

make still greater concessions to the rightness of Bryan's position on free silver, at least down to 1897, than the author apparently does. The work of Professor Milton Friedman, an outstanding authority on economics and finance at the University of Chicago, and who as one of Barry Goldwater's advisers in last year's campaign could hardly be characterized as a flaming radical, could have been profitably cited at this point. Some other readers may feel that the work moves along too slowly; that it is too detailed, and at times repetitious. But, whatever the minor blemishes may be, one has a feeling that here is an excellent, trustworthy, and scholarly work on Bryan down to 1908—one in which the author, with no axes to grind, makes a serious and successful effort, not to exalt or pillory, but to understand the man who, with all his mistakes, deserves more credit than has usually been given him for the important part he played in the Progressive movement.

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Five Novelists of the Progressive Era. By Robert W. Schneider. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965. Pp. vii, 290. Notes, index. \$7.50.)

The Progressive Era, either as a halcyon period before the holocaust of two world wars or as a period of transition necessary before the acceptance of a scientific orientation, has recently attracted the attention of social scientists and cultural historians alike. Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought* and Henry May's *The End of American Innocence* are two cases in point. Robert W. Schneider's *Five Novelists of the Progressive Era*, an attempt to shed light on the period 1890-1917 through a close examination of the work of five writers of fiction, seems to be a blend of the two approaches. The author concentrates his attention on "the thought patterns of a generation which reached intellectual maturity during the 1890s" (p. 5) and selects literary figures as his sources because they best represent a continuity of the old traditions and an intelligent criticism of the new ideas. His conclusion is that the period defined was one "of uneasy transition, not of intellectual revolution" (p. 255).

The authors selected as focal figures immediately raise problems. Howells as a mild realist with a genuine interest in social reform is an inevitable choice. Dreiser with his determinism, his antipathy to capitalism, and his pet theory of "chemic" compulsions directing human behavior is equally unavoidable (although the failure to consider *An American Tragedy*, 1925, weakens the argument). The inclusion of Winston Churchill, at one time an enormously popular novelist as well as an actual participant in New Hampshire politics, is particularly appropriate. But it is hard to understand why Stephen Crane and Frank Norris are given similar attention. Although Crane's association with early American naturalism (he published *Maggie* in 1893) is well established, his role as a significant social thinker is surely questionable. And today one can hardly take Norris' rhapsodic romanticism very

seriously even though *The Octopus* does condemn the machinations of California railroads. Professor Schneider may not have wished to deal with Hamlin Garland, whose later novels seem to evade social issues; and he is right in rejecting David Graham Phillips as insignificant today. But it is difficult to condone the omission of Jack London, who gets one index reference, and especially of Robert Herrick, who is completely ignored. Herrick's Chicago fiction, consistently focused on the issues of moral responsibility and personal aggrandizement, would seem to present the best kind of evidence to substantiate a study of this kind.

The five chapters have an identical pattern: a brief biographical summary, definite emphasis on the social position and education of the authors, and plot resumés of the novels treated. Professor Schneider is not primarily interested, of course, in problems of characterization or artistic structure. He discusses at great length, however, the views of various characters, whether or not they represent the attitudes of the authors, if they include any awareness of social or ideological issues. Thus Dreiser's Eugene Witla, Churchill's Jethro Bass, and Norris' McTeague are given special attention.

The present study had its inception as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota, and it reveals some of the limitations of its genre. Although clearly written and well organized, it suffers from extensive quotation and rather banal summaries of the plots of novels. There are also a number of inaccuracies. Surely Charles Horton (not Horten) Cooley was a sociologist, not a psychologist. The author of *The Economic Novel in America* is Walter (not William) Fuller Taylor. Charles Shapiro (not Chaperro) is the co-editor of *The Stature of Theodore Dreiser*. One minor stylistic peccadillo must also be mentioned. The author frequently uses the political term "mugwump" which he identifies alternately with conservative (p. 215) and with liberal (pp. 221, 225, 241), but on page 235 he can refer to "the old genteel mugwump tradition." Humpty Dumpty can of course make words mean what he wishes them to mean; a critic carefully distinguishing and defining ought to be more consistent.

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The National Farmers Union: Ideology of a Pressure Group. By John A. Crampton. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965. Pp. xii, 251. Notes, figures, tables, bibliography, index. \$5.50.)

Scholars in recent decades have scrutinized farm politics and policies. Of the farm groups, the activities of the largest and most powerful, the American Farm Bureau, have been closely examined. Not since the 1920's, however, has there been a substantial investigation of the Farmers Union, the smallest and second oldest of the three major farm organizations. Partly responding to this need, Professor Crampton, a political scientist at Lewis and Clark College, has concentrated on the relationship of theory and practice in the Union.