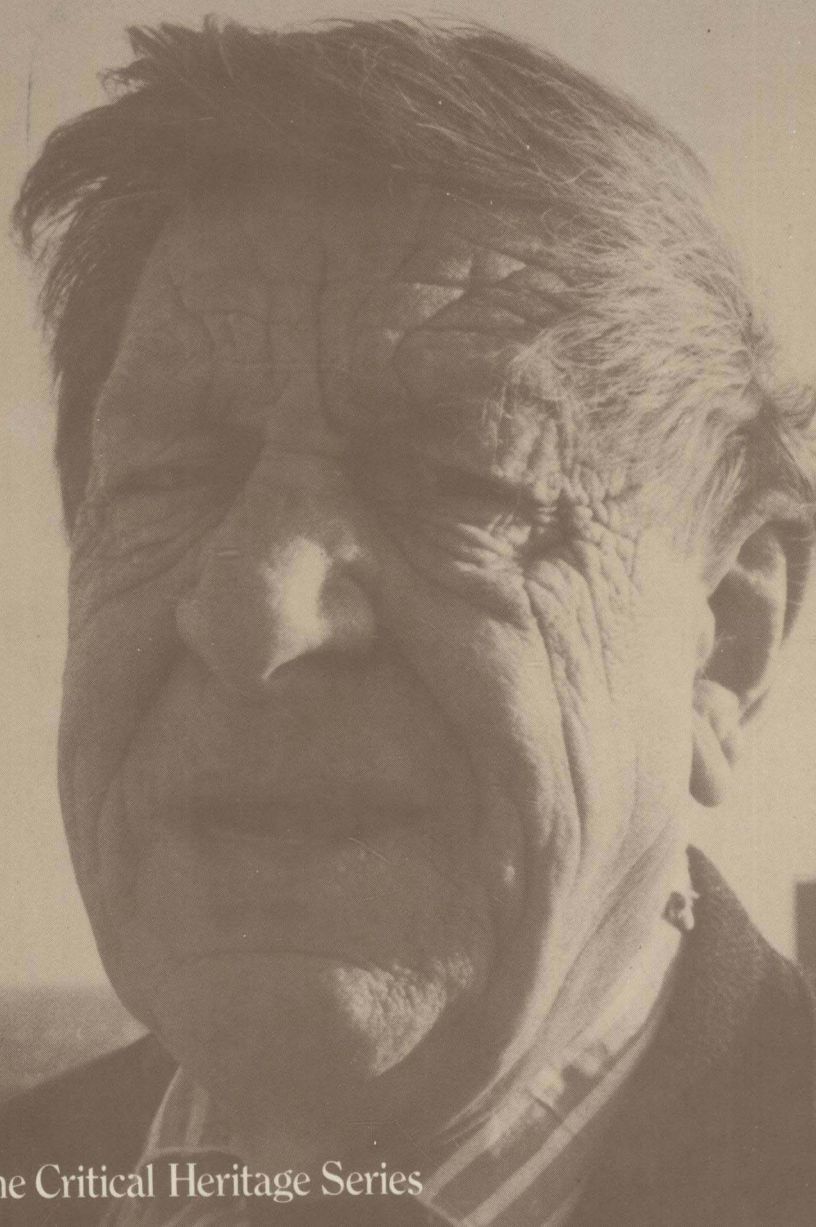


W. H. AUDEN  
THE CRITICAL HERITAGE  
Edited by John Haffenden



The Critical Heritage Series

# W.H. AUDEN

## THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

*Edited by*

JOHN HAFFENDEN

*Lecturer in English Literature  
University of Sheffield*

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## General Editor's Preface

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The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S

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# Note on the Selection and Text

This anthology gathers together a selection of the first reviews and essays covering the volumes of poetry by Auden published between 1930 and 1976. The terminus date allows for the inclusion of selected reviews of 'Collected Poems' (1976), but not of 'The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927-1939' (1977). The latter collection takes Auden's career full circle, so to speak, and invaluable reprints those works which were reviewed on their first appearance in the 1930s, as rehearsed in the present anthology.

Limitations of space and expense have determined the fact that reviews of Auden's own volumes of criticism are not represented here.

Quotations from Auden's works follow the original editions, and typographical errors have been silently corrected whenever necessary.

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