

THE LITTLE CRITIC

A Night On The West Lake

BY CHANG CHUNG-CHIH (張宗子)

Translated by T. K. C.

Chang Chung-chih was a writer of familiar essays, who lived at the time of Emperor Wang-li (萬曆) in the latter half of the Ming dynasty. It is only lately that his name has come into renown, since formerly the art of familiar essay was looked down by the literati as not worthy of cultivation by the followers of Confucius. This essay is taken from the anthology of familiar essays written during the Ming dynasty, edited by Mr. Sheng Chih-wu (沈啓无).

T. K. C.

EVERY year on the fifteenth of the seventh moon, a festival takes place at the West Lake. All Hangchow goes there to see the scenery, but in reality, there is no scenery to be seen at all. One sees instead only people, people everywhere.

Five kinds of people go to the Lake that night. First, there are those who entertain their friends with theatricals and sumptuous feasts in the cabin of their pleasure boats. They go there to look at the moon, so they say; but in fact, they never bother to do so. Then there are those who take beautiful ladies with them. Being gallants, they do not look at the moon either, but would spend most of their time looking at each other instead. The third group is made up of those who sit on their boats where they can be seen conversing with monks and listening to the sing-song girls. They do look at the moon, it is true, but they also wish others to look at them. Then there are those who do not take either boats or carriages. They go hatless and without long gowns. Pretending that they are drunkards, they would sing songs which they improvise for the occasion. They would look not only at the moon, but also at those who are looking at the moon as well as those who aren't. Finally, there are the poetic souls who would row their boats to the Inner Lake (裏湖), and hide themselves in the shadow of the trees. There they can look at the moon to their hearts' content without themselves being looked at by other people.

When the Hangchow people spend a day at the lake, they usually go home in the afternoon, avoiding the moon as if it were their enemy. But on the night of the fifteenth of the seventh moon, they would all come out and stay till the drum is beaten for the second time. (Translator's note: The drum in the drum-tower is beaten five times throughout the night. When it is beaten for the second time, it is usually around nine o'clock.) They would bribe the city-keepers to keep the gates open, and also tell their sedan bearers to wait for them on the shore. Once they have got into their boat, they would immediately row to the Broken Bridge (斷橋), where the festival is at its noisiest and busiest. Therefore, before the drum is beaten for the

BOOK REVIEW

EDITED BY QUENTIN PAN

A Critical Study Of Modern Aesthetics

BY THE EARL OF LISTOWEL, PH.D.

George Allen & Unwin, London. 1933. 10s. 6d.

THIS book is one of those doctorate theses which their authors think worthy of publication. It is divided into two parts: Part I Historical; and Part II Critical and Constructive. The historical part is intended to bring up to date Bernard Bosanquet's elaborate work "The History of Aesthetic" and begins where Bosanquet's book ends. Certain philosophers like Fechner and Guyau already mentioned by Bosanquet are also included on the ground that they have not received adequate treatment from him.

As a continuation of Bosanquet's "History," this book naturally challenges comparison with its predecessor. It must be admitted that Bosanquet's turgid style and faulty arrangement do compare unfavourably with the Earl of Listowel's clarity of language and orderly marshaling of facts. But Bosanquet, in spite of his occasionally second-hand knowledge (as he frankly admits with regard to the Medieval and Hellenistic period), is a weighty historian, quite prodigal of details and laborious in analysis. The Earl of Listowel, on the contrary, is brief to the point of perfunctoriness. His book gives us, as it were, only small puffs and short draughts of contemporary winds of aesthetic doctrine. He neither traces historical influences nor works out logical implications but contents himself with merely giving the broad conclusions modern aestheticians have arrived at. Even in the longest chapter on what the author calls "the profoundest interpretation" of the aesthetic experience, the theory of *Einfühlung*, we are nowhere told that the theory in question is but an offshoot of the theory of "Eject". Croce and his followers have to them only a meager chapter of four and half pages. Santayana ought to be grateful for the three paragraphs devoted to him in view of the fact that Richards is dismissed in one only. Ruskin has been accorded eight closely printed pages in Bosanquet's work, whereas the presumably

second time, all one sees are but boats, large or small, and faces, beautiful or otherwise. When the curfew is struck, they all hurry back and leave the lake and the moon in peace. Then it is that we row our boat to the Broken Bridge and go ashore. The stone benches are cool. We sit down and drink with our friends. The moon is now like a newly polished mirror.

Those who have been hiding themselves in the tree shadows now come out of their haunts, and we ask them to join us. We then enjoy the food that we have brought with us. The sing-song girls are asked to sing our newly composed poems. We talk and drink till the break of the dawn, then we row our boat out again into the lake, and go to sleep amidst the lotus blossoms and dream that we're in paradise.