think, to the very open way in which Fruman has written about the matter. His style reflects one kind of openness; it is full of personal touches, and much of its length and breadth comes from a desire to give the whole picture as the author sees it. Such an approach is inherently lively, and in a way its particular triumphs and failures are far less important than the example itself, which may help to clear the Coleridgean air by drawing our attention to the possibility of bias in our judgments. To give only one instance of a source of bias: it is difficult for English-speaking people, native-born to the tongue of Shakespeare, to imagine that a foreign critic like A. W. Schlegel might have earlier and more perfectly perceived certain great Shakespearean qualities, *and then articulated them* with greater elegance than was managed by the Bard's own countryman.

To sort out the failures of critics in seizing upon what he takes to be a more accurate picture of STC (the dust-jacket has four remarkable portraits of him, from youth to age), Fruman divides his book into three initial sections, which are followed by a radical extension of perspective in a final fourth section,

"Transfigured Night." Part I, "A Portrait in Mosaic," is an introductory tour through certain typifying Coleridgean plagiarisms, with a strong biographical coloration throughout. Poetry is the main issue here. Fruman shows that STC early acquired the habit of making people think he was *wunderkind*, a self-image which slowly developed, according to Fruman, into a tenacious complex form which Coleridge was never to escape. Part II deals largely with the expository critical writings, among them *Biographia Literaria*, the never finished "Opus Maximum," and the Shakespearean criticism. Here again Fruman documents what appear to be hundreds of thefts, large and small. Part III takes a similar approach to the greater poetry, including the work of the remarkable period when STC produced "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan."

Sections I to III will stand or fall, as I have suggested, on the degree to which experts of German romantic criticism and of the other "original sources" involved come to accept or reject Fruman's allegations as proved or not. The point needs repetition: only experts can tell exactly how a particular "borrowing" feels to them in the context of a whole canon. And this sort of discussion, provoked by the book, will be lively and useful and by no means ultimately destructive to Coleridge, though immediately embarrassing. This is perhaps the place to mention a most unfortunate lacuna in *The Damaged Archangel*. No doubt for reasons of timing (date of publication, etc.) Fruman does not mention McFarland's *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*, a profoundly learned study in German sources, a work written from that point of view yet colored throughout by an uncanny awareness of the Coleridgean mind and its reticulative method. Other interesting and important recent books come to mind at this juncture: it is too bad not to have had Fruman's reaction to Basil Willey's study of STC's religious development, Owen Barfield's new study, Haven's book, and so on.

This vigorous publishing activity suggests the scope of present interest in Coleridge, but it is hard to introduce others into a "big book" sometimes. Richard Haven, at least, is an enlivening source for Fruman (the *JHI* article on "Coleridge, Hartley, and the Mystics," dating back to 1959!), but his recently published book on Coleridge is not referred to. We are reminded of the unwieldy inefficiency of books of criticism—a problem of great interest to STC himself—and can only regret that here, as so often, the pressures of time and history prevented a confrontation between Fruman and McFarland. In that case at least, I believe it was historically possible for Fruman to have known McFarland's work. However, these *décalages* get sorted out in time (though we do really need more discussion about the role of speed and timing in the publication of ideas).

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It is Part IV of *The Damaged Archangel* that, so to speak, exists by itself. Humanly considered, it is the climactic portion of this biography of a mind. The scene owes much to the magnificent scholarly work of Coburn, Griggs and others who have gradually presented to us the Notebooks, the Letters, and the endless bits and pieces of Coleridgean rumination and marginalian magic. Fruman's chapter headings, "Themes," "Dreams," "The Unreconciled Opposites," "Shipwreck and Safe Harbor," tell much of the story. This part of the book will be read with profit by every student of literature, since it strongly conveys

the terror that beset Coleridge during most of his life and dragged him often to the edge of insanity. With admirable coolness, Fruman shows many details, one of which, infinitely suggestive and more austere in its *frisson* than most, comes in the record of a dream of December 6, 1803:

Adam travelling in his old age came to a set of the descendants of Cain, ignorant of the origin of the world & treating him as a Madman killed him. A Sort of Dream, which I had this night. (Quoted *Damaged Archangel*, 379)

The interest of Fruman's fourth section lies in its method. Thus, with the dream of the murder of Adam, he surrounds the quote with a revealing network of associative materials, all of which help to explicate the dream, some subtly, others grossly. In this instance, for example, he notes that "the day before Coleridge had written a letter (perhaps in the hours just before going to sleep) to one Matthew Coates; the letter deals primarily with his own projected *travels*, following upon his decision to leave his wife and children to seek health abroad." (380) The movement of commentary is back and forth between dream and the total verbal/physical scene in which the dream comes into being as a written object.

Once again a question of theory (or perhaps only orientation) arises: what in principle is the relation between dream and reality, with an author of the Coleridgean stamp? Fruman does have a general view, to be sure, though it rests in a curiously "classical" Freudianism of biography. I have nothing against the great master of mind, but it has to be said, over and over, that Coleridge in part is difficult to understand because he was busy drawing out the complexities of mind that exist "over and above" a Freudian dynamic. The "over and above" involves problems of perception (to which Patricia Ball has drawn attention in her monograph, *The Science of Aspects: The Changing Role of Fact in the Work of Coleridge, Ruskin and Hopkins* [London, 1971]), of metaphysics and semantics, and of certain literary concerns which circle about Coleridge's quite peculiar attitude toward Shakespeare.

Fruman has suggested, particularly in his illuminating pages on the poet's unhappy youth, on the Coleridge/Wordsworth connection, as well as throughout *The Damaged Archangel* in lesser matters, that Coleridge never resolved a basic problem of authority. On the one hand, according to this view, he always wanted to be taken for more pure, more right, more genial than in fact he was or could have been, he too being mortal and limited by space, time and death. This *wunderkind* complex took deep root. Not only so, but deeper roots went down from other quite private Coleridgean fears—can one imagine a relation tenser or more problematic than that connecting Coleridge and the two Wordsworths? The one-time "inspired charity boy" floated through life on a sea of guilt, fearful of incestuous longings that arose from a more or less cruel maternal upbringing and the sudden, Oedipally-freighted loss of his father (over which Coleridge had, in effect, Freud's "dream of the death of the beloved"). In handling such psychic history Fruman is resolutely the classic Freudian, admirably straight-forward, undeterred by more recent, largely European decorations of the Freudian dynamic of repression and its behavioral consequences. The following gives a sample of the classic lingo:

That the key role of horrible avenger is assigned to a demonic female provides the necessary clue which links "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel." If Coleridge's unconscious was roiled with oedipal or fraternal guilts, it was nevertheless the cruel mother who meted out the punishment, by banishment, by withdrawal of love. In all his subsequent crippled relationships with women, it was not a wife his longing spirit sought, but the sheltering love of the protective mother. [405]

There is some Jungian equipment here too, but the dynamic of Fruman's biography is a sympathetic, if perhaps not very subtle, use of Freud. But he does well with a number of diagnostic commentaries on various dreams and their place in the poet/critic's life. When he quotes a contemporary remark (it was in fact Dr. Gillman's) that Coleridge "was *scrupulously* clean in his person, and especially took great care of his hands by frequent ablutions," we are well situated by the critical text to use the remark in a Freudian (i.e., genetic and dynamic) search for the Coleridgean mind. Fruman is writing a psychobiography, a work not totally unlike Bate's biographies of Johnson and Keats (and to a lesser extent Bate's more modest and academic *Coleridge*). What always saves this book for the reader as a formalist, perhaps as a "structuralist," certainly as an unwilling geneticist of the imagination, is the way Fruman simply *fills* his pages with anecdote, aside, marginalia, slivers of poetry, in short with all the fillings of a rich biographical cake. It is true, as Basil Willey recently remarked, the time is not quite ripe for a gigantic *opus maximum* on Coleridge (though clearly Willey felt that various giants might be lurking in the wings). In the meantime, *The Damaged Archangel* is inherently satisfying to read as biography, especially the "Transfigured Night" of STC's mental climate. The mere act of collecting the dreams in one place and stressing them frontally is an important critical contribution, nicely illustrating the way in which technical innovation (the publication of the *Notebooks*, in this case) leads to new possibilities of theory and understanding.

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The present reviewer has only the roughest notion of how he would approach the Coleridgean life, let alone what is generally demanded by the exigencies of the subject as a whole. But there are some revealing oddities in the formal aspect of STC's production and life, which may be worth looking into more deeply. For example, why is *Venus and Adonis* the central Shakespearean instance of genius given in the *Biographia*? Was Coleridge simply too lazy to give a larger case, *Hamlet* or *The Tempest*? Is it simply, as he says, that this narrative poem shows how early real genius shows itself? Is that question, in turn, related to something going on in the *Biographia* as personal testament (however hastily and distractedly written)?

Increasingly critics of Coleridge have given more attention to his ideas of "method." Both Richard Haven and J. R. de J. Jackson have written about the relation between the theory of method and the Coleridgean performance. It begins to seem that the *form* of the *Biographia Literaria* is its most brilliant invention. Perambulatory and wayward, this form suggests, among other things, that when (almost alone among English critics of his time) Coleridge began to think seriously about method and wrote his *Essays on Method*, he had to adopt the prefatory indirection which life itself tends to possess. Coleridge

became systematically and deliberately wayward; he, like Hegel (on whom, in this connection, the reader may consult J. Derrida, *De la Dissémination*, "Hors livre," pp. 1-66), began to pay his respects to the preliminary aspect of real invention and insight.

In the same sense Coleridge may have been deliberately and systematically a kleptomaniac. This is not quite a paradox. Like many obsessed persons, that is, like many in the throes of the classical Freudian's "obsessional neurosis," Coleridge knew perfectly well what he was doing. This at least is the most economic assumption to make. Obsession is the one neurosis we can, and do, all live with; it is the basis, for example, of almost all difficult intellectual labor. According to such a view, Coleridge would then continue to thrive, because theft corresponded to his vast obsessive "method" of understanding the true nature of literary "property." If a passage was worth quoting, as the Renaissance humanists insisted, it was worth stealing. This "stealing" is personally tricky for the thief, if it induces guilt; at the same time its secrecy gives him an immediate access to parts of a verbal universe in which words, as such, are no one's property. On such a view (though not in terms of the literary marketplace and its copyright conventions), Coleridge had "a right to" anything said on the subject of his idol, Shakespeare. This "right" followed from the suspended belief that Shakespeare and the critique of Shakespeare were part of a larger theoretical whole which no individual could "own" in any ordinary sense. There is a sort of unique communism, a vague remnant of youthful pantisocratic hopes, lingering in everything Coleridge later accomplished. And he was living in the age of *de facto* property-enhancement. What is raised so well by Fruman's courageous book is the whole question of ownership in the literary domain. The theory of ownership is close to the theory of literary influence; both require the kind of sympathetic analysis which, from various quarters, they are beginning to get.

Furthermore, one emphasis, on guilt, is also an important directive for Coleridgean studies (as his fond admirers have really always known). Fruman has frankly approached this guilt. But the experience of guilt is not *directly* related to the acts we perform. It is always involved in a refraction of a virtuous desire to do the non-guilt-producing thing; in short, often those feel guilty who have no clear, direct reason for their feeling of guilt. In the case of Coleridge one senses sometimes that he accepted anxiety and guilt as a catalytic condition of his genius. He worked the fields of guilt. Coleridge happy, in a down-home way, is inconceivable, because he refused to entertain the idea. His identification with Hamlet is the structural principle of his life. No wonder he thought he owned Schlegel *et al!*

To get at the structural relation between the Coleridgean theft and the form of his writing and thought, we shall have to envisage the "methodical" shape of the "literary life," as he conceived it. This speculation has scarcely been attempted as yet, though Jackson has written a book on Coleridge and method that places us inside the periphery of the problem. The key to a further advance seems to me to be a flexible, unacademic study of Coleridge and the idea of religion. Both McFarland and Willey, in major texts, and many others in detailed articles and monographs, have begun to provide the technical equipment for such a study.

For the problem of authority, with Coleridge as with most metaphysically

inclined persons, comes down to a relation between the self and the religious life. He is at once in a complex situation, since criticism, on his own view, was a kind of science, whereas his own leanings were toward numinous explanation. That Coleridge was not alone in feeling the tug between critical and religious thought is apparent in the work of all subsequent 19th century English critics, perhaps most memorably in Matthew Arnold, but in fact across the board. A triadic sequence of questions becomes the issue: criticism (a science)—poetry (an action)—religion (a belief): requiring to be interrelated as they are by the "literary life." Without making this triadic analysis it will appear, as unfortunately Fruman's book makes it seem, that Coleridge's brain evaporated some time soon after 1820, if not before. Nothing could be further from the truth. His later writing is as brilliant and moving as anything he produced. It is, however, based on the religious side of the triad, and this aspect of things is less accessible to most of us.

Every critic of Coleridge will have a preferred mode of approach to his many-sided mind. One approach that has been inadequately explored is the question of Shakespeare's importance to his worshipper. To my knowledge no critic has shown why, when commenting on the theory of the Bible and its vast exploratory form (in *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*), Coleridge is led to speak of Shakespeare. A returning obsession? Nor, more important to begin with, what is the role of this "Shakespeare" in the *Biographia*, the *Essays on Method*, and the desultory, troubled lectures which seem, from our verbatim-note remnants, to have been a weird, semi-private monologue on the "true meaning" of the Bard's existence. (See, for these, R. A. Foakes' new edition of the 1811-12 lectures, *Coleridge on Shakespeare*, which is furthermore a monograph on that interesting man, J. P. Collier). Shakespeare is the central, structuring, leading, guiding light and heat (however one wants to imagine the process) and finally also a comforting mask in the Coleridgean dream.

Admitting that we are in the midst of a debate, we can say perhaps that Shakespeare provided for Coleridge the model for thinking about "method." Although "method" is a sign of the coming of the modern world, insofar as it defines the Renaissance attitude toward the connection of time and thought, when Coleridge found that he too responded to the problem of method, he also found that his Shakespearean inheritance could enrich and clarify the response. He must have felt that his philosophical raids on Germany, besides giving him a newly thing-filled philosophic diction (the German agglutinative semantic), gave him also a sense of the rightness of his belief in Shakespeare. For if it was "religious," it had to be "right," since religion is a matter, not of exterior proof, but of faith. As the domain of *implicit* coherence, religion communized the ownership of any ideas that would support the belief in Shakespeare. To suggest that Schlegel or Schelling (the latter on Imagination) was a "source" might well violate the sense of mysteries, which requires a mute recognition of what Freud said his informants called the "oceanic" aspect of religion. (Which of course puzzled the terrene Freud no end.) One can imagine a Coleridgean rumination going somewhat like this: "I have slowly discovered that my 'philosophy' is a deviation from a fantastic, imaginative literature in which metaphysics are always implicit. Philosophy can only be the hidden dimension, the tacit dimension, of a great literature that has religious force. Open it out (as you must with philosophic devices of a technical nature, i.e., the specific

words or terms of Schlegel or some other), and you will kill its mystery. In fact I began to think this way when I met Wordsworth, for whom philosophy is an art of poetic implication. At that time too Dorothy Wordsworth showed me the implicit structure of the landscape, which I could then contemplate in its living line, as if I could live the line of the mountain ridges. Writing my own better poems, on supernatural subjects of great terror, I found that for me method could never be explicit. It had to reside in the act, as its buried but constant life. 'Mechanical' and 'organic' were then merely names for something which the Wordsworths taught me to recognize, and because a *recognition* had already occurred with them, there was scarcely a chance that I could or should acknowledge any 'sources' in any one else. I could only acknowledge other mutual recognitions, and they already belonged to the realm of common understanding. Those who seek my sources must not forget my life."

Such imaginary monologues are nothing, compared with history. If one approach to a history of Coleridge's troubled life is to find, aided by the increasing bulk of published Coleridgeana, what happened to him as he went along, another will be to speculate on his own utterances about history and the social life of man, an increasing preoccupation as he grew older and survived. Another method will be to return to the great poems, adding to them certain lesser poems of great technical bravura. Basic to a finer grasp of the whole life will be a close acquaintance with the Coleridge/Wordsworth bond. And above all, the Coleridge/Shakespeare connection. This last, as its student soon discovers, leads to a large and difficult field of study: the role of philosophy in English letters (e.g., why so different from France and Germany, in this respect?).

Norman Fruman has, I think, done a lot to get such questions into a wider domain than any previous author of our time, except Dr. Richards. Fruman has done this simply by being interested in Coleridge the man. About most human, personal, character-judgments there will be some argument, and Fruman will find those who don't like his portrait at all. But the overall effect is strong and useful, since implicit in *The Damaged Archangel* is a systematic awareness that whatever is literary in Coleridge is importantly touched by a *biographia* of some kind. Fruman is often stiff—he belongs to the great tradition of puritan biographers—but he is not a fanatic. He has wonderful notes, like most, but not all, devoted Coleridgeans, and they fill about 130 pages of his book. And he has an expansiveness which goes with his roughness. Every so often the pathos of STC's life, which is so very difficult to describe convincingly, or sometimes even to believe in (writers are driven to speaking about his "terrifying" dreams, nightmares, drug symptoms, etc.), and the finally absolute quality of Coleridge's physical survival at Highgate, in Malta, in the Lake Country, everywhere, come across in Fruman's account with their true Wordsworthian austerity. Close to the end of *The Damaged Archangel* Fruman has occasion to summarize the poet's familial history:

Hartley [Coleridge's son and the "dear babe" of "Frost at Midnight," a born genius, for whom the poet said he dreamed so much good] was thirty-eight years old when his father died. In all those thirty-eight years he did not live in his father's presence for as much as five years. Coleridge's brilliant daughter, Sara, who was to do so much for his after-fame, did not see him once between her tenth and twentieth years.

One final reversal of position: I may have suggested, in commenting adversely on the lack of a theory of originality and literary theft, that Norman Fruman is insensitive to what he himself once calls the "quintessentially Coleridgean." That would be a harsh, stupid judgment. The very first line of this book breathes the atmosphere of being in the Coleridgean presence. In the inevitably twisting, over-played, critically garrulous search for the final identity of the Involuntary Imposter, Fruman has himself entered the path of Coleridgean method. In this path the mind, as he says, "turns to origins." (331) *The Damaged Archangel* lives its own life, full of its own sense of self-discovery. This may be inefficient, and it seems to accompany what will be called a philosophic and psychoanalytic naïveté, but it is a very Coleridgean production. Thus, although the book leaves a great deal to be unearthed, understood and formulated, and though perhaps it imagines itself as conquering more territory than it actually holds, it is still tremendously readable. Through its stress on the poet/critic's dreams it is critically innovative. There is a kind of bluff commonsense that breathes fresh air into a heavy ambience.

One wonders, of course, what Coleridge would say about all our recent interest in him. Perhaps we should be to him as Keats was, when they met one afternoon in the street. Coleridge was walking along slowly, at his alderman's pace, with another man. Keats observed that STC was caught in the stream of his own monologue, and as the two parted, the older man's voice could be heard disappearing in the distance, leaving behind it the fragments of an endless recital of an infinite blueprint of mental stimuli. What are we, then, to such a man?

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The Philosophy of Art by Giovanni Gentile, translated by Giovanni Gullace.
Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972. Pp. c + 292. \$15.00.

One of the more important parts of *The Philosophy of Art* is Gentile's logically rigorous enquiry into the experiential relationship between poetry and criticism. Italian thought concerning this relationship was much the same in 1931, when Gentile first published his book, as American thought was thirty years later, when Murray Krieger looked back upon the problems of the new apologists for poetry. For both Benedetto Croce, whose thought dominated Italian aesthetics through the first third of the century, and the New Critics, the difficulties of this relationship stemmed from their special sense of the radical difference between poetry and criticism. For both, poetry was thought to be a seamless unity, an autonomous organism, a fusion of intuition and expression, whereas criticism was viewed as analytical, intellectual, a practical endeavor whose objective lies outside itself in the wholeness of poetry.

According to the profoundest understanding of the New Critical position, that of Eliseo Vivas, in the experience of a poem the reader ceases to be himself and becomes the poem; aesthetic attention, intransitive attention, is selfless; one sees with the eyes of the poem, one is the being of the poem. Criticism, which

necessarily follows the aesthetic experience, is reflective; it is the effort to point out those elements in one's experience of the poem which are most important to it as an aesthetic experience, for the purpose of helping others work to the point of losing themselves in the poem, of becoming the poem. The drastic limitation of all criticism, viewed in this way, is that the critic can say nothing about the poem as a whole, as a totality, because in experiencing the poem he in fact became that whole, he was utterly identical with it. His acutest awareness, in other words, was indistinguishable from the awareness of the poem. Afterwards, he could talk about what he had been aware of, but not about his awareness, because it is essential to aesthetic experience that we not be aware of such awareness, since self-consciousness would violate the wholeness of intransitive attention. Since the critic's awareness in the aesthetic experience is identical with the totality of the poem, in not being able to speak critically about his awareness, he is incapable of speaking about the totality of the poem. He must limit his speech to the parts of the poem, knowing that in the aesthetic experience these parts had no distinct being apart from the entire poem as a seamless, organic whole. Such a predicament collapses criticism based upon a sense of the organic unity of poetry into criticism as paraphrase, a procedure based on a sense of the poem as the sum of its separable parts. It is true that as Empson atomizes a poem, he insists that his sense of multiplicity is governed by a taste left in the head from the aesthetic experience, and it is true that his best analyses suggest some ineffable feeling as their source. It is also true that Cleanth Brooks often refers an item discussed to the undiscussable "dramatic totality" of the poem under consideration. On the basis of what is actually articulated in such analyses, however, the New Criticism can be distinguished from conventional paraphrase only as being unhappy with itself, aware of its inadequacy, and longing to be other than itself.

So unhappy and anxious a situation could not endure, and the tensed bow snapped into two slack fragments, one dualistic, the other monistic. Northrop Frye adopted a positivistic dualism, content with intricate analyses unrelated to aesthetic experience. For Frye, an abyss as wide as that between plum and botanist or physical event and physicist separates poem and critic. The critic can say nothing about the poem as experienced; his responsibility is not to poems as read, but rather to the autonomous discipline of criticism. As a critic, Frye is cut off from poetry but not distressed by this as the New Critics were. Equally free critical spirits are legion today, many following Frye, others adopting structuralist techniques, others modelling themselves on Heidegger's use of Holderlin to picture forth his own mind's desire, and still others imitating the autonomous criticism of Leslie Fiedler.

In contrast to such dualistic criticism, other critics strive to write criticism directly out of their absolute identity with the poem in the aesthetic experience. As the criticism of Maurice Blanchot most strikingly manifests, the aim of these critics is to write criticism which is not detached from the poetry,—or for that matter even about the poetry—but fundamentally at one with the poetry. At bottom, their effort is to write criticism in such a way that its author will be the poem of its concern. Such criticism is as autonomous as Frye's, not because it is unrelated to poetry, but rather because it is indistinguishable from poetry. Although such visionary or orgiastic monism avoids the pains of the New Criticism as effectively as Frye's positivistic dualism does, the point of it all

seems no less dubious than the value of Frye's criticism. We desire the truth about beauty, not truth about nothing or beauty about beauty. Both radical dualism and radical monism seem to evade the difficulties of the New Criticism by ceasing to be criticism in any serious sense at all.

When Gentile came to write *The Philosophy of Art*, Italian thought about the relationship between poetry and criticism was not in so hopeless a predicament as that of the New Criticism and its remnants. For thirty years Croce had been striving to reconcile the dualistic and monistic aspects of the relationship. His maturest resolution of the problem is based upon a tripartite conception of criticism as taste, judgment, and characterization. Initially the critic must become the poem, experiencing it as an intuition-expression "from the point of view" of the poet. Taste and genius are identical. This first moment of criticism, however, is virtually inarticulate; its conclusion can be no more than "Eureka" or "ugh" or a blend of the two. The second, judgmental moment of criticism determines the categorical being of the first moment: it judges the experience to have been aesthetic, unaesthetic, or a mixture of the two. The third moment is a practical, approximate characterization of the uniqueness of the judged experience. It is meant to synthesize the first two moments of criticism, the moment in which one is aesthetically identical with the poem and the moment in which one is judgmentally detached from the poem. Experientially, Croce's analysis seems to work out the problems which broke the New Criticism and which have been simply evaded by its followers. Unfortunately, however, his analysis depends on three unexamined and unjustified dogmas: the poem experienced is the poem; the poem judged is the poem experienced; and the poem characterized is the poem as experienced and judged. Croce never explicated the relations among the three moments of criticism; they are simply strung out as distinct; their unity is uncritically assumed to be a "synthesis."

Not only his philosophy of art but the whole of Gentile's philosophy of Actualism was dedicated to an enquiry into the nature of the unity of human experience on the basis of which he could articulate its necessary inner relationships. As early as 1912, Gentile was evolving his concept of Actualism as a philosophy without presuppositions or dogmas. All depends for him on the incontrovertible truth and reality of "my present act of thinking." The proposition, "I am thinking," and only this proposition, cannot be denied or even questioned without its being affirmed, since to deny and to question are acts of thinking. "My present act of thinking" differs markedly from the phenomenological "consciousness of something," with its "of" being the relationship of "intentionality" and its every "something" an "intended object." Gentile recognizes that to be conscious is to be self-conscious, that to know something requires that one knows that he knows something. As Collingwood observed, even etymologically, "con-scious" implies this double awareness. As a result, in the very act of thinking one can attend not only to his "I" and its "object," but also to the way in which they are related. Gentile need not posit a necessary "intentionality" which cannot be attended to experientially, with the consequence, as in Husserl, that all attention slides inexorably away from "intentionality" to the "intended object." "My present act of thinking" is for Gentile a mediate act in which one thinks through the way self and not-self are related just as fully as he thinks through self and not-self. Instead of the relation between transcendental Ego and Object being merely necessary, like "Inten-

tionality," that relation for Gentile is both necessary and actual. Because all consciousness involves self-consciousness, the relation between "ego" and "object" is experientially open to inspection.

Even for Gentile, however, the relation proved extremely difficult to attend to. Prior to *The Philosophy of Art*, his dialectical concept of the act of thinking tended to collapse into two terms only, my thinking an object and that object as thought, so that the immediate I, the thesis, and the mediate I, the synthesis, fell into an immediate identity. Thus, an enquiry into what might seem to be subjectively immediate, like "sensation" or "intuition," reveals that in truth they are mediate. Just so, the immediate I becomes the mediate I; and art becomes philosophy, immediate intuition-expression becomes in its truth relational thinking.

The real problem, then, for Gentile in *The Philosophy of Art* was not how to relate poetry and criticism, but how to tell them apart. The essence of art is the I in its immediacy, my most immediate sense of experience. But to exist, this immediacy must break into its antithesis, the non-I, and to be actual both immediate thesis and objective antithesis must be included within the synthetic act of my thinking. But criticism, the act of thinking through the uniqueness of a poem, also contains the very same three moments as the poem does. To be existent and actual, both poetry and criticism must be both poetic and critical. In avoiding dogmatic presuppositions and in making both poetry and criticism experientially significant and logically necessary, Gentile seems to have barred himself from making a distinction between poetry and criticism. Only in *The Philosophy of Art* does he overcome this weakness. He does so by rejecting Croce's notion of art as intuition for the notion of the essence of art as pure feeling. The strength of this change lies in the fact that feeling, unlike intuition, remains feeling even when its dialectical implications are fully explored. In normal usage, feeling involves three aspects: an innermost sense of experience; the feel of things, the way things feel when touched or felt; and the prehensive act of feeling, of touching or reaching out for something. A poem, then, even though it includes all three moments of the dialectical act of thinking, just as criticism does, differs from criticism by being dominated by feeling, by having feeling, the first moment of the dialectic, as its essence. Criticism, even though it must include the moment of feeling if it is to be in touch with the poem of its concern, is essentially not feeling, but thinking. The critic concentrates not on the poem as essence or the poem as object, but on the thoughtful act of feeling in which the poet strives to make the feel of things adequate to his innermost feeling. The critic's objective is to make what is impassioned lucid, to clarify the act of feeling so that it can be more fully experienced as the act it is, unlike any other act of feeling. If he finds that the poet lapses into abstraction or relational thinking, that he could not integrate feeling as immediate and the feel of things, then his characterization will include this finding as an adverse judgment.

Thus, retaining Croce's three moments of criticism in the modified form of a single act of feeling, characterization, and judgment, Gentile relates them in a logically rigorous way, as Croce could not, and also relates criticism and poetry as a concordia discors, an identity of opposites. Poetry and criticism are identical because containing the same three moments; they are different because poetry is dominated by one of those moments, criticism by another.

The main limitation of Gentile's enquiry into the relationship between poetry and criticism is that he does not consider how one distinguishes between a critical reading which attends to the individual nature of a poem in action and a critical reading which makes the poem up as it goes along according to the innermost feeling of the critic. In his earlier thought, when he still agreed with Croce that a poem is an intuition-expression, Gentile indeed claimed that a poem is a new poem with each new reading, so that his own criticism tended to be as irresponsible as that of Heidegger. Although Croce could not justify it philosophically, he always insisted that criticism can and must be faithful to the poem as written. In *The Philosophy of Art*, Gentile recognizes that a poem is not identical with its critical readings, that there is a difference as well as an identity between poetry and criticism. But he does not face the question of what it is in the finest criticism that ensures that its poetic subject will be recognized as an act distinct from itself as a critical act. Gentile's failure to account for the continuing identity of a poem in multiple readings is the main reason for his being neglected by contemporary Italian aestheticians.

It seems to me, however, that *The Philosophy of Art* at least suggests a way of overcoming this limitation. As a critic reads and attends to and articulates his sense of the individual articulation of the feeling of a poem, must he not be most attentive to the way in which the poet listens critically to his own articulation of feeling? The critic need not and should not be the only listener in his act of criticism. Indeed, if he is to treat the poem as an act and attend to its full actuality, his final responsibility is to articulate his sense of the difference between the poet's critical attention and his own. Thus, as he recreates and judges the poem, he must evoke a sense of the otherness of the poem as act from his own critical act and suggest the difference between the feeling dominating the poem and the feeling that moves him in his criticism. As a result, he would find that as he judges the poem, he is granting it the capacity to judge him. The difference between the poet's attentiveness and the critic's would, it is true, depend on the critic's present sense of it. But by pushing his attention to the point of eliciting the duality of attention involved in his criticism of the poem, he would free the poem, or at least move it to the verge of being free, for further readings by critics more perceptive than he is. Drawing this suggestion out may seem to tip the balance of Gentile's position from a dialectical unity containing duality to a dialectic whose unity is fundamentally dualistic. But if one considers Gentile's last book, the *Genesis and Structure of Society* (translated by H. S. Harris), it will be clear that he was moving in just that direction. Such a tendency is at least implicit, I believe, in *The Philosophy of Art*.

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The "Encyclopédie" by John Lough. New York: David McKay Co., 1971. Pp. xii + 430. \$10.00.

Usually the best introduction to a scholarly or a literary work is a reading of the work itself. Commentaries should come afterwards. But in the case of the great French eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie*, this is not sensible advice. Anyone today who simply tries to read it will be confused without being enlightened. The seventeen folio letterpress volumes and the eleven folio volumes of plates contain about 72,000 entries and about 2,900 engravings, an embarrassment of riches. The parts vary in quality: some are masterpieces; others are muddled, misinformed, too terse, or almost endless. Moreover, contradictions abound. The hundreds of collaborators sometimes differed in their ideas, and the editors, Diderot and d'Alembert, did not try to impose uniformity. There are, for example, articles on religion favorable to Catholicism, Protestantism, deism, scepticism, or atheism, articles on economics promoting governmental intervention and others arguing for governmental restraint. The reader needs guidance.

A scholar excellently qualified to supply such help is John Lough, Professor of French at the University of Durham, England. He has a sure grasp of the history of the Old Regime in general: his *Introduction to Seventeenth Century France* (Rev. ed., 1969) and his *Introduction to Eighteenth Century France* (1960) are two of the best surveys of those periods. Also, for some thirty years he has written about the *Encyclopédie*. Many of his studies have recently been collected in *Essays on the "Encyclopédie" of Diderot and d'Alembert* (1968) and *The "Encyclopédie" in Eighteenth-Century England and Other Studies* (1970). They reveal an admirable familiarity with the work, the result of immense research, a critical reading of sources, and balanced judgment.

His new book is his most ambitious. It is the first long general study of the *Encyclopédie* to appear in English. The three beginning chapters—sixty pages in length—are mainly about the history of the enterprise. Limitations of space make it impossible for Professor Lough to tell this complicated and absorbing story in as detailed and dramatic a way as Arthur M. Wilson has done in his superb scholarly biography of Diderot; but Lough's discussion has virtues of its own. On the early history of the *Encyclopédie*, on its subscribers, and on its various editions he is the authority in the field; and we now have a handy summary of his conclusions. Concerning the work's immediate predecessors and its contributors, too little is as yet known for any scholar to be more than suggestive, but Professor Lough makes some valuable remarks. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that not all of the early general encyclopedias were shorter than the *Encyclopédie* and that one of them, Zedler's *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, was a massive work which deserves to be examined as a noteworthy predecessor of the *Encyclopédie*.

The main part of Professor Lough's study consists of six chapters—over 300 pages in length—on the contents of the work in relation to the thought of the time. Here he is selective. He deals little with the *Encyclopédie* as a reference book; and if the reader wants additional knowledge about its treatment of history, literature, or the natural sciences, he should supplement Lough's account with information from two French surveys of the *Encyclopédie*—Pierre Grosclaude's *Un audacieux message: l'Encyclopédie* (1951) and especially Jacques Proust's *L'Encyclopédie* (1965). What Professor Lough chooses to stress is

the most radical ideas of the *Encyclopédie* on philosophical, religious, political, social, and economic matters, and how these differed from the orthodox thought of many contemporary critics. Never before has this been done so comprehensively. Thanks to Jacques Proust's *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie* (2nd ed., 1967), we know what ideas the chief editor contributed on such topics as Christianity, absolute monarchy, and mercantilism. Now thanks to Professor Lough we can compare all this to the articles of d'Alembert, d'Holbach, Jaucourt, Naigeon, Saint-Lambert, and other collaborators.

Professor Lough's conclusion is not startling, but it is sound. The *Encyclopédie*, restrained by repressive authorities, was less bold than the boldest writings of Diderot or Voltaire. Some of its views were in fact very conservative. Nevertheless, judged as a product of the 1750's and 1760's, of the era of Madame de Pompadour, it was a "rallying point for men of progressive ideas," and the orthodox rightly saw it as a threat to the status quo in France—to Catholicism, to absolute monarchy, and to many current economic and social practices. "Here was a work which breathed a new spirit, one which was hostile to tradition and authority, which sought to subject all beliefs and institutions to a searching examination." One might add that this anti-establishment position was combined with a respect for learning, a reliance on reason, and a manner of expression frequently designed to minimize offense rather than to shock or to confront.

Professor Lough's book is not easy to read. He discusses the ideas of a good number of Encyclopedists on numerous topics, sometimes in a seriated fashion. Also, there are so many long quotations in French that the book often resembles an anthology with running commentaries. This is intentional. Professor Lough, as he says in his preface, thinks that long quotations from the Encyclopedists and from their contemporary critics provide the reader with "a firsthand view of the outlook of the contributors" and allow one "to understand the true meaning of many of the articles in their eighteenth-century context." Like the *Encyclopédie* itself, this book is full of useful information and thoughtful observation, deserving and demanding careful study.

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A Kingdom for a Stage: The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays by Robert Ornstein. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972. Pp. xii + 231. \$11.00.

Neither their popularity in the age in which they were written nor the fact that they represent roughly a third of his canon has encouraged a critical interest in the history plays of our most talented playwright. While Professor Ornstein in his book on the subject points out that "in the past several decades" the history plays have been "rescued" from "relative neglect," the rescue, like the neglect, has been just that—relative. The examples he cites, moreover, underscore his observation that "though appreciation of the History Plays is greater now than it ever was before, so too perhaps is awareness of their flaws and imperfections." The subtitle of his own book announces clearly that his emphasis,

on the other hand, will be on the achievement of these plays. It has been some time since we have had a book from Professor Ornstein, but the publication of *A Kingdom for a Stage* assures us that the interval was well spent. The achievement of his own literary judgment is noteworthy, even when evaluated by the kind of criteria that one ought to apply to a critic, as Titania would put it, "of no mean rate."

Yet, just as the history plays of an artist even of the first rank will naturally vary, so will the individual comments of a critic of Mr. Ornstein's stature—and this is no damning by faint praise, for he consistently offers that which is worthy of consideration. When one has reservations or disagreements with him, it probably reflects more the tendency of Shakespeareans, even more than other critics, to judge harshly any work that does not fall within the province (or is it "provinciality"?) of their own enlightened view.

Surely among the most excellent sections of the first-rate book is his opening one on "The Artist as Historian," in which he argues not only that Shakespeare's history plays "are so different . . . from one another that it is difficult to generalize about their subject matter, much less about their dramatic and poetic qualities," but also that the plays are more experimental and daring in both structure and theme than are his comedies. Still even his own convincing argument does not blind him either to the links between the plays or to the chronological development of Shakespeare's art in the genre.

The chapter on *Richard III* is also one of his stronger chapters. Here he stresses the central issue as focusing upon Richard's being "better equipped to seize the crown than to wear it." It is in this same excellent chapter that he brilliantly argues for *peripetia* as more structural than peripheral.

Perhaps what one views as the weaker sections of the book again depends on the reviewer's own limited interest and perspectives. I, for example, found that my preference for *King John* made me see Shakespeare as more than bored with his task of writing, and the play's "poetry, characterization, and plotting" as more than merely "pedestrian" and "primitive." Perhaps this disagreement made me more conscious of the fact that at this point Mr. Ornstein seemed to be answering Tillyard and Miss Campbell more than those more recent critics who had come to the rescue of the neglected genre. I even wondered whether or not Mr. Ornstein had read the rather impressive introduction to the Signet edition of the play by William H. Matchett, that argues with far more development and acumen for Philip the Bastard as protagonist than any of the critics he chooses to refute. Of course, some of what Mr. Ornstein sees as "new" or "needed" in this and other chapters derives not only from answering older books, but also from the admirable dedication and enthusiasm of a critic for his subject.

My bias also leads me to see his chapter on *Richard II* as of far more importance than that on the *Henry VI* plays, perhaps because I find them far more boring than *King John*, let alone *Richard II*. In this last play, Mr. Ornstein sees not Tillyard's Elizabethan World Picture of Cosmic Order, but instead a dramatization of Shakespeare's "awareness of man's will to discover pattern and stability in a universe of disorder and flux." His development of such an inclusive view of what Aristototele may have meant by Unity of Action, allows him, I believe, a richer reading of the play than most less flexible readings.

A similarly inclusive reading of *Henry V* causes him to view the King neither

as simplistically Machiavel nor Ideal Prince, but as a man and King, who compares and contrasts with, teaches and learns from, an old fat knight, his rival, and his father, about the relationship of the public and the private man. The reading includes within it, for example, standard notions about different kinds of honor. While others have seen the significance of this central conflict, few have done so, so fully. The fact that Mr. Ornstein sees this same public vs. private man as central to *Richard II* as well attests not to his having mounted any thematic hobby horse. This becomes clear as he notes instead, the implications of a theme that undeniably provides a major focus in both plays.

Though there is no single theme dwelt on by Professor Ornstein (as if searching for a unity for the book in which he sees the plays as so individual) there is one element that does distinguish his work—his almost Delphic sense of balance. Thus while his forte is clearly that of the critic, he is repeatedly aware that a knowledge of performance and scholarship are among his necessary critical tools. When he speaks of Hal in *II Henry IV*, for example, he adds a note that reveals his eye for performance: "Of course an actor playing Hal can with a suppressed sob or two and gestures of silent grief present a Prince overwhelmed with sorrow." When he writes of *Henry VIII*, his understanding of the scholarship concerning the possible collaboration with Fletcher, leads him to focus on their individualistic recurring themes rather than on style and authorship merely as an end. When he surveys the past criticism of a play, he does so with an astuteness that questions even as it presents. For example, he demonstrates clearly and fully, I think, that we have too lazily accepted the view of that list of critics who see the disease imagery of *II Henry IV* as pervasive and incurable. When he reviews the criticism on *Richard II*, it is his questioning again that leads him and us to see in the play that "paradoxically, it is the would-be preservers of the status quo who become the agents of revolutionary change." When he speaks of the criticism which views the Ideal King as God's deputy, he notes with a balance that God is also usually an afterthought for Henry. While he is aware of pervasive Elizabethan attitudes that may have contributed to the shaping of Shakespeare's art, he is also balanced enough to observe that geniuses do not always share common attitudes. Although he is aware that Shakespeare is not our contemporary, his balance, like that of Ben Jonson, allows him to realize that Shakespeare wrote not only for his age, but for all time. Even when he repeatedly points to what he conceives to be a misplaced critical hypothesis or an improper emphasis in the work of Tillyard and Miss Campbell, it does not prevent him from appreciating what he has learned from them and from building upon their work. His criticism, then, is not merely iconoclastic. Like the history plays he criticizes, it is creative as well.

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A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton, Volume Two, The Minor English Poems. Ed. A. S. P. Woodhouse and Douglas Bush, with a Review of Studies of Verse Form, by Edward R. Weismiller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972. Part One: pp. xvii + 338. \$15.00. Part Two: pp. xi + 339-734. \$15.00. Part Three: pp. xi + 735-1143. \$15.00.

One of the qualities most imperative in a variorum edition is that the information (and speculation) therein compiled should be clearly and accurately presented. These volumes splendidly obey this imperative. In carrying through to completion Professor Woodhouse's work, left unfinished at his untimely death in 1964, Professor Bush has performed a fitting tribute to his life-long friend; and one may add that these volumes are in turn a tribute to Professor Bush's unremitting and unstinting industry. Doubtless there are inaccuracies and misprints, but doubtless they are very hard to find—indeed, for this reviewer, and up to this point, impossible.

The clarity in the arrangement of material is occasionally reduced by unavoidable necessities—for example, the editorial decision to take the minor poems in the non-chronological order of the Columbia edition, which followed the order of *Poems* (1673), so that one must remember that Part Two is devoted to *Lycidas* (and the sonnets), whereas Part Three is devoted to the earlier *Comus* (and the psalms, plus Weismiller's review of studies of verse form). And throughout, Bush sets himself the constant problem of preserving as much as possible of Woodhouse's text, which was left in widely-varying stages of completion. Hence the reader must become accustomed to the recurring use of square brackets, indicating Bush's additions, illustrations, comments, and occasional disagreements—bracketing sometimes single sentences, sometimes paragraphs, sometimes many pages, or even whole sections, as indicated by a bracketed [D.B.] after the section heading. But the user of these volumes will soon become accustomed to these procedures, and will be grateful for such clarifying details as the complete avoidance of appendices, the continuous pagination, the provision of a new (and less cryptic) set of abbreviations for individual titles to replace those in the Columbia *Works*, and for the relatively uncluttered Bibliographical Index (III.1089-1143), prepared with an eye to its usefulness, not its impressiveness.

Presumably the other chief imperative for a variorum is that it should truly reflect the variety of existing commentary on its subject. It is true that comprehensiveness leads inevitably to the recording of ill-informed guesses and ill-grounded objections that one wishes might be left to die of exposure on the mountainside. But these editors, although predictably they choose "to err on the side of inclusiveness" (I.x), are well aware of the unevenness of the materials they include, and are willing to be specific about the false premises, blind alleys, and red herrings that sometimes adorn their pages. One may begin to think dark thoughts while perusing the twenty pages (!) devoted to "that two-handed engine" (II.686-706), but at least the editors are able to distinguish "two-handed" from "double-edged", and it is somehow comforting to note Professor Woodhouse's irritation with those who run the two together. On the whole, one concludes that a novice student may be puzzled, but not really harmed, by wandering through the blind mazes of this tangled wood, accompanied by edi-

tors as humane and sensible as these. (The analogy, with disclaimer, is Professor Bush's—I.x).

Professor Weismiller's review of studies of verse form (III.1007-1087) will be vastly supplemented by his line-by-line annotations of prosody and related matters, including pronunciation, to comprise Volume Six in the series. To one not expert in these perilous waves, his review appears balanced and comprehensible—the latter no mean virtue when the talk begins to center on prosody. One is pleased at the judicious recognition of achievements as various as those of Robert Bridges and F. T. Prince, and a bit disappointed that the New Gram-marians have not yet given Professor Weismiller anything to review—but the disappointment cannot be directed at him.

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The Lyrics of Shelley by Judith Chernaik. Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1972. Pp. xxii + 303. \$12.50.

On the book's inside flap, Professor Pottle, himself one of Shelley's most distinguished readers, calls Prof. Chernaik "one of the best readers of Shelley I have ever come across" and her book "original and mature" and "without any polemicism," and the scholarly, clearly written, and intelligent book that follows fulfills a good deal of this promise, offering, as a bonus, over one hundred pages of newly-edited and corrected texts of the poems discussed in the first-half of the book. Together with the recent work of Abrams on Shelley's place in Romantic thinking about apocalypse and the complex philosophical readings of Earl Wasserman, *The Lyrics of Shelley* should go a long way toward refuting those charges of mawkishness, imprecision, and impalpability that twentieth century critics have brought against Shelley and which he has never quite managed to shake. There is a considerable distance between what used to be called the "licentious phrasing" of "The Cloud" and Mrs. Chernaik's remark that "any stanza" of the poem "will serve to illustrate the freedom and spontaneity of the imagery and its inventiveness in relation to natural fact." (133) Yet, there is something missing from her book which it is no easy matter to identify. Shelley's rival, Keats, would have rested his diagnosis on the observation that "there is nothing to be intense upon; no women one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into reality." I would have preferred to leave it at that but since the critical assumption behind what I am going to say—that while Mrs. Chernaik's book is an excellent "horse," it ought to have been a "tiger"—may be erroneous, I have the obligation to be more academic than Keats.

The book is devoted primarily to an analysis of the transformations the recurring images and themes of Shelley's lyric poetry undergo as one moves from "Mont Blanc" (Ch. Two) to the poems to Jane Williams like "The Magnetic Lady to her Patient" (Ch. Seven). Sometimes these analyses center around a poem or two as in Chapter Three: "The Human Condition" which is given over almost exclusively to an analysis of "Lines Written among the Euganean Hills," but more often each chapter contains "mini-essays" on three

or four related poems, as in Chapter Four on the "political" odes, which are continually being made to echo one another and other poems by Shelley as well. Everything in a Shelley poem reminds Mrs. Chernaik of something somewhere else: "The same terms [of "Ode to the West Wind"] are given a precise metaphorical meaning in a passage from *Laon and Cynthia*"; (96) "The peculiarly mature character of the poet's lament and prayer can be seen by comparing it to the invocation to *Alastor*;" and (as an example of an interesting failure to echo) "the very bareness of the last two stanzas, the absence of any statement comparable to that of the closing lines of "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" . . . make the conclusion of the poem susceptible to a number of interpretations." (95) Because Mrs. Chernaik can do this kind of circling back, around and through the poetry so well, she generates a sense of the cohesion and consistency of Shelley's poetry which, Lord knows, we have been hard pressed to see. But the technique is not completely satisfying, because it often seems a substitute for raising questions about form in Shelley and, above all, about his language, even though the examination of "The Figure of the Poet" in the opening chapter is supposed to function, I imagine, as the issue at stake in all these analyses and does, in fact, end with a good question: "How should we relate a theory of the imagination that insists upon its creativity, its power to inform and give value to life, with a symbolic rendering of the poet as passive, dependent, subject to a vision that can neither be summoned nor recalled . . .?" (29) That question can be asked in still more general terms than Prof. Chernaik asks it, but I do not believe it can be answered by the kind of analyses she makes of the poems. We need more than "As the body of the poem is framed by an allegory for human life, so the meditation is organized by the progress of the day from sunrise to sunset" (67) (and I do not believe I have misrepresented the weakness by choosing an untypical instance) to satisfy the claims of the question.

The problem appears as early as the "Introduction" to the book. "If we are to recover what the Romantic poet has to say to our age, we must return to the idea of poetry as comprehensive in scope, proposing a whole view of life, of society as well as the self, political and philosophical as well as psychological." (6) Who will not welcome such a return?—until he notices the fudging in "proposing." We cannot recover this view—and I concur that the problem is profoundly political in character—because we know very little about the Romantic *mode* of proposal. There is a book out there on the politics of Romantic form still to be written which will ask Prof. Chernaik's question but will have to proceed from a very different conception of poetic activity and of the "body" of a poem if it intends to show how the "poet's function is . . . to create in language the forms his imagination craves." (46) But in fact the whole point is whether it is even possible to create such linguistic forms when what the Romantic imagination "craves" is a form which shall also be a process. When Shelley refers to his language as "Daedal" or "subtler" we may feel he describes less than he thinks, but he obviously intends to convey a dissatisfaction with available and received forms. What can serve as a model in this poetic predicament? One might even define the Romantic poem as the first poem which had to be its own—and only its own—model, which explains, incidentally, why Romantic poetry is as often likely to be awful as it is powerful; Prof. Chernaik could use a surer sense of what in Shelley it is just not possible to redeem.

She does not transmit a sense of the excitement—and the embarrassment—that this exploration of the possibilities of form entails because, in part, her own models for deciding when the poems work, while they are part of the critical equipment we all assimilate, do not seem able to disclose the poem she affirms. Not the least of our debts to her book stems from its demonstration of the limitation of our approaches to Romantic poetry: as long as we continue to talk the critical language of those who have always mistrusted Romantic poetry the battle cannot possibly be won. The central Shelleyan text, set against the background of Demogorgon's view that "a voice/ Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless," will probably continue to be that investigation of the relationship of power to form which is stanza XLIII of *Adonais* on "plastic stress." The endlessly unfolding and openended character of all forms, natural and poetic, which I take that passage to celebrate raises questions about every degree of Romantic poetic activity: about the dynamics of poetic structure, about whether Romantic poems can "end," about the status of the poem as a single unit, and, in the case of Coleridge, about why we do not see the "wholeness" of his fragments. For this reason, I believe that the image of the organizing circle which Prof. Abrams' brilliant new book offers to us, and which Prof. Chernaik's readings often seem to imply, will not totally do. The best teacher of poetry I know believes that the explanatory model will turn out to be not geometric or mathematical but biological, and a colleague, who persuades me more than I care to be persuaded that art is a form of propaganda, is sure the model will be political. (How do we distinguish a progressive poetic form from a reactionary one?) In any case, while we are waiting, Prof. Chernaik's book significantly contributes to the debate.

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