

doctrines, he can be ; nor does a close reading of the later portions of his essay convince me that he is.

I said above that the words I quoted from Signor Vivante were typical of Mr. Read's procedure. Perhaps that is now clear. Signor Vivante disposed of the problem of the relations between the words of a poem by locating the poem in any single word ; Mr. Read locates the whole of poetry in any single poem. He disposes of problems such as those of tradition by saying that any genuine poem is thereby modern. The procedure is a claim to solve problems by causing them to vanish ; and has as its principle the complete neglect of the analytic moment of knowledge in favour of the synthetic. There can be no doubt that it is reprehensible. A scientist above all can afford no Wordsworthian reluctance to dissect. Ruthless dissection would provide him, if with nothing more, with some scattered truths. Mere contemplation of a unity can of itself provide no one with anything—at least under normal circumstances. It reduces the critic from the rank of an articulate being to that of one who murmurs *O Altitudo !*

JAMES SMITH.

LEVIATHAN HOOKED

THE SHAKESPEAREAN TEMPEST, by G. Wilson Knight
(Oxford, 12/6d.).

This volume is the third of a trilogy and provides the documentation for a thesis implicit in the earlier books. Mr. Knight believes that the structure of Shakespeare's plays may be best seen through a study of their imagery, and that this reveals the fundamental categories of the Shakespearean schema to be Tempests and Music. Polarity is established between these two, and a number of subsidiary images group themselves about the one and the other. A coherent approach to the whole of Shakespeare's work is thereby attained. Mr. Knight has in short provided Shakespeare with a philosophy which, while wholly idealist in its tendency, is strictly dualist in its organization.

It is much easier to detect a structural correspondence to this curious arrangement in the style of Mr. Knight than in that of the

Plays. It is generally admitted, from Dryden onward, that it is characteristic of Shakespeare's genius to be rich, dishevelled, allotropic. Grammatical ambiguities, and verbal complexities, all the more obvious features of Shakespeare's style, confirm the judgment.

It is only by reducing poetry to imagery that Mr. Knight succeeds in erecting a schema: he ends by declaring that the Hecate scenes in *Macbeth* are 'The one stone necessary to complete the mosaic of our pattern' and that Theseus of Athens is 'a Christ-like figure.'

Mr. Knight's collection of references is both thorough and interesting, but in his desire to amass evidence he is inclined to ignore the context and the question of relative emphasis. For example, he says, apropos of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives*, 'The imagery is in the usual tradition. Mistress Page is compared by him to rich India merchandise "... she bears the purse too: she is a region in Guinea, all gold! ..."' But Falstaff is only making love for the replenishment of his purse (as he explicitly states in the passage Mr. Knight has represented by some dots) so that this image is hardly on a par with 'Her bed is India: there she lies, a pearl.' Moreover, it is isolated in the play, and therefore cannot have the cumulative weight of the jewel images in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Mr. Knight has endeavoured to find a constant reference to tempests and music throughout Shakespeare's work. It is well known in Shakespearean criticism that he who seeks shall find: but the citation of the imagery of storm in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew* only weakens the very admirable case that Mr. Knight puts concerning its importance in *Lear*.

The book is, in short, eccentric. There are some sensible remarks on the futilities of unenlightened scholarship in the Introduction, but they are countered by such statements as 'It is possible that a work of art is not intellectual in the ordinary sense, and demands a special intuition which transcends all reasoning; 'Poetry is a mystery. . . A man may be divinely inspired when writing poetry.' There have been hints of this attitude before: It is rather a melancholy spectacle to see one who so neatly exposes the Rationalist point of view swallowed up by that great Boyg of which Croce acts as a useful incarnation. It is precisely because

Mr. Knight abandons criticism for adoration that he can seriously contemplate *Titus Andronicus* as a unit in the same pattern as *Lear*.

Mr. Knight's method of approach is very fruitful for the major tragedies, the later plays and some of the histories, but hardly for the comedies. There is also great risk in considering imagery apart from movement and rhythm. Mr. Knight's balance and judgment are not equal to his genuine enthusiasm and his acute sensibility.

M. C. BRADBROOK.

OXFORD POETRY 1932. Edited by Richard Goodman (Basil Blackwell, 3/6d.).

Oxford Poetry 1932 is dedicated to Wystan Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, and Stephen Spender. But, with certain exceptions, the poems of which it is composed appear to be almost entirely uninfluenced by any modes of feeling or developments of technique more 'modern' than those displayed in Mr. Edward Marsh's long-defunct 'Georgian' anthologies. The problems resolved or stated in many of these verses, and the attitudes conveyed by them to the reader, seem to have little or no connection with contemporary interests. The pleasantly retrospective mood, however, evoked by a perusal of almost any volume of *Oxford Poetry*, reminds one by reference to one's own more or less distant undergraduate days of the superb timelessness of Oxford; and when one reflects that two, at any rate, of the poets to whom the volume is dedicated were themselves contributors to one of its not very senior predecessors, one cannot fail to realize that the poets one is criticizing are remote only in place and not in time, and that the Oxford poet of 1932 may well be quite an important modern poet of 1935 or so. In a word there is something about the public school and university education (of which incidentally about nine-tenths of the better poets of recent years are products) which tends to induce a delayed maturity: a phenomenon which gives rise to the expectation, abundantly justified in one or two fairly recent instances, that quite an inconspicuous grain of talent discovered in *Oxford Poetry*, may possibly bring forth really considerable fruits of achievement within a remarkably short space of time.