

Book Reviews

***Coup d'Oeil at Beloeil and a Great Number of European Gardens.* By Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne. Translated and edited by Basil Guy. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991. Pp. 304. \$95.00.**

It is my conviction that the Prince de Ligne's achievement, so splendidly translated and commented upon by Basil Guy, cannot be appreciated unless one is acquainted with that perennial Gallic virtue called *goût*. Indeed, an understanding of Voltaire's adage: "Il y a du plaisir à n'avoir pas de plaisir" (*Candide*), reformulated 150 years later in Valéry's epigram: "Le goût est fait de mille dégoûts" is a precondition for the appreciation of Basil Guy's knowledgeable introduction to, and translation of, *Coup d'Oeil sur Beloeil*. But, *goût*, like love, is hard to come by, and even harder to analyze by means of contemporary criticism which, although very learned and abstract, tends to disregard Voltaire's and Valéry's precepts. To be sure, one could turn the Prince's predilection for grottoes into Freudian values; similarly, one could write essays on the sexual significance of his love of flowers, or even sink to the level of unjustifiable *Wortspiele* by dissecting the pun which heads the work under discussion. Such approaches, while they serve a useful function in our age, strike me as inappropriate in the evaluation of the Prince's achievement as well as that of his interpreter, Basil Guy.

The handsome volume before me is a CENTENNIAL BOOK published by the University of California Press in 1991, one of a hundred books chosen as an example of the UC Press's finest tradition meant to celebrate the beginning of the second century of its existence.

The contents of *Coup d'Oeil sur Beloeil* are organized as follows. It begins with a preface and introduction by Basil Guy to which I shall return later. The remainder of the work is divided into four sections: I. Coup d'Oeil at Beloeil; II. The Surroundings; III. Coup d'Oeil at the

Handsome Sites and Natural Gardens; IV. Coup d'Oeil at Artistic Gardens, followed by Appendices, Bibliography and Index.

In his preface Guy stresses that despite the current interest in eighteenth-century garden art and literature among Anglo-Saxon critics, the *Coup d'Oeil* is rarely included in their discussions—an omission which, according to him, is a regrettable oversight, given the charm of the Prince's meditations—"charm" being another word which has been put to rest by the second *fin de siècle* critics. We learn that Ligne was an intimate of Maria-Theresa and Joseph II as well as everyone's favorite at Versailles, especially Marie-Antoinette's (*les mauvaises langues disent que . . .*); furthermore, we are told that he was a friend of "Catherine le Grand" (the Prince's quip). To boot, he was Talleyrand's crony—in short, he was one of the "happy few" who knew the perhaps mythic *douceur de vivre* of the *Ancien Régime*—a sweet life already mellowed by inexplicable preromantic tears.

Space does not permit me to do justice to Guy's introduction which is not the lesser part of his *oeuvre*. I shall, therefore, only stress some of his crucial insights. Guy insists that "Ligne never really achieved the consecration of his life and labors, however, at least not in matters military" (1), although he had been a brave soldier in many battles. Neither fanatic nor charlatan, the Prince offers us "the portrait of the perfect cosmopolitan at a time when that ideal was about to disappear" (60). In the words of Mme. de Staël, he was a "phenomenon" (6).

In 1766, the Prince inherited *Beloil*—located near the Belgian-French border, about ten miles from Mons—and proceeded to metamorphize this magnificent property between 1770 and 1792. Assisted by the architect François Joseph Bélanger and Jean-Baptiste Bergé, he sought, in the words of Guy, "to harmonize science and poetry, logic and fancy, past and present" and created a garden teeming with *follies*, *quincunxes* and *Ha-Has* (let the reader consult the dictionary!). The renown of this aristocratic soldier as a master gardener became so great that he even played a role in the planning of the *Petit Trianon*—an existential contradiction matched only by the incongruous fact that his contemporary, Choderlos de Laclos, artillery general and best of husbands, was the author of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Financially ruined, the Prince spent his last years on the Kahlenberg near Vienna—today, a favorite spot of

the Viennese who fancy cool breezes, strudel and good coffee. He could also be seen rolling about the Imperial Capital in a broken-down carriage. It should be added that he was buried on the Kahlenberg with all the honors due to a *Feldmarschall*.

I have already referred to the general plan of *Coup d'Oeil sur Beloeil*. In part I, the Prince reflects on the family seat, its history and, most intriguing, ". . . his vision of what *Beloeil* might become" (20). In part II, he describes nearby estates which belonged to his family until 1794. In part III, he delves into the inherently paradoxical notion of a "natural garden" characterized by the phrase "innate appropriateness" (20). Part IV deals mainly with the difference between "artistic" and "natural" gardens and reinforces the argument in question by references to estates in England, Italy, Russia, Poland, France, the Low Countries, Austria and the Germanies (as they were known). In other words, the Prince was a *comparatiste* not only as regards skirmishes and skirts, but also in matters pertaining to gardens.

Like Sade and Laclos, he loved Rousseau. His primary model was Virgil's *Georgics* and it is implicit that he knew his Latin. By the same token, he was well versed in classical mythology. His favorite poet was l'Abbé Delille, author of *Les Jardins*. Guy views the Prince's effort as part of a ". . . tradition of creative literature in which fiction and imagination had an important role, encouraging the re-creation of Western culture beyond the walls of dwelling and city—beyond even the pages of a text—in nature and in life" (24). The most important example of this eighteenth-century tendency, if not the earliest, is the "Elysée de Julie" in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. I said that the Prince loved Rousseau and I ought to add that he did not understand him. But, then, who did? Who does?

The Prince's ideals waver between the Englishman Kent and Le Nôtre, and it is questionable whether he could have succeeded in achieving a synthesis of his ideals given the antithetical nature of the typical English and French garden. As for the Dutch and their tulips, he scorned them whereas, strange as it may seem, he fancied *à juste titre* the gardens of Provence. In any case, to be French is, by definition, not to be English, and the contrary is almost unthinkable.

Guy grants much importance to the Prince's concept of flowers. For him, claims Guy, ". . . all vegetation had its symbolic even heuristic value" (36). Moreover, the Prince was fascinated by pebbles, stones,

boulders and rocks, not to mention precipices, caverns, grottoes, cliffs and hillocks beautified by various inscriptions. L'Abbé Delille furnishes a perfect example of this mania, for did not the poet-priest supply the motto for an inscription on a gigantic boulder at Morte Fontaine, Oise: "The indestructible mass has wearied Time." Intimations of Einstein? Guy points out that Rousseau had resorted to similar effects in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, reminding us, however, that Jean-Jacques's literary graffiti were but incidental. The Prince's main thesis is the superiority of Nature and simplicity—a thesis which criticizes the raging passion of *chinoiserie*, especially odious to Jean-Jacques who so much loved England before his exile to the isle of porridge and pudding. *A propos*, I should call attention to another book by Basil Guy, entitled, *The French Image of China* (Voltaire Foundation, 1963). After all, Milord Bomston couldn't be expected to thrive in the midst of flower-beds à la Medici, despite the undeniable fact that Jean-Jacques spent some of his happiest hours in the formal gardens of Chenonceaux, all the while haunted by visions of Mme. Dupin, decked out in her laciest décolleté. But, to return to our Prince. His ideal was picturesque gardens patterned on English models.

Thus, to read Basil Guy's book is to learn a great deal not only about sundry eighteenth-century gardens, but also about the eighteenth century in general, which sought only 50 years after Le Nôtre's death to make art subservient to nature. To summarize the Prince's achievement, we shall do well to quote one of Guy's insights to be found in the section, entitled, "The achievement of the *Coup d'Oeil*":

If, as Coleridge would have it, the imagination is no less than that shaping and modifying power that unifies disparate materials through idealization, it is easy to understand how the world of *Coup d'Oeil* is more than a garden: in Ligne's imagination it becomes the perfect *locus amoenus* where good may be not only observed, but put to use as an influence on morals and morality . . . Ligne is at one with his time, notably with Hume, when he proclaims that even in horticulture aesthetic and moral judgments are akin. (56)

As one reads the *Coup d'Oeil*, one becomes aware that the Prince's vision transcends reality and that his dream-like disquisitions are often treatises on his *jardin intérieur*, *seine seelische Landschaft*—imaginary gardens suffused with mythological implications, vaguely erotic, without

a specific lady in mind. Contrary to Roland Barthes, who asserts that it is impossible to speak of love without thinking about someone, I suspect that the Prince de Ligne was capable of writing about Eros without remembering a rendezvous with Marie-Antoinette, or with Catherine the Great who "liked" the Prince so much that she deeded him vast estates in the Crimea—an unmistakable sign of her imperial affection.

I should also mention that Guy is an agile recreator of the Prince's ironic style, to wit ". . . j'attendais les vaches les plus grasses de la Suisse; elles auraient présenté le soir ce que Cibèle avait en abondance à des pâtres, ou leurs maîtresses ou leurs femmes . . ." rendered thus: "I would expect the sleekest cows of Switzerland to offer at dusk the abundance of Cybele to the shepherds and their wives—or their mistresses" (Part I, paragraph 10, p. 79).

I have praised the perfection of this publication, and it would be petty to enumerate three or four misprints. The designer, Wolfgang Lederer and the editor, Stephanie Fay, also deserve much praise. In fact, everyone who labored to produce this masterpiece merits accolades. As for Basil Guy, I am convinced that one fine afternoon he will find himself strolling in the Elysian fields, explaining to his friend, the Prince, that, a century before the latter's life, an English poet named Andrew Marvell had written an elegy entitled, *Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Faun*, which foretells to perfection what was to be the essence of his companion's secret yearnings during his mortal days: "Henceforth I set myself to play / My solitary time away, / With this: and very well content, / Could so my idle life have spent. / For it was full of sport; and light / Of foot, and heart; and did invite, / Me to its game: it seem'd to bless / Its self in me. How could I less / Than love it? . . . I have a garden of my own. . ."

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***Jungian Literary Criticism.* Edited by Richard P. Sugg. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1992. Pp. xix, 439. \$39.95. Paper, \$14.95.**

Jungian Literary Criticism is designed as an introduction to literary study which uses, as the foundation of its critical theory, the depth psychology of C.G. Jung, in order to explore the interface between psychology and literature. It carries out this design conscientiously, comprehensively, and concisely.

After the usual preliminary material, including a handy chronology of C.G. Jung by Aniela Jaffe (one of Jung's closest friends and colleagues) and Professor Sugg's own introduction, the book is divided into three major sections. The first ("Jung and Literary Criticism: A Historical Sampling") presents a selection of Jungian criticism in practical application to individual or groups of texts by such eminent authorities as Northrop Frye, Joseph Campbell, and Kathleen Raine. The second ("Jung and Critical Theory") is divided into two subsections, of which the first presents descriptions and definitions of terminology in the area, most importantly two key sections from Morris Philipson's *Outline of a Jungian Aesthetics*, and the second presents selections which introduce the reader to the reorientation of Jung's theory in the work of James Hillman and others, as this applies to literary criticism. The final section ("Jungian Concepts in Critical Practice") presents three groups of papers which demonstrate three modes of application of the theory, under the headings "Archetypes and Literature," "Jung's Personality Theory," and the collision of Jung and feminism in "Jung and Gender Criticism". The critical apparatus includes a publication history of Jung's writing on literature, some extracts that explain key concepts of his theory, a glossary, a list of useful bibliographies and a bibliography of sources, and an index.

In the study of literature in terms of Jungian theory, the two big difficulties have always been first, finding the right introduction to Jungian theory itself, pure Jungianism, so to speak—at least until the enquirer is confident enough to tackle the *Collected Works*—and then finding the right introduction to the use of that theory in relation to literary texts (applied Jungianism). Although the former has still not been solved entirely satisfactorily, Richard Sugg's book certainly dissolves the latter difficulty. For complete beginners, its generous selection and its

wide variety of examples are particularly useful in counteracting the reductivism which limits Jungian literary criticism to the mere identification of archetypes, as are its systematic and orderly introduction of them in the Introduction and in the notes which introduce each section or subsection. The introductions to individual writers are also helpful, and minimize the newcomer's sensation of wandering around in a heavily populated fog which results from the cross-references from example to example—cross-references which are certainly necessary but can be confusing. The selection from Philipson's book will certainly encourage the further exploration of the interface between philosophy and Jungian psychology.

For more experienced Jungian critics, the same aspects are useful, but less essential than two others. The first is the section which presents James Hillman's "radical reorganization of Jung's psychology" (Sugg), which is an essential quick introduction to the evolution in applied Jungian theory that has taken place recently, and to the main points of difference between earlier and later critics in this field, whichever side of the divide one might find oneself on. The second is the section on Jung and gender criticism. The latter is an essential reference point for those feminist critics, among whom I must confess to finding myself from time to time, who find themselves reacting with discomfort to the occasional explicit and less occasional implicit masculinist tone of Jung himself in the *Collected Works*, and of some of Jung's male colleagues and followers in their subsequent work. The inclusion of both "Spinning Among Fields: Jung, Frye, Levi-Strauss, and Feminist Archetypal Theory" and a selection from *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* by Annis V. Pratt does much to help readers deal with the issue of whether or not it is possible to be both a Jungian and a feminist literary critic.

It is difficult to think of a way in which *Jungian Literary Criticism* could be improved. It is going to be a staple reference on the desk of most Jungian literary critics, however long or short their previous experience, and whether they are interested in applying Jung's theories strictly as psychocriticism dependent upon the archetypes and archetypal images, or more loosely as myth criticism.

"This book," says Richard Sugg, at the beginning of his preface to *Jungian Literary Criticism*, "intends to honor a tradition of Jungian literary criticism nearly as old as the century itself, that continues to offer

much of value to the current understanding of both literature and the life of the psyche." Inasmuch as the tradition must certainly be honored by the production of a text that will be invaluable to anyone who is interested in exploring Jungian depth psychology as a mode of critical theory, Professor Sugg has certainly fulfilled his intention.

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