

of God and therefore of man, and in its narrower doctrinal sense. There is, for instance, far too much Catholic criticism which adopts the attitude that if a writer is a Catholic he must therefore be good, and if he is anti-Catholic he must therefore be bad. While the Catholic critic's judgements must all be conditioned by the nature of his beliefs, because they give him a positive standard by which to judge, good literature is not necessarily sound doctrine, and the critic who allows himself to be led astray in this way only abuses his function. Although one feels sure that Mr Bethell would agree with this, he does not perhaps make it clear enough in his book.

Criticism today is becoming ever more and more lacking in honesty and positive and valid standards. A book such as Mr Bethell's could do much to remedy some of the defects of the time, and one can only be sorry that there is not more of it—and in greater detail.

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SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF THE ARTS OF LANGUAGE. By Sister Miriam Joseph, C.S.C. (Columbia University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; 21s.)

Shakespearean criticism has become of recent years, as the author of this book suggests, more and more diverse in its approach to its subject: indeed there are few angles—historical, political, social, religious, scientific and so on—from which by now Shakespeare's peculiar genius has not been viewed. As a new type of study, then, this book is a perfectly justifiable and laudable attempt to present the complete theory of composition current during the Renaissance with particular reference to the way in which Shakespeare's individual talent utilized the accepted and traditional stylistic forms. The immense care and clarity with which Sister Joseph has tabulated the two hundred figures of speech distinguished by rhetoricians of the time, and her knowledge of the plays and their constructions, can never be called in question, but yet at the end of it all one is tempted to regard the whole book as an exercise in excessive ingenuity. There are undoubtedly some people who derive great satisfaction from this sort of detailed analysis, from being able to identify forms and classify them, but for the most part a book such as this is probably of real value only to the philologist—the man who is professionally interested in language *qua* language and who might use Shakespeare as a kind of yardstick to measure the tendencies of the time.

For the general reader it is difficult to see just how the book could contribute much to either an appreciation of Shakespeare or to an understanding of his plays—except in so far as it may make one realize more forceably what one must surely have realized already, that 'he uses every resource of language and imagination to give life, movement and piquancy to his richly laden thought'. But perhaps the fault in this case lies in the English mind which is as fundamentally vague and imaginative as the American is precise and analytical.

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