Contemporary Literary Criticism

CLC 11

Volume 11

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Excerpts from Criticism
of the Works of Today's
Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
and Other Creative Writers

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Preface

Literary criticism is indispensable to the layman or scholar attempting to evaluate and understand creative writing—whether his subject is one poem, one writer, one idea, one school, or a general trend in contemporary writing. Literary criticism is itself a collective term for several kinds of critical writing: criticism may be normative, descriptive, interpretive, textual, appreciative, generic. Conscientious students must consult numerous sources in order to become familiar with the criticism pertinent to their subjects.

Until now, there has been nothing resembling an ongoing encyclopedia of current literary criticism, bringing together in one series criticism of all the various kinds from widely diverse sources. *Contemporary Literary Criticism* is intended to be such a comprehensive reference work.

The Plan of the Work

Contemporary Literary Criticism presents significant passages from the published criticism of work by well-known creative writers—novelists and short story writers, poets and playwrights. Some creative writers, like James Baldwin and Paul Goodman, are probably better known for their expository work than for their fiction, and so discussion of their nonfiction is included.

Contemporary Literary Criticism is not limited to material concerning long-established authors like Eliot, Faulkner, Hemingway, and Auden, although these and other writers of similar stature are included. Attention is also given to two other groups of writers—writers of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is hard to locate. These are the newest writers (like Robert M. Pirsig, Erica Jong, and William Kotzwinkle) and the contributors to the well-loved but nonscholarly genres of mystery and science fiction (like Georges Simenon, Agatha Christie, Robert Heinlein, and Arthur C. Clarke).

The definition of *contemporary* is necessarily arbitrary. For purposes of selection for *CLC,* contemporary writers are those who are either now living or who have died since January 1, 1960. Contemporary criticism is more loosely defined as that written any time during the past twenty-five years or so and currently relevant to the evaluation of the writer under discussion.

Each volume of *CLC* lists about 150 authors, with an average of about five excerpts from critical articles or reviews being given for the works of each author. Altogether, there are about 1100 individual excerpts in each volume taken from about 200 books and several hundred issues of some one hundred general magazines, literary reviews, and scholarly journals. Each excerpt is fully identified for the convenience of readers who may wish to consult the entire chapter, article, or review excerpted. Each volume covers writers not previously included and also provides significant new criticism pertaining to authors included in earlier volumes.

Beginning with Volume 10, *CLC* contains an appendix which lists the sources from which material has been reprinted in that volume. It does not, however, list every book or periodical consulted for the volume.

A Note on Bio-Bibliographical References and Page Citations

Notes in many entries directing the user to consult *Contemporary Authors* for detailed biographical and bibliographical information refer to a series of biographical reference books published by the

Gale Research Company since 1962, which now includes detailed biographical sketches of about 50,000 authors who have lived since 1962, many of whose careers began during the post-World War II period, or earlier.

Beginning with *CLC,* Volume 5, the method for referring to pages in the original sources has been standardized. Page numbers appear after each fragment (unless the entire essay was contained on one page). Page numbers appear in citations as well only when the editors wish to indicate, with an essay or chapter title and its *inclusive* page numbers, the scope of the original treatment.

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the excerpts included in this volume for their permission to use the material, and the staffs of the Detroit Public Library, Wayne State University Library, and the libraries of the University of Michigan for making their resources available to us.

Authors Forthcoming in *CLC*

With the publication of *Contemporary Literary Criticism,* Volume 12, the series will expand its scope to encompass songwriters, screenwriters, cartoonists, and other creative writers whose work is often evaluated from a literary perspective. These writers will take their place with the novelists, poets, dramatists, and short story writers who will continue to be the primary focus of *CLC.* Volume 12 is designed to be of special interest to young adult readers. Volume 13 will include criticism on a number of authors not previously listed, and will also feature new criticism of newer works of authors included in earlier editions.

To be Included in Volume 12

Maya Angelou (Black American novelist, poet, playwright) Author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Judy Blume (American young adult novelist) Author of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* and *Forever. . .*

Mel Brooks (American screenwriter, director, and comedian)

Carlos Casteneda (Brazilian-born American anthropologist and nonfiction writer) Author of *The Teachings of Don Juan*

E. E. Cummings (American poet)

Bob Dylan (American songwriter and novelist)

Esther Forbes (Newbery Award-winning American young adult novelist and biographer) Author of *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In*

Leon Garfield (British young adult novelist, short story writer, and nonfiction writer) His *The God Beneath the Sea* won the 1971 Carnegie Medal

Christie Harris (Canadian young adult novelist and short story writer) Best known for her adaptations of Indian legends

Jamake Highwater (Native American young adult novelist and nonfiction writer) Author of *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey*

Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey (American playwrights) Their *Grease* is currently Broadway's longest-running play

Norman Lear (Emmy Award-winning American screenwriter and television producer)

John Lennon and Paul McCartney (British songwriters) One-half of The Beatles

Carson McCullers (American novelist and short story writer) Author of *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*

Joni Mitchell (Canadian songwriter)

Andre Norton (American science fiction writer)

J. D. Salinger (American novelist and short story writer) Author of *The Catcher in the Rye*

John R. Tunis (American young adult sports writer)

Garry Trudeau (American Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist)

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (American novelist and short story writer) Author of *Slaughterhouse-Five*

To be Included in Volume 13

Alice Adams (American short story writer and novelist) Will feature criticism on new collection of short stories, *Beautiful Girl*

A. Alvarez (British essayist, poet, and novelist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Hunt*

Kingsley Amis (British novelist, short story writer, poet, and essayist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Jake's Thing*

Donald Barthelme (American short story writer and novelist) Will feature criticism on new collection of short stories, *Great Days*

Ann Beattie (American short story writer and novelist) Will feature criticism on new collection of short stories, *Secrets and Surprises*

Marie-Claire Blais (French-Canadian novelist and poet)

Jorge Luis Borges (Argentine short story writer, poet, and essayist)

Anthony Burgess (British novelist and essayist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Abba Abba*

Arthur C. Clarke (British science fiction writer) Will feature criticism on new novel, *The Fountains of Paradise*

Lawrence Durrell (British novelist and essayist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Livia; or Buried Alive*

T. S. Eliot (Anglo-American Nobel-Prize-winning poet and critic)

Carlos Fuentes (Mexican novelist, poet, and short story writer) Will feature criticism on new novel, *The Hydra Head*

Doris Grumbach (American novelist and critic) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Chamber Music*

Elizabeth Hardwick (American critic and novelist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Sleepless Nights*

John Irving (American novelist and short story writer) Will feature criticism on new novel, *The World According to Garp*

André Malraux (French novelist and essayist)

Edna O'Brien (Irish novelist and short story writer) Will feature criticism on new collection of short stories, *A Rose in the Heart*

Flannery O'Connor (American short story writer, essayist, and novelist) Will feature criticism on her collected letters, *The Habit of Being*

Bernard Pomerance (American dramatist) Will feature criticism on Tony Award-winning play, *The Elephant Man*

Katherine Anne Porter (American Pulitzer-Prize-winning short story writer, essayist, and novelist)

Ishmael Reed (Black American novelist and poet)

Susan Sontag (American novelist, essayist, and short story writer) Will feature criticism on new collection of short stories, *I, etcetera*

Muriel Spark (Scottish novelist, poet, and dramatist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *Territorial Rights*

John Updike (American novelist, short story writer, and essayist) Will feature criticism on new novel, *The Coup*

Yevgeny Yevtushenko (Russian poet)

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A

ACHEBE, Chinua 1930-

Achebe, a Nigerian-born novelist, poet, short story writer, and author of children's books, is considered one of the finest contemporary African writers. In his works Achebe explores traditional tribal values and the cataclysmic cultural changes invoked through the influence of European colonization. Achebe is recognized as a consummate craftsman for his innovative use of language, notably his use of traditional Ibo proverbs given in literal English translation, evoking the clash between the two cultures. (See also *CLC*, Vols. 1, 3, 5, 7, and *Contemporary Authors*, Vols. 1-4, rev. ed.)

ARTHUR RAVENSCROFT

[*Things Fall Apart*] is a short and extraordinarily close-knit novel which in fictional terms creates the way of life of an Ibo village community when white missionaries and officials were first penetrating Eastern Nigeria. The highly selective details with which Achebe represents the seasonal festivals and ceremonies, the religion, social customs, and political structure of an Ibo village create the vivid impression of a complex, self-sufficient culture seemingly able to deal in traditional ways with any challenge that nature and human experience might fling at it. . . . [The] greatest strength of *Things Fall Apart* is the tragic 'objectivity' with which Achebe handles a dual theme.

There are two main, closely intertwined tragedies—the personal tragedy of Okonkwo, 'one of the greatest men in Umuofia', and the public tragedy of the eclipse of one culture by another. (pp. 8-9)

Things Fall Apart is impressive for the wide range of what it so pithily covers, for the African flavour of scene and language, but above all for the way in which Achebe makes that language the instrument for analyzing tragic experience and profound human issues of very much more than local Nigerian significance. . . .

Superficially *No Longer at Ease* seems merely to carry the themes of [*Things Fall Apart*] into the 1950s, but the differences of approach and treatment should warn against pressing the outward resemblances too far. Its austere contemporaneity, its insistence upon the ordinariness of a young man's failure to live up to his untried ideals of conduct, allow for none of the glamour that many readers have found in *Things Fall Apart*. (p. 18)

No Longer at Ease seems to be too socially satirical to be able to carry off convincingly the tragic effect Achebe gives us reason to think he is striving for. What one misses is the artistically cohesive tension between chief character and setting that occurs in *Things Fall Apart*. (p. 20)

In *Arrow of God* there is the same kind of traditionalism expressed through Ibo proverbs as in *Things Fall Apart*, but the linguistic texture is richer and there is a new dimension in the use of the proverbs. The fuller scale on which the novel is conceived allows for greater elaboration in the descriptions of ceremonies as well as domestic life and personal relations. . . .

In *Arrow of God* Achebe has clearly returned to the African past with relish and a new confidence in his ability to evoke a way of life with which the legends of his childhood had familiarized him. (p. 30)

A Man of the People is a very different kind of novel—a satirical farce about corrupt politicians cynically exploiting a political system inherited from the departed imperial power. So disillusioned is the *exposé* that the author would hardly seem to escape a charge of personal cynicism. (pp. 31-2)

A Man of the People is a sparkling piece of satirical virtuosity, yet we feel throughout that deep anger, bitterness and disillusion are never far beneath the surface. The novel prompts one to ask: Is it too savage, too despairing, too Swiftian? Many readers find it so, but the skill with which Odili's dual function is controlled and the hints at other criteria of judgement . . . do pose values other than those of the 'eat-and-let-eat' politicians. (pp. 35-6)

Arthur Ravenscroft, in his Chinua Achebe *(© Arthur Ravenscroft 1969; Longman Group Ltd., for the British Council), British Council, 1969.*

GERALD MOORE

[Achebe] has recreated for us a way of life which has almost disappeared, and has done so with understanding, with justice and with realism. . . .

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which appeared in 1958, was the first West African novel in English which could be applauded without reserve. (p. 58)

[*Things Fall Apart*] is an extremely well-constructed short novel, fully equal to its theme and written with confidence

and precision. Achebe's theme is suggested in the Yeatsian title, but although he sees the disintegration of Ibo society as a communal and personal tragedy for those who lived through it, this does not in any way obscure his objectivity in describing that society as it was. (pp. 58-9)

Achebe's brief, almost laconic style, his refusal to justify, explain or condemn, are responsible for a good deal of the book's success. The novelist *presents* to us a picture of traditional Ibo life as just as he can make it. The final judgement of that life, as of the life which replaced it, is left to us. Only Achebe insists that we should see it as a life actually lived by plausible men and women before we dismiss it, with the usual shrug, as nothing but ignorance, darkness and death. His people win, and deservedly win, our full respect as individuals whose life had dignity, significance and positive values. (p. 59)

In dealing with Iboland sixty or more years ago [as he did in *Things Fall Apart*], Achebe could at least describe a single society, intact at first, and later only beginning to disintegrate. To write of modern Nigeria means writing of a country in which many different societies are flowing into each other, each at a different level of internal change, each dominated and confused by the presence of western standards and values. To make out of this boiling hotch potch a coherent social context for a novel calls for exceptional qualities of organization and selection. And this is the task which Achebe tackles in his second novel, *No Longer at Ease*. (pp. 65-6)

With his larger range of characters, and within the space of a very short novel, Achebe does not succeed in touching all of them into life. (p. 68)

No Longer at Ease is bound to create a certain sense of diffuseness and slackness after the austere tragic dignity of *Things Fall Apart*, a dignity which recalls Conrad, who is in fact one of Chinua Achebe's mentors. The fluid world of Obi Okonkwo [the protagonist of *No Longer at Ease*] is simply not susceptible of the same classic treatment, and to have captured it at all is an achievement of sympathy and imagination. Achebe measures the decline in the simple contrast of Obi and his grandfather [the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*]; the grandson has more humanity, more gentleness, a wider awareness, but he lacks the force and integrity of his ancestor. He measures it also in a certain slackness of language, which compares sadly with the strong, spare certainty of the speeches of Umuofia's vanished elders. (pp. 68-9)

If *No Longer at Ease* is something less than a tragedy, it is because Achebe does not see Obi Okonkwo as a tragic hero. The pressures that pull and mould him are all pressures making for compromise and accommodation; these are not the stuff of tragedy but of failure and decline. The alien forces that destroyed old Okonkwo were mysterious and inexorable, but still largely external and dramatic. (p. 70)

Gerald Moore, "Chinua Achebe: Nostalgia and Realism," in his Seven African Writers *(© Oxford University Press 1962; reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press), revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1970.*

R. ANGOGO

In his two books, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, Achebe uses a language I would like to refer to as 'Ibo in English'. Both these books share a rural side setting. They describe a relationship between society and individual. Achebe shows us how important communal life in Ibo was. We are presented with people who when supported by the society continue to live profitable and progressive lives, yet when they act as individuals, they meet with dead ends.

To show that the situation he is describing needs more than one person, Achebe in his two novels employs the style of conversation, which would be termed linguistically as casual-register. The casuality is seen through use of vocabulary that would be well known and recognised by everyone in the Ibo society. The imagery is local. (p. 2)

The adoption of casual conversational style gives the *Oral literature* taste, to Achebe's work. As a matter of fact, Achebe is recording the History of the Ibo. A lot of values found in the two novels mentioned above cannot be found in the society today. . . .

Sometimes Achebe uses Ibo words with English sentences. Such form of style reminds us again and again that we are reading an Ibo story and that the Ibo vocabulary is not limited in explaining the Ibo Culture. (p. 3)

The ability to shape and mould English to suit character and event and yet still give the impression of an African story is one of the greatest of Achebe's achievements. It puts into the reader a kind of emotive effect, an interest, and a thirst which so to say awakens the reader. (pp. 3-4)

Achebe integrates character and incident through imagery that is tropical. Okonkwo's character is compared to roaring thunder; flamer of fire; as contrasted to Unoka the weakling who dies through ailing and Nwoye who is compared to 'Cold Ash', and a bowl of foo foo could throw him down. The positive abilities of Okonkwo show us the importance the Ibo attached to physical strength. It is through the use of proverb and similes that Achebe develops his theme on this subject. (p. 4)

Arrow of God has taken the same 'Ibo in English' dialogue-like style [as *Things Fall Apart*]. In fact Achebe's wise invention of the [District Commissioner's] book gives a setting for *Arrow of God*; because that is when the British Government has taken root in Nigeria and the D.C.'s book is being used for guidance in administration. It can be noted Achebe attaches a lot of importance to dialogue when he is representing a traditional Ibo society. Where dialogue fails, the means of communication is cut and destruction follows. Ezeulu's failure can be traced through the failure of *proper dialogue* between him and his own people and also between him and the white man. Achebe may be saying that a society that compromises at the expense of their own values leads to destruction. We see this through the destruction of Ezeulu who symbolically stands for the society of Umuoro, since he is their head, by virtue of being the priest of the great snake cult of the village. (p. 5)

Achebe changes style from that of dialogue in the two books to prose narration [in *No Longer at Ease*]. We find no fault in such a change, because his story and time in history also change. We expect language also to change, because language is very much a human phenomenon and entirely belongs to the shaping of the human beings.

The story takes the form of a flash back. It begins with Obi's conviction and then the rest of the book is the unfold-

ing of the episodes that led to Obi's fate. The nature of the modernity and the urban setting of the story is seen through Achebe's use of pidgin English, which is characteristic of urbanization in West Africa. (p. 7)

In a way, I think what Achebe is emphasizing in the plot of *No Longer at Ease* is that intellectual insight without moral support to sustain it is not worthy the effort. In suiting language to character and time, I do not have a quarrel with Achebe, but as to the claims that he attained a piece of work equivalent to his novel, I would not say that. I find his protagonist Obi too weak. Achebe does not find strong enough words with which to present Obi. He makes him a weakling in every aspect. . . .

Achebe maintains his use of Ibo Proverbs and Idioms which make the story interesting and moving. Accompanying the urban theme are the English social, political as well as christian axioms and maxims which all together add to Achebe's intelligence and mastery over the English language.

A Man of the People portrays Achebe the satirical-author. In this novel Achebe decides that he has been soft long enough to his people and now he must lash them if a word of mouth has failed. Achebe's use of irony in *A Man of the People* surpasses that of any other of his books. (p. 8)

Apart from the prose irony, another feature that Achebe employs in *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People* is pidgin English. This is proper because pidgin is the lingua franca of the urbanized West Africans as contrasted with pure Ibo that Achebe uses in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. Achebe lets the pidgin suit the characters and the situation. . . .

All the four novels of Achebe are full of proverbs and similes. Each of the proverbs is always said at an appropriate time to explain a situation. Achebe has been described as an author who has the talent of knowing where things are supposed to be and placing them there. Achebe uses proverbs to sound, reiterate or clarify a situation that he is describing. (p. 10)

All the proverbs have African environment and imagery. They not only symbolise the vitality of the Ibo life, but also the heroism of Achebe the translator. Achebe has the ability to create a sense of real life, real issues of the Ibo society in an impressive turn of English. He lets his words speak. . . . All in all, Achebe's manipulation of English language to suit situations he is describing raises him far above other African writers. By use of idioms, proverbs, emotive words, action, he manages to put vividness and memorable drama into his writing. . . . Achebe takes an account of interlingual differences of syntax and idiom; of the functions of style and theme and the emotions and ideas and associations which the Ibo would have. (pp. 13-14)

R. Angogo, "Achebe and the English Language," in Busara, *Vol. 7, No. 2, 1975, pp. 1-14.*

PHILIP ROGERS

In Chinua Achebe's view, the African writer of our time must be accountable to his society. . . . To Achebe, it is 'simply madness' to think of art as pure and autonomous, happening by itself in an aesthetic void. . . . Each of Achebe's four novels has had an obvious (but never obtrusive) purpose. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* both aim to show that the African past 'with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans, acting on God's behalf, delivered [Africans]'. The public problems of bribery and the *osu* caste are examined in *No Longer at Ease; A Man of the People,* his most purposeful novel, was written with the deliberate aim of providing 'a serious warning to the Nigerian people' about corruption in government and the cynicism of the masses. . . . Written during and shortly after the Nigerian Civil War, the poems [of *Beware, Soul-Brother*] are centrally concerned with the regeneration of belief after the blight of war. . . . In 'Beware, Soul-Brother' and implicitly throughout the collection he identifies the enemies of the public spirit and admonishes his readers to beware. And in the more personal poems of the collection, which dramatize the rebirth in the poet himself of hope for love, new life, and order, Achebe creates a representative spokesman, an exemplary persona whose experience realizes the goal Achebe seeks for his society as a whole, 'the regeneration of its deepest aspirations'. (pp. 1-2)

Achebe's recovery of spirit is sustained more through dessicating irony and indignation than a positive faith, and in the sequential ordering of the poems, is achieved only after an ordeal of horror, disgust, and cynicism.

The poems are arranged so as to suggest a chronological unfolding of perceptions, beginning with 'The First Shot' of the revolution. . . . The poem sharply contrasts the human time of historical 'first shots' with the mechanical time of real bullets. . . . Achebe foresees the moment when it will lodge 'more firmly than the greater noises ahead' (real bullets) 'in the forehead of memory', where of course, it will resume the pace of human 'striding' in the 'nervous suburb' of the mind. The contrast of historical and mechanical forces announces a central concern of these poems, exploring the kinship of things human and inhuman.

'Air Raid' further defines the contrasting modes of time seen in 'The First Shot'. 'A man crossing the road / to greet a friend / is much too slow'. 'His friend [is] cut in halves' by the 'bird of death' from the 'evil forest' of technology. The poem's juxtapositions are immediately and simply effective: the potential unity of two men coming together, crossing the road that separates all men, is set off against abrupt, literal division as the friend is cut in half; the flying shadow from technology's evil forest eclipses the full light of noon; human slowness is contrasted with the dreadful quickness of mechanism. (p. 2)

'Refugee Mother and Child' and 'Christmas in Biafra' are longer, more ambitious poems that attempt to evoke pathos through direct description of civilian casualties—mothers and starving children. . . . Although 'Refugee Mother and Child' and 'Christmas in Biafra' are perhaps the least successful poems in the collection, they are nonetheless important to its central themes. . . . Seen against the plaster immortality of the rosy-cheeked Jesus, the perishing child becomes 'a miracle of its own kind': his mortality emphasizes the vital humanity of his mother's devotion. The spectacle arouses in Achebe a 'pure transcendental hate'. 'Pure' and 'transcendental' are more than casual intensifiers; they suggest a loftiness of feeling from which any hint of self-blame is absent. As in 'Air Raid', evil is perceived as external; the poet sees that war cuts men in half and starves babies, but he believes in the purity of the man's friendship and the mother's love. In the poems that follow, his confidence steadily wanes.

In 'Mango Seedling' . . . similar themes appear, but in a different and more effective mask. The poem is loosely allegorical. A mango seedling sprouts incongruously on the concrete ledge of a modern office building. A suggestive emblem of vital, human birth, 'purple, two-leafed, standing on its burst black yolk', the seedling is doomed because it cannot put down roots. Like the starving babies, perhaps the revolution, or even the persona himself, it feeds on its own substance, ultimately starves, and dies. . . . For the first time in *Beware, Soul-Brother* the persona stands inside the world of the poem. He, too, is entombed in the sarcophagus, remote from the nourishing earth, his tone as detached and distant as his vantage point two stories above, where he observes the seedling through a glass pane. In this sterile place and age, he can believe none of the myths of fertility. . . . But in the concluding line, the last two words, 'passionate courage', suddenly break the emotional distance the persona has maintained so far. A 'tiny debris' is all that remains of the seedling's 'passionate courage', but the poet's commitment to the significance of perishing courage is unequivocal. Like the dying babies, the withered seedling represents a last vestige of rapidly diminishing human values.

Achebe's confidence in such redeeming human values disappears completely in the next two poems. 'Vultures' and 'Lazarus' reveal the nadir of the poet's spirits. Both explore the idea that good and evil are inextricably linked; the very germ from which new growth may come is tainted with evil. . . . As in 'Mango Seedling', the moment of birth is blighted, but now the blighting force can no longer be dismissed as external.

The poet's recovery from this spiritually arid, cynical cast of mind is seen in 'Love Song' and 'Answer'. The transition is marked by two significant changes in the persona's stance: unlike the earlier poems, which relate to public scenes and historical moments of the recent past, 'Love Song' is personal in tone, addressed to 'my love' rather than 'my people', and looks to the future. (pp. 3-5)

The moment of recovery looked forward to in 'Love Song' takes place in 'Answer', which dramatizes 'a dramatic descent', the rooting of a new conception of the persona's self in the 'trysting floor' of the earth. . . . The metaphor of his re-emergence into 'proud vibrant life' is that of the seedling, bursting out of the darkness of its confining hull and sending the 'twin cotyledons' of his hands upward, his feet as roots drawn downward to the earth. (p. 5)

The implications of the symbolic action in 'Love Song' and 'Answer' are elaborated more discursively in the title poem of the collection. 'Beware, Soul-Brother' shapes the personal experience of these poems into a warning to writers, the 'men of soul'. In the central metaphor of the poem, writers are dancers; the earth of the dancing ground is their inspiration and their responsibility. (pp. 5-6)

'Beware, Soul-Brother' may seem too confident in its laying down the law for the arts, but it can easily be seen that Achebe has himself experienced the sense of disinheritance he warns against. He numbers himself among the soul-brothers, and in 'Answer' reveals a moment when he felt obliged to try to recover a lost vitality. Other poems in the collection also betray the uneasiness of one who cannot simply draw away from the 'departed dance' of the African past, even though he has committed himself to catching up to 'the dance of the future'. In three poems, 'Penalty of Godhead', 'Lament of the Sacred Python', and 'Derelict' Achebe looks back to the world of his ancestors, not to worship at their shrines, or even to lament their passing, but only to express the pain he feels in abandoning them. The inevitable penalty of Godhead is to be left behind. (p. 6)

But the uneasy sense of having betrayed the past is balanced in the final poems of *Beware, Soul-Brother* by a healthy scorn for the uncommitted, whose prudence and insensitivity shield them from the ambivalent emotions of engagement. The restored Achebe asserts his judgments to bring his collection to an angry close. In contrast to the 'pure transcendental hate' of 'Christmas in Biafra', the emotion of these concluding poems is 'seminal rage', a committed hatred that fertilizes and sustains his regenerated spirit. 'NON-commitment' and 'We Laughed at Him', the most important of these poems, are built on contrasting images of defence and penetration. . . . [The eye] is the primary metaphor of these poems. The uncommitted do nothing and feel nothing chiefly because their imagination is timorous and they find sight excruciatingly painful. . . . The final poem of *Beware, Soul-Brother* ['We Laughed at Him'], is, of course, a defence of poetry and the poet's role in a society blinded by conventionality and contemptuous of the arts. (pp. 7-8)

Philip Rogers [Harper College, SUNY], "Chinua Achebe's Poems of Regeneration," in Journal of Commonwealth Literature (© *Oxford University Press 1976; reprinted by permission of the author), April, 1976, pp. 1-9.*

SOLA SOILE

[In] *Things Fall Apart* the society is forced to give way to an inevitable change because of its violent collision with an alien institution. In *Arrow of God,* however, we have a more explosive situation of a society cleaving apart largely from its own internal strain. The latter novel illustrates the classic situation of a house divided against itself which, with or without any assistance from an external force, must collapse. To be sure the destructive colonial forces that we encounter in the first novel are still very much alive and thriving, but they now stand on the periphery of the doomed society, waiting on the wing to swoop down, like vultures, the moment the society commits *harakiri.* In this particular sense *Arrow of God* is more truly the tragedy. . . . (p. 283)

[The] central irony in [*Things Fall Apart* is the] paradox between what the society seems to encourage and what it can actually permit. In *Arrow of God,* Achebe brings out more elements in the Ibo society which help to sustain the internal cohesion of the clan but are at the same time responsible for its ultimate disintegration. This ambiguity is at the center of the tragedy of the hero, Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu. As the high priest of Umuaro, Ezeulu is the political and spiritual leader of the community and its most able protector against contamination from internal and external sources, and yet he becomes the unwitting cause of some of the society's woes. The germ of this paradox is built into the very function of the chief priest. As the Ezeulu his role involves the symbolic cleansing of the whole clan of all its abominations. . . . It is a psychically demanding function, but Ezeulu has gladly accepted this

symbolic role of the scapegoat on whose head the sins of the village are periodically heaped. . . . (pp. 283-84)

The chief priest is described by the author as an intellectual, someone who goes to the root of things and thinks about why they happen. He is the archetypical philosopher-king. His broad vision and comprehensive outlook on the world are his strength and at the same time . . . the main source of his tragic weakness.

The action in *Arrow of God* centers around Ezeulu's running battle against two threats to himself and his clan. As the chief priest of the god Ulu, he locks horns with reactionary elements within the clan who, for various reasons, want to displace him and the deity he represents from the long-established hierarchy of the village deities. This represents what one might call the home front of the war. . . . From the outside come the forces of the European colonial institutions represented by the District Officer, Captain Winterbottom. The forces here are initially less threatening, but in the structure of the novel Ezeulu's success on this external front largely depends on the degree of his success on the other front. Achebe carefully balances the two battles side by side, allowing the external situation to impinge on the internal only when the latter permits it.

In these battles Ezeulu naturally relies on the power of his god, but his conception of this power is tragically faulty. His attempt to probe too closely into the mystery of an essentially sacrosanct phenomenon first reveals Ezeulu's intellectual pride, that error of judgment for which he is later punished by Ulu. . . . Ezeulu's intellectual pride makes him attempt a definition of his individual will in relation to the sacred power of which he is only a custodian. The same presumption leads him later to second-guess the god and confuse personal revenge with divine justice by actually refusing to name the day for the harvest, thereby taking upon himself what is properly the prerogative of the deity.

Ezeulu's intellectual pride is, however, only a personal flaw that will partly account for his own individual tragedy. The central action involves the clan as a whole, and what really prompts Ezeulu to examine the nature of his power is the growing schism between rival factions in the community. . . . [In effect], the battle is really between the two gods, Ulu and Idemili, with their respective priests as the human protagonists. (pp. 284-86)

Ezeulu is the agent and champion of change. From the obscurity of the future he discerns the pattern of things to come. The essence of his leadership draws on this power to foresee future events. (p. 286)

His prophetic acumen in rightly guessing the necessity of learning the ways of white men leads him to think that he can similarly foresee and provide for every contingency. . . . [Too] often Ezeulu is blind to [his] limitation. (p. 287)

A superficial reading of the novel and a literal interpretation of the role of Ezeulu as just a mere arrow in the bow of his god might give the unwary the erroneous impression that the chief priest is an amoral agent of the deity. Of course, Ezeulu himself believes this. . . . I think that by relying so dangerously on Ezeulu's own analysis of the god's injunction, an analysis that can hardly be described as objective, [one] fails to recognize the necessary ambiguous role of the god and other divine elements in the novel, and thus misses the central irony. In an interview . . . , Achebe himself comes out with a clear statement of his intention in *Arrow of God*. "I am handling a whole lot of . . . complex themes, like the relationship between a god and his priest . . . and I am interested in this old question of who decides what shall be the wish of the gods, and . . . that kind of situation." That, precisely, is the core of the ambiguity in the novel which must be analyzed before any valid statement can be made about Ezeulu's motivation.

Achebe's enigma is posed right from the beginning with the lack of a precise definition of the nature and extent of the power of the chief priest. (p. 292)

There is little doubt that Ulu himself is visiting the sins of the people on their heads. What Ezeulu and [some critics] confuse is the human revenge of the chief priest and the divine justice of the deity. Ezeulu forgets that revenge is not justice but an unreasonable human retribution which has a way of getting out of proportion to the original offence and thereby constituting a new crime. Thus we hear Ezeulu lament that Umuaro's present suffering is not just temporary but will be for all time. Ironically, Ezeulu feels a sense of community with the people in their suffering as a result of his vengeance, seeing his own participation in the general distress as part of his function as the priest who pays the debt of every man, woman, and child in Umuaro. But in his interpretation of the god's justice he temporarily forgets this responsibility and remembers only his power. He comes to look at divine justice through his flawed vision as something from which he is excluded because of his earlier rectitude. . . . He says to Ulu in effect, "I have done no evil, therefore I must not suffer." He fails to see that true justice is a mysterious order in which the sins of individuals within a community are visited on the whole community; an order in which the sins of the guilty are visited on all—guilty and innocent alike. Ezeulu defines justice in non-personal terms, calling on Ulu, "Let justice be done—on others!" He forgets that far from being outside of this moral, if unfathomable order, far from being a mere spectator, a mere arrow in the bow of the deity, an unimplicated executioner, he is the pivot on which the whole order rotates. He is the Chief Priest of Ulu. . . . The incomprehensibility of the whole mystery of this order of justice remains with Ezeulu to the end. (pp. 293-94)

He looks at himself as the accuser but fails to see that he is also the accused. And without the recognition of this paradox there can be no proper grasp of the concept of justice and the proper role of the scapegoat, which is the office of Ezeulu.

The novel closes as it does with Ezeulu's dementedness because he fails to accept his own moral responsibility for the general sin of the clan. For it is our willingness to accept such guilt that leads to self-knowledge. . . . Although Ezeulu has sinned against the gods, his tragedy is not really a matter of crime and punishment, but a failure of moral self-recognition. (p. 295)

Sola Soile, "Tragic Paradox in Achebe's 'Arrow of God'," in PHYLON: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture *(copyright, 1976, by Atlanta University; reprinted by permission of* PHYLON*), Vol. XXXVII, Third Quarter (September, 1976), pp. 283-95.*

AKHMATOVA, Anna (pseudonym of Anna Andreyevna Gorenko) 1889?-1966

Poet, translator, and essayist, Akhmatova is often seen as Pasternak's successor in the Silver Age of Russian poetry and is generally considered the finest woman poet Russia has produced. Participating with the Acmeists in a reaction against symbolist poetry, she wrote in a concise and accessible style. Words are used logically, imagery is concrete. Hers is an intimate and authentic poetry, showing a love of art, of nature, of Russia, and of love itself. Though intensely personal, it achieves a sense of universal statement through a wide range of moods. The darker side of Akhmatova's work reflects the struggle of Russia under siege, the unhappiness of the people, the suffering of her own family, the war. Akhmatova was expelled from the Writer's Union under Stalin's rule, and her work was considered subversive and banned from publication until after Stalin's death. (See also *Contemporary Authors*, Vols. 19-20; obituary, Vols. 25-28; *Contemporary Authors Permanent Series*, Vol. 1.)

SAM N. DRIVER

In [Akhmatova's] four collections after *Rosary*, the love theme remains dominant despite the cataclysm of war and revolution, and the total destruction of the world that [she] had known. If the tone of these volumes reflects the turmoil of the times and becomes less capricious and more austere, the focus remains inward, on a woman's ill-starred love. (p. 55)

It is interesting to note that even in Akhmatova's very earliest work (two poems from the first copy book), desertion and abandonment provide the setting. (p. 58)

In the later volumes, the motif of tragic love escapes oversentimentality in its expression through an almost calm, epic resignation before suffering. In the earliest work, however, the *persona* is more often unreconciled to love's pain, and the lyrical statement lacks the indirection characteristic for more restrained works of the later period. (pp. 59-60)

It is the stance or point of view of the *persona*—somehow apart from herself, observing herself—which is most unusual. The peculiar stance permits an emotional distance, a degree of restraint and a certain objectivity in the expression of intense lyrical emotion. This device, with its shifts in grammatical person and the unusually infrequent use of the first person, is one of the principal reasons that Akhmatova's almost exclusive treatment of the difficult subject of love's pain avoids any impression of mawkishness. (pp. 62-3)

[Akhmatova uses this device in a variety of ways:] direct lyrical statement may be combined with the description of a dramatic scene in which the *persona* is a figure; the description of an interior may serve both to state the *tema* and to provide a setting in which the persona observes herself; in another setting, she may stand entirely apart. (p. 63)

To some extent, it is the sensitivity to furnishings and décor, and certainly the attention to details of feminine attire and coiffure which reminds us constantly that it is a woman who is speaking in Akhmatova's poetry. It would be mistaken, however, to interpret the prominence of such details simply as a preoccupation with traditionally feminine concerns. These necklaces and embroidery frames, painted chests and scarves are the materials from which Akhmatova's poems are constructed, and reflected the Acmeist love of concrete things. Akhmatova is highly selective in her choice of concrete objects, and items of dress and décor are two categories on which she typically draws. They occur so frequently that they present in themselves minor motifs. (pp. 63-4)

[It is in the] rapid focusing on concrete detail that Akhmatova's practice and Acmeist theory most effectively coincide. Given this focus, ordinary objects are "perceived anew," are evoked in their solidity, their texture, their mass. While they serve to communicate emotions which are often quite unrelated to them, they are not symbolic, but remain themselves, the Acmeist "things."

The most common household objects—although unusual ones in poetry, appear in extraordinary juxtapositions. . . . The poems are set for the most part within the house (and the garden wall the outermost limit); often there is a specific location within a particular room: entrance hall or bedroom, parlor or dining room. The effect of such settings is to create an atmosphere of intimacy, as well as to suggest a specific, concrete background for the brief and rapidly developed dramatic scenes. With the Acmeist fondness for the concrete, Akhmatova includes minor details of the rooms, and the physical setting is often fixed in time as well as place. All this is done with a maximum verbal economy. (p. 65)

Given the frequency of rooms and interiors in Akhmatova's poetry, it is perhaps not surprising that "house" should be one of the commonest words in her lexicon. There is a reflection here of the Acmeist fondness for architectonic imagery, but the house has a more complex function than merely providing concrete background. The house is also symbolic, on this level intimately related to the major motif. One of the aspects in which Akhmatova sees tragic love, for example, is as imprisonment; the house without love is a prison. . . .

If the major motif is often represented by the *tema* of imprisonment, it is much more frequently conceived in terms of abandonment. Quite often, the motif is stated through imagery of the house. The abandoned house signifies the abandoned heart. . . . (p. 66)

Although contemporary concerns did not ordinarily penetrate the intimate world of Akhmatova's lyrics, the threat to her homeland struck deep into her poetic consciousness; she produced a small number of highly moving poems concerning Russia during World War I, and later, in revolution. (p. 70)

The austere, solemn poetic person of the war poems, and those which forcefully reject the emigration . . . , are not typical for the war period. . . . National themes are secondary to the love motif; sometimes . . . they are congruent. . . . (p. 73)

In Akhmatova's poetry, one is constantly reminded of the city [Petersburg] she calls "the murkiest of capitals." Fragmentary views of the city seem to register involuntarily in the mind of the preoccupied poetic person. . . .

Akhmatova's attitude toward the city is, on the one hand, traditional: the mystique of the city permeates her poems, and grandeur past and present is frequently evoked. On the other hand, the attitude is familiar and proprietary. (p. 75)

While there are some points for comparison between Akh-

matova and the Symbolist poets with regard to urban themes, there is a fundamental difference in attitudes. Where the city is secondary to the dominant motif of love in Akhmatova's poetry, it is often the poetic subject for the Symbolists. If the city is illusory in Symbolist poetry, it is concrete in Akhmatova's. For the Symbolists, the city is sinister and otherworldly, but Akhmatova approaches it with fondness and familiarity. The ugliness of modernity holds a morbid attraction for the Symbolists; Akhmatova prefers to see Petersburg's historical beauty. (p. 76)

It is the old Petersburg, the familiar Petersburg, the Petersburg of history which captures the imagination of the poet, not the modernity of the contemporary metropolis which so intrigued, in different ways, the Symbolists and the Futurists. . . .

Akhmatova is extremely receptive to the Petersburg mystique, to the great literary tradition and the rich and colorful cultural history of the city. Unlike the Symbolists, however, she does not proceed from mystique to mystery. Her direction is opposite, toward the simplicity and clarity of concrete images. While the grandeur and magnificence—and the malevolence—are deeply sensed, Akhmatova's predominant attitude is a familiar one, even proprietary. It is "my" city; "our" city. (p. 77)

Not only in the quick impressions of the cities of Russia does Akhmatova capture—often in one expressive and picturesque epithet—the feeling of her country, but also by the briefest suggestion she can convey the limitless expanse of rural Russia. (p. 82)

Akhmatova draws upon [the] earlier, richly colorful level of culture for much of her thematic material and imagery. . . . [A] constant backward glance toward Russia's cultural and historical past is necessary to the interpretation of many poems. (p. 83)

[There] are many *personae* in Akhmatova's poems. . . . Some seem almost identifiable with the poet herself, while others can be quite remote from the real person. It is true that an important and most interesting *persona* is the one in whom "there flows a drop of Novgorod blood, like a piece of ice in frothy wine," . . . and whose attitudes are fixed in the patterns of a rich cultural inheritance. It is nevertheless also true that the *persona* may appear as a fashionable lady in a feathered hat riding through the Bois de Boulogne, as a literary figure from the Bohemian world of pre-Revolutionary Petersburg; or as a provincial girl daydreaming in a hammock. She may be haughty or humble, forgiving or malicious, austere or frivolous—and to attempt to reconcile the many poetic persons is both unnecessary and misleading. (p. 84)

Akhmatova's cultural and historical imagery, which strikes her fellow-countrymen as extraordinarily "Russian," is not restricted to immediately recognizable national themes: the so-called "patriotic" poems about Russia in war or Revolution, the urban poetry with its peculiar blend of historical grandeur and lyrical emotion, or the relatively few poems which portray provincial Russia. Nor is this imagery represented principally by the motifs and devices borrowed from Russian folk poetry; her folk settings are always highly stylized and indicate poetic sophistication rather than some uncomplicated spiritual kinship with the Russian folk singer. While these elements in Akhmatova's poetry lend a specifically Russian flavor to many poems, it is the attitudes and roles frequently given the *persona* which suggest most effectively the older, submerged level of Russian culture.

Frequently, for example, the heroine who has been cast aside by her lover is given the role of a homeless wanderer. If . . . the love motif and the imagery of the house are inseparably intertwined, the symbol of homelessness is a potent one in Akhmatova's poetry. (pp. 84-5)

The image of the weeping woman in Akhmatova's poetry is not a simple device to create sympathy for the heroine; if this were the case, a kind of commiseration would be achieved at best—and at worst, embarrassment on the part of the reader. The homeless, destitute wanderer meekly resigned to her fate must be seen in terms of Old Russian attitudes if her reactions are to be understood.

In Old Russian society, a prime virtue was charity. Its innocently unsophisticated interpretation was pity for the unfortunate. . . . (pp. 85-6)

By using the convention of attitudes drawn from the Russian past, Akhmatova is permitted an extraordinary compression in her poetry. Within a single couplet, she can suggest love lost, consequent renunciation of the world, and the life of a pilgrim or anchorite: "And long since have my lips / Not kissed, but they prophesy." . . . (p. 86)

[The] pattern of love lost, meek acceptance, complete forgiveness, rejection of home and worldly possessions, and ultimately an aimless wandering forms the basis for many of Akhmatova's poems. (p. 87)

[The] suggestion of a nun is inescapable among all these images of self-denial, renunciation of the world, triumphant suffering and poverty, humility, and meek resignation. What is remarkable is that Akhmatova keeps the suggestion a suggestion; the heroine is never cast in the role of a nun. (p. 89)

[Akhmatova's] vocabulary is rich in Biblical and liturgical words: chasubles, icons, King David, angels and archangels, incense, St. Eudoxia, crucifix. (p. 94)

When unmistakably religious imagery is employed, and even when Akhmatova makes use of Old Russian images of martyrdom, humility, poverty, pilgrimage, and so forth, it is obvious that the poet is expressing something quite different from religious sentiment. (pp. 95-6)

The majority of religious references . . . suggest a Russian society of earlier days, permeated with Orthodox expressions and symbols. (p. 97)

The Old Russian flavor of the religiosity Akhmatova employs in her imagery is complemented by the frequent evocation of ancient folk superstitions, which along with Orthodoxy were part and parcel of the Old Russian culture. In many poems, there is the suggestion of the folk *dvoeverie* ("double belief," that is, in both religion and superstition). . . .

For the most part, like the superficial elements of religiosity, superstition is part of the cultural pattern which colors Akhmatova's verse. At times, however, an awareness of supernatural phenomena seems to spring from a deeper level. When the poet adopts the role of prophetess, the quality of real superstitious belief is felt. (p. 98)

If Akhmatova draws on peasant traditions for many im-

ages, it is not surprising that she should also draw on the lyric genre of Russian folk songs. In Russian folk tradition, the lyric song is exclusively the women's genre. Its subject matter is very close to Akhmatova's own: the cruel husband, the unfaithful lover, the abandoned girl or wife. (pp. 99-100)

Akhmatova, however, was not a folk mannerist; that is to say, she did not attempt to create "folk poetry." She borrowed a few fixed forms from the tradition, a number of settings, images, symbols, but ignored the rigidly fixed rules of the genre. In most cases, the sophisticated, experimental poet can be seen through the colorful but inevitable pattern of the folk lyric. Her *Pesenka* is typical; the folk flavor of the song is inescapable, yet scarcely any of the rules of composition for such songs are followed—notably the syntactical parallelisms, in which a line or couplet is drawn from nature and the succeeding one describes the heroine; more importantly, the highly personal ending is entirely atypical of the folk genre. (p. 100)

[It is the single theme of love] which gives such an extraordinary unity to each of Akhmatova's volumes, and indeed, to the whole series of works published between 1912 and 1922. To Eykhenbaum, Akhmatova's poetry seemed "something like a long novel." The success of Akhmatova's extreme verbal economy depends in large part on the conventions she has gradually established in the "long novel"; many poems would be impossible to interpret fully without them. The unique motif, and the single point of view toward it, provide integration for countless disconnected secondary motifs, which may range widely from details of dress and interiors, through Russia's great cities, and endless open plains, through the history and culture of a people. (p. 102)

The sense of history is strong in Akhmatova. Not only do her fragile love lyrics evoke the great Russian past, but they are a kind of poetic chronicle of the cataclysmic events of the decade 1912-1922. If national reminiscence has become a major motif in Akhmatova's recent work, her poems of this fateful decade register directly her contemporary Edwardian world—and its total destruction. (p. 115)

Where historical and cultural impressions were in the early poems fused with the intensity of the lyrical moment, in later works the historical moment itself is often the source of the lyrical emotion. (p. 116)

The Seventh Book, representing the post-1940 period, shows many of the tendencies exhibited in one or the other of the long poems [*Requiem* or *Poem Without a Hero*]. The tendency to greater length is observed, for example in "Pre-History" (1945), which is one of Akhmatova's most successful later poems; and there is a trend toward length in the grouping of shorter poems into discreet cycles.

In the poems of greater length, too, there is a tendency to draw on the general, European cultural and literary traditions, rather than the almost strictly Russian associations characteristic of much of the earlier poetry. Together with this there is a greater intellectual weight than Akhmatova chose to give the early works. (p. 118)

In the sense of history and time, *Poem Without a Hero* is the most comprehensive, and any discussion of Akhmatova's later poetry must include some commentary on at least the nature of this remarkable work. It is a puzzling one. . . . It is a private poem, a laying to rest of old ghosts, an exorcism of present terrors, a catharsis. (p. 119)

Also puzzling is the very construction of the poem. "The Petersburg Tale" is a complete work in itself, and in itself, beautifully structured. The next two parts, however, seem to have only tangential relationships with it and with each other. (p. 120)

[What Akhmatova creates in *Poem Without a Hero*] is her sense of the time—the feeling of apprehension, impermanence and unreality. The "characters" are shades and shades of shades, masks, mirror images, portraits stepping from their frames, figures perhaps glimpsed in darkened windows. It is a shadow-play, a "hellish harlequinade," a "Hoffmaniana"—a Symbolist's, not an Acmeist's Petersburg. The ghosts of the past swarm unbidden before the poet and are finally laid to rest. The "Petersburg Tale" is ended. (p. 122)

The "Epilogue," or Part III, returns to Peter's city, this time in the present (1942), when Leningrad lay in ruins and Akhmatova was far away from it—evacuated during the siege to Tashkent. The "Epilogue" is dedicated "To My City," and begins with a farewell to it. As the Russian army fell back before the German offensive it seemed that all Russia was going into exile.

Although Akhmatova continued work on the *Poem* for another twenty years, it is at this indecisive historical moment that she fixed for the ending of the "Epilogue": an open point in time, with no finality such as the end of the war or the return to Leningrad. The sense is not of history past, but of time in an unending continuum. (pp. 124-25)

This suspension, rather than the finality of a different kind of conclusion, may be unsatisfying, but it suits Akhmatova's purpose in her new conception of time.

> As the future ripens in the past,
> So does the past moulder in the future.

These lines, which are central to the *Poem Without a Hero,* might serve as an epigraph for a collection of the later poems, including the other major work undertaken in that same year of 1940: *Requiem.*

Unlike the *Poem Without a Hero, Requiem* is not a private poem. It is not so much a new experiment in Akhmatova's poetry as a culmination of a style perfected over the decades preceding; Akhmatova organizes her characteristic devices and techniques into an amazingly powerful statement which requires no elaboration or "explanation."

Neither is the *Requiem* a private poem in the sense that the subject, unlike that of the "Petersburg Tale," is immediately accessible to anyone with a knowledge of Russia's recent history—and all too well-known to those who lived in Russia during the late 1930's. The poem is, if not private, deeply personal: but Akhmatova is able to generalize her own shattering experience into an epic cry for her people. (p. 125)

[The] structural divisions in the poem are quite complex. There is the prose "In Place of an Introduction," a dedication, a poetic "Introduction," and then a series of ten lyrical poems, not directly related to one another, and employing a variety of styles and moods, but each representing a step in a progression which replaces the usual poetic narrative. The two epilogues follow, returning from the lyric to