

essay by John Hague explores the gap between 19th and 20th century psyches -- a gap that increasingly reinforces the modern temper's sense of a "fall." Thus more than passing currency and coherence are established for the succeeding analyses of specific writers and literary documents. The collection may not exactly revolutionize the study of modern American letters, but it certainly offers a perspective and a balance too often missing in quarterly and journal.

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HAWTHORNE: A Critical Study. (Revised Edition). By Hyatt H. Waggoner. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (1955). 1963. \$5.75.

I very much like Northrup Frye's term "the well-tempered critic," and think that Waggoner is one. Someone did a study some years ago to determine which of two schools of psychology worked best in clinical practice. It turned out that the significant variable was not the system at all but the sensitivity of the practitioner. Waggoner is usually associated with the Original Sinner Division of the New Criticism: that's the key in which he plays, the system he uses. He does, for example, count images; he also concerns himself with the moral issues which delight the Sinners. Perhaps--who knows--in his heart of hearts he would like to make The Scarlet Letter a brief for the Anglican Church; he hints twice (158, 159) that this is what the governor's chaplain is doing in the novel, but then carefully restrains himself--obviously the governor's chaplain had to be Anglican; obviously Hawthorne, to make his point, would have used anyone handy and not a Puritan. Waggoner even calls Hawthorne a Christian humanist (159, but not a Christian, 248), though it seems to me that Hawthorne's concern for contact with the mass of humanity is not especially Christian, and that his imagery is as often pagan as it is Christian.

The point is that Waggoner is too honest a critic to reach any of the pet conclusions of a critical school. The critical techniques he uses are means, not end; he reaches not far-out-readings but rather the hardest-to-define facets of the material, those which explain, for instance, the "feel" it gives the good reader. Waggoner's image-counting is a good example. It gets us ultimately to the author's creative play; this would seem to justify both Hawthorne's calling himself a poet and Waggoner's careful categorizing of poetic devices (102 ff.; c. 136). Good criticism of any school transcends its school. I have numerous quibbles scribbled around in the margins of this study, but consider it nevertheless the best single book we have on Hawthorne; it is sane, basic, careful, sound; it spells out the biographical implications of the art; it attempts to explain what Hawthorne's style is like; it corrects

over-simple readings of Hawthorne, including those suggested by its own methodology; it argues, finally, no brief but truth. Hawthorne should be published in paper. I can see a difference in those of my graduate students who have read it: they know Hawthorne better; they bark up fewer wrong trees.

SGL

The University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers (Paper only)

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS. By John Malcolm Brinnin. EZRA POUND. By William Van O'Connor. THEODORE ROETHKE. By Ralph J. Mills, Jr. WASHINGTON IRVING. By Lewis Leary. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1963. \$0.65 each.

Professor Brinnin (University of Connecticut), a poet and critic himself, here considers "the man on the margin, the incorrigible maverick, the embattled messiah" of Rutherford, New Jersey. He sees Williams' primary concerns: "to devise the poetic structure that will formalize experience without deforming it; to let the beat of speech determine the measure; to rinse the language of ornament and encrustation; to be scrupulously selective but to allow for accident and impingement." He ranks Williams the outstanding American imagist, exhibiting "observation without comment, vulgar subject matter, common speech, homely details glittering with mineral clarity," noting a similarity between him and the 'Ash Can' painters, the cubists, and especially William Hopper. He finds Paterson, Williams' epic, "more accident than design," or to use Randall Jarrell's term, the Organization of Irrelevance. A very just estimate of a master of imperfection.

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Opening with a long quotation from one of Pound's wartime broadcasts from Italy, Professor O'Connor (University of California, Davis) devotes the first part of his discussion to Pound's career as critic and literary enfant terrible. The second section considers Pound as poet, while continuing the account of his literary career; it draws extensively upon Pound's Patria Mia (written 1913, lost until 1950) to shed light on Pound's tangled feelings about the United States. He notices that from about 1934, in Pound's prose "the sentences and paragraphs are discrete, and the author seems distracted and unsure of the unifying idea of his discourse." He concludes that the indebtedness of many important twentieth-century writers to Pound is beyond question, since such writers as Yeats, Eliot and Hemingway have