LITERATURE AND VALUES

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by

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PREFACE

Following immediately after the XIth Congress in Paris, August 1985, the ICLA held a Colloquium at the University of Sussex, organised and hosted by Anthony Thorlby on behalf of the BCLA. The subject was "Literature and Values", and the aim was to provide a rather smaller, more intimate occasion for participants in the main event in France to come together on a residential campus in order to discuss an important topic of common concern.

Some sixty papers were read in a number of seminar groups devoted to different aspects of the question; moreover, there were four plenary lectures. As one might have expected, the grounds of evaluation were found to be very diverse, being in one case social, political, or national, in another abstract, metaphysical, or religious; they have varied from critic to critic, text to text, epoch to epoch. No 'conclusions' were reached, but the ramifications of the question of values were explored and better understood; and the opportunities for personal contact were appreciated and widely used. Thus there existed, for three highly enjoyable days, a close, serious-minded but friendly and relaxed international academic community sharing life-style and scholarly objectives alike.

Originally there had been no intention of publishing the Sussex papers. Quite a number of contributions were never meant for this purpose, others already destined for publication elsewhere. Yet there remained a sizeable body of work which particularly the outgoing ICLA President, György M. Vajda, strongly felt should be made available in print, and it is in

the main thanks to the enthusiasm and enterprise of *Neohelicon's* editors that the present volume was made possible. It cannot, under the circumstances, reflect the various seminar groups and their sequence of sessions, but gives fairly representative samples of the issues and aspects raised and the approaches and methods applied in the course of the Colloquium at large.

These things take time, and the course of publication never does run smooth. Also, many contributions had to be shortened in order to accommodate all the available material. For a time it even seemed indicated to split the volume into two, one half to appear in *Neohelicon*, the other in *New Comparison*. However, eventually the publication in this one volume, surely the best solution, was established as viable and gladly adopted. Everyone showed a praiseworthy spirit of understanding and cooperation and submitting this collection of essays to the public, we want to thank for their help not only the editors of *Neohelicon* and its publishers, but also all the contributors. Special thanks are due to the ICLA Publications Committee for generously contributing towards the typing costs.

HMK, AKT