

Book Reviews

William A. Armstrong, ed., *Shakespeare's Histories: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972. pp. 282. \$3.25. (U.K. 75 p.).

This anthology, in the Penguin Shakespeare Library series, comprises twelve selected essays, an introduction by the editor, and a list of suggestions for further reading. As almost all the selections are from books still in print, including two Arden editions, the anthology might well be thought of as assembling for the undergraduate what he could with no great trouble search out for himself. Perhaps the book's labour-saving aspect — a kind of intellectual convenience food — accounts in part for its rather high price, especially in Canada.

But this is a judicious selection. The editor has aimed at assembling "a set of comprehensive discussions of Elizabethan theories of history and the history play" and representing critics who "have been especially concerned to rescue certain of Shakespeare's history plays from presumptions which run counter to an informed study of their texts." Irving Ribner's "History and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare" and S. C. Sen Gupta's "The Substance of Shakespeare's Histories" are placed to neatly counterweigh one another, the first outlining Shakespeare's use of medieval, classical and Renaissance ideas of history, the second asserting that Shakespeare "interpreted history aesthetically rather than philosophically." J. P. Brockbank, in "The Frame of Disorder — *Henry VI*," argues that Shakespeare dramatised whatever "plots" he could find in chronicle history, while in "Angel With Horns: the Unity of *Richard III*" A. P. Rossiter shows that *Richard III* is much more complex than the simple process of divine justice demonstrated in its chronicle sources. William H. Matchett's essay on *King John* underlines Rossiter's thesis that the Shakespearean treatment of a reign can be the most profound of all approaches, and Harold Jenkins' "The Structural Problem in Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth*" is included for its persuasive re-creation of the dramatist's method of working.

By reprinting Peter Ure's study of Richard II and A. R. Humphrey's assessment of Falstaff the editor reminds us that the histories can be both high tragedy and superb comedy; and it is a measure of the balance of the selection that Falstaff has a chapter to himself. There is no better essay on *Henry V* than Humphrey's introduction to the play in the New Penguin edition, but Professor Armstrong chooses for his anthology a piece which corroborates his own belief that *Henry V* is genuinely heroic, M. M. Reese's chapter in *The Cease of Majesty*. Reese fights on Henry's behalf almost as many critics, it seems, as the King fought Frenchmen at Agincourt. Frank Kermode's defence of *Henry VIII* also is reprinted.

The history plays are such splendid theatre that it was a happy thought to include John Gielgud's essay on acting Richard II and Arthur Colby Sprague's "Shakespeare's Histories on the English Stage." However, Professor Sprague should have been offered the opportunity to bring his stage-history up to date by mentioning the "Wars of the Roses" sequence, *Richard II* through *Richard III*, presented at Stratford in 1964.

In the introduction the editor provides an excellent account of the history play as a genre, and discusses changing critical interpretations. The list of "Suggestions for Further Reading" is an extremely useful supplement to both the introduction and the selection.

James Black

Jon S. Lawry, *Sidney's Two Arcadias: Pattern and Proceeding*. Ithica and London: Cornell U. P., 1972. pp. 298. \$11.50.

The starting point of Professor Lawry's study is Sidney's conception of the poet as "mediator" between man's "erected wit" and "infected will." He shows how both *Arcadias* are "heroic" in conception, but that while the *Old* defines heroism by depicting its "comic distraction unto error," the *New* "celebrates heroism in its successes against vice." He analyses the characterization of the main fable, showing that it is based on a Platonic conception of the universe as a series of corresponding "triadic" hierarchies. At the political level, the shepherds speak for divine wisdom, the "errant" princes are the "heroic centre" and the rebels represent the base. At the personal level, Musidorus, Pyrocles and Basilius, and Pamela, Philodea and Gynecia represent, in descending order, strength of reason over will and desire. The action represents a disintegration of the harmony of Arcadia through "infected will," manifested in Basilius's abdication and in the dethronement of reason in Pyrocles and Musidorus. But for Sidney erotic love is not evil in itself. The destruction of the Arcadian harmony results from an interaction of political and personal disequilibrium; erotic love is corrupted by the dislocation at the top of the political hierarchy which forces the princes into unheroic stratagems and the princesses into distorted responses. However, the action is governed not by infected human will, but by Divine Providence. Lawry suggests that Evarchus's judgment is intended to represent the opposite extreme from Basilius's permissiveness and that the providential re-awakening makes an implicit comment on the inadequacy of merely human justice.

In his discussion of the New Arcadia, Lawry follows a line of argument similar to that of K. O. Myrick and R. W. Zandvoort, showing how Sidney shifts the emphasis from "discussion within a . . . fallen world to the meditation which could prevent a fall."

Professor Lawry's account of the philosophical basis of Sidney's form is illuminating but it is marred by occasional obscurities. A glaring example is his treatment of the influence of Ramism. He makes the interesting suggestion that certain features of the "Arcadian style" derive from Ramist rhetorical

methods, but in attempting to show that Ramism offered further "possibilities to literature," he is on less sure ground. He moves from the unexceptionable statement that Ramist textbooks "honored the concepts of fiction equally with those from any other source" to, "By virtue of its gravitation to the noetic or intuitive, Ramism was fully at home in 'golden' worlds such as those of Christianity and Platonism. With proper use (including graded training) of the mind, the Ramist writer as well as the Christian or Platonist could attain to an erect perspective upon supposedly eternal truth." It is difficult to decipher this, but Professor Lawry seems to be claiming that since Ramist textbooks draw illustrative examples from fiction, a writer who follows the Ramist method is especially well equipped to discover "eternal truth." This is to make too large a claim for Ramism which is essentially nothing more than a method of ordering discourse.

The detailed commentary on the action is illuminating, particularly the analysis of the Eclogues and of the symbolic meanings of setting and action, but a less idiosyncratic style would have made the reading of it more pleasurable.

Lorna Watson

Motley Deakin and Peter Lisca, eds., *From Irving to Steinbeck: Studies of American Literature in Honor of Henry E. Warfel*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972. pp. 140. \$5.00.

This festschrift contains nine essays on subjects spanning two centuries, and evidences a wide variety of critical approaches to literature; furthermore, some essays are written by noted authorities. These features give solidity and balance to the book. However, in observance of the ceremonial of a festschrift, a reader may wish for a higher proportion of essays possessing fresh conceptions, interesting methodologies, and results of new investigations to provide a perfect tribute to the departed and clear usefulness to the living.

There are, to be sure, some engaging essays that are not only enlightening but possibly seminal. In one of the more original essays, Nathalia Wright convincingly analyses "The Significance of the Legal Profession in *A Modern Instance*" to show Howells' pervasive concern with the peculiarly American problem of securing "the liberty of the individual without forfeiture of social responsibility," and how complete personal freedom might be followed by disaster but discipline can become an unnatural trait. And Richard Beale Davis' "Neglected 'Literary' Materials for Writing an Intellectual History of the Colonial South" reiterates competently how the abundant supply of wills, sermons, and letters may reveal profound intellectual assumptions and debates in a region that hitherto has been unjustly deprived of the stature assigned to New England by such a scholar as Perry Miller.

Other essays are quite competent and of some interest but specialised or somewhat derivative in their interpretations. Robert J. Griffin in "Carrie and Music: A Note on Dreiser's

Technique" supports the recent re-appraisal that finds Dreiser's style is more controlled formalistically than earlier noted; examining Dreiser's assumption that "inarticulate experience" can be shown by "a complex of references to things musical and music-like," Griffin shows, for example, the importance of "lilting" voices and the Charles Ives-like "music" of the city that overwhelms Carrie. In "*Absalom, Absalom!* as a Portrait of the the Artist," Frank R. Giordana, Jr., builds upon earlier studies which read the novel as more than a confused history of the South or of one family, and concludes that greater notice must be given to Quentin's failure to separate his efforts to imagine history through the eyes of a received tradition from what he discovers about the fragility of that tradition, which ultimately leads to his suicide. William K. Bottorff is not content as others are to note merely the sources of "Hindu and Buddhist Usages in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot," and he seeks to clarify the original context of the poet's allusions through an examination of the editions used by Eliot; the conclusions are limited, but the study adequately suggests how Eliot read the Eastern doctrines of karma and time to render incisively a Western concern about the failure of values in the modern age. Finally Peter Lisca competently discusses Steinbeck's art in using images and discussions of biological, sociological, historical and religious changes in the Great Depression to underline his theme of the breakdown of the old concept of traditional community and the pains of the new order that are driving "Manself" on to a higher awareness of the human community.

The other essays have noticeable limitations to their interests or usefulness. In contrast to recent studies employing a multitude of approaches, as need requires, Lewis Leary's "The Two Voices of Washington Irving" is essentially a literary historian's study of Diederich Knickerbocker as the American response to the Anglophile assumptions of Geoffrey Crayon; it is perhaps too pedagogical in its simplistic division between the two narrators of the *Sketchbook*, for the essay ignores both the Americanisms of Geoffrey in such sketches as those of the English Christmas and the neo-classic hang-ups of Diederich. Sculley Bradley's ambitious study of "The Controlling Sexual Imagery in Whitman's 'Song of Myself'" attempts to show the subtle sexual suggestiveness which guides the reader to the underlying play between the poem's persona and the conception of self-hood and to the theme of life, death, and regeneration; but the essay's otherwise commendable concision leads to a bald assertiveness of an interpretation which is not always clearly supported at critical portions of the poem. Oscar Cargill's "John Dewey: The Neglected Philosopher" seeks to explain the cause of Dewey's lack of popularity despite his profundity; but it remains clear after all that Dewey's works read as a "poor translation of the German original," and it perhaps is tautological to assert simply that Dewey's flatness of style is the result of his having abjured literature for forty important years in the fear that stylistic concerns would preclude an examination of his ideas; it is more plausible to see Dewey's style as in line with pragmatism in order to clear away the underbrush as Locke and the school of Bacon attempted centuries before.

John Stephen Martin

Fay M. Blake, *The Strike in the American Novel*. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1972. pp. 292. \$7.50.

The Hollywood novel, the war novel, the corporation novel, and now, the strike novel. Studies into such forms of the novel assume that by examining patterns of setting, plot, and characterisation, we can discover the "intentions" of an author toward a theme. Often, however, such studies merely presume the existence of a genre in order to explain a novel from a pre-conceived viewpoint. Fay Blake's book differs in that she lacks the modern critical posture and confines herself to an historical survey of those American novels since 1840 which have used the labour strike as part of the plot until the strike, in the period between 1930 and 1945, became the plot itself and expressed a specific belief about the American complex of violence, freedom, and individualism.

A reader might expect that he must grit his teeth to get through a sweep of a century in only 184 pages of text, especially when some 240 novels containing strikes (annotated in the bibliography) are of little interest today or even in their own day. But the unpretentious style convinces a reader that Fay M. Blake has read closely those source novels and wishes only to present the skeleton of an engaging and useful thesis. Before 1840, she begins, the novelist saw poverty as a punishment for sin, and strikers were simply sinners contrasting with a moral hero. But in the Age of Social Darwinism the strike represented the immorality of un-American slackers ignorant of the "work ethic" of the middle-class hero who sought unbridled power for his individual talents, both moral and economic. Only about 1895 did novelists see a connection between strikes, economics, and the non-creative aspects of work from the labourer's perspective, and after 1910 the middle-class novelist suffered doubts about the morality of the "work ethic." Between 1930 and 1945, this novelist used the strike to resolve his doubts. In the "proletarian novel" he used the strike action to show that labourers who had a reverence for work were worthy of the rewards of dignity and status. But there also was the "strike novel" which Blake says became a distinct genre because it used the strike as the plot and not merely as a means of character revelation or an aspect of working class life. Violence was the nature of the establishment, freedom demanded a commitment to production (not consumption), individualism was a selfless struggle against cosmic forces of evil. The "strike novel," Blake says, disappeared only after World War II when the moral conflicts centering on the strike were subsumed into the conflict of authority between officers and enlisted men on the battlefield.

This thesis presents some interesting observations. Such as how the strike after 1870 challenged the closing Western frontier as a proper setting for American values under pressure, and how the novels of the 1930's were not the visions of authors who achieved credible insight into complexities but virtually the hack-work of a middle-class intelligensia in complete disarray in the face of ultimate democratisation of American life. Indeed, there are only some four or five important novels ever to use the strike and, as Blake admits, the strike attracted lesser novelists who simply reflected an age's mainstream standards. Even so, in

some manner not discussed by Blake this genre of commonplace values became a bridge to the more philosophical, less parochial fiction of the post-war era. The book is an introduction to the genre's rise; its fall must yet be explained.

John Stephen Martin

Books Received

Would publishers please note the change of address of ARIEL.

- ACHEBE, CHINUA, *Beware Soul Brother* [African Writers Series]. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972. pp. 68. 30p.
- AMOTOSO, KOLE, *The Edifice*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 121. 30p.
- AMOTOSO, KOLE, *The Combat*. London. Nairobi. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 88. 35p.
- BELL, QUENTIN, *Virginia Woolf. A Biography. Vol. II. Mrs. Woolf 1912-1941*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1972. pp. 300. £3.
- The Brock Bibliography of Published Canadian Stage Plays in English, 1900-1972*. St. Catharines, Ontario: Brock University, 1972. pp. 35. \$1.50 [available from Playwrights' Co-op, 344 Dupont Street, Toronto, Canada].
- DIPOKO, MBELLA SONNE, *Black & White in Love*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 72. 35p.
- DIXON, PETER, *Alexander Pope* [Writers and their Background Series]. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1972. pp. 342. £5.25.
- EHRENPREIS, IRVIN, *Wallace Stevens. A Critical Anthology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972. pp. 333. \$3.95.
- FAGUNDO, ANA MARIA, *Vida Y Obra de Emily Dickinson*. Madrid: Col. Agora 1972. pp. 194. 300 pesetas.
- GARDNER, HELEN, ed., *The New Oxford Book of English Verse*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. pp. 974. £3.25.
- GOETSCH, PAUL, ed., *English Dramatic Theories: 20th Century*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972. pp. 152. Dm.8.
- GUSTAFSON, RALF, *Selected Poems*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972. pp. 128. \$5.95.
- HENRI, ADRIAN and DUNN, NELL. *I Want*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1972. pp. 109. \$6.00.
- HYNES, SAMUEL, *Edwardian Occasions. Essays on English Writing in the Early Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972. pp. 208. £3.00.

- JAFFIN, DAVID, *Emptied Spaces (The Abelard Poets)*. London: Abelard-Schuman, 1972. pp. 32. £1.25.
- KANE, CHEIKH HAMIDON, *Ambiguous Adventure* (trans., Katherine Wood). London: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 178. 50p.
- KENNELLY, BRENDAN, *Salvation, The Stranger*. Dublin: Tara Telephone Publications, 1972. pp. 46. 40p. (paper). £1.25 (cloth).
- KENNELLY, BRENDAN, *Love Cry*. Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1972. pp. 48. np.
- KNAPPERT, JAN, ed., *A Choice of Flowers. Chaguo la Maua. An Anthology of Swahili Love Poetry*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 202. 60p.
- LA GUMA, ALEX, *In the Fog of the Season's End*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 181. 50p.
- LAWRENCE, ANTHONY, *Foreign Correspondent*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1972. pp. 201. £2.95.
- LUBEGA, BONNIE, *The Outcasts*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 88. 35p.
- MANNHEIMER, MONICA, *The Generations in Meredith's Novels*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972. pp. 199. np.
- MCMASTER, GRAHAM, ed., *William Wordsworth. A Critical Anthology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972. pp. 552. \$4.25.
- MINER, EARL, ed., *John Dryden [Writers and their Background Series]*. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1972. pp. 363. £5.00.
- MULAISHO, DOMINIC, *The Tongue of the Dumb*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 299. 50p.
- NEWLOVE, JOHN, *Lies*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972. pp. 96. \$4.95.
- PATRIDES, C. A., *The Grand Design of God*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. pp. 157. \$7.50.
- PETERS, LENRIE, *Katchikali*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 70. 40p.
- PIETERSE, COSMO, ed., *Short African Plays*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 242. 80p.
- PLATZ-WAURY, ELKE, ed., *English Theories of the Novel. Vol. III. Nineteenth Century*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972. pp. 139. Dm.8.
- RAFROIDI, PATRICK, et al., *Aspects of the Irish Theatre*. Paris: Editions Universitaires, Publications de l'Université de Lille III, 'Cahiers Irlandais, No. 1,' 1972. pp. 297. 49F95.
- SMITH, A. J., ed., *John Donne. Essays in Celebration*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972. pp. 470. £6.00.
- THEMBA, CAN, *The Will to Die* [selected by Donald Stuart and Roy Holland]. London. Nairobi. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1972. pp. 115. 35p.