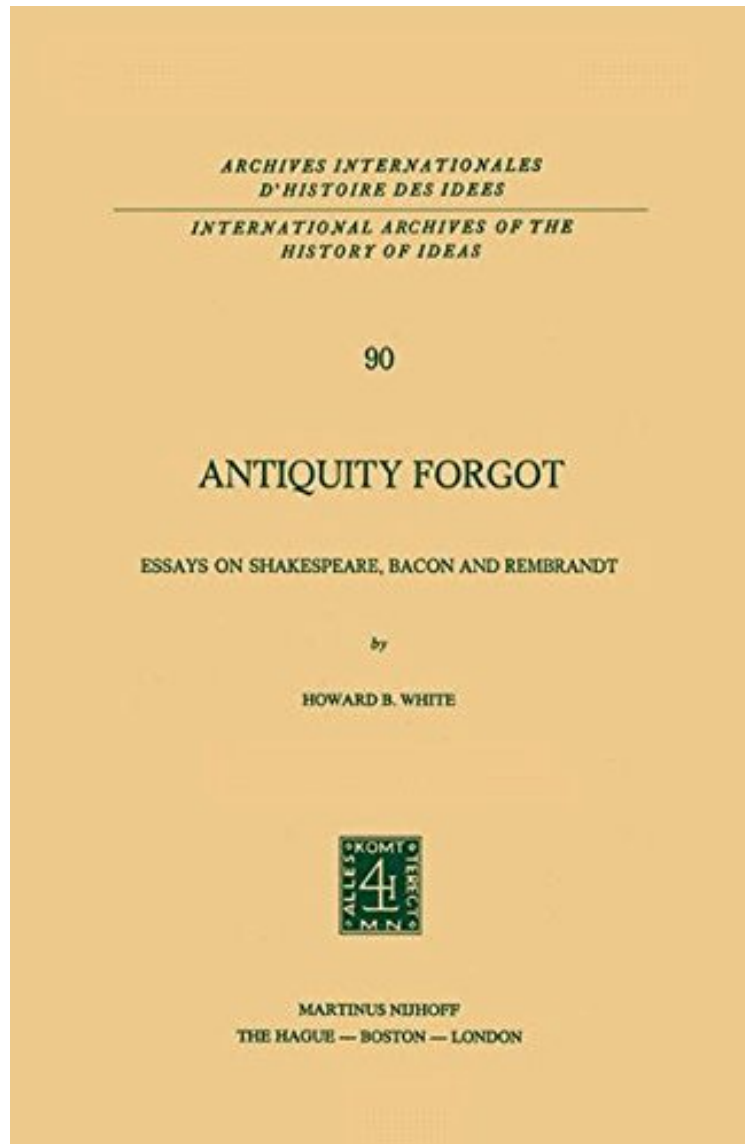


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Antiquity Forgot: Essays on Shakespeare, Bacon and Rembrandt (International Archives of the History of Ideas Archives internationales d'histoire des idées) (Volume 90)

Howard B. White

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Antiquity Forgot: Essays on Shakespeare, Bacon and Rembrandt* (International Archives of the History of Ideas Archives internationales d'histoire des idées) (Volume 90):

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Transcending contemporary departmentalism
By delv@worldnet.att.net
In this thoughtful work, the author (the former dean of the graduate faculty of the new school for social research a political philosophy professor) examines the work of each of these seemingly unconnected men and their attempts to understand and present the human condition. This work transcends specialization and is an important piece in the study of the moderns' break with the ancients. Dr. White was the first Ph.D. student of Leo Strauss in the USA. He is, as well, indebted to the thoughts of Kurt Riezler, with whom he also studied.

It was probably Rousseau who first thought of dreams as ennobling experiences. Anyone who has ever read *Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire* must be struck by the dreamlike quality of Rousseau's meditations. This dreamlike quality is still with us, and those who experience it find themselves ennobled by it. Witness Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream." Dreaming and inspiration raise the artist to the top rung in the ladder of human relations. That is probably the prevailing view among educated people of our time. Rousseau made that view respectable and predominant. Yet in another sense, the problem is much older. It is the problem of political philosophy and poetry, the problem of Socrates and Aristophanes, of Plato and Homer. Yet, while antiquity usually gives the crown to philosophy, since Rousseau, the alternative view tends to prevail. The distinction is not, however, a formal one. Sir Philip Sidney enlisted Plato on the side of poetry. The true distinction is between imagination and reason. If reason is to rule, as Aristotle points out, the most architectonic of the sciences, that is political science, should rule. It is political philosophy which must determine the nature of the arts which will help or which will hinder the good of the city or the polity. That does not mean that a mere professor should stand in judgment of Shakespeare, Bacon, and Rembrandt. It means that if he studies these three great artists, he is not over-stepping disciplinary limits.