

this statement indicates a very serious deficiency based on the author's almost exclusively literary bias.

While we cannot judge the extent of this deficiency until we get volume II, the first chapter of the present volume dealing with "Antiquity and the Middle Ages" indicates that this weakness could be very serious. In good, old mid-Victorian fashion, Lach starts with a reference to Homer and, on the same first page, begins his subject about 600 B.C. This omits the whole Asiatic foundation of European culture including food (fowl, swine, cattle, grain), technology (the plow, arch, wheel, weapons, etc.), and basic culture (writing, alphabet, units of measurement, basic religious and cognitive attitudes) from the archaic period (before 600 B.C.). But even more serious is the fact that Lach's discussion of the medieval period also omits the same kind of Asiatic influences (such as Europe's basic religious outlook, including the heresies, and much technological innovation which, over the last thousand years, has embraced such items as horse-shoes, stirrups, effective harnessing of horses so they could be used for heavy work, windmills, the compass and rudder, fore-and-aft sails, an efficient number system, gunpowder, printing and paper, steel-making, a variety of crops of vital significance to Western agriculture, among them those two indispensable legumes, alfalfa and soybeans, many food products, and much else). Lach ignores most of this because he is not concerned, as he says, with the "impact" of Asia on Europe but is really concerned only with Europe's awareness of Asia (that is why he wants to restrict his attention to *published* information), and he is concerned with "awareness" because his attention is still anchored in the area where it began, the use of Asia by men like Montesquieu, Leibnitz, or Voltaire as a weapon to criticize European culture during the Enlightenment.



—Bettmann Archive.

Stendhal—"a repressed sentimentality."

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## Looking for a Lady to Love

*Stendhal*, by Armand Caraccio, translated from the French by Dolorès Bagley (New York University Press. 222 pp. \$6), first published in France in 1951, emphasizes the close links between the life and work of a writer whose analytical skepticism is counterbalanced by concealed romanticism. Henri Peyre is professor of French at Yale University.

By HENRI PEYRE

THE FAIRLY widespread esteem in which the novels of Stendhal (Henri Beyle) are held in America is a comparatively recent development. For a number of decades the fervent, happy few, to whom Stendhal had prophesied that his appeal would long be limited, had failed to impart their enthusiasm to their students. Publishers hesitated to keep translations of his novels on their current lists. Then, on the eve of World War II, a new generation of readers arrived on the college campuses, eager to analyze their feelings and to affect a cynical attitude which, as in Stendhal, only half disguised a repressed sentimentality. Naturalistic fiction and the moralizing Victorian novel had begun to pall on many of the young. Stendhal's masterpieces came to be preferred to all other French novels, except perhaps those of Proust, by American admirers of Hemingway, E. E. Cummings, and Edmund Wilson.

Some resistance continues, however, to most of the thirty-odd volumes of memoirs, journals, travel diaries, and amateurish art and music criticism that compose the bulk of Stendhal's writings. The taste for the enigmatic figure of an amateur novelist, intent upon revealing himself more fully than anyone had ever done before and at the same time assuming a variety of masks, is a sophisticated one. It needs to be nurtured by expert biographical and critical studies. Excellent ones have been written by F. C. Green and F. W. Hemmings, both Englishmen. An American professor at Cornell University, Robert M. Adams, has offered an insightful sketch of Stendhal. The French have explored Henri Beyle's every move, every year or even month of his life, have checked every one of his many lies and his plagiarisms with laborious industry. Many an anticipation

of our modern psychological complexities has been read into Stendhal's confessions and fictions.

Armand Caraccio's book, first published in France in 1951, is fortunately neither bulky nor pedantic. It is concise, lucid, Stendhalian in its swift and vivid tempo, with only very little of the ironical condescension with which his biographers have often patronized Stendhal's naïveté and his famous fiascoes in love.

Love was the chief concern of this French officer in Napoleon's armies and the prime article of faith of his daily hunt for happiness. But, unlike Alexandre Dumas or even Victor Hugo, Stendhal scored few successes with women, and he probably preferred it that way. He was afflicted with an almost pathological timidity; he was intent upon analyzing and dissecting love, and his desultory but occasionally very keen book, *De l'Amour*, which belies the poetical sentimentality and adolescent idealization of women in his novels, remains one of the very few readable treatises on that subject so often mishandled by psychologists.

SOME early sex misadventure had imposed upon him, as upon many other writers and artists in an age when the wages of sin were not merely a metaphor, an unglamorous dosing with mercury. But in truth Stendhal was in love with love and a worshipper of the eternal feminine. To remain "eternal," that feminine had best be severed from robust physical gratification, which would have impeded his reveries about the worshipped lady. At fifty-nine, just before he was struck by a fit of apoplexy on a Paris street, Stendhal had longingly jotted down: "One thing alone haunts my memory, after so many years and events: the smile of a woman whom I once loved."

Criticism, emphasizing the close links between the works and the life of the writer, is not lacking in this volume, which, though addressed primarily to students, is nonchalant and alert enough in tone to attract the general reader as well. It grants relatively more attention to the minor works (*Promenades dans Rome*; a curious and, to the connoisseurs, seductive novel about a hero apparently hampered by sexual impotence, *Armance*; and the unfinished *Lucien Leuwen*) than to the two best-known novels. But there is a

shrewd consideration of *Le Rouge et le Noir* as social criticism and as an ironical work, and a brief but suggestive sketch of *La Chartreuse de Parme* as suffused with poetry and tender reverie. One of the claims to uniqueness of the *Chartreuse* lies indeed in the dreamlike atmosphere in which Stendhal steeped the impossible adventures of his characters, and in the creation of a woman who may well be the truest and the most appealing of all French fictional hero-

ines. The book was completed in incredible haste (within less than two months) by an author over fifty who had never learned the technique of fiction-writing, and it proved all the greater for that. To Balzac, who alone of his great contemporaries placed Stendhal where he belongs, among the giants of fiction, Stendhal disarmingly confessed in 1840: "I had never given much thought to the art of making a novel. I had not suspected there were any rules."

table that differs from Chapman's in some significant details and is necessarily based in part on guesswork.

In his text, however, Mr. Litz makes out a persuasive case for his conjectures. Consider *Pride and Prejudice* (called *First Impressions* in the 1796-97 draft), which some scholars have thought was not greatly altered before its publication in 1813. Mr. Litz believes it was radically revised and gives several convincing reasons for this, among them an increased sophistication in the author's style and, most compellingly, the book's use of the 1811-12 almanacs: "The consistency of the novel's time-scheme could only have resulted from a thorough reworking of the plot."

We have more explicit information about the last three novels Jane Austen completed: *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and the posthumously published *Persuasion* (1817). The author's sister left a memorandum that pretty well dates the composition of the first of them, while Jane Austen's own notes offer positive evidence about the last two. Mr. Litz can therefore write about these books more confidently and more expansively than about the others, and can indicate that, if Jane Austen's early work derives from the eighteenth century, the later, with its complications of character and involutions of plot, marks the true beginning of the modern novel.

**I**N *EMMA*, which Mr. Litz rightly says doesn't lend itself "readily to generalized discussion," the Henry James-like closeness of texture depends entirely "on the intriguing consciousness of Emma Woodhouse" (*intriguing* of course in the sense of scheming). "The growth of Emma's personality" is the intrinsic subject of the story. Further, this book and the two other later novels prove that Jane Austen was not so immune to the influence of the romantic movement as various earlier critics have stated. By this time landscape had often taken on a symbolic function in her stories, as Mr. Litz aptly and amply demonstrates. And his discussion of changes in the extant manuscripts of *Persuasion*, an unusual survival, illustrates how aware Jane Austen was of technique, of knowing how to improve an episode by shifting its dramatic emphasis and by intensifying its psychological progress. In such revisions she achieved a mastery that is distinctly modern.

At several levels, this study is an exceedingly useful approach to Jane Austen, whose stature as a novelist can only be increased by such adroit and judicious reading of her texts, not so much in pursuit of purely conceptual or moral questions, but in an examination of the author's movement toward technical-artistic maturity.

## While Revolutions Came and Went

**Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development**, by A. Walton Litz (Oxford University Press. 198 pp. \$5.75), a close chronological examination of the author's works, sets out to demonstrate that the later ones mark the true beginning of the modern novel. Harry T. Moore, of the Southern Illinois University faculty and author of a new book on E. M. Forster, is spending the next several months abroad on a research trip.

By HARRY T. MOORE

**J**ANE AUSTEN completed six novels before her death at forty-one in 1817. Some critics regard her as a major novelist. Others see her as limited, a miniaturist of manners who continually used the same plot dealing with the subtle tribal ritual of finding just the right husband for just the right young woman. But many of those who look upon Jane Austen's work with reservations cannot refrain from admiring its lively dialogues, its shrewd comedy, and its expert irony.

Commentators have often pointed out that the world-shaking changes that took place in her era had little apparent effect on her writings. When she was a child, the American colonies were snatched away from England. When she was in her teens, the French Revolution disturbed many Englishmen, and Louis XVI lost his head (so did one of the Austen family's relatives by marriage). Two of Jane Austen's brothers were naval officers who served against Napoleon.

Behind all these events, the Industrial Revolution was recasting the face and spirit of England, and the romantic movement was pulsing in the national consciousness. But the witty spinster-author, whose experiences with love and courtship her biographers find rather obscure, is supposed to have remained

safely in her little world of parental rectory, country house, and seaside resort as she quietly wrote her anonymous books.

This new volume about her is one of several impressive critical documents of our time that show Jane Austen as a major novelist. In undertaking to trace her artistic development—and the subtitle of A. Walton Litz's book declares that intention—this volume is especially ambitious because the exact dates of composition, or at least completion, of various Austen books cannot be determined. Several of her novels which were begun in the 1790s were not published until more than a decade later, and even the extensive scholarship of the late R. W. Chapman turned up no precise knowledge as to how much or how little these books were revised in later years. Mr. Litz, relying both on previous discoveries and a fresh examination of the sources, provides a helpful chronological



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Jane Austen—"a mastery that is distinctly modern."