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Beetz, Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Bibliography of Secondary Works, 1861-1980

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KIRK H. BEETZ. *ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY WORKS, 1861-1980*. METUCHEN: SCARECROW PRESS, INC., 1982. 238 pp. \$16.50.

If Swinburne has not been well served either in the popular mind or all too often by literary critics, neither has anyone who has sought to do a responsible job of assessing the poet's rightful place in English literature. Apart from the efforts of C. K. Hyder and Cecil Y. Lang, such essential research tools as a definitive edition and a reliable, conveniently available bibliography have not yet appeared. Although such an edition is apparently still far away, the bibliography has an admirable forerunner in Kirk H. Beetz's *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Bibliography of Secondary Works, 1861-1980*.

The third volume in the "Scarecrow Author Bibliographies" that Beetz has produced, this work definitely fills a need in Swinburne studies. Essentially a chronological listing of secondary sources, with further subdivision by type (books, dissertations, periodical articles), the bibliography also lists which, if any, of Swinburne's works were published in each year covered. The text is a direct reproduction of what is apparently Beetz's final typed copy—a format perhaps "professional" as what appears in more expensively produced bibliographies but that avoids the errors in detail that all too often creep into a bibliography between the compiler's typescript and the printer's finished product. The spacious layout of the entries on the page allows for quick reference. One's ability to make rapid use of this work is aided as well by an author index, an especially useful subject index, and by Beetz's annotations, most of which are merely designed to clarify possibly misleading titles but some of which offer extensive comments on the content and value of the works cited. Beetz has helpfully included many non-English items.

Aside from the bibliographical listings themselves, the book's greatest value, especially for either undergraduate or graduate students, is Beetz's introduction, which delineates briefly but quite accurately the present state of Swinburne studies and identifies the essential secondary works one must master for any thorough study of Swinburne's achievement as poet, novelist, and literary critic.

Unfortunately, the introduction does not explain what principle Beetz used in deciding what to include in this selective bibliography. *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature's* selective bibliography on Swinburne, for example, has over twenty items not listed in Beetz's work. Three of these are worth considering here. One

is an important article by C. K. Hyder: " 'Laus Veneris' and the Tannhäuser Legend" (*PMLA*, 1930). Its omission is surely an oversight. The other two items, however, are cited not only in *NCBEL* but also in Hyder's essay on Swinburne in *The Victorian Poets: A Guide to Research* (2nd ed., 1968), one of the bibliographical aids Beetz followed when compiling his materials on Swinburne. The first of these is Henri Peyre's "Le Centenaire de Swinburne" (*RLC*, 1937), a copy of which Beetz may not have been able to acquire; but the second is Ruth Marie Faurot's "Swinburne's Poem 'Love' a Translation from Hugo" (*N&Q*, March 1954), which should be readily available. Assuming that these last two items were not also inadvertently omitted from Beetz's bibliography, one must wonder what principle of selection Beetz employed—the quality of the source, his ability to lay his hands on a copy of it, or some other principle?

Nevertheless, Beetz has produced what is on the whole a competent and necessary research tool. He has taken Swinburne bibliography, which he has accurately labeled "a mess," and given it a clear sense of order. In his introduction he cites those works that he thinks should be present in a "basic Swinburne library," among them Philip Henderson's biography, Cecil Y. Lang's edition of the letters, and C. K. Hyder's *Swinburne as Critic*. Clearly, Beetz's bibliography belongs on the same shelf.

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