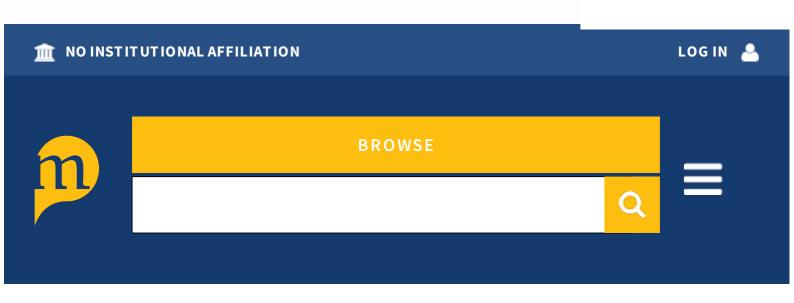
# Butler for Beginners.



# Butler for Beginners

Philip Armato

English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920

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**REVIEW** 

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# In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

310 expected to read pointed analysis of, say, THE TRUMPET MAJOR or A LAODICEAN. Of the latter book, Prof. Carpenter comments: "The book affords glimpses of what Hardy might have become if he had been denied his Wessex and his tragic outlook, his grotesque and mythic consciousness, but it is to be read as a curiosity and then laid aside without regret." Readers who know but few of Hardy's poems will appreciate Prof. Carpenter's discussion of such buried poetic treasure as "Logs on a Hearth," of which he says: "the symbolic tension between the past and the present—between this log burning on the hearth, 'sawn, sapless, darkening with soot,' and the days when he [Hardy] and his sister climbed its bending limbs for apples—constitutes the central meaning and cannot be abstracted from the metaphors which give it life," The book contains many similar examples of such close and sympathetic analysis of Hardy's less popular novels and poems. The only aspect of Hardy's work not equally well covered is his shorter fiction, for which Prof. Carpenter has less admiration. Perhaps his stories do "range in quality from that of, say, TWO ON A TOWER to that of THE V/OODLANDERS"; their range in variety and the achievement of individual stories is greater than suggested here. This complaint is a small one, however, in light of the fulfillment of the basic

aims of the study. Oddly enough, the lack of a thesis is not a handicap, perhaps because of Prof, Carpenter's
enlightening emphasis on the relevant motifs in Hardy's work which help us see Hardy's work as a totality,
and that the same sensibility and genius may be seen throughout his work. One significant motif may be
singled out: love and sacrifice, the odd mixture we see so clearly in Marty South, Tess, Henchard and Jude,
"those scapegoats of the world", whose love for some one found expression in self-giving of an
extraordinary kind and led to the ultimate sacrifice of life itself" Purdue University W. Eugene Davis 3. Butler
for Beginners. Lee E. Holt. SAMUEL BUTLER. NY: Twayne Publishers, 1964. ^3.50. Lee E. Holt's SAMUEL BUTLER
is a welcome contribution to Butler scholarship insofar as it contains a wealth of material covering Butler's
whole career from its beginning to its end. Unfortunately, however, the boo! has two rather fatal flaws. It is
not well organized and, for the most part, lacks depth. Professor Holt breaks up the material in his chapters
into individual sections designated by roman numerals and subtitles. All of this organizational paraphernalia
tends to fragment his discussion into parts which are difficult to relate to the whole picture that Professor
Holt is attempting to create. For instance, in Chapter 1, Section 4, he begins a discussion of the Butler-
Darwin controversy, In Section 5 of the same chapter, he interrupts the discussion of this topic and does not
return to it until Section 6, Furthermore, we find references to this controversy in many chapters of the book;
it would have been wiser to contain the whole controversy in one chapter instead of forcing the reader
continually to backtrack in order to tie the strings of the controversy together. Also, too much of the book is
mere summary on a very superficial level. His discussion of EREWHON in Chapter 2 is typical of this problem:
"When Higgs awakes, he hears the ghostly sound the wind makes blowing through the tenstatues at the
pass into Erewhon—the tencommandments of Christianity which by formalizing our lives, Butler suggests,
have kept us from coming nearer to ourselves. We must pass these and leave them behind; we ought not be
frightened by them since they are really only hollow bog eymen" (p. 38). And "the 'Musical Banks' at which the
Ere who nians worship are used to express Butler's criticism of ethical dualism and of religious hypocrisy" (p.
41). All of this is true enough, but the discussion goes on in this "summary manner" page after page. In
Chapter 4, he interrupts a discussion of THE WAY OF ALL FLESH in order to discuss LIFE AND HABIT: "Since so
many of

expected to read pointed analysis of, say, THE TRUMFET HAJOR or A LADDICSAN. Of the latter hook, Prof. Corpecter comments: "The book affords glimpses of what Hardy might have become if he had been deried his wassex and his tragic outlook, his gretosque and mythic consologyments, but it is ut be read as a correctly and then haid asido without regret." Readors who know but few of Harcy's poems will appreciate Prof. Consenter's discussion of such buried poetic treasure as "Logs on a Hearth," of which he says: "the symbolic tension between the post and the present—between this log buring on the hearth, 'sown, sapless, darkening with woot,' and the days when he [Hardy] and his sister plimbed its leading limbs for apples—constitutes the central meaning and connot be abstracted from the metaphers which give it life," The book contains many similar examples of such close and symbothetic analysis of Hardy's loss popular novels and poems.

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Furdue University

W. Eugene Davis

#### 3. Butler for Beginners.

Lee E. Hoit, SAMUEL SUTLER, MY. Twayne Publishers, 1964, 93,50.

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