

## BOOK REVIEWS

*W. H. Auden as a Social Poet.* By Frederick Buell. Cornell University Press.  
Pp. 196. \$8.85.

Professor Buell takes considerable time to get the steam up, and so his last chapter, which is concerned briefly (as a postscript) with Auden after 1939, is quite the best. There are several reasons for this, the most important being that the mental picture we get of the poet here is very much more vivid and convincing than is the case earlier in the book. Auden of course has assisted everyone of late in describing in one way or another what kind of a poet he is. Only in a very special and delicate sense is he primarily a social poet (So much for the book's title and its main thesis!), and this sense, in the nick of time (p. 192), Mr. Buell describes as a "comic affection for all the familiar imperfections of the world." Quite Chaucerian in fact—and quite Christian.

In dealing with the variegated and, to tidy scholars, the impossibly inconsistent nature of Auden's development and genius, Mr. Buell is pretty good. He understands that on one level Auden is the magpie—with intense curiosity peering into and gathering for his own temporary purposes whatever strikes the eye or the imagination. Any system, scheme, or interpretation that brings order into the desperate disparate is irresistible to a poet who is as obsessed with form as he is with divisions of time. And so fascism, communism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and various forms of religion pass through his pages as creative tests, *ad hoc* opportunities for poetry's great need to organize.

Behind all this, at a deeper level, is something more fundamental in Auden's work, giving rise, I think, to some of his finest poems. Mr. Buell rather underestimates the importance of this strain, feeling as he does that the almost monstrous cleverness of the poet is antagonistic to song. But Auden, strangely enough—since his qualifications as a social satirist seem inescapable—is preeminently a celebrant, and when the time comes he will be seen as the grateful medium of a large number of poems of praise, many of which evidently come from rather mysterious, as distinct from sharply defined and social, circumstances. If this is right then Mr. Buell's first sentence ("It is the social aspect of W.H. Auden's verse that will ensure him an enduring and central place among major twentieth-century poets") is insupportable. But I think even Mr. Buell has doubts about his thesis in the end.

In a sense, also, it is misleading even for Auden to speak of the climacteric which restored to him the religion of his childhood, since there is a continual if not continuous anticipatory habit, in his best work, of celebration of qualities and ritualistic forms that either belong to that religion or have a recognizable relation to it.

One of the first things to be done, I should think, in a book with this title is to settle on the various meanings of *social*. Though Mr. Buell has not done this—to the point of almost irredeemably upsetting the reader in the pursuit of a theme—he does rather work out these meanings as the book is being written. Though this is not “academically” very satisfactory, it is endearing—and one effect is to leave the reader with more enthusiasm at the end than at the beginning—always rare in works of this nature.

I think that this work-in-progress feeling about the book may be the result of Mr. Buell's being a poet himself—and you can sense a very pleasant naivete in some of the things he says. On the other hand, since he is, I gather, a young man, he does not have that comradely alertness (like that of the Indian guide with his leader) which seems to be necessary to read Auden's poetry of the thirties in the right spirit. It is difficult to say what this credential is exactly—but its presence makes it possible to say sensible things about poems without always “understanding” them. What Mr. Buell says about *The Orators*, for example, hardly ever sounds right. So far, we of the thirties who received every Auden volume with unique excitement have earned a special entry. We are never put off—only intrigued and charmed. But of course this feeling that Auden is an essential and flowering part of our generally unimportant and mean biographies makes it very difficult for us to write about him with any objectivity. Mr. Buell has us there all right.

His prose is very uneven, and I think more bad than good. He is capable of insights and can write a good sentence (“A second aspect of the Mortmere world is the complement of its subversive tendency; the fantasies also represent a comic form of magical control of a ‘Hostile’ environment.” p. 47), but paragraph after paragraph proceed as if a promising student essay hadn't merited a critic. The writing is often wordy and loose, and words like “parodic”, “nonsensical”, “bizarre”, “conscious faddishness”, and “contentless” are not so much weapons to penetrate meaning as to ward it off. And no one should write like this: “Thus, Auden has effected one of his notorious changes in the identity of his speaker and brought his reliability into question; the derivative nature of this repudiation indicates that the charge is, as are the preceding sections, a managed effect more than anything else.” (p.57) There are many such dyed-in-the-wooly awkwardnesses. And a number of resoundingly cul-de-sac simplicities: e.g., “Auden's ‘belief’ in the faith healing of John Layard and Homer Lane is the best example of this [comic treatment] ; as can be seen by Auden's use of it in analyzing his friends,

it is a doctrine that allows a great deal of fanciful elaboration and is more than a little crackpot in character.”

Finally, there are three Auden areas where Mr. Buell is, to my mind, not tough enough. The first is in the matter of the long drama between Art and Life in the poet's mind and practise, a drama which often has its temporary conclusions, one of which is that Art is a game and Life a purgatory, but which never seems to be finally over. Hence in the Foreword to *The Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957* the poet talks about his “dishonest” poems in the most extraordinary fashion, as if they were sins, and the whole structure of a neat division comes tumbling to the ground in the touching flurry of old-maidenly confessions. I don't think that Mr. Buell has thought about this sufficiently to help him in the identification and understanding of Auden's social and political poems.

The second weakness is in the treatment of Auden's attractively famous poem from *Look, Stranger!* “Out on the lawn I lie in bed/ Vega conspicuous overhead.” This poem has always had the importance that Mr. Buell assigns to it, but his analysis of it is extremely unsteady, particularly when one puts it beside Auden's own description of its genesis (as an example of “The Vision of Agape”) in his introduction to *The Protestant Mystics*, edited by Anne Freemantle (1964). Mr. Buell goes over the poem very carefully, but he seems not to have the advantage of realizing the stakes in the argument as the poet so eloquently describes them. He should also check Benjamin Britten's *Spring Symphony* again to see exactly how the poem is used there. A “comic revaluation” is not in order at the point he mentions.

These are partly matters of balance and interpretation. More serious is the treatment of materials which we expect every Auden scholar to know. To describe Georg Groddeck as a “whimsical forerunner” of Freud is extremely unwise, as a reading of *The Book of the It* will disclose. To say that “At Oxford, in Berlin, and later at Gresham [sic] School, [Auden] belonged to a loosely knit, but highly self-involved group” or that Auden, “as he wrote in *Letter to Lord Byron* ‘lived with crooks but seldom was molested’ ” shows either a serious factual deficiency or a way of taking things out of context to the point of falsification. And I find the scathing, brief, and very superficial treatment of *The Ascent of F6* almost unforgivable. Mr. Buell says that the play “is wholly fantastic in style and in theme represents a return to the politically ambiguous private mythology of the T.E. Lawrence hero-figure.” To use one of Mr. Buell's favorite terms, one would have to call this “nonsensical”. What would “wholly fantastic in style” have to do, for example, with the scenes composed by collaborator Christopher Isherwood of the biting colloquial and realistic dialogues of Mr. and Mrs. A.? And in the content of the play there should be far more than

this statement indicates to interest a critic who is intrigued by the relation between social and religious experience. The Romantic Michael Ransom, I think, discovers Original Sin.

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CHESTER DUNCAN

*Man's Place: An Essay on Auden.* By Richard Johnson. Cornell University Press.  
Pp. 251. \$11.50

This is certainly the best book so far on the later Auden, and one of the most perceptive and expressive in the analysis of individual poems. Professor Johnson has a thesis, but it is so carefully worked out by his careful reading of three recent cyclic works (*Bucolics*, *Hora Canonicae*, and *Thanksgiving for a Habitat*) that it seems like a self-evident discovery. In pursuing and proving this thesis Mr. Johnson, to my mind, has perhaps underplayed the intensity of the religious element in Auden's poetry, but he has brilliantly defined and illustrated its humanistic element and design. Hence the title.

In doing this Mr. Johnson has effectively related Auden's later poems to Auden's philosophy (if anything so single exists), so that they become a reflection, both physical and intellectual, of his ideas and beliefs. This relationship is so clearly established that it resolves the old critical problem as to the limits of art and life--art being a reflection and a projection but never an encroachment. As a projection it is still concerned with what could be, rather than with what an inherent untidiness always prevents, but its idea of order (a habitat) is no longer grand or highfalutin but almost viable. The poet as bourgeois has succeeded the poet as revolutionary, except that, miraculously, all the wit, wisdom, and zest for life of the early Auden has remained and grown.

So the public interests and the public hopes have now become "private", though the ideas of order are of course available in the social act of a private person--in poetry. Though such a pulling in of horns has been and will be interpreted as an abandonment of political and social responsibility (compare Browning on Wordsworth), Mr. Johnson presents the interesting paradox, fully documented from the primary source, that "Auden should properly be thought of as a profoundly political poet...given a proper understanding of the term." The poet's discovery of the havens of church, college, or village, and his celebration of these in his poems constitute action, not retreat from action, and therefore they are not apolitical.

If this notion seems too flip and simplistic to us, all it demands is a qualification that in a sense adds a humanizing pathos to Auden's pilgrimage. The miniaturization is "also a mimetic representation of the public realm", writes Mr. Johnson. At this point (p. 241) I had marked in the margin "surely rather sadly so". It was gratifying to my grasp of the book that in the next paragraph this sadness was acknowledged by Mr. Johnson. Modified rapture, in any case, when one thinks of the state of the world and all those callow hopes. And one can't help thinking, as I am sure Mr. Auden does, of how lucky it is in the construction



of an ordered and civilized existence if you are boundlessly creative, healthy, and successful. The helots don't have the same opportunity to find the good city.

Auden's early poetry was full of news of home and abroad--and very excitingly so. Now the minutiae of human activity are not just "interesting"; they are used as an assistance to thought and unity. The poems at their best, therefore, become almost emblematic, records of mind-events in the consideration of the nature of Man--"a true architecture of humanism".

This quietly articulate activity is a sign of individual freedom, to which Auden has been always devoted, despite its difficulties and obscurities. The activity is anti-Marxist, since the necessity which it follows is uniquely individual. And it carries on a perpetual running battle with the inhuman order of the impersonal powers, the Lords of this world who want us to serve the state in general, or some faceless statistical convenience in particular. Civilization is served, on the contrary, by the selfish.

There is a great deal more in this fine book than I can appreciate, but only occasionally do I feel that my difficulties with it come from the writer's tendency to fire too many words, like buckshot, after an idea. It's just that I don't know the later poems well enough to get full value from Mr. Johnson's subtle and complete analysis. What he says about the early poems is not as striking or as careful. He's wrong about Hitler's resemblance to the Devil in Auden's mind (Part Two of *New Year Letter*). The Devil is much too complex and sophisticated to represent "either-or thinking". His reading of "As I Walked Out One Evening" is clouded in indirection and prolixity. It is odd to find that "In my veins there is...a memory of a fish" (sic), from a discarded poem in the 1930 volume, has been let slip, and that *epigram* (p. 113) has been used for *epigraph*. Finally, it is strange that "On This Island" is not regarded as an inscape as well as a seascape and a landscape. But these last remarks are just a salve to my critical vanity. They have only a tiny, distracted importance in the really brilliant context and perspective of the book as a whole.

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CHESTER DUNCAN

*Looking for Philosophy*. By F.E. Sparshott. Montreal and London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972. Pp. viii, 171. Paper \$3.25. Cloth \$8.50.

To be honest I don't quite know how to take Professor Sparshott's book though I have read it through more than once, parts of it many times, and pondered over it, with alternating appreciation and exasperation, for half the summer. Is this perhaps what he intended? Ostensibly he is looking for philosophy, confessing after a number of probings his inability to pin it down, and concluding that for him the only way to philosophize is to keep on looking for philosophy. Is it an elaborate, light-hearted leg-pull? A philosophical entertainment devised, not wholly out of new cloth as he is careful to acknowledge, for the amusement and prodding of his fellow professionals? (The title, particularly if it ended with a question mark, might be mistaken for the trendy title of a mod-style text-book

designed for the mass-consumption and seduction of to-day's college freshmen; but if there is one thing we can say with complete certainty about this book it is that it is nothing of that sort). Is it a personal confession of philosophic faith? Is it any or all of these things? There is at least something extraordinary about a book which seems to its author to require a preliminary direction-setting foreword with much emphasis on the elusiveness, ambiguity, and equivocalness of the quest, and, between the main chapters, six Interludes to explain how, in spite of its twists and hairpin bends, the argument has been proceeding. In short, the author has succeeded in devising a very individual work, a kind of philosophical novelty, a new *genre* in philosophical writing, in which are combined verse, Socratic dialogue, wit, epigram, levity, sustained high-spirits, and general cheerfulness, with the seriousness breaking in in the form of more or less straight-faced, it teasingly sinuous, argumentation. Whatever it is, it defies a neat summary and disarms coherent criticism.

Since he is both poet and philosopher it is only natural that Professor Sparshott should have something to say about the relationship between poetry and philosophy and what he brings to Athens from Parnassus is one of the more noteworthy elements in the unique mixture. The verses which open and close the book might be taken to suggest that he thinks philosophical problems are not really meant to be solved and that only the flight into poetry offers him an escape-route. But he is not arguing *against* philosophy and *for* poetry. For example he says: "...in moving towards an account of philosophy as having to do with the limits of knowledge and hence of the sayable - an account traditional enough in itself - the argument has in effect moved towards an approximation of philosophy to poetry. This account must now be reckoned with and to some extent neutralized" (133). Poetry and philosophy are alike in that both are "modes of discourse designed to organize a more or less intractable experience" (134). As branches of literature they are complementary, but they differ in method and intention. "And poetry does not 'deal with' its subject matter in such a way that the result can be integrated with what the philosopher has done" (104). "It is by argument and refutation that philosophy lives" (120) and it "cannot solve its problems by ceasing to be philosophy" (121). "Literature is neither a form of philosophy, nor a substitute for it, but something else entirely" (120). Philosophy is necessary if only because it reminds us that we must remain reconciled to doubt, because it keeps us humbly human, as "the activity in which a man becomes and remains problematical to himself" (9). As St. Augustine might have said, every man is a philosopher when he can say with understanding: *Mihi quaestio factus sum.*

A second recurrent theme is the whimsical condition of the philosopher whose personal involvement is at war with his professional commitment to truth, whose reality is not really real; whose central problem (how to describe what is experienced without thereby distorting it) is insoluble; and who in discovering himself is making himself by his philosophy. Professor Sparshott's glance may

be a roving one but he has a sharp eye for the diversities and incongruities of philosophical attitudes and doctrines and these are often wittily displayed. But his treatment of philosophy and philosophers is less detached than this might suggest. "What is philosophy in me?" "Is philosophy necessary for me?" he asks. If he concludes that looking for philosophy is "rather a good way" of philosophizing, he makes the claim only within the terms "and in the setting proposed by the author. If other terms and other settings might have imposed different solutions, that is no concern of ours" (9). There are many legitimate styles of philosophizing and the seeming elusiveness of philosophy for him, he suggests, may arise from the insuperable difficulty, for anyone who has been brought up in one particular way of philosophizing and has practised it for a long time, of changing to another. So he must "abandon the illusion that there is any technique with whose aid a philosopher of one kind can change into a philosopher of a different kind" (105). The dilemma of competent but arid discussion of trivialities or gassy, emotional and rhetorical outbursts about what matters, the polarity of commitment and objectivity, the tension of creation and criticism, the recurrently intractable problems which enable philosophy triumphantly to continue without progressing, likewise arise from the incompatible diversities of interests and styles. And on the whole he is eminently judicious, temperate and catholic in his treatment of many other philosophers, "a collection of names which only ignorance and idleness kept being much longer" (104).

But if he has a sharp eye he has also on occasion a sharp tongue, too. "Cartesianism is the philosophy of solitary confinement" (117). "Philosophers, just because they reflect on man's nature, find that it is man's nature to be reflective" (119). After quoting Dio Chrysostom on the desirability of philosophers adopting a particular style of dress and regimen to distinguish them from the multitude, he remarks: "Even in the occidental present, it seems, the mysteries of what passes for Zen Buddhism cannot be penetrated by those who have not donned the uniform of the Beat or Hip and taken their vows of poverty, disobedience and unchastity" (115). Of Existentialism he says that it "never did succeed in formulating a method adequate to its insights and that is no doubt why it has become extinct" (121). A footnote adds: "Extinct, that is, except among theologians, who after prying the *Kerygma* loose from a mummified mythology are trying to shackle it to this fresher corpse." Coming back once more to the relations between philosophy and poetry: "And it is possible that the criteria of success in philosophy and poetry may be more alike in practice than they are generally admitted to be, for philosophy in our day has become so caught up in the academic machine that its vital relation to the realities of human intercourse has been obscured. Those who take part in the ceremony of Kissing the Backside of the Ph.D. Octopus do well not to invite scrutiny of their postures, and it is considered unprofessional as well as unconventional to look into the more general implications of philosophical methods. But the rest of us may still fix these ungainlinesses with our roving glance" (134).

It must be confessed that his glance does tend to rove and there are times when a more prolonged and sustained attention to the argument in hand would enable him to reach a less tantalizingly elusive result. Moreover a continuous barrage of wit and epigram, while perhaps effectively stimulating in the class-room, begins to pall when translated into cold print.

What he contributes most positively to the discussion of philosophy in general, and what will make his book something of an oasis in the desert to his more sympathetic readers is I think, his sensitiveness, very proper to the poet and aesthete, to the great richness, variety and cataleptic quality of many profound human experiences. These do somehow seem to get lost in the technical hasslings of those professional academics who appear to function only by taking in each other's washing and whose publications come almost to resemble the claims of manufacturers of detergents who proclaim the superior whiteness of their wash over that of other leading competitors. We have grown accustomed to distinguishing the problems of the scientist as scientist from his problems as a man. There does seem to be something odd about our having to draw the same kind of distinction in the case of philosophers. Perhaps philosophy in our time has become over-organized, over-professionalized, over-regimented, over-standardized, over-concerned with keeping discussion within the bounds of professional respectability. If so, there is room for greater independence and individuality to generate new methods and new ideas, and if this is what Professor Sparshott is telling us he will be doing us no inconsiderable service.

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F. H. PAGE

*A Theatre for Spenserians*. Edited by Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither: Papers of the International Spenser Colloquium. Fredericton, N.B., October 1969. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

This interesting volume of essays prompts the thought that a number of North American and English scholars must have spent a few very congenial days in Fredericton in the Fall of 1969. And, considering the concentration of Spenserians in our Universities, and Western Ontario's *Spenser Newsletter* it suggests that Spenser studies flourish well in Canada—perhaps with the help of the climate and the long winter nights. Of course, Spenser is not just a Canadian pastime; judging by the number of recent full-length studies and articles, the Spenser industry continues to burgeon alarmingly. Each year since 1960 has produced at least as much commentary on *The Faerie Queene* as the two centuries after Spenser's death. As well, there is the welcome revival of interest in Spenser among undergraduates. It reflects, perhaps, the contemporary taste for romance, for Tolkien or Golding, or more interestingly, for Shakespeare's late plays, Hawthorne, Dickens the fabulist, even for the *Arcadia*. Romance, like the dream—an analogy which may provide us with a useful way into the mode—can at its richest lead us into a world of wishfulfilment of the most profound kind. It creates a fictive world where the accepted laws of character and action may be selected and

simplified in order to celebrate those nearly ungraspable possibilities of life we sometimes despair of, and as well, seeks by out delighted participation in the offered vision to inspire us to search once again for them. The twentieth century has learned to take fantasy, dream, nightmare and myth more seriously than previous ages, and our reading habits have changed and benefited accordingly.

These particular essays provide interesting contrasts in tone, even in ideology, which must have enlivened the colloquium somewhat. Millar MacLure takes a civilized ramble over a few aspects of Spenser's sense of history; like his chapter on Spenser in the recent *Sphere History of the English language*, its elegance is a disappointing contrast with the lack of intellectual substance, Kent Heatt's essay on *Faerie Queene II* is businesslike, terse, and often searchingly suggestive, the incisiveness of his reading increasing, one suspects, as he ceases bothering about saving the appearances of his numerological world-view. Where MacLure suggests that "Spenser was not a philosopher" (6), Alistair Fowler argues with a typically enriching array of references--if occasionally wavring logic--that *The Faerie Queene* "bodies forth a philosophical vision" by which Spenser explores "the inner universe of sensibility" (76-77). William Nelson provides what is, in the context of such high priests of Divine Mathematics and the solemnity of Spenser studies generally, a much-needed account of Spenser's humour. A.C. Hamilton, after starting in a somewhat recapitulatory vein, provides a careful and stimulating discussion of examples of Spenser's "scrupulous care and precision in choice of words" (106). If it is a foretaste of the quality of his forthcoming annotated Spenser, one only hopes that many future classes in Spenser will have his edition as their text. Finally--in the finest piece of the volume--G.K. Hunter discusses the *Amoretti*. His essay, arguing that the sonnets betray Spenser's weakness as a poet by comparison with both *The Faerie Queene* and other contemporary sonneteers like Sidney, is remarkable for its careful critical discrimination, a quality all too rare in Spenser studies. Its frame of reference and detailed analysis deserve deep pondering.

A fundamental problem in teaching *The Faerie Queene* is that given the amount of time usually available even at a graduate level students will tend to substitute knowledge about the poem itself, or--a problem for the student of any gifted Spenserian--be wafted into Spenser's forest on the wings of an instructor's enthusiasm and find the trees difficult to penetrate, let alone be able to climb one to view the forest as a whole. In their varied approaches, these essays are, therefore, a useful combination, providing stimulus for both the fiercely focussing specialist and that slowly but distinctly increasing group, Spenser's common readers. One might have wished, perhaps, for an index and even a contribution from the editors--one of whom is herself no mean romancer.

Dalhousie University

G. F. WALLER

*The Elizabethan Theatre III: Papers given at the Third International Conference on Elizabethan Theatre held at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, in July 1970.* Edited by David Galloway. Toronto: Macmillan, 1973. \$7.95.

We must, as T. S. Eliot suggested, occasionally change our ways of being wrong about Shakespeare. Each year's criticism, reviews, not to mention the variety of productions, are not merely monuments to the solemn industriousness of twentieth-century academia, but a tribute to our changing fascination with Shakespeare himself. The great works are like many-faceted crystals, illuminating according to the angle from which they are viewed, and there is a real sense in which radical critical divergences on, say, *King Lear*, may point to the work's meaning being not given, but including the capacity for change and renewal. Presently, we are moving from an era where criticism has almost totally assumed that Shakespeare's plays expressed what Tillyard termed the Elizabethan World Picture, a kind of pre-digested Elizabethan Reader's Digest view of order and hierarchy, to one where Shakespeare is pre-eminently *our* contemporary, a sinister and disillusioned existentialist, for whom *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does not take place in a moonlit wood, but in a surrealist Big Top-gymnasium-prison.

Such critical anarchy can be unsettling. One way of avoiding it has been traditionally to fall back on the seemingly factual, substituting the humble but factual "knowledge about" for the *ding am sich*. Here too, however, fashions change: the yet-another-source-for-the-subplot-of-the-*Shrew* syndrome of the 1890's to "The Boar's Head Again" of the 1970's Study of the Elizabethan Theatre has burgeoned into a minor industry since the caution of Chambers and Lawrence; even the then seemingly microscopic *The Globe Playhouse* of J.C. Adams has been o'ertopped by, say, the speculative wealth of Glynn Wickham's philosophical history of English theatre, or the fearsome trampling of this relatively untrammelled pasture by such giants of Renaissance hermeticism as Frances A. Yates.

The present volume is an interesting pointer to some of the trends in contemporary theatrical scholarship. It offers a wider sweep of essays than earlier volumes in the series, although most of the papers remain specialised investigations of minute problems in theatre history. T. S. King gives a typically austere and densely packed comment on his irritatingly over-compact book *Shakespearean Staging 1599-1642*, and attempts to "extend the structure of valid inference" and "limit the field of admissible conjecture" (13) in a field alarmingly bare of the first and over-populated with the second. Clifford Leech tackles the three *Ho* plays and the vexed question of the private theatres: current opinion, if Wickham's most recent volume is an indication, suggests that the hall, the court and the private playhouses were of more importance than public playhouse productions--and that, contrary to earlier views, there are few differences between plays ostensibly written for one or the other kind of theatre. Herbert Berry takes up the legal minutiae which point to the organizational details of playing in the yard of the Boar's Head Inn. C. J. Sisson's recent full-scale study has covered



this question thoroughly, and, indeed, another of the current trends in theatrical scholarship is the revalue of the importance of the innyard, a little neglected in the last decade or so under the impact of waves of alchemical and architectural speculators.

J.A. Lavin offers an admirably no-nonsense warning against theatre scholarship's gravest vice, the carelessness of slipshod speculation, and tackles in particular the assumption that "the physical arrangements" of the playhouses "largely determined the dramaturgy of the playwrights" and that they wrote "with a view to the facilities and limitations of a particular playhouse." (68) The essay following, ironically enough, is an example of what Lavin warns against, a specious speculation by Glynne Wickham that Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is an emblem of the reunited Kingdoms of England, Wales and Scotland, with Perdita as Reunited Brittainia, and Florizel, as Prince Henry, and Paluina as Sir Francis Bacon.

The final three essays raise more general points. W.R. Gair gives an interesting insight into the way the theatre reflected current intellectual and political interests in academies. George R. Kernodle brings into the play those slippery terms, Renaissance, Mannerist and Baroque. The dangers of applying art-history terminology notwithstanding, his discussion of Shakespeare's style as pointing towards crucial changes in the age's world-view is suggestive. Beside such speculative scholarship the minutiae of Elizabethan theatre-lore fall into place as humble addenda to the central mystery of Shakespeare's work. The central question for any Shakespearean must be, as John Lawler put it, "what is the veritably Shakespearian? How can we hope to get at that which is central in each play?" (136), concluding, so surely correctly, that we fail "if we ever lose sight of the fact that our task is not so much to interpret Shakespeare as to let Shakespeare interpret us--to bring it about that we are contemporaries of Shakespeare's as well as his being our contemporary." (144).

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G.F. WALLER

*Johnson's Sermons: A Study.* By James Gray. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972. Pp.XVI, 263. \$15.50.

Johnson's sermons have not been much read. Although he is thought to have written at least forty and probably more, only two were published during his lifetime and twenty-five more shortly after his death from the papers left by the Reverend Dr. John Taylor, his friend. Only one of these bears Johnson's name; the others were pseudonymous, and although the possibility of Johnson's authorship was known to many, especially because of Boswell's attribution to Johnson of the Taylor sermons, for most readers the question of their authorship remained unclear. For that reason they were slow to get into the collected editions. No supplementary volume was allotted to them in Hawkins's *Works of Samuel Johnson*, and they were largely ignored in the many "complete" editions that



derived from it except for the "Oxford" edition of 1825. None of the other sermons has turned up, except for a manuscript one now at Yale, which, though in Taylor's hand, seems to have been written at Johnson's dictation. It has not yet been published. So it is little wonder that the sermons as a whole have not been well known to readers of Johnson. Dr. Gray's book is an attempt to make them better known and to establish for them an important place in the canon of his works. It is unfortunate that the volume containing the texts of the sermons prepared for the *Yale Johnson* by Drs. Gray and Hagstrum has not yet appeared, but it is good to know that we may expect it shortly.

Though Johnson liked writing sermons, as a layman he was unable to preach and so never wrote sermons for himself. All were written, either for pay or out of friendship, for other men to preach and, if they so desired, to publish as their own. The two published in his lifetime bear the names of Henry Aston and William Dodd respectively, and of the twenty-five published shortly after his death, twenty-four were often mistaken for Taylor's because of an ambiguous title-page. Only the twenty-fifth, written by Johnson to be used at the funeral of his wife, was attributed to him specifically. Modern scholars have largely confirmed the attribution to Johnson of all the rest as well as of the Yale manuscript, except for number 21 and part of number 18 in the Taylor collection, which must have been by Taylor himself. Dr. Gray now argues for closer collaboration between Johnson and his patrons, at least Taylor, who was his close friend. Since most of the sermons were written for special occasions and necessarily allude to local situations, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize preliminary consultation, and, of course, before delivery the patron was at liberty to delete or add whatever he wished. Moreover, while Johnson would write nothing that offended his own beliefs, he would be unwilling to put into the mouths of other men words that they could not utter with complete sincerity. One of the most interesting parts of Dr. Gray's book is his revelation of Johnson's tact in avoiding anything in his sermon on the "martyrdom" of Charles I that would annoy Taylor, who was a "vile Whig," without betraying his own "Tory" sentiments. To this extent Dr. Gray's argument is convincing. But he has produced no real evidence of any more fundamental collaboration, and it is difficult to imagine Johnson collaborating with a man like Taylor on anything requiring intellectual depth. Nobody, not even Dr. Gray, has ever been able adequately to explain the basis of their friendship. The two men differed markedly in temperament and disagreed violently on politics. To make matters worse Johnson disapproved of much of Taylor's behaviour, especially that in relation to his clerical profession. While their friendship is an historical fact, no basis for intellectual collaboration is easy to find, Taylor being more interested in breeding cattle and amassing wealth and honours than in abstract thought. Neither sermon 21 nor Taylor's published *Letter to Samuel Johnson* shows a basis of agreement beyond the common doctrines of Christianity or even literary abilities that Johnson could respect. Whatever he may have omitted to say in these sermons, then, what he did say must have come straight from his own heart, and Dr. Gray has put us all into his debt

by drawing parallels between the sermons and the *Rambler* and *Idler* essays as well as with other parts of the Johnson canon.

However, in his sermons Johnson does not sound like himself. Even after allowance has been made for the fact that he was consciously adjusting himself to the occasion and the personality of the preacher, he hardly ever sounds like either the *Rambler* or the *Idler*, even when handling themes very much his own. The shadow of the pulpit hung over him. Dr. Gray has made an excellent analysis of Johnson's conception of what the style and structure of a sermon should be: the outlines must be clear, the style must be lean, and there must be no figurative language, no humour, no exempla, no emotional appeals. In imagination Johnson wore a cassock when he wrote sermons, and the persona inside it is not the Sam Johnson we know so well. He was prevented by his own rules from arguing a case as he loved to do in conversation and even in writing, or to indulge his flair for exaggeration and striking statements. He was the official expositor of doctrine, serenely instructing his flock of Christians, a role in which he could not have been altogether happy. Consequently the critic who reads the sermons in an effort better to understand Johnson the man and writer will have to be cautious. They will tell him what Johnson wanted to believe about religion and what in his firmer moments he did believe, but they will tell him nothing about his doubts and fears and little about his compassionate knowledge of the human heart.

Port Maitland, N.S.

CLARENCE TRACY

*Stranger in China*. By Colin McCullough. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1972. Pp. ix, 292. \$7.95.

Many thoughtful Canadians are not taken aback by book titles such as *China: An Introduction for Canadians*, *Stranger in China: A Canadian Family Tells ...*, or *Canadian Essays on Revolutionary China* (Gibson and Johnston, 1971). Somehow the perspective of a Canadian on China must be distinct from the dominant Sinological wisdom with its roots in Anglo-American academe. Such is, after all, the stuff from which national identity is forged. But if Canadians have not yet fully discovered themselves, it is equally evident that they have yet to find "their China". The two books reviewed here reveal some hopeful insights but perhaps even more these volumes demonstrate the difficulty of the pursuit itself.

Colin McCullough's objective is modest enough. He doesn't purpose to explain China, but merely his--Canadian--response to China. The title, in a sense, tells it all and for 292 pages the reader is pulled along through his bewilderment, frustration, and lack of understanding about China. As an individual he is encased in what appears to be an unbreakable cultural isolation. "Essentially a foreigner is a stranger in China, and the Chinese can never regard him in any other way.

He is not Chinese. There is nothing more to say". To a degree this is quite so, but one might expect more worldliness and adaptability from a professional newsman. Somewhat more serious under the circumstances, one might expect more cultural tolerance from a Canadian.

On the surface, the aim of Ray Wylie's volume is also modest. He writes, "It is easy to hate a people one has never met, and it is easy to dispel from one's mind a nation one has never visited" (Page x). It is a risky hypothesis—"familiarity breeds contempt" is an equally compelling assumption. But it is true that Canadians without an immediate stake or experience in China are largely ignorant of, or antagonistic toward, China. It is at them that this book is aimed. Though all five of the major authors are academics, all have successfully "dejarگونized" for the prospective lay audience.

For the most part, the essays present the standard historical landmarks in an interesting, if not terribly revealing, fashion. All very "introductory", but not distinctly "Canadian". But if one is familiar with the "American standard version", there are variations that could be the seeds of a genuine Canadian perspective. In most of the essays the tenor is one of "myth-busting." Ainsley goes after such perennial misconceptions as regime extermination campaigns. Sue Wylie, in an effective and unassuming essay, explains that the Chinese really do love their children and that the revolution has liberated, not destroyed, the nuclear family. Rene Goldman attacks the myth that east and west are inherently at opposite poles. And no lesser light than Pierre Elliott Trudeau is brought in to testify that the Chinese worker is not a slave, but is enthusiastically involved in the state plan. But these facts are not entirely unknown outside of Canada. And while they may be useful insight, they do not constitute a Canadian perspective in any general sense.

In short, the Canadian Sinologist has not yet arrived at a level of self-consciousness that could underwrite a Canadian Sinology. As in so many areas of the national search for identity, the definition of self is still dependent on negations. We don't know what a Canadian Sinologist is, but we are beginning to see what he is not. The "myth-busting" approach of these scholars is more than a convenient device, it's a necessary first step in breaking away from what another group of scholars have called "America's Asia".

*Dalhousie University*

ROGER DIAL

*The Rejection of Politics and Other Essays.* By George Woodcock. Toronto: new press, 1972. Pp. xiii, 192. \$7.50.

This collection of essays by the distinguished editor of *Canadian Literature* has been brought out by new press to celebrate the author's sixtieth birthday in 1972. The pieces assembled in the volume have all been published previously,

between 1944 and 1972. They fall into four main categories: political theory; comment on public events; literary criticism; and personal accounts of journeys into exotic places. The range of interests is impressive as is the continual fair-mindedness and Orwellian decency of George Woodcock's manner.

One instinctively compares Woodcock with Orwell -- a former friend and the subject of his fine study, *The Crystal Spirit*. And yet even though there are so many points of similarity between the two, it is in manner that the two are most dissimilar. Both share the urge to assert their separateness from group-reactions of most kinds. (Woodcock was, of course, an anarchist as a young man.) Both instinctively sympathise with the wretched, the dispossessed, and the victim. Both strive to avoid the prepared response if they can possibly come to terms with the problem they are discussing directly and afresh. Both exemplify the triumph of that most cultivated of qualities -- common sense. And both draw on a vast range of political experiences and acquaintances as well as an unusual familiarity with life in outlandish places and circumstances. But Orwell is often strident. Woodcock is seldom so.

A great deal is involved in this difference. The curious hold Orwell's polemical writings have on the reader is, to a large extent, caused by their curious mixture of styles and impulses: the Etonian manner of assured understatement and the direct appeal to the ordinary, decent man; the passionate concern for a better, egalitarian future and the nostalgic yearning for a better, Edwardian past (real beer -- no canned food!) George Woodcock himself is one of the best analysts and chroniclers of these traits of Orwell's. And he is free of them in his own writings. His tone is seldom equivocal. His manner is that of the classless intellectual without any of Orwell's unconscious little Etonian gestures.

The result is that one is not exasperated by Woodcock's essays as one so often is by Orwell's. At the same time, however, the essays themselves are less compelling, lacking that relentless-if ambiguous-drive which gives Orwell's work its unique flavour.

It is only in the earliest pieces assembled in this collection that George Woodcock shows a doctrinaire streak. Both "The Rejection of Politics" and "The Tyranny of the Clock" were first published in 1944. The former essay appeared in his first book on anarchism, *Anarchy or Chaos*. He himself writes in the preamble to "The Rejection of Politics": "Much in *Anarchy or Chaos* belongs merely to its decade but there are parts which, with a little rewriting, I still find worth reading, and it is as a mosaic of some of these redeemable fragments of the past that this essay emerges. I still believe in general terms what it says" (p. 20). This would appear a generous judgement. The tone of those early essays is tight-lipped and unbending. They have a primness about them which is quite lacking from the later writing.

In "Anarchism Revisited" the author gives an incisive account of the legacy of his early libertarian years. The libertarian urge that underlies the early tracts is in no way diminished by the humanity and wisdom of the later account in which the resurgent interest in anarchism during the sixties is compared with the movement of the 1940's. One of his closing statements in this essay of 1968 is, as he admits, no longer anarchism. But it encapsulates the independence and concern of his mature political writing: "Our aim should be to preserve as much freedom as possible for men as they are, rather than dream of a hypothetical total freedom for men as they at present are not" (p.44).

Even if he has changed from a doctrinaire young anarchist into a wise and flexible libertarian, the utopian instinct has not left him. It surfaces in his fervent belief in the "polycentrism" underlying the Canadian federal principle, and -- in more extreme form -- in this kind of statement from "Prophecies and Pontifications" (1970): "By 2020 the have-not peoples, inhabitants of all the petty little lands that arose in fervent patriotism out of the wreckage of old empires after 1947, will have grown wise to the folly of defending themselves against each other for the benefit of the large arms-producing countries, and will have become entirely intolerant of the narrow ways of 1970-vintage nationalism" (p.190). And even Lilliput will no longer revile Blefuscu ?

Interesting as the theoretic essays are in this collection, it is the more immediate, occasional pieces that demonstrate the clarity of George Woodcock's mind at its most crisp. The articles on McLuhan, revisions (1959) in the laws of obscenity, and the October crisis are all urbane and provocative. The literary criticism on Orwell, Frye and Richler is stimulating and accurate. And there are vivid accounts of his journeys to visit a Doukhobor community, settlements in the Canadian arctic, and a trip to Fort McLeod, the oldest European settlement west of the Rockies in remote northern British Columbia. All are acutely observed, and give that stamp of authenticity and experience to the wide-ranging concerns embodied in this birthday collection by one of Canada's most distinguished intellectuals.

*Dalhousie University*

ROWLAND SMITH

*Love and Whisky (The Story of the Dominion Drama Festival)* By Betty Lee.  
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. Pp. 335. \$8.95.

Betty Lee's *Love and Whisky (The Story of the Dominion Drama Festival)* deserves to be better than it is. The story needed to be told, but it needed also more careful, more imaginative treatment. As it is, this work of a "journalist of world-wide reputation" (dust jacket) shows most of the flaws and only some of the virtues of journalistic method and style. It is, of course, a popular not an academic book: even so, it is a bit of hodge-podge, gossipy, repetitive, full of mistakes both in fact and type-setting, and altogether disappointing, considering the potential of the subject.

Miss Lee completed her book while a Southam Fellow at Massey College, Toronto, and it has been appropriately introduced by Robertson Davies. Certainly the Dominion Drama Festival was "an astounding achievement", as he puts it, and certainly it is the largest and strongest foundation stone of our modern professional theatre; but a balanced and thorough history of this singular enterprise has yet to be written by someone other than Betty Lee.

There is, to begin with, some uncertainty and confusion in the approach. Miss Lee begins with a fairly breathless columnist-like account of "The Big Bash" in Saskatoon, May, 1972, when Theatre Canada was born from what were almost the ashes of the old-style Dominion Drama Festival. Details of theatrical luminaries whose "teeth flash" and who cross their "turquoise-panted legs" seem enthusiastically misplaced. Adverbs and adjectives flow unchecked as "Kramer grinned crookedly" and "Helen Smith looked crisp", and so on. But from this opening we jump back to 1606, the date of the first recorded theatrical performance in what would become Canada, and are given a one-chapter capsule history of theatre until pre-World War One days. After two further chapters on the beginnings (the Earl Grey Musical and Dramatic Competitions, the start of Hart House, the rise of various amateur groups, and Lord Bessborough's grand schemes which led to the founding of the Festival), the rest of Miss Lee's book outlines the birth, growth and demise of the Dominion Drama Festival, with individual chapters tracing various aspects of the Festival, and chronological treatment being given each one. This whole method of tackling so much intractable material invites repetition and even some confusion; and this is what it gets.

All of this can only be regretted. Miss Lee has been painstaking in gathering together a great deal of information on persons and events; but having done that, she fails to give what one had the right to expect. How many of us, for example, knew or remembered that Bessborough decided to name Karsh "the official photographer of the fledgling Dominion Drama Festival. Not only did the newcomer to Ottawa record some of the first plays to be presented at the festivals, he was also asked to photograph the Dominion Drama Festival's founding fathers." But where are the photographs? Did cost prevent their being reproduced for this book? Indeed, the visual aspects of theatre are so strong and so obvious, one wonders why there are not any photographs anywhere.

Might there not also have been prepared - most suitably in an appendix - a catalogue of all those plays presented throughout the years when the Festival existed? It is not enough to learn the titles of some but not all. An opportunity was missed to make a list, both significant and helpful, for students of Canadian theatre. Something as contemporary as Festival Lennoxville, for instance, might have found treasure long buried and worth resurrecting.

The index, too, is woefully inadequate. Why do some plays rate being indexed and not others? The selection seems random. And the mistakes - either of Miss

Lee or of McClelland and Stewart are altogether too many: Alvin Shaw is not and was never "Dean of Romance Languages" at the University of New Brunswick; Antonin Artaud, by no stretch of even his wild imagination, was ever a Canadian; J.T. Grein was rather more than "the well-known essayist and theatre critic"; there is more than a lost week-end in the itinerary for the regional adjudicator in 1958, taking an unaccountable six days to get from New Glasgow to Truro; and we find Clark for Clark, Plaute for Plautus, qualify for quality, collected for collecting, as well as Candians, rether, breatheless, and glamorous.

Despite these criticisms, anyone interested in the Canadian theatre should be grateful that Betty Lee showed interest enough to write this book; for it is readable even when it irritates; and it is rich indeed when one finds quoted at length such a passage as Gardner's account of what it was like to be a Dominion Drama Festival adjudicator in Newfoundland. One might only have wished for the rest of the book to be as good as it had every right to be.

*Mount Allison University*

ARTHUR MOTYER

*LYRIC AND POLEMIC: The Literary Personality of Roy Campbell.* By Rowland Smith. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and London, 1972. Pp. xii, 249. \$12.50.

Roy Campbell's poetic genius, his native gift, can speak for itself; even in his inferior work it comes out, from one line to another, unexpectedly but unmistakably. Dr. Rowland Smith's study will be of very great value to anyone wishing to interpret the poet's successes and failures, and to relate them to his life. Campbell was, and felt himself to be, a lonely and exceptional figure, in spite of those years when he was welcomed and admired in England, or found a temporary "paradise of exiles" in Provence or Spain. Yet his obvious isolation, and also the apparently "unmodern" technique of his verse, can be related to the problems and procedures of many other twentieth-century poets. For example, Dr. Rowland Smith points out that when Campbell "turned almost exclusively to translation in his last period, he was really only continuing a lifelong habit of basing poems on other works" (p. 234). In this plunder of French and other Romance sources, Campbell offers a parallel to the more explicit and cerebral methods of Pound and Eliot. Even his practice of translation is somewhat Poundian, or rather perhaps like the practice of Robert Lowell in *Imitations* (that is to say, the *traduttore* is not only *traditore*, a traitor; he is practically also an assassin).

South Africa gave him the elements of an intractable problem: a half-wild, unconsciously arrogant upbringing which fostered his poetic imagination and personal pride; on the other hand, a scrappy and superficial education, a lack of self-discipline, and a society incapable of supporting his genius -- a society



in which the particular adventurous oligarchic tradition that produced him was sinking into complacency and mindlessness. He was only eighteen when he arrived in England at the end of the First War; and there he found all the advantages and opportunities of a revolution in art and poetry. Few young poets can have met with so ready a welcome and so much eager encouragement: T. W. Earp, Edgell Rickword, The Sitwells and Wyndham Lewis were among his earliest friends. When *The Flaming Terrapin* was published in 1924, it was generally agreed that its novelty and force outweighed its weaknesses of structure and purpose.

Looking back on these and later years, Campbell would boast defensively in prose or verse, and claim a record of splendid privilege, independent genius and adventure. Yet after his early marriage the real practical difficulties of making a living and a life seem to have constantly baffled him.

The experiment of returning to South Africa in the 1920's ended in disgust. At this crucial turning-point, he wrote some of his best poems, in a state of inner turmoil that William Plomer has indicated:

Although high-spirited, he was in a state of constant nervous tension, which he called neurasthenia...His native land had got on his nerves. "The whole of this country," he said one day, "has an acid smell, and all the white people have Khaki faces." (p. 59).

Yet the Campbells were no less unable to come to terms with their surroundings when they returned to England in 1927. They were in need of help, and help was readily given. But the almost immediate outcome (which may look inevitable in retrospect) was a furious attack on those who had tried to help them, given public expression in the self-intoxicated crudity of *The Georgiad* (1931).

Dr. Rowland Smith does his best for this and for the later satires; but surely one must admit that a really ugly, boorish, and hysterical side of Roy Campbell then emerged, and that we can see it was as damaging to his poetic development as to his chances of making a settled life. For an expatriate poet those chances were slender enough in the Europe of the 1930's. But while the Spanish Civil War sucked him into the disastrous, almost drunken confusion of opinion and emotion we find reflected in *Flowering Rifle* (1939) and *Talking Bronco* (1946), the outbreak of the 1939 War gave him a second (or third) chance of coming to terms with modern England. He served happily in the Army, and certainly benefited from the new role of old campaigner which he could take up.

There is a submerged parallel with the career and the psychology of another outsider of genius, D.H. Lawrence. Both were provincials, the one from a middle-class colonial oligarchy, the other from a part-rural, part-urban working-class culture. Both were obliged to uproot themselves, both found it impossible to fit into the metropolitan literary world which admired their vitality and was ready

to accommodate them. Both sought a refuge in exotic or at least un-English cultures, and let their opinions be exacerbated to the point of self-caricature. Lawrence felt himself to be profoundly English, Campbell was perhaps profoundly a Scot -- in Plomer's phrase, "a wild Highlander". But both were in effect "internal emigres" in the vast bubbling stew-like mixture of the English-speaking world in this century. Like Lawrence and Pound (and Eliot, for that matter), Roy Campbell illustrates the hazards of poetic genius in the period in which the old British, American, and European order was stretching, cracking, breaking, and undergoing a transformation.

*Lyric and Polemic* makes use of much unpublished material, and will be indispensable to students of Roy Campbell's poetry.

University of Southampton

F. T. PRINCE

*Wanted: a Single Canada.* By The Honourable J.T. Thorson. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. Pp. 160. \$6.95.

This book rests on such a shaky foundation that it is surprising that McClelland and Stewart saw fit to publish it. Its general argument goes something like this: Section 133 of the British North America Act, by guaranteeing the use of French, as well as English, in the Parliament and courts of Quebec, accorded a limited recognition to the French language, and this has been extended, perhaps, by recent legislation in New Brunswick, "purporting" to make French an official language in that province. Nonetheless, according to Mr. Thorson, the fact still remains: "The only official language in Canada is English." The French-Canadian Fathers of Confederation gladly accepted the guarantees to their language contained in section 133, and there was no expectation on anyone's part that those guarantees were to be extended. Indeed, as Mr. Thorson sees it, since section 133 was a basic ingredient of the arrangements of 1867, "any legislation which is in conflict with it is a breach of an essential condition of Confederation."

On this basis, he contends that the recent Official Languages Act of the federal Parliament violates not only the moral, but even the legal agreement of 1867. Worse still, it is part of a plot entered into by Prime Ministers Pearson and Trudeau to change the basic character of Canada by putting French on an equality with English, and thereby converting Canada into a dual French-English country. Mr. Thorson is emphatic that Canadians want something quite different: "A Single Canada in which all Canadians, regardless of differences in ethnic origin, whether British or French, or neither British nor French, stand on the footing of equality with one another, both in the enjoyment of their rights and in the fulfilment of their duties, without any preferential treatment to the members of any component of the Canadian nation."

This approach to the language question defies not only the constitution, but logic and common sense as well. Constitutionally - despite Mr. Thorson - the B.N.A. Act places English and French on the same footing, and English is therefore no more an official language than is French. Nothing in the B.N.A. Act prevents the federal Parliament or the provincial legislatures from extending, or otherwise regulating, the use of any language in the institutions under their control, provided they do not diminish the guarantees of section 133. As a result, the Supreme Court of New Brunswick has refused to declare the federal Official Languages Act to be *ultra vires*, and in due course the Supreme Court of Canada will reach the same conclusion. Again, despite Mr. Thorson, it is hard to understand how an act which is designed primarily to ensure that, wherever practicable, English - and French-speaking Canadians will be offered the services of the federal government in their own languages as part and parcel of a conspiracy to alter the basic character of the country. It is no less incomprehensible that, on the other hand, Mr. Thorson takes a position which accords primacy to English, and, on the other, favours a *Single Canada*, which posits the equality of all Canadians as its basic principle.

There are many other things wrong with the book. At times it is focused more on the general problem of Quebec than on the language problem with which it purports to deal. In relegating French to the same position as other languages, English excepted, it is lacking in the most elemental understanding of Canadian history. To describe the short, superficial chapters of the book as "monographs" on specific aspects of the basic question seems nothing less than a parody of that term.

As a contribution to the language question in Canada, this book clearly falls within the realm of *curiosa*. It is a sad commentary on human nature that a distinguished lawyer and jurist could, in riding a hobby-horse of his own, depart so far from the canons of his profession.

*Dalhousie University*

J. MURRAY BECK

*Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour 1935-1956.* By Irving Martin Abella. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. Pp. VII, 256. \$15.00 Hardcover, \$4.50 Softcover.

Professor Abella makes it clear that his book is "neither a history of the Canadian Congress of Labour nor of the CIO in Canada, but rather a study of the interaction of the two." Because he has had access to the voluminous correspondence in the files of the Canadian Labour Congress and its affiliates, and has supplemented the gaps with interviews, he has been able to challenge in some important respects the accepted interpretation of major developments within the Canadian trade union movement between 1940 and 1956, or the entire life span of the Canadian Congress of Labour.

Thus, in dealing with one of the two basic conflicts confronting Canadian trade unionists--the attempt of the CCL and of the CIO in Canada to get rid of their Communist-dominated affiliates - he concludes that historians and commentators alike have badly maligned the Communist trade union leaders of the period. The evidence he presents suggests that the left-wing activists made an invaluable contribution to the building of a viable industrial union movement in Canada, and that the hasty and often crude attempts to reduce their influence were neither "necessary nor wise."

Likewise, in his treatment of the second basic conflict - the external battle of the CCL, and to a lesser extent of its CIO affiliates, to defend their autonomy against the "aggressive incursions" of American unions - Professor Abella takes issue with Professors Paul Norgren and John Crispo, who have contended that the CCL was free of any attempts at domination by the CIO, and that the latter fully sympathized with the CCL's aspirations for independence. In this instance Professor Abella shows convincingly that "from the beginning the CIO was insistent upon showing the flag in Canada - the American flag, that is." The most amusing part of the book is a recital of the instances in which American union leaders requested the officials of the CCL to put pressure upon the senators from their "state" to oppose the policies of the American Congress. Pat Conroy, long-time secretary-treasurer of the CCL, and the hero of the book, finally lost patience. It was about time, he told Allan Haywood, the CIO Director of Organization, that the CIO realized that Canada ought not to be treated like an American state.

The volume suffers from the faults that are usually associated with the conversion of a doctoral thesis into a book. Certainly, for the ordinary reader, it is crammed with too much detail, unaccompanied by sufficient explanatory and interpretative material. In the light of contemporary events, it would have been well, too, if the author had explored in greater detail the long-run significance of the inability of the CCL to check the advance of American unionism into Canada. Nonetheless, the work provides a highly valuable study of the development of industrial and international unionism in Canada.

*Dalhousie University*

J' MURRAY BECK

*Murder, 1776 & Washington's Policy of Silence.* By William H.W. Sabine. New York: Theo. Gaus' Sons, Inc., 1973. Pp. 207. \$7.50.

To go from this book's eye-catching title to its introduction is a letdown. Its starting point is an omitted reference by George Washington, in reply to General William Howe's report of it, to the death of General Nathaniel Woodhull, who died while a British captive at the Battle of Long Island. What follows is a tour de force of the use of negative evidence. The unfortunate General Woodhull became a martyred hero for patriotic publicists, who attributed his death to a

wanton assault by Dragoons who held him prisoner. Sabine is intrigued, however, by the reluctance of those who understood his situation best to enter into the panegyric. Washington, though always tender on the subject of respective treatment of prisoners, never mentioned the leader of the New York militia whom he had counted on to keep provisions on Long Island out of British hands. The New York provisional government, of which Woodhull was President, was loath to investigate its leader's death and refrained from publicizing what investigations it made. And Woodhull's wife lived in seclusion after his death, reluctant even to make a claim for land due her as a veteran's widow.

The reason for such circumspection, Sabine suggests, was that Woodhull, previously a vociferous patriot, has lost hope for the success of the American cause after the British invasion and shifted his allegiance back to the Crown in an effort to protect his genuine *patria*, Long Island. With independence less than two months old, political allegiance in New York was so fluid that even patriots tempered their condemnation of such regional neutrality with sympathy. The shrouding of Woodhull's fate, however, may testify to his taking prudence in a revolutionary situation to a deceitful extreme. Sabine thinks it not unlikely that he was a traitor who allowed British troops to slip behind the Continental forces guarding New York.

Because they deal with possibilities rather than probabilities, arguments from omission are never satisfactory, but Sabine's web of circumstance holds up quite well. Yet is is a dangerous approach to historical explanation: there is a reluctance to let anything go unexplained, and the argument can get lost in a miasma of what people "must have thought". Sabine's preoccupation is with the secret and mysterious aspects of the American Revolution--which by their nature we shall never know very well--and it prevents this tendentious and padded book from having much significance. Yet this attitude toward the Revolution has its unintended advantages: it takes the violence of the revolutionary process and the contest for allegiance to be central to the Revolution itself. Most studies of the Revolution have taken its outcome for granted and have therefore focused either on its origins in the imperial crisis before 1775 or on the formation of a national government. How one led to the other involves more than battles and diplomacy--of which we may know more than is decent. We remain largely ignorant about crucial elements of the change: the role of provisional governments, the regulation of the war-time economy, the response to British occupation (the strongest correlation of Loyalism is that with the location of the British army), and other matters significant only during the revolutionary conflict but crucial to its outcome and indicative of its nature.

*Dalhousie University*

JACK CROWLEY

*Shakespearean Design*. By Mark Rose. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972. Pp. 190. \$7.95.

The reader should not be put off by the formal tone of Professor Rose's claim that his book is "a study of Renaissance dramaturgy". It is a spirited examination of Shakespearean form which every high school teacher of English ought to carry in his briefcase. Like his earlier excellent *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser* this book is an admirably lucid work, authoritative yet easy in manner, which masters the difficult art of presenting a complex subject in a concise and illuminating way.

Professor Rose is unquestionably right in treating Shakespeare as a man of his time, profoundly different from ourselves, and the focus of this study is the Shakespearean play as a Renaissance artifact. Eschewing both the "new critical" orthodoxy of G. Wilson Knight and the earlier neo-classical orthodoxy of A.C. Bradley, he argues that Shakespeare's structural principles "have to do with the very shape of Renaissance thought". "Shape" is the key work in this book, for it pursues the elusive concept of "spatial form" not only in Shakespeare's construction of tableaux and scenes, but in the mirroring and balancing effect of larger groups of scenes to produce a contrapuntal design achieving a "multiple unity", which Professor Rose calls the creation of a "calculating architect". If we accept that this artistry is the result of the "visualizing imagination" which Shakespeare shared with his contemporaries, it follows that the principles of his dramatic design cannot be viewed as unique, and the author suggests that they were employed by Marlowe and can be traced later in the work of Webster and Tourneur, specifically in *The White Devil* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

The author disarmingly disclaims originality for his book, making it clear that he has simply developed a line of enquiry where other critics left off. Indeed, this reviewer was brought up on lectures which propounded similar views. It is also true that he offers no fresh interpretation of the plays. But Professor Rose need not be so modest. After all, most criticism builds on the work of others, and in any case this book is primarily an exposition of form rather than a foray into new areas of significance. Its achievement lies in the way it draws together various strands of thought about Shakespearean scenic design into a more comprehensive theoretical framework. While the opening chapter, sketching in the context of Elizabethan culture with its taste for elaborate symmetry, is necessarily brief and deserves a separate study, the second chapter, so far as I know (except for Anthony Trollope's marginalia in his copies of Shakespeare) marks a fresh emphasis in stressing the centrality of the scene in Shakespeare's art. In making a searching analysis of the internal organisation of Shakespeare's scenes Professor Rose rightly stresses his debt to the didactic tradition of the morality plays, which are more concerned with meaning than with the thrust of the narrative. From this point of view the "intrusive" drunken porter's speech in *Macbeth*, for instance, provides a central emblem for the moral turmoil of the

scene of Duncan's murder. Similarly he identifies a "diptych" pattern in the opening scene of the early play, *Romeo and Juliet*, where the vain feud of the Montagues and Capulets is balanced against Romeo's vain love for Rosaline and argues that as Shakespeare's art matured this is amplified into a larger structural principle in, for example, the winter and spring halves of *The Winter's Tale*. The major unit of design, Professor Rose urges, is the group of scenes which make structural parallels, like the great debate scenes of the Trojan and Greek councils in *Troilus and Cressida*, or the opening ceremonial scenes of *Richard II* which frame the intimate conversation between Gaunt and his sister in which Shakespeare reveals the political reality behind Richard's public display of impartial justice. These scenes strike the keynote for the play and in them Shakespeare can be seen feeling his way toward the great opening scenes of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

The chapter on *Hamlet* is a case study providing a scene-by-scene analysis which convincingly demonstrates the value of the scenic approach in the classroom. It also emphasizes the book's careful logic, for it forms the pivot between the earlier discussion of the component units of Shakespeare's structure and the last two chapters which deal with overall design. It is disappointing to find in these chapters that Professor Rose has slighted the comedies in favour of the tragedies and histories which more obviously suit his purpose. This is a pity because his approach allows scope for an interesting discussion of the relation between the Renaissance concern with life as art and Shakespeare's comic view of life as ritualised game.

Plainly embarrassed about the diagrams which illustrate his text, Professor Rose tells us that he includes them reluctantly as a means of making his argument clear. They are indeed useful teaching aids in the classroom, although they seem superfluous in this book. But they do serve to point to its virtues and limitations. It is a model of how to expound Shakespeare in the lecture hall, and it is probably no accident that the book reads like a series of cogently organised lectures. At the same time the static nature of the sketches emphasizes its neglect of the temporal and poetic dimensions of the plays. Professor Rose pays the price of ignoring the critical strategies of Bradley and Wilson Knight by missing something of the rich poetic contexts of Shakespeare's drama and the psychological dynamism of his narrative; hence something, too, of his meaning. However, these are the virtues and defects of a thesis, and it is precisely the fact that this book has something distinctive to say about the "myriad-minded" Shakespeare, as Coleridge called him, that makes it more stimulating than the innumerable general studies and esoteric articles. Moreover its frank orientation toward the classroom makes this study ideal for students and teachers.

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G.M. HARVEY



*Tristram Shandy: The Games of Pleasure.* By Richard A. Lanham. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: The University of California Press, 1973. Pp. 174. \$7.95.

According to Richard A. Lanham the main cause of error in Sternean criticism has resulted from seeing *Tristram Shandy* as an experimental work. Thus, for the Victorians it was considered frivolous because it did not measure up to Nineteenth-century standards of seriousness. In the eyes of many moderns, on the other hand, it is viewed as an early exponent of the existential absurd, which makes it a highly serious philosophical work. Both of these views have in common the question of Sterne's seriousness and both arrive at their respective concepts of seriousness by referring to their own place in the realistic tradition. It is on this point that Lanham takes issue with the bulk of Sterne's critics and makes an important, and for the most part, new contribution to the critical dialogue surrounding *Tristram Shandy*.

Lanham maintains that *Tristram Shandy* is not part of the realistic tradition, but that it is one of the last classical narratives, made up as it is of many classical fictional genres such as the history (in the tradition of Herodotus and Thucydides), the autobiography-biography, the rhetorical sampler, the *speculum principis*, and the travel book. Lanham sees in Sterne's self-conscious use of these classical genres Sterne's game (or *ludus* as he calls it) and indeed his very purpose in *Tristram Shandy*. The originality of Sterne, he argues, is not in extending the domain of the novel in terms of time and space, but in applying the old (and basically public) techniques of the classical tradition to the new *subject* of realistic narrative, the private life. The net result of using classical rhetorical means to describe the private life is to make us accept Sterne's conception of the private life as "essentially rhetorical, dramatic, acted--full of ceremony". This technique establishes the basic dichotomy in *Tristram Shandy*. It places the reader between the seriousness of the public life (the Victorian expectation) and the seriousness of the private life (the modern expectation) so that we can not be serious about either one. Rather, we are made self-conscious about language and literary form. Language is shown to be a "*ludus*, a knowing public display of rhetoric, a game. Thus the word for the *form* of the book can point to the *theme* of the book as well, the rhetorical definition of man."

Lanham argues very convincingly that Sterne has used the rhetorical tradition to illustrate the classic struggle between the philosophical and rhetorical views of man--i.e., is God at the centre of all things or is man? Rhetoric is useful because it allows for the solution to conflict through verbal confrontation. Also, rhetoric polarizes conflict. It makes us play not to learn but to win. And it opens out, through debate as game, an immediate access to pleasure. It is this idea which, according to Lanham, made Sterne's major originality possible. Using it, Sterne rehearses the conflict between the philosophical and the rhetorical views. "Their resolution he finds neither in rhetorical victory nor philosophical wisdom but in the pleasurable reenactment--and pursuit--of both. He finds the midpoint in a state

of mind and activity to which Kenneth Burke has given the brilliant name 'pure persuasion.' This, Burke says, is something like what the actor feels when he plays for an audience. Something, that is, like what Tristram feels when he plays for us. For that finally is what he is doing. Playing."

Lanham is perhaps the first critic to seriously consider *Tristram Shandy* as a game in the sense of "a continuing contest with, by its nature, only intermediate results". He finds that the book consists of various types of games: Walter contends (*agon*), Toby simulates a war (*mimicry*), Yorick delivers himself to chance (*alea*), and Tristram makes us and himself giddy (*ilinx*). Seen as a collection of overlapping, sometimes conflicting games or hobbies, *Tristram Shandy* reveals itself as the "epic of the private life. The game or hobby then becomes the symbol for the private life, and the elements in the novel which challenge and interfere with the games become, inevitably, symbolic of the public life, of duty rather than pleasure." The hobby-horse thus represents commitment to self, to pleasure. The world of *Tristram Shandy* is, then, one of unashamed addiction to the pleasure principle, a world which offers no set point of view, no center, no transcendence except through play itself.

This critical framework allows Lanham to challenge rather compellingly many of the standard interpretations of *Tristram Shandy*. Walter is no longer just the frustrated *philosophus gloriosus* who can never bring his theories to fruition. He is also, and more importantly Lanham would add, a gamesman, an eloquent orator who can successfully use language and take pleasure in it so as to offset the sad experiences he can not change. Thus language becomes more important than meaning. Communication is no longer seen as the main issue, but pleasure is. Once the ego has been served, then, and only then, is communication possible. In other words, self-indulgence liberates real feeling. This explains Toby's great capacity for fellow-feeling. Lanham sees Toby as the philosopher of the private life. Through his hobby-horsical study (which satisfies him) Toby discovers human motive—pleasure, the secret of the private life. When he rides his hobby-horse he has no fellow feelings. But once he attains self-satisfaction his feelings are liberated and become truly spontaneous. Pleasure is thus shown to be the single cause of both his hobby-horse and his goodness. In Lanham's view this is the central lesson of *Tristram Shandy*, and it is made particularly evident through Tristram's unpredictable narrative. Tristram is also a successful player. He seeks pleasure in vertigo, in the exhilaration of the virtuoso who must keep a variety of self-induced obstacles in balance. His game is self-satisfying; it is an end in itself. And through it we are made to see that all games, and all human motive, start with pleasure; all feelings for others are preceded by feelings for ourselves.

This reading places Lanham at odds with those critics from Herbert Read to the present (particularly Arthur Hill Cash) who see in *Tristram Shandy* a significant moral dimension. Lanham discusses the sermon episode in *Tristram Shandy* in a chapter on Sterne and *Hamlet* (an area, by the way, which has hitherto received little analysis), and he concludes that this episode shows how irrelevant

conscience and revealed truth are in a world where motive is reduced to pleasure. *Tristram Shandy* is thus seem as a "counter-statement" of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*. These latter represent Sterne's moral and ethical position. The novel, on the other hand, makes actors of us. It does not say what we ought to do but tells us why we do it. We are not presented with the sphere of moral responsibility or with the tragic self. In effect, then, "what *Tristram Shandy* really does is reverse the stance of the *Sermons*, declare war on the conscience."

*University of Alberta*

MARCO LOVERSO

*A Writer at War: Arnold Bennett, 1914-1918.* By Kinley E. Roby. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1972. Pp. 3-313. \$10.95.

Apart from some typographical errors and a few stylistic lapses, Professor Kinley E. Roby in this book presents a readable account of the available biographical facts of Arnold Bennett's life during the world crisis of 1914-1918. The accumulated details of these years impress upon the reader more forcibly than in any previous account an awareness of the almost incredible energy of the author, his breadth of interests, and the terrifying regimen he set himself.

Professor Roby is obviously sympathetic to the man and his work. However, his sympathy for Bennett, his wish to erase the persistent picture of the author as a "soulless writing machine", does not prevent him from selecting the usual anecdotes and general statements which support that derogatory image of the man. Too many of the clichés attached to Bennett weight the scale of opinion in the opening chapter.

Besides trying to counter some of the major criticisms of the author by reference to Bennett's theoretical statements in *The Author's Craft* (1915), Professor Roby in the first chapter outlines the author's personality, describes his psychological state during the war, and gives a resume with evaluations of Bennett's writings up to the beginning of hostilities. Too many important issues are summarily treated because Professor Roby wishes merely to set a background for his examination of the war years. The unfortunate consequence is that valuable insights remain undeveloped. For example, in countering Henry James's estimate of Bennett's "saturation" technique as "a 'promiscuous' heaping of rubble" by quoting selected statements from *The Author's Craft* where Bennett emphasized the importance of "coordination of detail according to a true perspective of relative importance", Professor Roby asserts that Bennett's mastery of detail in his best work "takes on a vividness and an intensity generally found only in poetry". This point is not elaborated and the example given of the elephant's death in *The Old Wives' Tale* is not nearly as impressive as Bennett's description of Anna's kitchen in *Anna of the Five Towns*, to name but one of many other possible illustrations. Bennett's concern for "design" is limited in Professor Roby's opinion to his development of "a context which largely defines the nature and direction

of the dramatic action" with "nothing behind it, no guiding principle, no cosmic purpose". However, there is an "inevitability" in the course of events and that sense of inevitability produces "a distinct emotional tone ... of melancholy, perhaps even disillusionment....In the last analysis there is nothing in his novels to relieve the tedium of existence". The illustrations provided can be considered readings selected to support a questionable opinion. The "indistinguishable man on the footpaths" who is "secretly obsessed by the vision of a train just moving out of a station" need not be interpreted as typical of Bennett's "melancholic" images. The young man of *The Living Age* article is homeward bound to a dull routine, but his obsession with a train moving out of a station can link him with Bennett's characters from Richard Larch onward who either secretly contemplate the exciting possibilities of the train outward bound or are involved near or on trains in incidents that change their lives. These men have dreams. To say that "Bennett's characters at crisis points in their lives, tend to deny something to themselves", that "their greatest achievements appear to be their renunciations", and then to cite as examples Sophia Baines's refusal to become Chirac's mistress and Anna Tellwright's submission to her father is misleading. A reader must ignore the fact that although Sophia felt some sexual attraction and a profound pity for Chirac, she knew that she did not love him, and a reader must ignore the fact that Anna risks all her family security in defying her father to destroy an incriminating document for William Price. To accept Professor Roby's assessment that Bennett represents no relief from the tedium of existence, a reader of the novels must in fact ignore Bennett's careful rendering of his characters' vivid sense of the drama of their lives, *their* sense of satisfaction, frustration, or bafflement.

Of benefit here would be conclusions drawn from a thorough study of Bennett's critical ideas about his craft. He carefully studied the techniques of earlier novelists and was familiar with contemporary experiments. The critical statements that he made throughout his career, although not set down in one document, have a remarkable consistency which illuminate his aims and his practice in his best work. Scattered references to some of his critical notions can provide only an arbitrary view of the craftsman.

Professor Roby's contention that the war years coincided with, if not provoked, a crisis and revolution in Bennett's novel writing is worthy of consideration. From the second chapter the remainder of the book is devoted to giving almost a daily account of Bennett's activities during that period. Generally, the mass of information is developed well. A persuasive case is made for understanding Bennett's self-imposed task of maintaining "civilian morale" at a high level and for accepting some of the less attractive manifestations of Bennett's aim.

In addition to journalism, Bennett involved himself in community work and eventually was invited to join Lord Beaverbrook in the Ministry of Information of the Lloyd George Government. Throughout this period Bennett's marriage with the Frenchwoman, Marguerite Solie, deteriorated to the point of their establishing

separate residences, although the rift was not publicly acknowledged and a legal separation was not arranged until 1922. Professor Roby's discussion of the Bennetts' relationship is sensitive, but it suffers in some instances from the fact that considerable biographical material concerning them was destroyed or was unavailable at the time of writing. This leads him to make some surmises that the recent publication of letters which passed between the husband and wife will not support.

Because of his war experiences it is suggested that Bennett's "preoccupation with the provincial novel was nearly at an end", that he was weary of "the moral and ethical values dominating the Five Towns", that he was anxious "to bring his writing up-to-date". Although he rightly considers the novels inferior representatives of the genre, Professor Roby gives prominence to *The Price of Love* (1914) in the author's attempt "to reshape his fiction" and finds a radical change in the type of heroine heralded in *The Lion's Share* (1915). His estimate of *Lord Raingo* (1926) as one of the finest of Bennett's career is substantiated and gives credence to his claim that Bennett's experiences during the war stimulated him out of an abyss of creative sterility demarcated by journeyman articles and novels like *The Lion's Share*.

Professor Roby raises and only partially explores difficulties he encountered in Bennett's writings - Bennett's reticence or lack of emotion, his omission from his fiction of any direct rendering of his experiences at the Front, his "preoccupation" with death scenes. His reading of Bennett's earlier great work in the light of his analysis of the work Bennett produced during and after the war leads Professor Roby to conclude in his Epilogue that "Bennett's fiction is a remarkable illustration of how life can be presented in impressive detail without endowing that life with any meaning", a conclusion possible to be drawn only when aspects of Bennett's novels, such as his qualifying humour, are ignored.

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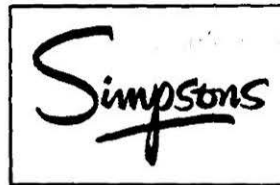
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