



## Book Reviews

**Andrew Bowie, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997.**

'It is increasingly apparent that we lack an appropriate archaeology of contemporary 'literary theory' (p.28), writes Andrew Bowie—before embarking, successfully if not exhaustively, upon just that. By 'an appropriate archaeology', Bowie means one designed at once to supplement and at the same time to correct the account offered by literary theory of its own origins, one that will clarify and 'demystify' theory's ideas and aims by bringing them into a working and respectable relation with the ideas and aims of post-Kantian 'metaphysics' as well as of modern analytic philosophy. More bluntly, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* is a reaction to the unjustified claims that have been made for the originality and iconoclasm of recent literary theory, which, like its idols Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, is 'too often credited'—not only by theory itself, but also by its antagonists amongst the literary scholars—with fundamental innovations that had actually already been initiated by others' (p.134). On the contrary, argues Bowie, it is Kant and post-Kantian German philosophy—the focus is on Kant, Jacobi, Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century (with extended reference to Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Hamann, and Herder), and on Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Habermas, Gadamer, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, and Adorno in the twentieth—that constitutes 'the historical and theoretical 'condition of possibility' of the new wave of theory that developed from the 1960s onwards in the work of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and others' (p.3) although in *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* 'theory' is most often represented by Derrida, Lyotard, and the pragmatist Richard Rorty). German philosophy, according to Bowie, is a continuous tradition that has to be credited not only with initiating what have become fashionable 'ideas' and 'issues' (as distinct from arguments, a word Bowie rarely uses), but also with genuine iconoclasm. Hence the subtitle of the Introduction: 'renewing the theoretical canon'—rediscovering, that is, and thus extending; broadening the historical base of literary theory while indirectly but insistently asking students of literature and philosophy themselves to confer on the issues raised by that tradition.

This last point I take to be crucial, for Bowie's study is more than just a systematic exposure of the derivativeness of the emperor's new clothes—indeed the question of direct debt is carefully avoided—it is also inspired by the 'failures' both of anti-theoretical literary critics and of philosophers to appreciate the sorts of questions that theory is asking and how far these are questions that should be shared across the two disciplines (p.281). Beyond everything else, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* is a plea for interdisciplinary co-operation to

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overcome the redundancies and blindnesses of a jealous and intellectually unjustifiable academic isolationism and to ensure the survival of the fittest: 'the need to integrate the disciplines of literary studies and modern philosophy in new ways is, I propose, vital to the long-term health of both disciplines' (p.2).

Their coming together over a neglected philosophical tradition would mean, first among other things, that the philosopher and the student of literature would be in a stronger position to resist the ideological reductionism and demystification of 'literature' being carried out by historical and cultural materialism, fast becoming institutionally and intellectually the only option available to a literary studies whose 'legitimation is now lacking' (p.2). In one very vital sense which in Bowie's introduction only gradually becomes apparent, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* is offered as both a complement and an antidote to Terry Eagleton's *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Blackwell, 1990), whose sustained, often deconstructive critique of many of the same thinkers that Bowie treats—Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno, Lyotard, Habermas, Derrida, and Rorty—is characteristically preoccupied with the historical and political implications of flawed logic and discursive detail. *From Romanticism to Critical Theory*, on the other hand, deploys a judicious selection of quotations as part of a sequence of uncritical, interpretative paraphrases to isolate its privileged 'issues': 'the truth-potential in art that is more than just ideology' (p.8) and 'the reevaluation of interpretation which ensues from a mistrust of both epistemological and semantic foundationalism' (p.104). Concerned to demonstrate the continuity of these issues and to provoke a reassessment, Bowie is inclined to take the philosophers themselves at their own word.

None of this, however—not the challenge to the misplaced vanity of literary theory and the ways in which theory has wilfully misread 'traditional metaphysics' to trumpet its own originality; not the challenge to modern philosophy to recognize the immediate relevance of 'questions of literature to central philosophical questions concerning art and truth' (p.9); not the challenge to the children of the New and practical criticism in departments of English, and to their colleagues the scholarly positivists, to address themselves to the questions raised by theory and prevent their 'conversation about poetry' from deteriorating into 'wine parties of second-rate and commonplace people' (Protagoras 347; quoted p.1); not the challenge to the Marxists to recognize that in explaining everything, ideology explains nothing, rendering the subject indifferent to what is known and impotent in the act of knowing—none of this is stated as directly as I state it here, much less argued rigorously or at length. This is not from any want of either understanding or courage on Bowie's part—indeed, his position is made clear enough for me to be able to reconstruct it here. Rather it is because Bowie's is a diplomatic exercise involving complex orchestration. For example, each of the too self-contained 'interest groups' variously challenged throughout the discussion is also credited with making a valuable contribution: if, contra Eagleton, 'literature' (and philosophy, come to that) has a viable if contingent status both practically and theoretically, still the ideological is granted its own (again contingent) explanatory force; if to become both responsible and indeed meaningful the act of literary interpretation needs to be initiated into its own procedures and thus into the

wherefores of philosophy and its doppelganger theory, still interpretation is found to have valid motives and objectives; if theorists like Derrida are less remarkable, both inherently and historically, than their argumentative and stylistic mannerisms would have us believe, still they continue to ask the right questions and to reconfront the abiding issue of the grounds for knowledge; and so on.

This diplomatic apportioning of praise, blame, and subsequent responsibility collaborates with a natural tendency in Bowie's writing to diffuseness and delay. An anxiety about being overcome by his own involved and onerous narrative far too frequently erupts into phrases of the 'as we shall see in Chapter X below' kind, even to the point of editorial laxness: 'One fundamental way of seeing the issue will, as we shall see, recur in different forms right up until the present day' (p.33). We are constantly being told that the significance of this or that idea will become apparent later, even while it is, of course, being made apparent then and there. Having arrived at the middle to later chapters in which everything is supposed to happen or be revealed, moreover, we are referred to earlier ones ('It should be obvious from preceding chapters that a great deal turns on exactly what language itself is understood to be', p.183; 'There are, remember, very divergent ways of taking seriously the idea that art—particularly literature—is connected to truth, as should already be evident', p.185). It is not that Bowie has not said all that he intended to say or that it wasn't worth saying, rather that at no point in the long narrative do we have a sense of arriving or having arrived at just that—a point: an argument conducted rigorously to its conclusion with a point being made that stands explicitly and contestably there. Indeed, at his most decisive, as on the unique occasion when Nietzsche is roundly condemned as overrated as a philosopher and repugnant as a human being—'one of the most hectoring, derivative, self-obsessed and generally reactionary modern theorists to put pen to paper' (p.27)—Bowie refers the reader elsewhere for the actual argument, to the eighth chapter of his own *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester, 1990).

Beyond remarking the sacrifice of detail, rigour, and force made for the sake of introducing an interdisciplinary readership to some of the most abstruse ideas of German philosophical idealism, two observations occur to me. The first is in response to Bowie's wondering why it is that the insights of German Romantic philosophy are not better known to controversial theorists and modern analytic philosophers alike. There does seem to be a whole area of ideas rather than specifically of philosophy that a study of this kind cannot accommodate, one represented by books like David Simpson's *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory* (Chicago, 1993), whose title is self-explanatory. The individual and national or cultural motives behind the transmission or suppression of 'issues' present a complex field to which philosophy as Bowie conceives it, even while it is at every point implicated, must remain indifferent. When, for example, the Whig Lord Byron wished out loud that the Tory student of contemporary German metaphysics, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'would explain his explanation', he didn't really want to know what Coleridge was on about. Again, more recently: why should an intellectual movement like Existentialism, whose debts to German Romantic philosophy were far more extensive and far cruder than were those of the French intellectuals of the generation after 1968,

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have proved so fertile in other areas of artistic endeavour in the West? There is more beyond philosophy than merely ideological reductionism of the kind rightly challenged by Bowie. Rather there is a more faithful and capacious 'historical and theoretical "condition of possibility"' than any strictly philosophical tradition could hope to comprehend. And this is especially true when the 'historical and theoretical "condition of possibility"' bears directly on what are, ultimately, moral decisions—like the decisions concerning the separate and corporate responsibilities of different academic disciplines and the way in which they should develop that are so urgent for Bowie himself.

My second and last point is admittedly neither historical nor philosophical, but concerns a nonetheless nagging problem: in spite of the 'change in orientation towards the aesthetic' (p.5), indeed of the curious triumph of literature that Bowie traces in the history of philosophy, as well as in the critical theory he anatomizes and in his own project of 'renewal'; in spite of the deference throughout *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* to 'great literary works' (p.24) and of its persistent return to fundamental 'questions about language, truth, art and interpretation' (p.281), there is no criticism of, meditation on, or even extended reference to any work of literature (though very occasionally a film or a piece of music achieves honorific notice). Nor is there any sense either that novels, poems, and plays—or works of history and philosophy as 'literature', for that matter—are pleasurable in themselves or that they matter, personally or culturally. But I am prepared to take Andrew Bowie's word for that.

*William Christie*

***The Letters of George Henry Lewes*, ed. William Baker, Department of English, University of Victoria, British Columbia: English Literary Studies Monograph Series 64–5, 1995.**

This edition prints 442 letters of George Henry Lewes together with summaries of 57 more (these are mostly notes confirming appointments and the like: today's phone call or e-mail). It is designed where possible to avoid duplication of letters that have already appeared in the nine volumes of Gordon S. Haight's magisterial *The George Eliot Letters* (1954–78), which includes 722 of Lewes's letters, though Baker places great emphasis on the fact that he has more accurate texts of letters previously published in Haight and elsewhere.

The letters range in date from 1834, when Lewes was 17, to the month of his death, November 1878. About one-third of the letters, and something approaching two-fifths of the pages, date from the period before 1854, when, by eloping to Germany with Marian Evans, Lewes took the step that was to secure his reputation. The story these pages have to tell is of an immensely energetic and enthusiastic man, with all kinds of literary, historical, philosophical and scientific interests, whose versatility is apparent in the various personae adopted in his correspondence. The early letters mostly concern professional and intellectual interests, while showing him also to be much involved with his family: not only his young wife and their children, but also his mother and other relations. One question is inescapable: if the 'Ravensbourne' on which Lewes crossed the English Channel en route to Germany with the woman who became the great novelist George Eliot

had foundered, how would he have been known to posterity? If at all, as a journalist who met an untimely end, and who wrote some novels and plays, and a durable *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845–46, later revised and expanded)—for his most significant work, the *Life of Goethe* (1855), *Sea-Side Studies* (1858), *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859–60), *Problems of Life and Mind* (1874–79), together with his stint as inaugural editor of the *Fornightly Review* (1865–66), lay in the future.

The plain fact is that for all Lewes's versatility, it is his relationship to George Eliot that is the most interesting thing about him, and the most significant aspect of this edition of his letters. From the time of their common law union in 1854, he increasingly gave himself over to the nurture and service of the split personality with whom he lived out his days, known to him by affectionate names like Pollian; to friends and family variously as Marian, Miss Evans, Mrs Lewes, Madonna, and so on; and to the world as George Eliot. His devotion is apparent to the end. The last letter in Baker's edition is a brief note, in French, on 1 November 1878, to George Eliot's close friend, Barbara Bodichon, arranging for her to visit. The last of Lewes's letters in Haight is on 21 November, accompanying the manuscript of George Eliot's *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* to the Edinburgh publisher John Blackwood. Lewes died of enteritis on 30 November.

His role as George Eliot's agent and manager is well demonstrated by his correspondence. Baker has some new letters to Blackwood (though curiously appears to imply on p. 31 that George Eliot's novels were routinely serialised in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*), and an important group of previously unpublished letters to George Smith, whose offer for *Romola* led her to desert Blackwood. One of the revelations of this edition, though, is that he performed similar duties on behalf of his wife Agnes: in 1847 he wrote to the publisher John Murray about her adaptations and translations (letters 76–7). There are no letters to George Eliot, however: in her journal she noted that she re-read them on the anniversary of his death, and requested that they be buried with her.

This edition at once becomes indispensable as a work of reference. Its layout replicates Lewes's subordination in life to his more famous consort, conveniently following the style of Haight's *George Eliot Letters*. Baker provides useful annotation, including cross-referencing to Haight (on whom the annotation is inevitably dependent), together with an appendix of letters to Lewes held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale (the major repository of Eliot and Lewes manuscript material), and indices of correspondents, and of names, places and subjects. The letters are divided into chronological groupings, though the headnotes tend to be summaries of what is in the letters rather than tactful reminders of what is not. For instance, there is no mention of John Cross in the headnote to either of the last two sections, until his marriage to George Eliot in May 1880 is reported without comment: Cross's friendship with and assistance to both Georges, especially in their search for a country house, might have been mentioned. The edition appears to be generally reliable, though it behoves a reviewer to demonstrate attentive reading by pointing out errors and omissions. Accordingly: 'correspondance' appears frequently where 'correspondence' would be correct—only in letter 132 is there an exonerating '[sic]'; at letter 63, Lubin's dating is clearly correct; it is surprising that a note to letter 245, glossing 'Bertie's

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wife safely delivered of a boy', does not report that Lewes's son Bertie and his wife ingratiatingly named their second child, born 16 May 1875, George Herbert. His elder sister was Marian Evans Lewes. And in places Baker misinterprets: for instance, in letter 15 to Karl Varnhagen von Ense he misses the point that Lewes is flattering his correspondent by referring to a long article he is completing on the work of the German scholar, which takes precedence over a budget of Lewes's own news to follow.

The greatest interest of this collection comes from the light it casts on the daily lives of George Eliot and George Lewes, particularly on their travels. To single out just one example, the letters (347–52) dealing with their journey to Spain in 1866–67 show Lewes in inimitable form. These include some to his good-natured eldest son Charles in which the engaging humour of other letters to his sons especially in their boyhood years still emerges, though he became increasingly fussy about such matters as household arrangements during an absence. Of course the letters also have much to tell about Lewes's own career, especially his scientific researches in the 1850s and 1860s: among other things it is good to have complete the letters to Dickens on spontaneous combustion (145–7).

William Baker in producing this important edition has performed a service which would have gratified George Eliot, whose devotion 'To my dear husband, George Henry Lewes' (as she inscribed the manuscript of *Adam Bede*), in its way rivalled Lewes's to her.

Margaret Harris

**S. N. Mukherjee, *Citizen Historian: Explorations in Historiography*, Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture, Sydney, and Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1996.**

At a time when it's still all the rage in some circles of Australian historical writing to cloak one's views in a post-modernist garment or two, this reviewer must come clean right away and reveal that he is not only short of a post-modernist garment, he doesn't even sport so much as a fig-leaf. 'It's all in the mind, you know', says Wallace Greenslade at the end of the *Goon Show*, and that is true enough of the *Goon* universe that was created by Spike Milligan's BBC steam radio *Big Bang*. But fans know very well that if they were to assume that this holds for the world in which their bodies take up space, they would have little hope of stepping off the pavement of a busy street and reaching the other side unscathed. One must suppose that whatever post-modernists may say about the construction of reality, they really know this very well too. But proceeding with his list of true confessions, this reviewer must also reveal that he knows next to nothing about Indian history, not the most impressive qualification, some would say, for one who is dealing with a book of collected essays by a historian born and brought up in India (though spending most of his professional life in England and Australia), all but one of which are concerned with aspects of Indian history. Quite so, but this is a book that lives up to its title: no matter how little (or, I suspect, how much) its readers may know about Indian history, they will come away from *Citizen Historian* not only better informed, but intellectually enriched by sharing the explorations over thirty four years of one who is at home in three cultures: that of

India; that of the world where English is the native tongue ; and that of the world of international scholarship. Scholarship *tout court* is the right word here—Professor Mukherjee is a historian who has learned from other disciplines; has worked and published with the late Sir Edmund Leach, the British anthropologist; and has not only written on aspects of literature, both British and Indian ( there are two such essays in the book under review), but has introduced a Bengali novelist to an English language readership by means of his own translation.

First, a glance at the range of *Citizen Historian*: in eight essays, all but one of which have been published previously as papers or as articles, the first as long ago as 1961, we are introduced to topics as various as the question of polygamy and genealogy in the Gupta period, to that of the role of the novel as a historical source, with particular reference here to Satinath Bhaduri's *The Vigil* and the Indian revolt of August 1942 against the Raj. Others look at the origins of Indian nationalism; Indian historians and the Rama Gupta tradition; British administrators and their ideological construction of the Indian village community; the political thought of the great Bengali intellectual and reformer Raja Rammohun Roy; another on his approach to the question of the status of women; and one on aspects of the thought of that remarkable English example of the 18th century Enlightenment, Sir William Jones, who lies at the core of Mukherjee's monograph, *Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth-Century British Attitudes to India*, the second edition of which was published in Bombay in 1987. The common element throughout is the interest in some of the central problems of the profession of writing history both now and in the past, for the subtitle of this collection is not a catchy label, but a genuine guide to the main ingredient of the contents.

The opening essay, from the title of which that of the book is taken, is a credo. Mukherjee is a Marxist, not of the barbarous tribe of those who strap their readers onto the bed of dialectic and torture them with jargon, but rather, one of those whose eyes were opened to the marvellous complexity and inter-connectedness of things by Marx, as was the case with Eric Hobsbawm and Pierre Vilar, and has never forgotten or regretted it, but would never confuse Marx with a Moses who came down from the mountain bearing the Table of the Law. In explaining why he believes that history matters, why historians matter, and why the nature of the world in which they write matters to historians, Mukherjee ends this piece with a telling quotation from R. G. Collingwood, who, as he rightly points out, nobody could ever mistake for a Marxist. He could equally well, I think, have found support in Thucydides—on this score Mukherjee stands in an ancient and honourable tradition, one in which Marx also stands of course, whatever the failings may be of his vulgarisers.

The final essay, 'My Discovery of Nehru: Autobiography as History', should be required reading for everyone who has any interest at all in the India of the last years of the British Empire, and will serve as an antidote for any, if such there still be, who regret the passing of the Raj; and likewise for any who imagine, as some still do, that successful nationalist movements lead straight to paradise.

No book from an academic publisher would be complete these days without its complement of typographical errors, and this one has its share, but no more than its fair share. Even non-historians would have little trouble tracking down via the

on-line the correct title of the journal which appears here as *Annales Econotrues, Sociétés, Civilisations* (p.7), and none of the others are serious enough to throw the reader off the scent.

G. B. Harrison

**Heather Kerr, Robin Eaden, and Madge Mitton, eds, *Shakespeare: World Views*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1996.**

*Shakespeare: World Views* presents fifteen papers from a conference 'Shakespeare Outside England' held at Adelaide in 1992. The editors admit that the conference theme was open to liberal interpretation, and this has resulted in a mixture of papers on different kinds of subject. On my count most of the papers are not concerned with Shakespeare at all, but with adaptations and productions of Shakespeare in countries other than England. In other words, they are external literary and theatrical history. Some of the papers do offer to discuss Shakespeare's texts, and do so from a variety of points of view. The editors claim that all this succeeds in doing is to 'unsettle Shakespeare as a stable indicator of cultural values', and to 'unsettle confident claims for Shakespearean universality'. But this is absurd. How can adaptations of Shakespeare (e.g. Tate's) tell us anything about Shakespeare? In the most extreme case, how can Ducis' *Othello*—a re-writing of the *Othello* story, and therefore a totally different play—tell us anything about Shakespeare's *Othello*? It tells us much about French tastes in the 1790s, but that is another matter. That a production of Shakespeare must be an interpretation is true. But it can also be a misinterpretation. Most of the contributors to this volume evade or neglect the issue of validity. The postmodernist ideology of the editors' preface would collapse Shakespeare into the history of Shakespearean productions. This is merely imperialism on the part of performance studies.

By my judgment only six of the papers are good, four are average, and five are poor. Moreover, since many of them are either introductory surveys of their topic, or programmatic assertions about what it would be good to study, one does not feel that one has learned very much in depth by the end of the book.

The very best papers are by Martin Prochazka, and Werner Habicht. Prochazka discusses the uses of Shakespeare by different political forces in the Czech lands since the late eighteenth century. But his paper is not merely historical. His very scholarly account is conducted within a theoretical framework that allows him to consider the issues of agency and subjectification in the relations between popular movements, imperialist authority, and theatrical institutions. Habicht also is theoretically sophisticated. He charts the development and transformations of the myth of 'our Shakespeare' in Germany, the myth by which Shakespeare was appropriated for German nationalism from the eighteenth century onwards.

The other good papers are by Golder, Morley, Camino, and Parsons. John Golder gives an informative and amusing account of Jean-Francois Ducis' re-writings of Shakespeare's stories for the French stage in the last third of the eighteenth century, with a special focus on the *Othello* of 1792, produced in the context of the conflict between the Girondins and the Jacobins. Golder interestingly

points up the paradox of the persistence of neo-classical taste in the revolutionary decade: Othello loses his blackness; Iago is omitted altogether as too monstrous; the handkerchief becomes a diamond tiara; and so on. Michael Morley traces Brecht's responses to *Hamlet* from the 1920s onwards, and usefully shows how Brecht, unlike postmodernists, thought he was getting back through falsifying traditions to a real Shakespeare. Mercedes Maroto Camino makes a detailed and incisive study of *The Rape of Lucrece* from a Foucauldian-feminist standpoint, using the notion of the Renaissance map as an instrument of imperialist conquest, and analogizing the map to the poetic blazon of a woman's body. Philip Parsons describes vividly his experiments in producing Shakespeare in reconstructed Elizabethan stage conditions, both in Perth and in Sydney. By dogged intuition and imagination Parsons recreates what must have been the styles of acting and the uses of the stage in the English Renaissance.

In the second rank of papers stand those of Gay, Carruthers, Martin, and Billington. Penny Gay responds to Parsons' account of his experiments, unfortunately repeating much of what he has already said, but also making some telling criticisms of Parsons' weak points, such as his tendency to dismiss the relevance of the actors' and director's own experience of life for producing Shakespeare in reconstructed Elizabethan conditions. Ian Carruthers gives a detailed but rather uncritical account of Suzuki Tadashi's adaptations of *Macbeth*. Jacqueline Martin blandly describes the history of Shakespearean productions in Sweden, without much in the way of value judgment or theoretical engagement. Michael Billington, Drama Critic for *The Guardian*, enthusiastically describes the non-British productions of Shakespeare he has seen around the world.

I forbear to mention the other papers. They are too superficial, or too gestural—acceptable perhaps for a conference, but hardly for a book.

The editors' pretentious claims raise expectations of some theoretical exploration of the relationship between Shakespeare, and the history of the reception, appropriation, and adaptation of Shakespeare, but these are not met. This is especially disappointing as there are not only differences of theoretical and ideological standpoint between the papers, but also contradictions. For example, Billington, and Carruthers' Suzuki believe in a universalist Shakespeare, a being officially denied by the editors, and rejected explicitly by some of the contributors (and ignored by the others). Nobody even begins to consider at the level of theory the relation between (putative) human universality, socio-historical specificity, and authorial individuality. Billington wants to preserve a notion of Shakespeare's universality if only because he knows that Britain itself is now a multi-cultural society. And yet he is happy to speak of Japanese or Romanian productions as if Japan and Romania were monocultural societies. It seems that only 'Englishness' is to be abolished by postmodern, post-colonial critics; other nations, we are to believe, have preserved a homogeneous culture, despite the transnational movements of capital, labour, Hollywood, and McDonald's. The feeble-mindedness of post-colonial 'theory' is suggested by the invocation by one contributor of 'the southern hemisphere' as a category with which to study Shakespearean production in Australia. That the relation of nationality to culture cannot be treated at the level of intellectual fashion is indicated by a striking contrast between this post-colonial geographer and Werner Habicht. The former

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is an Australian nationalist who evidently wants to study 'our Shakespeare.' The latter knows what nationalism has done to Germany, and as a modern liberal is desperate to get rid of 'unser Shakespeare.' Habicht, understandably, favours 'the international style' in Shakespeare production! The theoretical position commonly assumed in this book is an old-fashioned historicist relativism, which nobody feels obliged to question.

Postmodernism, we are told, has superseded the Enlightenment. It seems to me that if the issue of the value of Shakespeare is to be treated with anything like intellectual seriousness, we would do well to revive the eighteenth-century notion of 'rational admiration.' The postmodernist contributors to this volume seem to be unable to distinguish between judging a writer's merits, and analysing the uses to which a writer's works may be put as a means to the end of ideological conditioning.

*David Brooks*

**Mary Warnock, *Imagination and Time*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.**

The strong impression of being in the presence of a lively, engaged and engaging intellect, is no doubt heightened by the fact that *Imagination and Time* is based on two sets of public lectures: the Gifford Lectures and the Read-Tuckwell Lectures, presented during 1992 at the University of Glasgow and the University of Bristol, respectively. Warnock ranges widely in her treatment of the imagination. Hume and Kant, Coleridge and Wordsworth, Sartre and Parfit, Merleau-Ponty and Strawson, Collingwood and Dennett, are just a few of the authors whom she considers. Strange bed-fellows, perhaps, but Warnock's study of these philosophers and poets contributes to her forcefully argued, if sometimes contentious, views concerning personal identity, time, symbolism, morality, history, and the important place of the imagination in education. Warnock represents a type of scholarship that, sadly, is increasingly rare. She maintains that philosophy cannot be fruitfully practised in the absence of a knowledge of its history or the traditional cultural values which it assumes. Her references to both theology and literature, and the way in which each overlaps with philosophical thought, offer important insights into her conception of the imagination. Warnock's considerable knowledge of these overlapping fields yields a rich and complex thesis. Human knowledge and understanding, Warnock maintains, are inseparable from the creative power of the imagination which, in turn, is crucial to the formation and maintenance of shared values.

Warnock argues that it is the creative power of the imagination that distinguishes human from non-human animals. Imagination is crucial to the formation of personal identity. It is what allows us to be aware of ourselves not only in the present but also as beings who exist in time: beings who have a past and a future. Furthermore, imagination gives rise to feelings of sympathy toward others and so provides the foundation for the existence of human communities and shared values. Imagination is the source of compassion and sociability and without it the cooperative and cumulative nature of human discovery and knowledge would be

impossible. Warnock sees imaginative genius as a particular capacity through which some individuals create new knowledge or combine existing knowledge in ways which lead to new insights.

Warnock's aim is to link a common and essentially timeless understanding with imagination' (p.70). She seeks to achieve this aim by offering a bold and interesting account of the role of symbolism in human life. Warnock draws a distinction between arbitrary or conventional symbols and those which she calls 'full-blooded', or 'natural'. Unlike the conventional symbol of, say, a flag at half-mast, full-blooded symbols are those 'which we seem to be able to interpret without rules, and without learning' (p.70). Such symbols form the basis for a common understanding of the significance of natural phenomena, including human life. The power of imaginative genius is that it may symbolically reveal the truth not only of the poet's or philosopher's nature but the truth of human nature. Although all human beings possess imagination, Warnock locates the imaginative genius of the exceptional individual in this capacity to derive universal truth from particular experiences. She asserts that we could not understand Thucydides, Plato or Aristotle, if it were not the case that (at least some) human values possess a trans-historical and cross-cultural permanence and adds, 'humans remain [more or less] the same throughout time' (pp.87-88).

Literature, art, music, morality, the history of ideas, all contribute to our grasp of truth. Adequate study of such matters necessarily involves some understanding not just of the present but also of the past—how do we come to know, believe, or value those things that we do know, believe and value? As well as history in the narrow disciplinary sense, Warnock is concerned with history (or 'story-telling') in the broadest sense, including autobiography. 'Story-telling' is central to all human cultures because it is through stories that individuals and communities maintain themselves over time. Warnock is keenly aware that such a view introduces a tension into her account of the role of the imagination to the attainment of truth. Imagination may foster false, as well as true, narratives. Warnock's treatment of this problem (along with the now standard side-swipe at Derrida and postmodernism) is the least satisfying part of the book. She offers an interesting, though brief, argument concerning the necessary publicity of knowledge and values and insists on the virtue of 'common sense' in avoiding relativism. The distinction between story-telling as pure invention and story-telling as truth-revealing is rather tenuously drawn and Warnock's pragmatic account of the difference between history and stories avoids, rather than confronts, the difficulty. Whereas stories have a beginning, a middle and an end, history, Warnock tells us, is a story without end, which we continue through our actions. The problem with her views on truth, relativism and shared values becomes clear in the final chapter which concerns the practical issue of the education of children.

In addition to acquiring the skills needed to make one's ideas available to others, education must, Warnock argues, include the passing on of stories and shared values to the next generation. Our knowledge about ourselves, our past, our values, our entire cultural heritage, is necessarily public. Ultimately, it is knowledge such as this that allows us to assign meaning to ourselves, our lives and actions, and our shared communities. Without such knowledge human life would cease to be fully human and we would lack the ability to form cohesive

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communities grounded in shared values. Warnock states that educating the imagination of children should be valued by all those who desire to maintain their culture and the values upon which it is based. She writes 'the imagination is crucial in the acceptance of shared and continuing values. It is not surprising, therefore, that I would [also] argue that the education of the imagination is by far the most important educational goal, and that which should be central in any curriculum decisions' (p.173). And later, that '[t]he past is continuous with the present. Just as, for an individual, his memory shapes what he is now, so, in the public domain, history makes us, the living, what we are, and gives us the understanding that may help us shape the future' (p.176). There is little reason to assume that Warnock intends her thesis to apply equally to different cultural groups, each of which possesses a distinct cultural heritage which its bearers will desire to pass on to their children. Warnock's ideas on education are disturbing precisely because she does not appear to acknowledge that notions of history and culture are contested terms in contemporary societies. Although she offers a brief discussion of multiculturalism, her recommendations for the education of children take little account of the profound differences between the various ethnic, racial and national groups which typically compose modern polities. There is little recognition that modern polities consist of groups from many different cultures—each of which has a history. Warnock's stories, and the many writers to whom she refers throughout *Imagination and Time*, are exclusively British and European. This is not a problem per se. The problem arises when one considers that for some children, the telling of such stories may not have the enabling consequences which Warnock predicts: imparting a sense of belonging, of self-respect and pride in oneself and one's past, and a sense of purpose for the future. In fact, for some children, it is these very stories which may inhibit them from realising their powers, capacities and freedom to act.

*Maira Gatens*

### **Anthony Julius, *T. S. Eliot, anti-Semitism, and Literary Form*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.**

One of the most serious charges to have been brought against T. S. Eliot and his poetry and prose is that he was and they are anti-Semitic. The gravity of the allegation is intensified, in Eliot's case, because of his publicly-professed Christianity. Christianity developed out of Judaism: scripturally, theologically and liturgically. To be anti-Semitic and Christian is a contradiction in terms, as Eliot recognised:

I am not an anti-Semite [he remarked in 1956] and never have been. It is a terrible slander on a man. ... in the eyes of the Church, to be anti-Semitic is a sin.

To what extent, if at all, can Eliot be implicated in this ancient prejudice? More specifically, can he be charged with having contributed to the persecution of the Jews under Nazism, through the influence of his writings before the Second World War?

Although Christopher Ricks has devoted a chapter to the subject in *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice*, the only complete study is Anthony Julius' *T. S. Eliot, anti-Semitism, and Literary Form*. Julius claims both that Eliot was thoroughly possessed of the prejudice and that he contributed to the persecution of the Jews in the modern age. 'Of the many different kinds of anti-Semite, Eliot was the rarest kind', he writes, 'one who was able to place his anti-Semitism at the service of his art.'

Julius' intense personal engagement with his topic is revealed at the beginning of his study, when he records that the lines in 'Gerontion' (1920),

And the Jew squats on the window-sill, the owner,  
Spawnd in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London

'sting like an insult'. From the outset, in other words, before he has assembled such evidence as he is able to bring to it, we confront the major problem with Julius' argument. The author is aggrieved: he is Jewish and he has been gravely insulted by Eliot. These are facts which cannot be contradicted. But Julius deduces from his personal experience of outrage both the racist convictions and the anti-Semitic intentions of Eliot and their effect, on Jews and non-Jews alike, before the Holocaust and since. He demands that Eliot's readers agree with him (including those many distinguished Jewish critics who have not been similarly disquieted and whom Julius savages for their failure to respond correctly). His argument focuses on the half-a-dozen explicit Jewish allusions in the entire body of Eliot's work and on other instances where Julius discerns an unspoken anti-Semitism.

Such ideologically-driven analyses of literature have become familiar in the academy, with the same intimidating pseudo-morality: failure to recognise that an author is promoting unacceptable ideas and to concur that his work must be indicted for the beliefs and prejudices it allegedly proposes, is to align oneself with the oppressor. Objective truth is the last consideration in what Harold Bloom has described as the 'School of Resentment'. Indeed, Julius turns on the Jewish critic, Wolf Mankowitz, for failing to denounce 'Gerontion', displaying thereby a 'demeaning absence of resentment' toward its author.

Meeting the argument about the scarcity of Eliot's anti-Semitic allusions, Julius protests that it is the 'centrality' not the 'quantity' that matters. But how 'central' to Eliot's work or thought can a couple of dozen words in the contexts of hundreds of thousands be, particularly when some of these—as in 'Gerontion'—are spoken by a character created by the poet, not necessarily representative of the poet himself? Gerontion's observation about the Jew is satiric as much ridiculing the speaker, the 'little old man' synonymous with decaying European culture after the First World War, as the subjects of his disdain, including Hakagawa, Madame de Tornquist and Fraulein von Kulp. Julius is not concerned with the prejudices that these xenophobic caricatures might reveal. Was Eliot anti-Japanese, French and German as well as anti-Semitic? Possibly—his critique being of humanity at large, not one racial and religious group within it.

The genre of satire is no respecter of persons or of religions or races, and for

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Julius to argue that the passing reference to the Jew in 'Gerontion' degrades the Jewish race, is as compelling as to argue that Milton's *Paradise of Fools* degrades Catholics, or that Eliot's 'Sweeney' poems insult the Irish. The Irish critic, Denis Donoghue, rejects that charge, commenting that to call Eliot anti-Irish is 'as specious' as to call him anti-Semitic. Julius, in turn, rebukes Donoghue, accusing him of not 'caring' about anti-Semitism.

Julius argues that we should be 'bothered' by Eliot's anti-Semitism. How much bother is needed when the most that Eliot could be charged with, a Jewish critic, Irving Howe, has claimed, is 'a few incidental lines of bigotry'? Cynthia Ozick similarly fails to be 'bothered' by 'the handful of insults'. Not significantly 'bothered', either, is George Steiner, Julius finding it 'troubling' that yet another Jewish critic fails to be stung into 'resentment'.

As Julius fails to contextualise, within the corpus, so he fails to place Eliot's remarks historically. Eliot's offending passages represent Jews negatively, but to assess their degree of negativity, to reach a balanced judgement about how egregious they were when published (rather than how they might appear to be, with the hindsight of the Holocaust), we only need to read a few writings of contemporary authors to find that Eliot's half-dozen remarks are typical rather than exceptional, and milder than those of many writers of his period, such as D. H. Lawrence and Tennessee Williams. This does not excuse them, but it explains them in a social context wherein equally savage comments were made about Protestants by Catholics, and vice versa, which today would be unthinkable outside Northern Ireland. As A. N. Wilson wisely observes in his recent biography of Paul ('a Jew of Jews', by his own account), with regard to the apostle's assorted prejudices, 'to be unenlightened because one shares the beliefs and attitudes of one's own time and group is not to deserve singling out for vilification'.

'I hate Jews', Lawrence wrote (of himself, not as a character in a poem or a novel), referring to his New York publisher, Thomas Seltzer, 'and I want to learn to be more wary of them'. Using bestial imagery, he spoke of 'moneyhogs in motorcars, mostly Jews', and the priest of love also referred, at the beginning of the 1930s, to 'those little Jew booksellers'. As one of Lawrence's biographers points out, none of this was exceptional by the standards of the day. To present it otherwise is to rewrite history.

In the decade when Lawrence was hating Jews, Eliot was writing, in *After Strange Gods* (1934) that, in an ideal society, 'reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable'. Apart from the phrase in 'Gerontion', this is the favourite text of those who indict Eliot for anti-Semitism and Julius works it hard. But as Ricks has pointed out, Eliot's is a statement with which a rabbi might 'concur', and 'Eliot never spared free-thinking Christians' either. Julius is not bothered by what Eliot has to say, from his Anglo-Catholic perspective, about the Free Churches (in 'Reunion by Destruction', for example—which is more sustained and denunciatory than anything he says about Jews). In 'free-thinking Jews', the epithet is at least as important as the racial reference. But Julius, with his grievance, sees only 'Jews', ignoring the important qualification.

Julius compares the poet's alleged anti-Semitism to his attitudes to women, attempting to prove his case (with its scanty explicit evidence) by showing that the

poet was swayed by assorted prejudices. The analogy is grossly flawed and further reveals the weakness of Julius' case. As Marja Palmer has recently shown, Eliot's presentation of women in his poetry is a complex and ambiguous matter. Julius sweepingly asserts that Eliot treats women with 'contempt', arguing that this is the same attitude he brings to Jews. But how much contempt for women is revealed in 'Marina'? How are women degraded in *Ash-Wednesday*, in the various celebrated forms in which they appear there, or in Eliot's dedication to his wife:

To whom I owe the leaping delight  
That quickens my senses in our wakingtime

Even where women appear to be condemned, as in 'Portrait of a Lady', the poem turns out to be a denunciation of the young man in the work, who is less admirable than the woman in her febrile romanticism, for at least she is passionate, alive. It is the man, in the end, who is contemptible. Are the women in 'Prufrock'—including the alluring mermaids—any more contemptible than the speaker of the poem? Nor does the analogy work with regard to the number of instances where women appear in Eliot's poetry as compared to Jews. Women are everywhere in it. But then Julius argues that the absence of Jews is further proof of Eliot's anti-Semitism.

The most disgraceful charge that Julius brings against Eliot is that his work, contributing to the 'anti-Semitism of his times', is one of the causes of the Holocaust. 'After *Strange Gods* coincided with the inauguration of the Hitlerian persecution', he writes, presenting the coincidence as if it were a sign of congruence of convictions between the poet and the Nazi leader. Conveniently, he ignores Eliot's published criticisms of the persecution of the Jews, during the War, as early as 1941, when he insisted that there should be 'organised protest against such injustice'.

Indicting Eliot for prejudice, Julius reveals his own. He dismisses Eliot's forty years of poetry after *The Waste Land* as being 'too pious to be capable of fostering anything other than virtue in its readers'. Apart from the extraordinary oversimplification of this judgement (what pious virtue does 'The Hollow Men' foster?), this is a clear example—if one were to apply Julius' own methods—of anti-Christian bias. But some religious prejudices are more acceptable than others. Gore Vidal can write, in the *New York Review of Books*, that 'Eliot ended a mere Christian'. As Christopher Ricks points out:

ought liberal readers of the *New York Review* to acquiesce so happily in a crass prejudice against Christianity such as they would never countenance against any other religion?

But self-proclaimed 'liberals', like Julius, customarily extend their liberality only so far as you are prepared to agree with them.

Julius' book is a 'terrible slander' (in Eliot's phrase) on Eliot. As it misrepresents Eliot's poetry and prose, arguing that it is pervaded by anti-Semitism, it is inaccurate about Eliot's attitude to Jews. He had several close Jewish friends (including Groucho Marx, with whom he established a club in London). Eliot wrote to Marx, in 1963, saying that 'I envy you going to Israel and I wish I could

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go there too... as I have a keen admiration for that country'. As this simply contradicts Julius' thesis, he must pervert the generous comment and claim that this was merely Eliot attempting to 'ingratiate himself'—it could not possibly be the expression of a genuine emotion. Yet when Eliot makes an apparently negative comment about Jews, this must be read *au pied de la lettre*. Why would Eliot, if he was anti-Semitic, bother to attempt to ingratiate himself with the Jewish comedian (his friend of many years) who, moreover, was legendary for his alertness to humbug? Certainly, if Eliot was attempting to ingratiate himself, the attempt was resoundingly successful, Marx describing the poet as a 'dear man and a charming host', providing further evidence of yet another Jew who failed to be stung into resentment by Eliot.

Julius' book is, in other words, the worst sort of literary criticism, of a kind all too familiar today. Instead of encouraging debate and discussion, it not only presents its judgements (made, as they are, selectively and distortedly and out of context) as the last word on the subject, but insists that if you do not accept them, you, too, are blinded by the prejudice it alleges to have identified.

*Barry Spurr*