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The Armed Vision, by Stanley Edgar Hyman. Revised edition, abridged by the author. Vintage Books. Vintage ed. pub. 1955; second printing, 1961.

Chapter 6, "Caroline Spurgeon and Scholarship in Criticism"

*Spurgeon Criticism*

p.180 "The most distinguished and extensive scholarship, for obvious reasons, has been inspired by the <sup>most</sup> important works of literature, specifically the Bible, Homer, and Shakespeare. With the miracles of Biblical and Semitic scholarship, chiefly the so-called "higher-criticism," which has largely succeeded in unraveling the innumerable documents, revisions, and editings that go to make up our Sacred Books, and the only slightly less miraculous feats of Homeric and Greek scholarship that have done a comparable job in identifying the medley of fragments and incrustations we know as Homer, we need not concern ourselves here. A very brief glance at a few aspects of Shakespeare scholarship, <sup>the</sup> specific tradition in which Miss Spurgeon worked, however, should be in order. "

p. 182 The gravest charge raised against Shakespeare scholars (is) that for the most part they do not tend to be very poetic men. William Empson has made this charge effectively in Seven Types of Ambiguity, in the brilliant and ingenious theory that what Shakespeare editors tend to do is unwrite the play, working a Shakespearian ambiguity back to the simple one-meaning word with which he started and which he then enriched. He gives a number of examples . . . And so on, through a damning number of emendations Empson would reemend back to the original.

p. 183 W. W. Greg, in his brilliant "Principles of Emendation in Shakespeare" (1928) . . . pleads for far greater conservatism in editing Shakespeare, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ , , , , Greg's lecture, which is the best concise and understandable statement I know of the whole problem of Shakespeare texts, is welcome evidence that the Shakespeare editors of our time may be in the process of coming around to Empson's view.

Footnote 1 "An authoritative list of twenty-six major divisions of Shakespeare scholarship, for those whose interest may be stimulated by this superficial account, can be found on the first page of J. Isaac's excellent essay on the subject in A Companion to Shakespeare Studies.

p. 184 Dover Wilson is a typical case: an intelligent and conservative textual critic, one of the editors of the valuable (sometimes weird) new Cambridge edition, who has been one of those to make an exhaustive study of Elizabethan handwriting as a basis for reconstructing Shakespeare's manuscripts through compositors misreadings, he frequently goes wild when he gets to critical interpretation, and relies on no evidence more objective than his own pipe dreams. Theories like the conjecture in The Essential Shakespeare that the great last poems Shakespeare undoubtedly wrote after his retirement were destroyed by his Puritan son-in-law, or the view in What Happens in Hamlet that Shakespeare chose Denmark as a setting because of its Lutheranism, make Greg's statement that Wilson's theories are the "careerings of a not too captive balloon in a high wind" seem surprisingly moderate.

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p. 184-185 Caroline Spurgeon was much influenced by the method of Prof. John Livingston Lowes of Harvard. . . . Lowes's major critical-scholarly work is The Road to Xanadu, subtitled A Study in the Ways of the Imagination, a six-hundred page tracing of the sources of Coleridge's two great poems, "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan." It is a wholly fascinating and almost miraculous single-handed reconstruction of a poet's reading and precise state of mind after one hundred and twenty five years. Relying on Coleridge's extensive habit of jotting and his curious trick of habitually passing from any given book he read to all the books to which that book referred, Lowes simply followed Coleridge through all his reading. As a result of his incredible doggedness . . . he was able to trace the