

1967

## Book Reviews

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### Recommended Citation

Editors, Criticism (1967) "Book Reviews," *Criticism*: Vol. 9: Iss. 4, Article 7.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism/vol9/iss4/7>

## Book Reviews

*La Formation de la pensée de Coleridge (1772-1804)* by Paul Deschamps. Paris: Didier, 1964. Pp. 603. F58.

Professor Deschamps has written a very full and scholarly book on the development of Coleridge's thought up to the year 1804, when he went to Malta. The book is fuller than any other on its subject up to its date, and even later, for it is fuller than either J. A. Appleyard's *Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature* (1963) or D. P. Calleo's *Coleridge and the Idea of the Modern State* (1966), which are more specialized in subject. As for H. W. Piper's *The Active Universe* (1962), which has much of interest to say on Coleridge's thought, Deschamps knew the portion of it published as a paper in 1959. Deschamps relates in detail the growth of Coleridge's mind in all areas, aesthetic, poetic, philosophical, religious, political and social. He also discusses Coleridge's emotional and psychological vicissitudes, with penetration and without indulging in wild theories. The narrative, which covers half of Coleridge's life, extends to more than 600 pages not because of prolixity but because of the wealth of documentation. The book is so rich in this respect that it has been called a Coleridge anthology. The author during seven years has thoroughly explored the vast and increasing literature on Coleridge, the many new texts now being brought out, the voluminous correspondence, and the new monographs and papers, with the exhaustiveness expected in a French *Dissertation*.

His book is even fuller than Hanson's biography of Coleridge's early years to 1800, for although the latter includes many purely biographical details which Deschamps rightly omits, Deschamps covers a longer period and devotes more attention to the contents of Coleridge's writings. There is of course a very full bibliography and index, including copies of the lists of books borrowed at Bristol and at Göttingen. It is for all these reasons invaluable to Coleridge studies.

The portrait of Coleridge thus presented is thoroughly sympathetic, although Coleridge's shortcomings are neither ignored nor explained away, but put in their place, subordinated to his positive contributions to poetry and to thought. There was already in French another sympathetic portrait of Coleridge, by J. Aynard (1907), also very well informed up to its date. But it is now sixty years old, and Deschamps is up in all the modern discoveries, although he did not explore MSS. He also shows judgment in avoiding a number of traps into which other investigators have fallen. He does not try to find anything profound in Coleridge's earliest attempts at verse, his school compositions, in which both Plotinism and *Weltschmerz* have been detected. Deschamps rightly considers them "souvent des simples lieux communs, moraux ou philosophiques" (p. 57): "l'angoisse verra plus tard" (p. 47). He correctly shows the limitations of J. L. Lowes' famous book, whose great virtues have tended to conceal its shortcomings (pp. 71, 84, 421, 441, etc.). He hints doubts that Coleridge translated Synesius before he was fifteen (p. 61); confirmation of the doubts

will be found in Coleridge's letter of 26 March 1794 to his brother George, in which he says: "Synesius. . . . I mean to translate" (*CL*, I, 76-77). There are many such instances of judgment and perception, such as the observation of confusion in the ideas of the conversation poems (e.g., p. 412 and 431).

But Deschamps still accepts uncritically Lamb's account of Coleridge as a Bluecoat boy reciting Plotinus and Jamblichus in the original (p. 61 and cf. 379). First of all, Lamb speaks of Coleridge reciting "Homer in his Greek, or Pindar," and does *not* say that he recited Plotinus or Jamblichus in Greek; this makes the feat more believable. Secondly, the statement, as far as it goes, is not the independent testimony of Lamb, but goes back to Coleridge himself (*Unpublished Letters*, II, 274, as noted already by Miss Werkmeyster), and is not worth more than Coleridge's other recollections of his juvenile prowess. Hence there is no secure foundation for the accounts of Coleridge's familiarity as a schoolboy with the more important Neoplatonist philosophers. And when we come to consider more carefully what is meant by "thought" or *pensée*, certain other limitations begin to appear.

One may extend the meaning of "thought" to include not only intellectual activity of all kinds, but also every passing notion, every fleeting fancy or odd association of ideas, every dream and every psychological reaction to external or internal events. In this broad sense, Deschamps' title is justified: he endeavors to cover all this, as far as the evidence allows, with many interesting connections and illuminating references.

But if we limit "thought" so that it means only purely intellectual, and specifically philosophical, activity, then this book covers sometimes too much, sometimes too little. There is a tendency among literary students of Coleridge with little or no knowledge of philosophy to consider "philosophical" any expression of belief, however vague, in matters of religion or of ethics. In the Coleridgean context these students often speak vaguely of general trends such as "Platonism," "Neoplatonism," and "Christian Platonism," without specifying the precise philosophy to which they refer. Also, they tend to speak of these three trends as if they were all one and the same thing, which is worse. That one thing is made to consist in a vague and general belief in God and/or in immortality, with hints of mystical meanings and sentimental overtones. This is what Deschamps calls elegantly "la vision platonicienne" (Part III, Chapter ii). He is usually more definite than most of these students, but even he is not definite enough.

It is easy to see what is likely to happen when Kant, whom Coleridge studied seriously for many years and profoundly admired, is brought into this frame of reference. The philosophical innocents ask: "didn't Kant believe in God? and didn't he also believe in immortality? So he's also a Platonist, and there is no philosophical difference between him and any other member of the group—between Plato and Plotinus, Berkeley and Kant, or Cudworth and Kant: they all believed in the same things." Thus the most disparate philosophies, with the most opposite basic assumptions, are boiled down to an amorphous mass, and that is claimed to be Coleridge's "thought" (see for instance Deschamps, pp. 81 and 471).

But it so happens that Coleridge believed in philosophy: not in philosophy as vague belief or lackadaisical daydreaming, but in philosophy as a science. He ventured at times into occultism and mysticism; indeed he tried everything;

but at bottom he was deeply dedicated to the philosophic quest, to the search for truth by rational means, to "philosophy as a science," to which he devoted in particular one chapter of the *Biographia*, the Ninth. That chapter is the culmination of a philosophical argument running continuously through the four preceding chapters, and proceeding less continuously through the next four. This strictly philosophical argument, based upon German philosophy, and sometimes literally translated from it, is too often neglected by the students of Coleridge whom I have called "purely literary," or, to use Croce's famous phrase for Saintsbury, "*digiuni di filosofia*." In one edition of the *Biographia*, excellent in its literary commentary (George Sampson's, 1920), these philosophical chapters are altogether omitted. And from a purely literary point of view it is perhaps understandable; but Coleridge was not a purely literary man. After reading his unpublished *Logic* and other writings, one may even put up a claim for him as a philosopher, though not as great a philosopher as a poet and literary critic. Anyone who really wants to understand the mind of Coleridge must consider philosophy as a science. This means that the history of philosophy must be studied with the proper regard it requires both as a philosophical and an historical discipline; and in this Deschamps sometimes comes short.

For instance, take Cudworth, the philosopher who is supposed by the purely literary students of Coleridge to have supplied him in advance with the Kantian philosophy, a claim which alone shows an incredible lack of historical perspective, and of which there is some trace in Deschamps (p. 461). But Deschamps' acquaintance with Cudworth appears to be not only deficient but second-hand, for he repeats the error of Piper in speaking of Cudworth's "plastick natures" *in the plural*, thus equating them to monads (p. 412, n. 25), whereas for Cudworth "plastick Nature" is emphatically one, a kind of divine Providence that looks after the natural world, as Deschamps states more correctly on p. 402.

Again, Coleridge was well acquainted with the difference between "transcendent" and "transcendental" in the Kantian system, and explained it repeatedly: see *BL*, I, 64 and the *MS. Logic*, II, 208. Deschamps sometimes misses the difference, as the following passages will show. Speaking of "la théorie platonicienne de la réminiscence," (p. 382), he says:

"Ici c'est l'existence *transcendentale* des idées qui est envisagée dans un jour essentiellement poétique" (p. 383; italics mine).

The term "transcendental" was coined by Kant to mark the difference between his own philosophy and all previous systems of *metaphysics*, which he considered "dogmatic." It cannot therefore be applied to Plato's ideas, which if anything are "transcendent."

But Deschamps uses the latter term when he means "transcendental": speaking of the idealism to which Coleridge turned after his disillusionment with the philosophy of the Revolution and its empiricism, Deschamps says:

"Il existe dans l'esprit de l'homme un certain nombre d'idées, les réalités mathématiques en sont un bon exemple, qui ont une existence *transcendente*, c'est-à-dire qu'elles ne sauraient, dans leur universalité et leur perfection, être dérivées de l'expérience" (p. 381; italics mine).

"Transcendent" means something utterly beyond the range of human experience, and not a cognition *a priori* such as the mathematical idea of a circle. Those who think that the distinction between "transcendent" and

"transcendental" is trifling or a quibble, should stay away from Kant—and from Coleridge. These men took that distinction seriously.

Having grasped Kant's *Critique*, Coleridge was well aware also that previous metaphysical systems *a priori* were to be rejected as "dogmatic," and he repeatedly criticised the Cambridge Platonists (the group to which Cudworth belonged) for their lack of the critical approach, i. e. their failure to institute the preliminary inquisition into the validity (not the psychological operation) of the human cognitive faculties, which constitutes the *Critique of Pure Reason*: see *Literary Remains*, III, 157-58 and 415-16.

Deschamps instead can write: "Berkeley, Spinoza, les Platoniciens de Cambridge, les mystiques apporteront leur pierre à l'édifice que viendra couronner le transcendentalisme kantien" (p. 478).

But in the Transcendental Dialectic Kant had cut the ground from under all previous *a priori* metaphysical speculations, so that he cannot be used to "crown an edifice" built out of the theories of the Cambridge Platonists who, as Coleridge stressed, were ignorant of the critical philosophy, and necessarily so. The facts are rather the other way around. While all Coleridge's early studies contributed to his intellectual growth, and in that sense "prepared him" for Kant, what he finally attempted in his mature speculations was to ground the traditional beliefs of Christianity on the philosophical foundation provided by transcendentalism. Such a plan may not be feasible philosophically, but Coleridge was neither the first nor the last to attempt it. Deschamps has a glimpse of this when he says at his conclusion that Coleridge restored faith in the spirit "en s'appuyant solidement sur l'idéalisme allemand" (p. 541).

Regarding Coleridge's early study of Kant, it looks at times as if Deschamps ignored or minimized the evidence now available of Coleridge's earliest acquaintance with Kant. He apparently ignores Coleridge's statement, soon after landing in Germany, and in contradiction to a distinguished German poet, Klopstock, that "all are Kantians whom I have met with" (*CL*, I, 444). He omits to quote Prof. Wilkinson's excellent analysis of the notebook entry of 1799 already noted by Chinol, which he quotes on pp. 456, n. 7, and 509, n. 107. Prof. Wilkinson concludes "that his (Coleridge's) philosophical powers were already so highly developed that he could make, *en passant* but with complete sureness, the kind of inference only possible to someone familiar with the fundamental issues involved" (*NB*, I, Notes, p. 452). On the other hand, Deschamps is sound in accepting 1801 as the date of Coleridge's study of the Transcendental Aesthetic, rejecting Lovejoy's alternative hypothesis, even though that also is at bottom a Kantian idea (p. 470), and in limiting the extent or the depth of this first serious study of the *Critique* on the reasonable grounds that if Coleridge had then gone deeper into Kant, there would be traces of it in his notebooks, as there are in 1803 (p. 458, n. 19). In the latter year Coleridge takes up Kant in considerable detail, although characteristically shifting to a different work, and Deschamps gives a good account of it (pp. 469-78), as Coburn gave an excellent typographical rendition.

The purely literary students of Coleridge seem to make sometimes the assumption that to admit any derivation from German thought is derogatory, implying a lack of originality, if not actually the nasty charge of plagiarism that was hurled at Coleridge in the 19th century. But there is an alternative which they

do not consider: that Coleridge's borrowings and derivations from German thought were not a blemish but a virtue, a positive contribution to English thought, and that in taking over Kant and Schelling lay Coleridge's originality. Even now English thought has something to learn from Coleridge: to study Kant.

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that Professor Deschamps will in time complete his study with another volume, carrying the account to 1834, but with a more exact account of philosophy, both ancient and modern.

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*Coleridge and the Idea of the Modern State* by David P. Calleo. Yale Studies in Political Science, 18. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966. Pp. viii + 157. \$5.00.

The further we recede from Coleridge's age the easier it is to see his political thought in perspective. Yet there is a danger that what we gain in objectivity we lose in personal engagement. One of the great virtues of Mr. Calleo's excellent study is that it combines exemplary scholarship and serious commitment to vital political issues. On every page he demonstrates the truth of his contention that it is Coleridge's "extraordinary suggestiveness" that makes him "in politics, as in many other fields, so rewarding a subject for close and imaginative study." As the introduction makes clear, he is not concerned with Coleridge's political influence on nineteenth-century thought, pervasive as that was, but with his idea of the state and the relevance of this to modern constitutional problems. In discussing his timeless relevance, he does not make the common error of claiming too much for Coleridge. For example, he says quite frankly and unequivocally that Coleridge's essay on International Law in *The Friend* is haphazard and ignores the problem of the good man in the bad state. He recognizes too that Coleridge's plans for a National Church were somewhat unrealistic, since the Church of England however broad could never become the "general guild of the intellectuals in the contemporary world" that Coleridge thought it should.

While it is absolutely true that the distinction Coleridge drew between the National Church and the Church of England is not wholly satisfactory, he did devote more thought to the problem than is apparent from Mr. Calleo's discussion. For example, his marginal comments on Bishop Blomfield's *Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, 1830* reveal how deeply concerned with the practical implications of this distinction he was, while his extensive notes on Richard Baxter's writings usefully supplement the argument in his last work, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, carefully underlining the point that "two distinct trusts and functions may be vested in and exercised by the same person." But, on the whole, Mr. Calleo has made excellent use of Coleridge's unpublished writings to clarify his published views. Thus on pages 77-8 two skilfully selected passages substantiate the claim that Coleridge's psychological definition of the state is expressed more clearly in the Notebooks than in *Church and State*.

Underlying the whole study is a serious preoccupation with two related

problems: consensus and constitutionalism. Like John Stuart Mill, whose misunderstanding of Coleridge's terms "permanence" and "progression" is ably corrected, Mr. Calleo admires Coleridge's unique awareness of the complex factors that unite people in a National State. The essays in *The Friend* on Hobbes and Rousseau are indeed unfair to those great writers, but they have a timeless relevance, since they demonstrate clearly that neither a theory of coercion nor the idea of "man in a rational world of tidy universals" offers a satisfactory explanation of political cohesion. By recognizing the mixed and often irrational nature of man, Coleridge is able to offer instead a psychology of man and society that is neither doctrinaire nor reactionary but does justice to the permanent realities of social behaviour.

Mr. Calleo succeeds very well in illustrating that Coleridge's idea of the state embodies psychological, historical, and philosophical elements. The first two gave it a sound empirical basis, while the latter, concerned with the Constitution as a particular national reflection of an ideal Constitution, is more metaphysical and therefore more open to challenge. Basil Willey and many others have elucidated the complex argument of *Church and State*, but no one has established so clearly its modern relevance. As Mr. Calleo rightly says, *Church and State* is "more than a sentimental, if imaginative, defense of a passing order."

In addition to disentangling what is of permanent interest from what is merely ephemeral in Coleridge's political writings, Mr. Calleo draws attention to the supreme importance of the exercise of the "political imagination" for any society. Scattered references to Coleridge's recognition of its vital function are so illuminating that one wishes that the theme had been more fully developed. But perhaps Mr. Calleo will take this up in a more general study of the role of the political imagination in modern society.

In chapter seven there is an interesting explanation of Coleridge's unwillingness to grant political power on the basis of intellectual distinction. It has always seemed a somewhat perverse and reactionary view, difficult either to defend or explain. But Mr. Calleo succeeds in making this view intelligible. The course taken by the French Revolution seemed to Coleridge to establish beyond doubt the subversive nature of the rootless intellectual—Reason divorced from Understanding. Rights asserted at the expense of corresponding Duties. The situation in Africa today offers a modern parallel. Although there was nothing comparable in England to the strong anti-clerical tradition in France (English radicalism and dissent only rarely assuming extreme revolutionary forms), Coleridge feared that to grant political power solely on the grounds of education or intellect might endanger both church and state. If property were free to circulate the intellectual should not remain permanently disenfranchised. Coleridge saw society as an ever-changing dynamic organism.

What are the responsibilities of the clergy? The problem is still with us, even if we do not normally use this term to describe our educators and guardians of culture. In seeking to reveal the contemporary relevance of Coleridge's ideas, Mr. Calleo's preoccupation with the role of the academic in American society leads him to a rather unscholarly use of Coleridge's ideas about the importance of first principles and the powers of the "recluse genius." He seems almost to suggest that withdrawal from direct action is the price the university teacher should be willing to pay for his privileged position in society. Whatever Coleridge may have said about those at the fountain heads of civilisation being in possession

of seminal ideas and refraining from premature action, he neither advocated withdrawal nor withdrew himself. He wrote pamphlets, gave political lectures, and lobbied members of parliament. However, this is the only occasion on which the attempt to establish modern parallels leads to a slight perversion of Coleridge's idea. Mr. Calleo's book is a notable addition to the rapidly growing literature on Coleridge's politics. As it appears in the *Yale Studies in Political Science*, it should succeed in convincing political philosophers that Coleridge's idea of the state has something more than mere historical interest.

JOHN COLMER

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*Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold* by A. Dwight Culler. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966. Pp. 303. \$7.50.

Matthew Arnold lives! "No Arnold could ever write a novel," Professor Culler is fond of quoting the poet, but he has virtually made him the hero of one, treating his quirks and qualities as authoritatively as those of a fictional character. *Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold* casts Arnold in the unexpected role of *piccaro*, and if Professor Culler makes him a refreshingly loveable scamp he is also willing to administer some pretty sharp corrective raps, when needed. We smile at the thirteen-year-old's earnestness, chuckle when Marguerite gives the young lover a taste of his own medicine (Arnold, sphinx-like even to his closest friends, complained she was not frank with him), and frown at his uncharitable poetic treatment of Harriet Martineau. Even when Professor Culler strongly scores Arnold for having abandoned the noble concept Joy for the distinctly lower social value Charm, he does it with love and the leaven of good humor. His tone, indeed, is fairly uproarious at times.

The sheer readable fun rests on a solid intellectual base. Professor Culler has previously identified Matthew Arnold's "symbolic landscape, a group of related figures, and the myth or history of their lives," in the introduction to his *Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold* (1961). In *Imaginative Reason* he fills in his outline so that it becomes an extremely persuasive model of how to read—and to teach—Arnold's poetry. Briefly, he traces the growth of the poet's mind, in terms of the poetry as it moves from Romantic isolation in "the Forest Glade" through social disillusionment on "the Burning (or Darkling) Plain" to reconciliation with the self and with the world in "the Wide-Glimmering Sea." Professor Culler discusses the various roles possible in each of these symbolic settings, and their linkage by the journey down the River of Life. It is all very plausible and useful, an imaginative recreation of a poetic universe.

There must, of course, be objections. The reviewer's reach must exceed the critic's grasp, or what's a notice for? *Imaginative Reason*, then, seems a bit pat in its discussion of the third division of the Arnoldian myth. To identify "the Wide-Glimmering Sea" as an image or place of reconciliation is to imply a coming together of various people and points of view, or one man's reintegration of scattered faculties and fragmentary perceptions. This is perfectly adequate in a discussion of Arnold's personal development. But in his poetry the sea is

more often a place of *dissolution*. As Professor Culler himself declares, Arnold's "image of the Sea of Life . . . is precisely comparable to the darkling plain." Bitter and divisive, few of Arnold's seas are of the wide-glimmering variety. Usually they are wet hells, salt and estranging. His more familiar image for cosmic process, "the life-circulation of nature," is as Professor Culler points out "the movement of the stars, the endless flowing of great rivers, and all that is denoted by the phrase 'the general life.'" It is, for example, the River Oxus, not the waiting sea, which provides the cyclic movement and hope of joy in *Sobrab and Rastum*. The sea may be used as a symbol of universal reconciliation but, in company with virtually all Nineteenth Century poets except Tennyson, Arnold himself does not habitually or even often use it this way.

However, this is a minor difficulty. Much more important are the things Professor Culler succeeds in doing so easily and so well, such as when he pinpoints the distinctive quality of Arnold's elegy, "an instrument of change rather than of permanence." He quietly demonstrates the relevance of history and biography to poetic criticism, with more effect than a polemical assertion. He almost incidentally yet with great authority distinguishes Romantic and Victorian poetry, the more convincingly for his tact. For he never closes the door on those who would hold that Blake, after all, controls the three-fold myth underlying Arnold's poetry. "Forest Glade" and "Burning Plain" correspond to Innocence and Experience, "the Wide-Glimmering Sea" and its more satisfactory equivalent "Imaginative Reason" resemble closely the third term in the Blakean dialectic, the Marriage of Heaven and Hell. In Professor Culler's more Arnoldian statement of the idea, religion and science are united and transcended by poetry, or the lives of "the Children of the Second Birth." The Blakean concept of vision seems to underlie Arnold's view that poetry embodies abstract moral truth; the Scholar Gypsy lives in the poet's dream of the Forest Glade, disappears in the awakening on the Burning Plain, yet at the last proves an unquenchable reality "without the poet's beginning to dream again." Blake's Vision would seem very close to Professor Culler's definitions of Imaginative Reason: the faculty which recreates the living idea behind a myth; a joy without illusion "acceptable to the adult as well as to the youth"; Arnold's "own personal myth embodied in human history."

ALLAN DANZIG

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*The World of Marcel Proust* by Germaine Brée. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966. Pp. 295. \$3.50. Cloth, \$1.95. Paper.

Germaine Brée is no newcomer to Proust studies. Years of familiarity have further deepened and widened her command of the subject. She moves with ease and complete mastery through the Proustian creation. What is more, she can be trusted. She is not out to propose revolutionary interpretations. Her modest and valuable book profits fully from work done by others, as well as from her own former research. At a time when literary criticism tends to be dogmatic, and critics feel that it is both honorable and intelligent to be intolerant of each other,

Germaine Brée clearly represents the view that exegesis, though bound to be personal, should fit into a collective effort to understand and appreciate a writer's vision.

The qualities of her book are obvious. It goes directly to essentials, and its style is vivacious. The general reader, especially the student penetrating into Proust's novel for the first time, will be grateful for a balanced, comprehensive approach. Those more familiar with *A la Recherche du temps perdu* will appreciate the de-emphasis of the traditional view of Proust as a dandy and a snob, the stress laid on the earlier writings (especially *Jean Santeuil*, with its interesting use of a narrator), the unwillingness to read Proust's work as a biographical novel or a *roman à clef*—and above all, the quite meritorious attempt of the critic (and here Miss Brée is faithful to Proust's own prescription) to use the work of the writer as the only reliable dictionary with which to assess and control his meanings.

The organization of the study allows for a substantial section dealing both with Proust's life and with the social and cultural climate of the period; another section surveying his early writings (*Les Plaisirs et les Jours, Jean Santeuil*); but the bulk of the book is given over to a study of the great novel from a variety of points of view, and takes into account problems of technique, thematic developments, recurrent patterns, and the webs of metaphors which contribute to the opulent texture and structure of the work.

Such a general presentation, no matter how bright and sophisticated, obviously excludes the possibility of exploring any single area in depth. Yet Germaine Brée succeeds, at almost every point, in making incisive comments which could lead to further developments, and which ought to be of great value to the student. This informative and stimulating function is, after all, the chief aim in writing a general study such as this. The author's comments range over a wide area: Proust's ability to remold in retrospect, his awareness of the "spectacular" quality of social life, his notion of art as a mental construct, his central theme of identity in metamorphosis, the ironic destruction of private myths and the even more ironic fact that this very destruction is illusory, the principle of discontinuity as fundamental to the Proustian character creation, the satire of society's parasitic exploitation of art and artists, the novel's meaning not in terms of a past recaptured but of a determinism transcended.

The very qualities of this book imply some limitations. There is no central thesis (is this a defect?), and the most fertile ideas are never thoroughly exploited. Beyond that, it is certain that every reader will be able, if he chooses to be lukewarm to the positive aspects of this study, to list his own favorite notions which are here, perchance, neglected. I myself would have welcomed some more patient analyses. The extraordinary opening pages (the images of the bed, of the traveler, of metempsychosis) deserve, it seems to me, closer scrutiny. The Swann episode is rightfully presented as an immense paradigm of other loves in the novel. But is it not proleptically rooted in the very anguish of Marcel as he waits, in bed, for Françoise's intercession with his mother precisely during a visit of Swann whom he (erroneously!) imagines incapable of understanding a suffering such as his? And does Germaine Brée not fail to underscore one of the most fundamental Proustian themes: the fecundity of unhappiness?

But these are matters of emphasis. They in no way mar a study distinguished

for its sensitivity, its profound knowledge of Proust, and its ability to communicate insights with lucid enthusiasm.

VICTOR BROMBERT

*Yale University*

*Yeats At Work* by Curtis B. Bradford. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965. Pp. xvii + 407. \$12.50.

The power and mystery of artistic creation is by no means an obsession peculiar to the twentieth century. It has been a topic of perennial fascination and speculation since ancient times. What manner of man is the artist? Whence comes his "inspiration"—the word itself denoting the presence of a god, or Muse, breathing a divine vision into a mortal mind? What eternal principles of truth and beauty can be discerned in or deduced from the work of art?

But if such questions are not new, the modern search for their answers is often a departure from traditional methods of criticism. For it is only recently that authors have left, in their successive manuscript drafts, a record of the changes which slowly brought about the finished work. And it is in this fossil record of evolution, rather than in the author himself or in the final product, that some modern scholars and critics seek to read the riddle of creation.

Let it be said at once that this search, though it turns up many discoveries of interest and sheds light on some subsidiary matters, fails to penetrate to the sanctuary of Apollo. Deeper than critical or scientific plummet has yet sounded lie the springs of artistic life. It is in vain that the most painstaking scholar tracks the great lyric through change after change, seeking the key that will unlock its inmost secrets. The poem itself, when once in Yeats's words it has come right "with a click like the closing of a box," is no less than ever a miracle, the final proof of godlike power. It is to this fact—the final resistance of the creative process to textual analysis—that Professor Bradford's book most eloquently testifies.

That said, the interest of such a study to specialists can be acknowledged. It does tell us a good deal about Yeats's methods of composition, and it clarifies some ambiguous passages and authorizes certain readings rather than others. It shows how the poet worked toward maximum energy coupled with maximum simplicity of diction and phrasing, so that the finished version of a poem is both more dynamic and more colloquial than the earlier drafts. It shows the steady progress toward increasing correctness of type: toward making a ballad, say, conform more fully to the poet's abstract ideal of what a ballad should be. And it reveals Yeats's constant effort to find the fresh word, to make the scene or action of poem or play increasingly vivid sensuously.

The two most important points which emerge from Professor Bradford's study are the major rôle played by form in the shaping of the final poem, and the struggle Yeats had to develop and control his "personae." These two points alone would justify such a study, for the first shows us something, however dimly, about the creative process itself, and the second throws light on the difference in quality and in kind between Yeats's earlier and later, less and more successful poems.

Young students of poetry, as all teachers of it know, have always to be coaxed out of their conviction that the content, the *what*, of any passage is the important thing. They have to be shown that, in John Ciardi's phrase, in poetry it is not the *what* but the *how* that counts. Auden tells us that a young man who says he wants to be a poet because he has something to say will never write good verse. "But if," this practised poet continues, "he says he likes fooling around with words, listening to what they do," why then there may be hope for him. Yeats's manuscripts show how true this is. Poems are made of words, and words have sound, shape, rhythm, and infinite variety of effect in different combinations. They appeal primarily to the senses, only secondarily to the mind. The first thing Yeats did was to set his form; once he had set it, he rarely changed. He tries lines with three or four stresses before deciding on three; he finds the stanza form he wants; he sets his rhyme scheme very early, and clings to it while the entire context changes around it. Form, to a large extent, controls meaning.

Much of Yeats's revision of his later poetry, Bradford finds, is concerned with developing and controlling the expressiveness of his personae. One source of the limitation of Yeats's early poetry, up through *The Wind Among the Reeds*, is the vagueness and abstractness of their personae. The voice speaking in them is not sharply enough defined. Gradually Yeats came to believe that poetry, above all, is memorable speech, and that speech comes from a man. A poem, then, must be a personal utterance; but it is a personal utterance controlled, refined, objectified out of "the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast." In "The First Principle" Yeats says, "A poet writes always of his personal life . . . he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria . . . he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete." Yeats's principal problem in revision, his manuscripts reveal, was to refine "the accident of a particular man involved in an actual situation in the alembic of his imagination," as Bradford puts it. When the trouble was serious, Yeats would write draft after draft until he had transmuted accident into permanence. To the effort to attain this public mode of speech, developed and controlled out of private experience, the successive changes in his manuscript drafts testify, as the final result testifies triumphantly to his success.

Students of Yeats will be grateful for Professor Bradford's patient and thorough scholarship, though they may reject the more extravagant claims his publishers make for the results of his study.

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*Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. Murray Krieger. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966. Pp. x + 203. \$5.00.

"The devil's advocate," W. K. Wimsatt says, "is not called in until the prospect of canonization is imminent." It's clear from this volume, however, that we needn't worry about canonization in the candidate's lifetime. It consists of an introductory essay by the editor, a letter from Frye addressed to the original

meeting, the Conference papers by Angus Fletcher, W. K. Wimsatt and Geoffrey Hartman respectively defending, attacking and weighing Frye's work, a brief comment on the three papers by the subject himself, and an excellent checklist (by John E. Grant) of writings by and about Frye. These lively, witty and rather disjointed proceedings resemble as printed not so much a premature canonization as a premature trial for heresy.

Murray Krieger delivers the general indictment in his introduction. The original papers, he says, do not relate Frye sufficiently to "the modern critical tradition" as defined by Krieger and his new apologists for poetry. Frye's work and theirs is "little less than mutually exclusive." Frye is an irresponsible Ariel whose flights must be checked by the spirit of gravity. Krieger revives Hulme's mischievous and naïve distinction between romanticism and classicism to contrast Frye's "lunar dialectic" and "romantic escapism" with the tragic vision, classical and existential, which accepts man's radical flaw. For less impressionistic anathemas, however, we have to turn to Wimsatt and Hartman.

Hartman argues that "Frye's criticism and an historical approach differ more than we are led to believe." First, as an attempt to find ideas of order in secular history, Frye's mythical method is insufficiently heuristic. His "consciously spatial . . . concept of literary structure" seems to evade "the fact that literature unfolds in time rather than quasi-simultaneously in space." Second, "Frye's system reposes on a tacit assumption of the authenticity of myth." His interpretation of literature by "displacement" is analogous to the use of "accommodation" in Biblical hermeneutics. But, since we don't share an official theology, Frye can't show us an unaccommodated state of myth. Third, Frye's "concept of a verbal universe" abstracts language from its concrete historical settings. Frye forgets that a verbal fiction mediates reality only in "the course of a particular."

Angus Fletcher attends to Hartman's first two objections. (Fletcher, Frye, Krieger and Wimsatt all slight the third, although it is crucial to the relationship between Frye and the orthodox New Critics). In the first half of his essay Fletcher analyzes *Anatomy* as historical criticism. In the second half, he makes a brilliant case for the work as a post-Hegelian history of the imagination. It is an "anatomy," by Frye's own definition a form of fiction which "presents us with a view of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern." Anatomies are often utopias, ideal visions of the goals of society. Fletcher calls Frye's work "utopian history" because it is built on the modern liberal vision of the cultivated imagination as the "great instrument of moral good." Frye's phenomenology of the spirit presents two contrary movements within Western history. His evolution of the "idea of the hero" reveals the poets' "increasingly liberal perception that man as a social or political being has become gradually less free." This "epic struggle for imaginative freedom" culminates in private, not public, apocalypse. Frye's metahistory doesn't depend, as the millenarian historicist's does, on cycles which have in fact "*a priori* temporal duration." It restores to criticism what Eliade calls the "sacred time" of myth.

W. K. Wimsatt makes the commonsense attack on Frye's "Gnostic mythopoeia," which he calls in one particularly Johnsonian outburst "an extreme and violent conjunction of schematism and concreteness." Frye, he says, "wants all the idealism, autonomy and absoluteness of a subjective humanization but at the same time a highly concrete typology." Frye, like Blake, "would number the

streaks of the mythic tulip." Wimsatt wittily describes Frye as a visionary critic in the sense in which Frye finds Chatterton and Macpherson visionary poets. Frye writes "criticism as myth." Like his predecessors, he finds it necessary to authenticate his vision by creating pseudepigrapha. Wimsatt is not as tolerant, however, of *criticism* by "the oracular process of composition." Frye gets away with "violations of logic and order" because his style itself is "discontinuous . . . aphoristic . . . oracular." His diction evokes "a lurid glow, a feeling of rituals enacted in the deepest recesses of the racial past." But, "for the rest of us," Wimsatt asks, "what if the cast of critical characters should all turn out to be phantoms?"

This question displays the trial for heresy. It is a demand to know if Frye's religion is true. Wimsatt and Krieger refuse to acknowledge the hypothetical nature of Frye's mythopoeia. At bottom, perhaps, they don't agree with him that man is the symbol-making animal, that all his knowledge is constructed "as if." The tension Wimsatt finds between belief in the mythic tulip and desire to number its streaks, or that Hartman finds between Frye's "evangelical" and "scientific" tendencies, expresses the plight of all modern systematizers. Readers of Frye won't find much new in his notes on his critics, but they will find him, as usual, eloquently inviting his critics to clarify the alternate myths into which they incorporate his specific insights while rejecting his system. Frye proposes, in Hartman's phrase, "to demysticize and democratize" criticism by offering a conceptual model open to experiment. Both Fletcher and Hartman recognize our desperate need for a paradigm which would organize our "museum without walls." To Frye's "*e pur si muove*" Krieger responds, "Heresy!" and Wimsatt, "Witchcraft!" Hartman is our "scientist." Even though he objects, for example, that Frye's "displacement" has no demonstrable origin, he says the concept "is empirically sound; it works; it is teachable." And by trying it out Hartman has found Frye's most important specific contribution to literary theory, "the permanence of Romance." Fortunately, the fate of Frye's system is probably in the hands of empiricists like Hartman.

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