

REVIEWS

THE LONG SHADOW: Emily Dickinson's
Tragic Poetry. By Clark Griffith. Prince-
ton University Press. 1964. \$6.00.

The author of this book knows which of Emily Dickinson's poems are very good and which are merely frequently anthologized. Saying so in print is a great contribution because the authors of journal articles generally aren't interested in whether the literature which they are discussing is good or bad -- at least they seldom say so. Professor Griffith is also undoubtedly right in what he says about the poet's themes, preoccupations and fears. But because I have a very high opinion of the author's capacities, I found The Long Shadow disappointing in a number of ways. First, Mr. Griffith makes a number of very disconcerting mistakes in the factual content of the poems, the "where we are" and "what happens." It seemed to me that these errors were matters of fact and not of "reading," and so I have been taking the book around to friends to see what they think. Alas, they agree. "His students should have caught those for him," said one, "we all make mistakes like that; good students set us straight." The second fault is related to the book's virtues. While Mr. Griffith is almost always right, the tone of his prose is frequently distressingly bald. Often he states with heavy emphasis things which sensitive readers of Emily Dickinson's poems have always known, some of them in fact things which many of us have been taught. There is, in short, a good bit of tilting against windmills, and from time to time even the setting up of a straw man: "Her poetry suffers, the critics have often insisted, because it is too terse, too threadbare, too inveterately lacking in the niceties of adornment and refinement" (61). I hope that no critic in the last few decades has really talked about "niceties" in quite that way. Or again: "One suspects that the favorite public images of Miss Dickinson are still those of an American Mrs. Browning, . . . or of a feminine Walt Whitman . . ." (6). Good critics, it seems to me, more often have made the opposite error -- making her too steadily tough, when in fact, as Professor Griffith himself pointed out in a very good article published a few years ago, sometimes she is kind of goeey.

I found the book rather uncomfortable in a number of other ways as well, although I am not sure that some of these flaws are really the author's fault: first, he needs quite a bit in the way of prose statement of the contents of poems. Such summaries always read badly. Second, while the sexuality of Dickinson's poems is undeniable, spelling it all out makes again for awkward passages. Still, Professor Griffith has pointed to a number of poems and said, "These are very good, and here's why," and then listed plausible reasons. This alone in the case of a figure as often misread as is Emily Dickinson is a genuine contribution.

SGL

THE WAKE OF THE GODS: Melville's
Mythology. By H. Bruce Franklin. Stan-
ford, California: Stanford University
Press. 1963. \$5.75.

The first chapter of Mr. Franklin's book contains a succinct and helpful discussion of the state of mythological theory and knowledge in Melville's time, "from the mastering of Sanskrit by Sir Charles Wilkins and Sir William Jones in the 1780's to just before Sir James Frazier began to displace astronomical gods in favor of vegetation gods in 1890." The author also stresses the problems posed for orthodox Christians by the similarities among the world's religions which comparative mythology revealed. The book concludes with what should prove to be a useful "Selected Index of Non-Judaic-Christian Gods, Myths, and Religions in Melville's Works."

The remainder of the book is rather less successful. Mr. Franklin tends too often to assume Melville's knowledge of source material, and he imputes to Melville a too-conscious use of mythologies and mythological theories. For example, the arguments that Mardi constitutes a careful analysis of contemporaneous mythological theory and that the Osiris-Typhon myth "is central to Melville's conception, and . . . maintains a central order" in Moby-Dick are intriguing; but they ignore much that we know about the composition and meaning of these books. The arguments seem at too many points imposed on, rather than derived from, the texts.

Southern Illinois University

Howard Webb

THE AMERICAN HUMORIST: Conscience
of the Twentieth Century. By Norris W.
Yates. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University
Press, 1964. \$4.95.

Norris Yates argues that the key to much twentieth-century American humor is to be found in the humorists' use of three character types. Two of these types, the crackerbox philosopher and the solid citizen, had

their origin in the nineteenth century; the third, the little man, is in part a blend of the other two, but he also possesses important traits of his own. Professor Yates examines the works of fifteen writers, showing how they employ one or more of these types to embody basic norms and values, and he concludes that the little man has become the chief figure in modern American humor.

One might, perhaps, object that Professor Yates fails to consider the impact of the New Yorker writers on modern humor; that he does not deal with what Hamlin Hill (College English, 1963) has called "the Janus laugh" of that humor; or that he excludes from his study any but the popular humorous journalists. Such objections would be unfair, for the author makes amply clear that none of these was his intention.

He has given us a work which suggests how and why twentieth-century humor differs from that of the nineteenth century and which shows in convincing detail the basic norms of writers who have earned reputations as humorists. Mr. Yates' book is, and I suspect will for sometime continue to be, the starting point for any study of modern American humor.

Southern Illinois University

Howard Webb

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM CARLOS
WILLIAMS: A Critical Study. By
Linda Welshimer Wagner. Middle-
town, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univer-
sity Press. 1964. \$6.50.

The first purpose of this study, "to show the major reasons for Williams' excellence as a poet," might be achieved by quotation and analysis of two or three poems as well as in 130 pages. The second purpose, however, "to disprove the assumption that he was a 'typical' poet who wrote 'instinctively,' with little critical awareness," needs the reiteration of Williams' poetic theories and the examples of related revisions which characterize Mrs. Wagner's book. The extensive examination of technical devices which is central and significant here will not intrigue those not already interested in Williams' place in twentieth century metrics; American speech patterns do not figure prominently in the argument. Similarly, the remarks on Paterson treat the poem as a formal structure, not as part of American literature.

The University of Texas

Joseph Evans Slate

THE BATTLE & THE BOOKS: Some Aspects of Henry James. By Edward Stone. Athens: Ohio University Press. 1964. \$5.00.

Periodically since Henry James' death in 1916 it has become an academic pastime to judge his work mainly by common-sense American moral values. Positing James as an expatriate, as an impotent, as an obscurantist, as an apologist for the elite, it followed by the logic of such a philosophy of quasi-literary pragmatism that James' fiction deserved to be derogated. The latest and perhaps most ambitious such melange was published in 1963 by Maxwell Geismar, Henry James & His Cult, a militant cut at not only James' fiction but at the idiosyncratic intellectuals who would justify that canon as art. The first part of Mr. Stone's book answers to Mr. Geismar's book, implicitly by setting it in perspective as but one of the points of view assumed toward James, explicitly by factually correcting some of Mr. Geismar's more arrogant claims about James and his critics. Apart from the tone of a few remarks about Geismar, Mr. Stone's survey is an objective and well balanced perspective of the polemic that has been waged over James' corpus.

The second part of Mr. Stone's book adds a literary dimension to that perspective by linking James to various American traditions of letters and values, and by incisively studying his influence upon so unlikely a candidate as James Thurber. Not nearly so well accomplished, indeed without much insight into the logic of association James often formed through extended metaphor, is Mr. Stone's chapter on the game elements in James' fiction, -- the so-called figures in the carpet. Upon that low ground Mr. Geismar may well see his opportunity to recoup some of his moral losses in the battle of the books. Whatever the repercussions, interested observers will find in Mr. Stone's collection of studies a sincere and creditable attempt to evaluate James' place in American literature.

The University of Kansas

Floyd R. Horowitz

REBEL VOICES: An I. W. W. Anthology. Edited, with introduction by Joyce L. Kornbluh. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 1964. \$12.50.

Not since Elizabeth Gurley Flynn chained herself to a lamp post has the unshapely outline of I. W. W. philosophy, exhortation and influence been so well represented. Mrs. Kornbluh's collection accents the main events and persons in the history between the I. W. W.'s emergence in 1905 and its political fracture in 1924. A final chapter covers its trailing-off until 1964. Recorded are the poems, tracts, posters, speeches, photographs, essays,

plays and songs of a strident organization during twenty tumultuous years of economic stress. As "Woody" Guthrie would sing it, "Shall we still be slaves and work for wages / It is outrageous -- has been for ages; / this earth by right belongs to toilers, / And not to spoilers of liberty." While Rebel Voices lacks the elevation of formal historical perspective, the topography of that struggle between labor and capital is thoroughly documented, from Joe Hill's martyrdom to the 1912 Lawrence textile strike, from the by-laws of the Mulligan Bunch -- hoboes on the work trail -- to the reform of employment agency licensing practices. A good bibliography and a glossary of terms used by the migratory worker are included.

The University of Kansas

Floyd R. Horowitz

TALES OF THE FRONTIER. By Everett Dick. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1963. \$6.00.

The writing of objective history by a professional historian who knows the tools of research and is scrupulous in his use of sources is one thing; the rewriting of other people's accounts, even if done for the commendable reasons of brevity and concision, is something quite different. Professor Everett Dick is known as a specialist in the history of the plains, as such volumes as The Sod-House Frontier, 1854-1890 confirm. The present collection of frontier stories "selected and retold" by Professor Dick, although it does sustain the author's intention of presenting the western panorama, seems drably factual.

Certainly the five sections of the anthology reveal the kaleidoscopic scene over a period of a century. Indians, fur traders, soldiers, circuit riders, trail drivers, nesters, Mormons, gold-seekers, rustlers, road agents and ultimately the durable and responsible settlers pass in review, their lives illuminated by editorial interpretation and carefully selected incident. Professor Dick has drawn on a multitude of sources, from actual diaries and chronicles to reminiscences and articles in historical journals. He has also had the good sense not to try to rewrite Peter Cartwright or Andy Adams or Mark Twain. But his versions of narrative passages from such writers as J. Frank Dobie, George Bird Grinnell or Charles Edward Russell are generally inferior to the original. His particular fault, in the eyes of one reader, is a tendency to reduce everything to a kind of summarized narrative in which the absence of tonal variations and the general omission of dialogue can result only in stylistic monotony.

Tales of the Frontier undoubtedly shows the rich variety of western life. Sources are carefully listed and abridgements and condensations are acknowledged. But somehow the gusto and vitality of so much indigenous western writing are strangely lacking.

University of Illinois

John T. Flanagan

AMERICANS ABROAD: Two Centuries of European Travel. By Foster Rhea Dulles. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 1964. \$5.95.

This book is a delightful account of that genus Americanus, the traveler in Europe, who has evoked just about every emotion and opinion known to man, from respect and admiration to economic gratitude to the most sovereign contempt. The period which the book covers extends from the last part of the eighteenth century to our own day.

Professor Dulles combines meticulous scholarship and an enviable style in describing such disparate traveler-types as James Fenimore Cooper, Phillips Brooks, Benjamin Franklin, Abigail Adams, Horace Greeley, Harriet Beecher Stowe, J. P. Morgan and Theodore Roosevelt -- to name only a few of the figures in an extensive gallery. Thus, the book pictures a broad range of tourists, including such recognizable classes as "culture vultures," bons vivants, artists, authors, scholars, clergymen, socialites, journalists and businessmen. And it presents additional examples less well known generally but equally valid, like abolitionists and other reformers, Boy Scouts, Jehovah's Witnesses, an International Congress of Beauty Care and Cosmetology, a World Congress of Widows and Widowers and an International Reunion of Children Born in Leap Year.

Among the many admirable features of this volume is the fact that it is much more than an account of travelers and their reactions: it tells all Americans a great deal about themselves, their national psychology, their ambivalent attitudes about Europe and things European. Here, Professor Dulles' ability as a historian manifests itself most clearly: he has selected those aspects of his subject which give to the reader deeper insight into it, a characteristic of social history at its best.

Centenary College of Louisiana

Lee Morgan

AUTOMATION FUNDS AND DISPLACED WORKERS. By Thomas Kennedy. Boston: Harvard Business School, Division of Research. 1962. \$5.00.

In recent years much attention has been given to the role of government in cushioning the employment effects of technological change. Comparatively less emphasis has been given to the role of collective bargaining as an adjustment process in this area. Professor Kennedy examines the establishment and operation of seven funds loosely defined as "automation funds." The author's major conclusion appears to be that automation funds play their most significant role in permitting the parties to "proceed with the automation and to postpone until later the decision with respect to the

nature and size of the benefits." A weakness of the book is that much of the empirical material on specific funds has become dated almost at the time of publication due to new approaches in the highly volatile arena of collective bargaining.

Iowa State University

Edward B. Jakubauskas

COLONIAL NORTH CAROLINA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: A Study in Historical Geography. By Harry Roy Merrens. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1964. \$7.50.

This significant study strives to overcome the lacuna of precise population figures before 1790 and of adequate quantitative data for economic studies. Utilizing primarily tax and customs records, the author also turns to estate inventories, travel accounts, diaries and both official and private correspondence.

The major focus of the work is on the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Greatest attention is given to immigration and demographic changes, to the role of towns, and to the commercial significance of crops and livestock. Excellent tables and illustrations are generously used, although some fail to give a realistic population pattern because dots are evenly distributed within county boundaries.

Certain leading conclusions emerge from this study. The large number of immigrants was the "most basic factor causing changes in the colony's geography," and colonial North Carolina did not have the "zonal and successional pattern of development" posited in the Turner frontier thesis. While acknowledging the recognized variations between east and west, the author challenges both the assumed homogeneity within these regions and the use of the fall line as a division between the two.

The author proposes to initiate through this consideration of one colony a more extensive study of the historical geography of all the Atlantic coastal settlements, and he recognizes that similar studies for Virginia and South Carolina would answer additional questions about North Carolina.

The University of Kansas

W. Stitt Robinson

FROM ENMITY TO ALLIANCE: U.S. - Australian Relations, 1931-1941. By Raymond A. Esthus. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 1964. \$6.00.

American diplomacy in the decade preceding the attack on Pearl Harbor threatens to rival the Civil War as an area of interest for the historian. Not only is the subject of compelling interest and a source of heated contro-

versy but the lapse of time has provided more information and permitted a new generation to explore the less obvious facets of the problem and assess the developments with greater objectivity. The present volume is a notable example of the way in which momentous foreign policy decisions can be better understood by a study of American relations with a relatively insignificant country.

The author begins his account at a time when "the formal ties between the United States and Australia were weak and inadequate." Australia resented America's delay in entering the first world war and her refusal to join the League of Nations. Our insistence on the repayment of war debts and the belief that the United States was responsible for the great depression contributed to a feeling of hostility, which was abetted by a tariff struggle between the two countries. A reversal of the Australian attitude began with the breakdown of international collective security and the realization that the United States could play a vital role in the safety of the British Empire.

Most of this work is devoted to an account of diplomatic negotiations between the two countries, though the author places them in the context of threats to world peace and especially in the framework of the military imperatives of 1940 and 1941. A glance at the bibliography and footnotes reminds the reader that the United States is far ahead of other nations in providing the historian with the documents pertaining to foreign relations.

The University of Kansas

Raymond G. O'Connor

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ANA OF
ROBLEY DUNGLISON, M. D. Edited by
Samuel X. Radbill. Philadelphia: Amer-
ican Philosophical Society. 1963. \$5.00

In editing these autobiographical notes of an important figure in nineteenth century medical education, Dr. Radbill has performed the kind of service that social historians should highly appreciate. The most valuable parts of the editor's work was the identification of all the people and places referred to by Dunglison and the construction of a quite detailed index. Since Dunglison was personal physician for three presidents (Jefferson, Madison and Monroe), and knew most of the important political and social figures of his time, his importance extends far outside the field of medical education, although, of course, historians of education or of science would be those most likely to profit by consulting his Ana. Dunglison's information on the founding of four early medical schools is not duplicated elsewhere, and the same can be said for his evaluation of the University of Virginia, where he was one of Thomas Jefferson's first appointees. The Ana is a welcome addition to our all too limited supply of source material on these subjects.

Northwestern University

George H. Daniels

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THOUGHT
OF CHARLES A. BEARD. By Bernard C.
Borning. Seattle: University of Washing-
ton Press. 1962. \$6.75.

Charles A. Beard was a controversial figure for most of his adult life. This doctoral dissertation summarizes his thinking in both a chronological and topical progression. Generous quotations capture much of the yeastiness of Beard's prose style. The principal criticisms of his views and of his scholarship are duly recorded. An introductory essay by the author summarizes Beard's life and academic career. This is a useful companion volume to the collection of essays in memory of Beard edited by Howard Beale some years ago.

The University of Kansas

Francis H. Heller

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY: 1854-1964.
By George H. Mayer. New York: Oxford
University Press. 1964. \$9.75.

As much research and writing have been devoted to political parties as to any other field of United States history. This fat volume is, however, the first history of either of the nation's major parties that is both scholarly and comprehensive. Using a variety of manuscript collections, memoirs, theses and secondary works, Professor Mayer has endeavored to survey the 110-year history of the Republican party. The result is a sound and occasionally eloquent account of the personalities and issues that have shaped the party, of its victories and defeats, and of the impact that it has had upon the country. This work belongs in the libraries of all those who are seriously interested in American politics.

The University of Kansas

Donald R. McCoy