

801  
Sh92

1. Elements of Critical Theory, Perspectives in Criticism by Wayne Shumaker. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952.

p. 15 I do not wish to imply that M. Cazamian's interests are unusually narrow. Messrs. Murry, Eliot, Brunetiere, and Brownell would be equally unable or unwilling to write critiques that were all things to all men. The truth is that the task of "exhausting" even so restricted a subject as a single poem is virtually impossible of achievement. Take for example, the matter of sources: "The number of elements that went to the writing of one work is infinite; no reckoning of them will ever be full; those that are most essential are elusive, intangible, cannot be caught and pinned down on the page." <sup>2</sup> Thus M. Cazamian himself, upon whom I am anxious to avoid casting special obloquy. Yet sources are only one of many conceivable objects of investigation . . . . .

p. 124 <sup>2</sup> Louis Cazamian, Criticism in the Making (New York, Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 28-29.

*Cazamian*  
✓ p. 63,4 And yet everyone who is acquainted with the present critical situation is aware that in the last dozen or fifteen years there has been a general rush to light bonfires. There has been, indeed, a widespread disillusionment with "scientific" methods, at least among young scholars, with the result that in many departments of English an uncomfortable tension has developed between the lighters of torches and the igniters of bonfires.

✓ The movement seems to have been stimulated by a conviction that the torches set out by older critics have all too often been placed along tracks that lead endlessly across plains instead of upward toward summits. What purposes besides those of "getting something published" and winning academic advancement have been served (the younger critics seem by their actions to inquire) by the typical discovery of a partial source, a trivial influence, a conceivable allusion on the third or fourth plane of meaning? . . . . The suspicion is unavoidable that large numbers of "experts" have given up the attempt to find answers to questions that anybody actually wishes to ask, and instead have sought industriously for questions to fit the answers their methods allow them to supply. But this is to reverse the proper relationship of methods and interests. The methods ought clearly to be adapted to interests, not the interests to be subordinated to methods. To praise a method regardless of the problem (says Kenneth Burke) is like advocating the use of nothing but quadratic equations.

p. 65 The protests against external study cited in the preceding chapter clearly imply dissatisfaction with an unfruitful devotion to "scientific" methods; but the objection has often been made explicit. Thus Louis Cazamian asserted that philological and historical approaches "are not the divinely-appointed rulers of the whole empire of criticism." (1929) Michael Dragomirescou believed the historical method to become "absolutely destructive when applied to the study of masterpieces" (1928-29). W. C. Brownell thought the detective method "debased" (1914) (W. C. Brownell, Criticism. New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1914, p. 57). The contempt of some of the "new" critics for historical drudgery is notorious. Yet there are serious difficulties in the way of lighting bonfires, much as one may be inclined to agree that the illumination from torches often does not fall on paths that lead to a view.