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Criticism Editors

Figures of Literary Discourse, by Gérard Genette, translated by Alan Sheridan, Introduction by Marie-Rose Logan. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Pp. xix + 303. $20.00.

Figures of Literary Discourse is a selection of eleven essays published by Gérard Genette between 1961 and 1970 (the structuralist decade) and collected in his *Figures* (and not *Figures I*, as the Introduction to the English translation, the blurb and even the back of the title page call it!), *Figures II* and *Figures III*. Several of the essays—"Principles of Pure Criticism," for instance, "Frontiers of Narrative," "Proust Palimpsest"—are considered classics of literary structuralism; most of them had not, to my knowledge, been translated in English (one exception is "Frontières du récit," translated as "Boundaries of Narrative" by Ann Levonas and published in 1976 in *New Literary History*); and all of them are representative, substantial and thought-provoking. The essays are preceded by a good Introduction in which Marie-Rose Logan identifies their main thrust—"to combine a systematic approach to the study of literature with a questioning that exceeds the boundaries of a given system"—and suggests an interesting comparison between Genette's rethinking of poetics and Derrida's rethinking of philosophy. The translation by Alan Sheridan is more than adequate though it is marred by too many misprints (I have counted over 30) and though it is not always felicitous (I do not think, for example, that *gap*, in "Poetic Language, Poetics of Language," is an appropriate translation of *écart: deviation* or one of its synonyms would be better; and I think that, on p. 167, *it needed the device* is a poor rendition of *il a fallu la trouvaille*).

The essays are not arranged chronologically. Rather, as Logan points out, "the order of presentation adopted follows the traditional distinction between theory [the seven essays constituting Part I] and practice [the four essays constituting Part II]" even though "a rigid distinction between theoretical and practical criticisms does not apply to Genette's work." Perhaps it could be said that they go from the more general to the more specific. "Structuralism and Literary Criticism" describes the latter as a kind of *bricolage*, locates the structuralist method between pure formalism and traditional realism, and charts the domains in which an explicitly structuralist criticism might prove fruitful, irrelevant or illegitimate. "The Obverse of Signs" continues the examination of the structuralist domain and gesture by focusing on Barthes's semiological project and its attention to the phenomena and techniques of connotation; it shows how structuralist criticism both "deciphers and constitutes the intelligible" and how (Barthes's) semiological activity belongs not only to an epistemological order but also to a critico-ethical one. "Figures" defines the *figure* as the form of the gap or space "between the letter and the meaning, between what the poet has *written* and what he *thought*," between the signifier and the signified; such gaps or spaces and the systems they form constitute a privileged area of investigation for structuralist criticism. "Principles of Pure Criticism" makes use of Thibaudet's *Physiologie de la critique* to outline the three major areas that a

criticism concerned with essences (a structuralist one!) would study: that absence of the subject that we call "writer"; the structures of literary discourse; and the very notions of Book, text, writing. "Poetic Language, Poetics of Language" characterizes the fundamental thrust of literature as the attempt to reduce or close the gap constituting language itself—the gap between signifier and signified—and points to the necessity of studying systematically "the innumerable forms of linguistic imagination." "Rhetoric Restrained" traces the gradual restriction of the rhetorical field, bemoans the rise of metaphor as the trope of all tropes, and argues for the construction of a "new rhetoric," a semiotics of all discourses. "Frontiers of narrative" shows how narrative constitutes itself in terms of three major polarities (diegesis/mimesis; narration/description; story/discourse). After having thus discussed the nature of structuralist criticism and charted its domain and some of its sub-domains, *Figures of Literary Discourse* turns to more specific structuralist demonstrations. "'Stendhal'" argues that the essence of Stendhalian activity is "a constant and exemplary transgression of the limits, rules, and functions that apparently make up the literary game" (who is the author? what is a work?). "Flaubert's Silences" studies the moments in which Flaubert's narrative escapes meaning and concludes that literature itself is a "death" of language. "Proust Palimpsest" shows that the *Recherche* is constituted by the ceaseless merging and entanglement of figures and meanings, decipherable only "in their inextricable totality." Finally, "Proust and Indirect Language" finds that, for Proust like for Mallarmé (and for Genette), literature is a secondary, indirect language trying to make up for the "shortcomings" of our "primary" language.

Taken together, the eleven essays constitute an excellent introduction to (or reminder of) structuralist poetics, its major concerns and ambitions, its fundamental stance and methods, its privileged references. Structuralism in literature (and elsewhere!) is essentially interested in making sense of sense-making and attempts to build a coherent and systematic account of literary signification. It considers literature (or the literary text) as a language to be studied formally. It has faith in "objective" criteria, values structure as an explanatory category at the expense of substance and pays particular attention to what in a text reveals the text's own view of language, communication and meaning. It regards linguistics (rather than history, sociology, psychoanalysis, or philosophy) as the discipline to imitate and emulate. Like a good *défense et illustration* of structuralism, the essays also testify to its rigor (it consistently favors strict homologies and successfully resists ideological biases in the analysis of structure), its suppleness (if it is against the fetishism of the author, it is also against the fetishism of the work; it reminds us that, strictly speaking, there is no literary object but only a literary function; it makes ample room for the reader reading), and its many contributions (to poetic theory and narratology, to the study of connotation, to the view of literature as a self-signifying system and a rhetoric of silence, to the analysis of meaning as form). Lastly, the essays are exemplary of Genette's own manner and interests. They bring out his originality, his erudition, his easy precision, and his capacity to be scientific without scientism. They also put in relief his understanding of rhetoric as a system and as a code of literary connotations, his belief that writing is the very locus of the true critic's

thought, and his fascination for what in a text transgresses the laws of the literary system. In fact, the seeds of much of Genette's subsequent work can be found in this collection: *Narrative Discourse* (in "Frontiers of Narrative" and the two pieces on Proust); *Mimologiques* (in "Poetic Language, Poetics of Language"); *Introduction à l'architexte* (in the various discussions of the nature and structure of literary discourse); and the recent *Palimpsestes* (in the repeated considerations of text as palimpsest). *Figures of Literary Discourse* is a superb structuralist performance.

University of Pennsylvania Gerald Prince

The Narrative Àct: Point of View in Prose Fiction by Susan Sniader Lanser. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. Pp. x + 308. $21.00.

Susan Lanser undertakes an ambitious twofold project in this book. She seeks, first, to develop a descriptive poetics of point of view and, second, to demonstrate how her descriptive schema can lead one to firm conclusions about the connection between narrative technique and ideology. Lanser has more success with the first part of her project than with the second, but that success is significant enough to make *The Narrative Act* a useful contribution to narrative theory.

Lanser devotes her first two chapters to an assessment of previous point of view studies and to an exposition of her own theoretical commitments. She argues that, in spite of their notable successes, previous students of point of view have generally conceived of the concept too narrowly (leaving out, for example, the importance of a narrator's sex) and have divorced their analyses from considerations of ideology. To move beyond these perceived shortcomings Lanser adopts two fundamental principles: (1) fictional narratives should be analyzed as speech acts; and (2) the aesthetic structures of a text reflect its ideological content.

In the next two chapters, Lanser develops the consequences of these principles for her descriptive poetics. She begins with a sensible, though overly long, discussion of the chains of authority, both diegetic and mimetic, existing among the various possible voices of a text. The diegetic chain moves from the authorial or "extrafictional" voice as most authoritative, through the voices of the public narrator and the private narrator (the first addresses the reader, the second another character), down to the voice of the focalizer as the least authoritative. The mimetic chain moves in the reverse order. In turning to the poetics proper, Lanser follows her speech act model and develops a broad conception of point of view, one based on three key relationships between the narrator and the narrative act. *Status* refers to "the authority, competence, and credibility" (p. 86) a narrator is granted. *Contact* refers to the relationship the narrator establishes with the audience. *Stance* refers to the relationship the narrator adopts toward the narrative itself. Each of these three relationships, Lanser explains, is itself the product of several other elements of narrative technique.

Status is determined by (1) the narrator's diegetic authority, which in turn

is determined by his or her social identity (sex, race, class, etc.), and by (2) the narrator's mimetic authority, which in turn is determined by the honesty, reliability, and competence of the narration. Contact is determined by (1) the mode (or directness) of the communication between narrator and audience ("I-you" at one extreme; no first or second person pronouns at the other), by (2) the attitude of the narrator, including such variables as self-confidence, self-consciousness, deference, and formality, and by (3) the identity of the narratee. Stance is determined by a combination of four different kinds of stance: phraseological, spatial-temporal, psychological, and ideological. In her discussion of each variable, Lanser tries to locate a degree-zero or unmarked case along a spectrum of possibilities; she also stresses that each text establishes its own rules and that a narrator's profile can alter during the course of his or her narration.

In Chapter 5, Lanser explains how one can move from the description of technique to the discovery of ideology. The surface structure speech acts will reveal the narrator's status, contact, and stance, and these elements will, in turn, reveal the narrator's values and norms for social behavior, especially communication. Comparing these beliefs with the dominant beliefs of the "culture text" will complete the portrait of the narrator. At this point, one can make the final connection between technique and ideology by examining how the point of view reflects the text's ideological content. In Chapter 6, Lanser illustrates this process of discovery with analyses of Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" and Hemingway's "The Killers." She concludes with some suggestions for other uses of her model (e.g., a history of zero-degree conventions), and she adds an appendix suggesting that speech act theory might properly treat literary speech acts as "hypotheticals," a class that would be parallel to rather than a deviation from other classes of speech acts (representatives, directives, etc.).

Lanser's book is impressive for the knowledge of previous work on point of view it demonstrates; more impressive still is the sound critical intelligence that enables her to unite the findings of such diverse critics as Gérard Genette, Boris Uspensky, Mary Louise Pratt, Fernando Ferrara, Terry Eagleton, and Wayne Booth into her own coherent vision of point of view. The chief virtue of that vision is that it combines depth and flexibility. Lanser succeeds in offering a specific, detailed schema for developing a portrait of a narrator while also showing that the system cannot be applied mechanically. Furthermore, Lanser emphasizes the important point that absences from a text (e.g., Caddy's voice from *The Sound and the Fury*) can be as significant as presences.

Nevertheless, *The Narrative Act* suffers from some rhetorical and analytical deficiencies. Much of the first four chapters, approximately two-thirds of the whole, is exposition rather than argument; to the extent Lanser does provide demonstration for her points, she employs brief illustrations from texts, or more frequently, citations from the work of other critics. This mode of procedure has three undesirable consequences: (1) it makes the book seem more derivative than it is; (2) it makes certain sections, notably the chapter on voice, seem labored or too long; and (3) it leaves almost every conclusion vulnerable to those who have mustered arguments against Pratt or Eagleton or Fowler or whoever her source happens to be. Furthermore,

Lanser's method of presentation puts a heavy burden of demonstration on her analyses of Chopin and Hemingway, and that burden proves too much for them to bear.

Lanser's readings do show the descriptive poetics to good advantage—among other fine insights she offers a perceptive analysis of the narrator as an "invisible eyewitness" in "The Killers"—but her conclusions about the connection between ideology and technique are generally unconvincing. Perhaps because "The Killers" is a more difficult case, the problems are especially evident in that analysis. After her careful description of the narrator, Lanser moves to ideology by giving the story a thematic reading—the events "signal a loss of possibility, in this American small town, for a certain kind of proof or assertion of manhood" (p. 274)—and then interpreting the point of view in light of the theme—"as the characters are unable or unwilling to act, to show feelings, to respond, so too the narrator refuses to accept the full range of linguistic possibilities" (p. 274), refuses, in short, to act in his sphere. This conclusion, I believe, is far too easy. Lanser's supple system for describing point of view gets transformed into a crude instrument for detecting ideology. The distinction between means and end is all but lost as technique simply mirrors or reiterates ideological end, and Lanser forgets that Hemingway stories with quite different ideological content, e.g., "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," employ remarkably similar techniques. If space permitted, I would try to show that Lanser's belief that "the novel's basic illocutionary activity is ideological instruction" (p. 293) leads her to misread "The Killers" and misrepresent the effect of Hemingway's technique (the horror of Ole Andreson's situation is what is central), but far more important is what her faulty analysis suggests about her project. It indicates that one of her basic principles—aesthetic structures have a homologous relation to ideological content—needs to be seriously rethought and even perhaps rejected.

Although Lanser's book does not succeed at the ambitious task of connecting technique with ideology, her poetics of point of view will serve as a valuable guide for others who want to pursue that connection—and as a helpful system for those whose main concern is still technique itself.

Ohio State University James Phelan

Five Frames for the Decameron: Communication and Social Systems in the Cornice by Joy Hambeuchen Potter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. ix + 230. $20.00.

Critical pronouncements of literary scholars could not be much more varied than those which have been generated, for at least the last hundred years, by radically dissimilar readings of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. It is the one work by the man from Certaldo which is most beloved by the general reader and scholar alike, and yet is often shunned by scholars who cannot find a cubby-hole in which to place it. The work defies confinement. The sharp contrast between its modest claims and its highly literary structure, between

the gruesome description of the plague and that of the idyllic world of the storytellers seems to destabilize the work's equilibrium. The discomfort of scholars who are hard-pressed to explain the function and meaning of the *Decameron* clashes violently with the *nonchalance* of the "author" who claims that the book is not for scholars and that, while it may be instructive in some small ways, it is not purposefully didactic.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* has been seen by its readers to be evolutionary, medieval, transitional, modern and even revolutionary. Now, by adding to the traditional arsenal of literary critics the newest weapons acquired through the communicational disciplines (semiotics, sociology, and cultural anthropology), Joy Hambeuchen Potter leads the hunt for meaning in the *Decameron* in a promising new direction.

Armed with Erving Goffman's "frame analysis" techniques, Victor Turner's notion of liminal phenomena, Mary Douglas's "symbolistics," and a semiotic compass, Potter begins her search by examining the idea of framing in the *Decameron* in terms of ritual. The discovery, for which she gives a cautious argument which is burdened at times by an excess of "could"s and "might"s, is that the *Decameron* thrives on its ambiguity and its self-subverting nature. It is an intermediary of sorts (as the book's subtitle suggests) between the liminal world of the frame tale protagonists and that of the reader. In it "telling" and "reading" become rites of passage whereby the rules of ritual and the "grammar" of societal values are transmitted to teller and reader alike. The very literariness of the *Decameron*, paradoxically, serves to point to the prime importance of its social function as a training manual and mirror of institutional crisis. Boccaccio's style is itself a metastatement on his seriousness of purpose, and the text is witness to his civic-mindedness and intolerance of institutions (especially the church) which are failing to fulfill their proper social function. One comes away, in the end, with a vision of a work which reflects not only the crisis of a society in transition (which others have conjured up before), but also its author's acute awareness of the dimensions of that crisis.

Potter argues that "Boccaccio carefully sets up his work in five major overt frames, but he weakens his own structure by stepping in and out from one to the other. . ." (p. 122). She, in effect, decontructs the false critical dualism which surrounds the text ("Boccaccio the Escapist" vs "Boccaccio the realist") by showing how Boccaccio's subversion of his own elaborate frame systems obscures the boundaries between fiction and reality and between the fictional tellers and the "real" reader. The only potential flaw in the argument concerns the central issue of the ambiguity of the *Decameron*. Potter is well aware of the importance of *lying* in the text and even quotes Umberto Eco on the intimate bond between semiosis and lying, yet some of the *Decameron*'s enunciations, especially on the "nature of women," are accepted at face value in a surprisingly uncritical manner.

This study of Boccaccio's *Decameron* is refreshing, exciting and important. Those readers who find the style of current criticism to be less than limpid will find here a thoroughly readable book which, in spite of its readability, makes a significant contribution to Italian studies in general and to Boccaccio studies in particular.

Wayne State University Andrea di Tommaso

Alexander Pope and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire by Howard Weinbrot, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. vii + 388. $35.00.

Howard Weinbrot has written a learned book on an interesting aspect of the Popeian poetic, and his announced intention is to correct two "misleading assumptions regarding Pope . . . . The first is that his career is 'progressively an *Imitatio Horatii*,' and the second is that 'Horatianism and Augustanism are definitive of the age' " (p. 3). At very substantial length these propositions are revealed as impostures, requiring the necessary corrective that the "direction of Pope's career as a formal verse satirist is from an essentially Horatian ethic epistle like *Burlington* (1731), to mingled satire with a variety of Horatian, Juvenalian, and Persian emphases, to the overwhelmingly Juvenalian-Persian elevation and gloom of the *Epilogue to the Satires* (1738)" (p. 331).

Much of the first half of the book is given over to historical inquiry into classical and modern (English and French) satire, and particular attention is paid to Juvenalian conventions in the earlier sixteenth and later seventeenth centuries, to such topics as the sublime and the Juvenalian correspondence, and to the political inadequacy of Horatianism for opposition writers in England after 1688. Weinbrot's political assessment of the relative utility of Horace and Juvenal to Pope leads him also into a lengthy discussion of "the classical satirists and their relationships with their own rulers" (p. 44) in the course of which he argues that "Lucilius anticipated and shared the political and satiric severity of Persius and Juvenal," whereas Horace, "more accepting of his age . . . had the good fortune to live when a poet, prime minister, and prince were on amiable terms" (pp. 50–51). The entire commentary lucidly establishes Pope's perception of his own political situation and the urgencies that rendered Juvenal a more valuable (and necessary) satiric model as Pope's own dubieties about Walpole and the age deepened in his later years.

In his chapter on "Roman Modes of Proceeding," Weinbrot notes the "variety of related satiric conventions" ("disguise, dialogue, the nature of the adversary, and irony") that Roman satire made available to Pope (p. 65). The author moves easily and well between classical and modern modes, stating that "one of Boileau's essential satiric techniques . . . is the mingling of the varied conventions of his Latin predecessors while exercising his own original genius" (p. 96). Much the same sort of insight into Pope's later satires is offered in the remark that Pope's "The Fourth Satire of Dr. *John Donne* . . . Versifyed" begins "with a Horatian framework already modified by the Persian and Juvenalian urgings of the Renaissance," while adding "Pope's own level of attack upon the specific aberrations of Sir Robert's court" (p. 307).

All of this is very much to the good, necessary and useful. My own dubiety about the work arises when Weinbrot turns to consider at length the *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* and the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*. The positioning of these works within the study (pp. 201–75) and the long discussion given over to them clearly suggest their importance to him. Yet I find these pages somewhat disappointing because of the relentless focus upon the single dimension of political experience that dominates the inquiry. Pope's use of language as a self-reflexive instrument, questions of

theodicy, or the relation of these satires to themes and issues that permeate Pope's other and earlier poetry—all of this is almost entirely absent, and we are given over and again the view that Pope's "Juvenalian world," even in 1733, "is in decline, rotten at its political core, and no longer reliable at its highest levels—monarch, minister, church, law, and trade are corrupt" (p. 238).

Much has been made in other quarters of the *darkening* of the Popeian perspective as he moved into the middle years of the century's fourth decade. Weinbrot takes his own stand within the conviction that such works as the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* are "the penalty [Pope must pay] both for his own eminence and for living after Gay's death in 1732, for that Hanoverian world is characterized by, one may say, the slimy Bufo not the diminished Atticus" (p. 257). Undoubtedly, but I am a little uneasy about a thesis so often reiterated and made the entire and single basis for the movement from Horatian to Juvenalian modes. Perhaps too often Pope is established as a figure single-mindedly and exclusively in the service of a noble cause, as though the poet is without doubt about himself or his vocation, and the text without any evidence of a subtle and self-searching individuality, without bearing on the poet in the context of his own vanity or weakness. Thus, of the *Arbuthnot*: "Once we reach Sporus, Pope is seen as a member of the characteristically embattled and shrinking minority, a citizen of a nation corrupt at its highest levels and hence further corrupted by subservient imitators" (p. 261). It is therefore that the "finally un-Horatian *Arbuthnot* may be seen more clearly when it is set against the more Horatian *Epistle to Bathurst* (p. 269). Yet the un-Horatian *Arbuthnot* ends with a blessing; the more Horatian *Bathurst* ends with a curse and a death. Is it really effective to argue that in the latter the devil can be treated with "amused contempt" (p. 269), and does Weinbrot really mean to suggest radical distinctions in Pope's beliefs and convictions in works composed so closely together? And what is gained or proven by arguing that the "tenuous but finally positive world of *Arbuthnot* ends with the word 'Heav'n'; the declining Juvenalian world of the second satire of Donne versified ends with the word 'Law'" (p. 302)? The Twickenham editor reminds us that "*The Second Satire* was 'translated' for the first Earl of Oxford—perhaps in 1713 . . . . When Pope revised the poem in 1733, he retained only some 30 of the 120 and odd lines" (*TE*, IV:xlii). So far so good, but the closing couplet of the far earlier version is similar to that of the 1733 version and concludes with "Law." Declining world in 1713?

I find myself uneasy with the range of the criticism and, perhaps even more importantly, with the claims implicit (and explicit) within it. Is there truly anything remarkable in being told about the darkening mood of Pope's later years? It is something he shares with Swift, and the despair (if that word does not somewhat overstate the case) of both men is referable to the familiar "gloom of the Tory satirists," the title of an essay Bredvold wrote in 1949 which cites Joseph Warton on Pope's two *Dialogues* of 1738: "The satire of these pieces is of the strongest kind; sometimes, direct and declamatory, at others, ironical and oblique." Admittedly Weinbrot does much more than recognize the increasing inadequacy of the Horatian mode (invoked sometimes in Pope's later poetry as a "lost norm" and at other times as an "inadequate norm"). He quite convinces me that "Pope used Horace,

Persius, and Juvenal in the proportion his occasion demanded" (p. 364). But I might add that we have been long aware that Pope is one of the most assimilative and synthetic poets in the language, and I remain somewhat in doubt about my response to a work that consistently overproves its one thesis: "The notion of Pope as an eighteenth-century Augustan Horace wants reconsideration if we are to reclaim Pope's genuine achievements in satire" (p. 44).

By all means let us do so, but surely Pope's achievements are somewhat more complex than the reconsideration of Pope as Augustan Horace can provide. But even granting Weinbrot everything his thesis requires, there are moments when he sends me rummaging back through his own and Pope's text to discover precisely what point his commentary is making. "The courteous epistle *To a Lady* is Pope's only Horatian poem to follow *Arbuthnot* and its Pyrrhic victory. Thereafter, he would alternate or blend Horace with the more severe tragic masks of Persius and Juvenal . . ." (p. 275). Indeed, but a few pages earlier we heard of the "mingled but finally un-Horatian *Arbuthnot*," and as late as 1737/38 in the *First Epistle of the First Book*, "Horatianism here ekes out its slender victory because Bolingbroke is Pope's present model of good" (p. 298). If, however, Weinbrot gives us excellent reason to reconsider the relation in Pope's later years between Horatian and Juvenalian contexts, he nevertheless does not convince me, on the basis of his own limited engagement, that "Pope's comprehensive achievement [is] as impressive in its way as *Paradise Lost* is in its" (p. 364). No one, I think, can make this claim for Pope without demonstrating the integrity of his "composite art" (p. 364) as it extends throughout the canon. If, then, I admire the careful and searching historical intelligence on display in these pages, I also find myself wanting a criticism both more daring and more demanding, more multi-dimensional and thereby more appropriate to the totality of Pope's vision.

Duke University Wallace Jackson

The Holy and the Daemonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake by R. D. Stock. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982. Pp. ix + 395. $27.50.

A religious purpose so suffuses much of literature that few poets would admit to being entirely skeptical and secular, to having experienced no sense of awe at the universe or at the very fact of being. Who would admit not even aspiring to nobility of mind? For a poet to be worthy of the name with the glories attendant on it, he ought in good faith to marvel at the works of the Maker, or at the ecstatic inflations of the released spirit. Somewhere wonder enters; without it, who writes—a stone? a clod? Allusions to the Bible and to subsidiary occult traditions have left little need to prove that much of the work of Herbert, Donne, Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, and others have religious undertones or echoes, and rarely does someone argue otherwise. Indeed, religion and literature have been closely allied as parallel sources of spiritual wisdom and personal fulfillment since the Greeks,

and in earliest tribal times one was a function of the other. Trembling, shuddering, mystery, awe—these were experiences variously provoked and variously described, often beyond the gropings of language to convey, whether the experience arose once in a lifetime or in a regular sequence of worship. The venerable Rudolf Otto knew that the Numinous was everywhere, arousing here a sense of humility and terror, there a sense of power and enthusiasm, always a recognition of forces wholly Other beyond the quotidien. Otto recorded those glimpses in the workings of the magician, of the oriental mediator, as well as of the Christian; in his footsteps Mircea Eliade located the precincts of the sacred in the dancing grounds of the shaman, as well as in the alchemist's vial. Who is to say which holiness is the holiest, which universe is the most sacralized, which hill the most radiant with mana? The Holy is not a prescribed rite or an ethical program but an invisible dimension of human experience made visible in shrines, artifacts, works of literature, and other traces of numinous visitations.

The term "Daemonism" is not as inclusive, being a manifestation of the Holy in guardian spirits or in personal energy, but it, too, in its original meaning involves no judgment. Information about pre-Christian Greek and Celtic Daemons is readily available in encyclopedias of religion, in E. R. Dodds's many works, and in literary studies of Daemonism such as those by Charles I. Patterson. The ethicizing of the Daemon comes with the banishment of the pagan gods who are metamorphozed into demons, forced henceforward to exercise their passions subversively.

As used in the book under review, however, both these terms contract into a narrow sphere. Otto's 1923 *Idea of the Holy* is the touchstone (with no mention of Eliade, Gerard Van Der Leeuw, or later commentators) but Otto's inclusion of a broad range of comparative religious experience is here ignored; here the holy resides alone in a precarious balance of reason and faith most effectively achieved in the mid-seventeenth century by Thomas Browne and John Dryden. In choosing to find Job "the locus classicus of the experience of the Holy" (p. 17) Stock emphasizes the abasement of the worshipper, not his enthusiastic glory, and this emphasis determines the choice of works. "Daemonism" is used also in its narrow Judeo-Christian not its wider Greek or Celtic sense. The "mysterious, energetic, non-rational, nonmoral" quality of Daemons is rightly asserted on page 19, but thereafter the word, like a hiss on the burning lake, applies to devilishness ("daemonic impulsions of man" [p. 246], "truly daemonic pursuit of Clarissa" [p. 274], "daemonic formula" [p. 343], "daemonic horror" [p. 365] and to real life witches, whom the author hints may be necessary to a belief in the Holy and in the reality of evil according to the principle "no spirit, no god" (pp. 96–7). Major contributions to the study of the daemonic such as Frances Yates's, D. P. Walker's, and Keith Thomas's need to be dealt with thoroughly, not footnoted to corroborate minor points (though Yates is not mentioned anywhere). On the subject of eighteenth century demons Coleman O. Parsons's *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction*, which covers the whole field, not just Scott, would be useful.

Within the confines of the terms as used, the book moves chronologically through a series of writers, often curiously grouped, assessing first their sense of the Holy, then their concern with the Daemonic. John Donne and

Job exhibit the correct sense of the Holy in their attacks on human pride. Thomas Browne, Dryden, and Pascal walk the line between extremes that are explained like this: "The defenders of religion can be classed as follows. There were the Deists, who attempted to ground religion on reason. At best a shivery compromise with rationalism, Deism failed to flourish and was moribund by the middle of the eighteenth century. Opposing the Deists were Fideists, for whom, despairing altogether of reason, supernatural revelation and dogma were the foundations of faith. But Fideism is a radical position as close to skepticism as Deism to rationalism" (p. 24). This explanation is typical of the level of theological discernment in the book. Browne preserves his balance by paradox; Dryden by keeping to "the middle way" of "Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism" (p. 42) because "the ideas of salvation and redemption—concepts quite incomprehensible and even idiotic to the non-religious or rationalist sensibility—are fundamental to any numinous or transcendental faith" (p. 40); and Pascal by "mimic[king] the unspeakable hopelessness of the infidel" (p. 46). Sometimes an author's sense of the Holy is found to be meagre, as in the cases of Pope (p. 130) and Swift (pp. 147, 150), but they nevertheless show a fugitive interest in images of the daemonic, as in Eloisa's "daemonic dream," or Swift's *Tale of the Tub*. One wonders why they were included under the Holy at all. Watts, Akenside, Thomson, and Young, are rushed together because they were "forging an aesthetic of the numinous" (p. 162). Evidence is found for their interest in the eery, the dark, the gloomy, and the horrible. In a typically vague analysis, Young is praised for his resemblance to Pascal: "And I will make two further points. However inferior Young is as a poet to Pope, he is truer to my sense of Pascal: the disjointed observations, the violent antitheses . . . seem closer to the *Pensées* than Pope's couplets. I also think that the Pascalian view runs more consistently through Young's gargantuan work than through Pope's poem" (p. 194). The chapters on "Spiritual Horror in the Novel: Richardson, Radcliffe, Beckford, Lewis" and on "Religious Love and Fear in Late Century Poetry: Smart, Wesley, Cowper, Blake" continue the search for the Numinous as a shudder of supernatural horror, and the daemonic as a haunted world of madness. Much plot summary, tenuous evidence of daemonism, and impressionistic ("I feel" "he must have thought") interpretations clog the progress. The chapter on the Gothic concludes, "Between titillation and spiritual exercise, after all, there is but a wavering line" (p. 313). The chapter on the "mad" religious poets ends by dismissing Blake in the words of Paul Elmer More writing in 1911 (p. 372).

The best sections of the book are the chapter on "The Debate over Witchcraft and Miracles in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," rich in historical and polemical lore, especially on Casaubon, Glanvil, and Conyers Middleton, a brief section on Defoe's recognition of supernatural guidance in *Robinson Crusoe*, and a fine chapter on Johnson and Hume, with Hume's arguments presented and rebutted clearly, with a certain admiration of Hume shining through the rebuke of Hume's "Puerile diatribes" and "boisterous loathing."

Unfortunately, there are demons in the book that are not part of the daemonic content; these demons are the Others, those critics, often anonymous,

with whom the author disagrees. The book bristles with graceless attacks on individual critics, such as Theodore Besterman (p. 58), F. R. Leavis (p. 153), A. O. Lovejoy (p. 245, note), Northrop Frye (p. 347), and on critics generally, growled out with the revulsion of Gogo's insult "Crritic!" in *Waiting for Godot*. For example, "a neo-sophist or positivist may pooh-pooh the intuitions as epistemologically inane, but others will respond that nothing is more irrational than to dismiss such immediate and vivid experiences as empty . . ." (p. 25); or, "I should like again to argue, in passing, that the impact of that new theory on the seventeenth century mind has been magnified out of proper proportion by the typical historian of ideas, who trots it out wearisomely, unimaginatively, to explain the intellectual perturbations of the last three centuries" (p. 31); "less intrepid are some of the modern scholars and *soi-disant* champions of Voltaire, who feel that they too must give Pascal a kick to evince, I suppose, their fealty to the master" (p. 57). Neo-sophists, typical historians of ideas, *soi-disant* champions of Voltaire, are lined up against the wall with Whigs and Marxists: "I wish to decry a tendency in whig scholars to label Browne, Dryden, and Pascal Fideists, and hence to dismiss them more easily as reactionaries trying to slink away from the skeptical implications of the new philosophy" (p. 59). In his discussion of *Eloise to Abelard* the very word "synthesized" provokes this outburst: "This interpretation is as gratifying to the Marxian or Hegelian critic as the other is to the sentimentalist" (p. 136). This brief sneer is transformed on the last page of the book into the following: "Earlier in this study I stressed the difference between the Christian, and the Hegelian or Marxian, understanding of *Eloisa to Abelard*. This is the same difference, on a cosmic scale" (p. 385).

Rarely specified after 1950, critics take it on the chin: *The Dunciad*'s "commentators have too often emulated the dull critic in the poem itself" (p. 139); "Swift's personality strikes some people as too prickly, and his attitude toward his church, they say, is that of a bureaucrat or politician instead of a priest. Swift was wholly cynical, they may go on to allege, but like a good Pyrrhonist he supported Christianity as an anodyne for the *mobile vulgus*. But this is the telepathic school of criticism, which I mistrust" (pp. 146–7). Who are these "they"? We must be telepathists to know, for the footnote gives us only critics who argue "*for* the compatibility of Swift's writings and orthodox Christianity" (p. 147, note 22). On the same theme: "Swift has told us persistently that he is satirizing abuses of religious thought, not the thought itself; but critics, as persistently, disregard him: the dull ones because the satire is too intricate for them, the sophisticated ones because they are always trying to 'see through' the satire to some underlying and congenial nihilism" (p. 156). Proponents of modern poets (p. 164), of James Joyce (p. 190), of Blake (p. 346), "most modern scholars" (p. 216), "academics" (p. 225), "innocent Johnsonians" (p. 231), skeptics and cynics (p. 275) "a chorus of modern exegetes" (p. 346), and "witless" critics (p. 376), culminate in a furious rampage of "robotic naturalists" (p. 378), whigs and spiritists (p. 379), behaviorists, environmentalists, egalitarians, Marxists (p. 380), and Gnostics (p. 382), all routed like Satan's fallen army, even as the author promises that he himself will "try to repel the allure of egregious ax-grinding" (p. 203). The jeremiad in "Epilogue: The Next Stage" is too long and

jumbled to quote, the enemies surrounding the writer too busy, for "seldom has the smorgasbord of placebos been more depressingly copious" (p. 380). Stock's bias is never far from the surface, as on pp. 66, 201, 256–7, but here the apologetics, with calls for help from C. S. Lewis, who is too dignified to answer, becomes hysterical.

Stock not only disdains his predecessors on the sacred ground before him but even the initiates he is hoping to instruct. He is not writing for the critic of the last twenty years, whose name he would not mention and whose work he has not read, nor for "the tyro for whom Thomas Browne is an unknown personage and *Deist* an esoteric term" (p. 7); (we see how much the tyro learns about the Deist from the quotation from page 24 noted above). He mystifies the poor "tyro" by a combination of simplistic religious definitions and outlandish vocabulary such as the phrase "banaustic orrery" (p. 199), resulting in a style often tediously strained.

Four final suggestions: since the author states that Gnosticism is the worship of the snake (p. 157), I suggest he read Hans Jonas; since he can think of no religious poetry since T. S. Eliot (p. 200), I suggest he look at Geoffrey Hill's work; since he claims that Ernest Campbell Mossner writing in 1943 is "Hume's most highly respected modern critic" (p. 202), I suggest he consult some of the more recent Hume scholarship, such as that of Terence Penelhum, James Noxon, and Anthony Flew; and since he calls Blake's "two later prophetic works, *Milton* and *Jerusalem* . . . but supplementary" (p. 370) I suggest he read them again, and the excellent recent criticism of Blake. The wonder of the Holy, and the energy of the Daemonic, vanish as the author defends a small beleagured terrain which he admits he floundered (p. 10) in finding.

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D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction by Graham Holderness. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982. Pp. 248. $32.00.

Graham Holderness's claim that "*all* literary productions . . . can be understood completely only by relating them to a historical and ideological context" serves as the basis of his study of D. H. Lawrence. Holderness, however, seems uninterested in understanding Lawrence's work completely, and thus his book only deals with those works of Lawrence "which directly address his native society." Even here there are gaps: *The Lost Girl* is barely mentioned, and *Aaron's Rod* is ignored altogether. Holderness's Marxist reading of Lawrence focuses on *The White Peacock, The Trespasser, Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Brief attention is also given to "Odour of Chrysanthemums," "The Fox," and "Study of Thomas Hardy," and a coda-like chapter of eight pages is devoted to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Holderness is at his best when delineating the influence of the cultural attitudes of Aestheticism on Lawrence (the chapter on *The Trespasser* is especially impressive in this context) and when describing the Midlands mining

society of the 1880s and 1890s. His chapter "History and Culture" shows that the historical Eastwood of Lawrence's early youth differs significantly from the writer's own descriptions in his novels and essays, and Holderness also definitively clarifies the differences between the "butty system" and the "little butty system" in which Lawrence's father was involved. Holderness is least impressive when he restricts the possibilities of interpretation or allows his language to become excessively dogmatic. In his analysis of Morel's cutting of William's hair in *Sons and Lovers*, he attacks Eliseo Vivas for failing to recognize the social dimension of the conflict between husband and wife, but his insistence that "all the Morel quarrels are really social conflicts" rules out the multiple levels of psychological conflict expressed in this novel. Holderness also argues that Lawrence's practical programs of reform "are contradictory because they arise out of a contradictory analysis of human life in society," but he refuses even to consider a defense which suggests that Lawrence's use of key terms—including "mechanical"—is largely metaphorical rather than rooted in the practical.

Crucial to his attitude towards Lawrence's fiction is Holderness's use of "realism," which is closely related to Georg Lukacs's use of the term. For Holderness, "Lawrence's realism is always tragic," and tragedy is the strength of his art. In his introduction, however, Holderness indicates that he is not suggesting that "realism can claim a monopoly over the artistic representation of reality, or that other artistic techniques, such as symbolism and myth, are merely illusory fantasies," but by the time he comes to discuss Lawrence's transcendence of realism in *The Rainbow*, he can only mourn the loss of Lawrence's art. For Holderness, transcendence of realism is merely the triumph of Lawrence's impulse to evade social tragedy, at the expense of the conjunction of "individual life" and "actual history" found in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" and the complexities and contradictions of social existence found in *Sons and Lovers*. As such, he can only view Lawrence's experiments in *The Rainbow* and in many of his later works as "ultimately sterile and directionless."

This reviewer can appreciate Holderness's analysis of Lawrence's early work in a meaningful historical context, but in no way can he agree with the author's evaluation of *The Rainbow* and the "mythic" works of Lawrence's middle and late periods.

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The Play of Faulkner's Language by John T. Matthews. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982. Pp. 278. $19.50.

John T. Matthews' *The Play of Faulkner's Language* is a closely reasoned, exciting, and often illuminating book, but also a flawed one. Matthews' aim is to read Faulkner's fiction through the enabling lens of Jacques Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence. This is an approach that has recently begun to be used to good effect by a number of Faulkner critics, most notably by Stephen Ross in his deconstructions of the idea of voice in *As I Lay*

Dying and *Absalom, Absalom!* (*PMLA* 94 [1979]: 300–310; *Essays in Literature* 8 [1981]: 135–49), and by Gail Morrison in her study of the motif of absence in the major novels (*Novel* 14 [1981]: 232–50). No previous Derridean criticism of Faulkner, though, approaches Matthews' in either scope or ambition, for he is attempting nothing less than a full-scale redefinition of Faulkner's significance as an artist. Though Matthews discusses only *The Sound and the Fury, Absalom, Absalom!, The Hamlet,* and *Go Down, Moses* in depth, his comments are clearly intended to apply to the canon as a whole and to create a view of Faulkner as entirely—even relentlessly—committed to post-structuralist beliefs and fictional practices. This Faulkner believes that "there may be no actuality or truth behind the texts' words that can be fully presented"; he "overthrows traditional ideas about the expressive prerogatives of speech," believing instead that "language embodies consciousness, it does not reveal it"; and he creates fictions whose entire meaning and value reside in the "spirit of lively play" with which they greet the loss of authoritative truth, the center, the signified realm, the place of origin, innocence."

For readers of Faulkner raised on Brooks, Millgate, and Vickery, and accustomed to viewing him as a traditional moralist with modernist leanings, these comments will seem strange indeed. That they will not (or should not) seem merely preposterous is a measure both of the range and variety of Faulkner's fiction and of Matthews' subtlety and acuity as a critic. In the case of two at least of the four novels he considers, Matthews has much that is new and enriching to say. His reading of Faulkner's unpublished 1933 introduction to *The Sound and the Fury* provides the first convincing explanation I have seen anywhere of the peculiar combination of exultation and foreboding with which Faulkner recalled the writing of this seminal novel. What Faulkner discovered in *The Sound and the Fury,* Matthews shows, is that writing not only compensates for loss but initiates it. Because writing is "supplementary," in Derrida's sense of the term, it necessarily defers the sense of presence it intends to elicit; hence the "ecstasy" that Faulkner experienced when writing the novel is, like sexual climax, a form of self-completion that "simultaneously fulfills and exhausts itself." In his analysis of the novel itself, Matthews shows how Faulkner extended his discovery of the double movement inherent in writing to the various "languages"—Benjy's relics, Quentin's memories, Jason's money—through which the Compson males attempt to stave off their sense of loss. Especially admirable is the challenge that Matthews mounts to the influential view, originating with Jean Paul Sartre, of Quentin as a passive victim of the intrusive power of memory. Matthews shows that even as Quentin is being overwhelmed by memory he senses its supplementary status. Hence Quentin's suicide is as much as result of the weakness of memory—of its inability to foster a truly convincing illusion—as of its strength.

Similarly insightful is Matthews' reading of *Absalom, Absalom!* This novel, very nearly a *vade mecum* for critics interested in self-reflexive fiction, responds particularly well to Matthews' Derridean method. Central to his reading of it is another challenge to a prevailing belief, this time to the view that Rosa Coldfield's and Mr. Compson's accounts of the Sutpen story are little more than preludes to the supposedly authoritative narrative created by Shreve and Quentin. This view, Matthews suggests, resembles Sutpen's

innocent understanding of his own experience, in that it is based on a "phallic, singly inseminated" conception of meaning. Matthews finds a more appropriate model for our reading of the novel in Derrida's view of meaning as a "hymeneal" play of repetition and variation across an infinite field of signification. Armed with this model, Matthews is able to take Rosa's and Mr. Compson's narratives more seriously than have most previous critics. He shows that Rosa's being is centered in the idea of continually deferred experience and traces the ways in which her highly-charged language serves both to renew her desire and to guard against its satisfaction; and he provides an equally stimulating reading of the ways in which Mr. Compson's interest in Sutpen's career originates in his sense of himself as having been tragically displaced in time.

Many virtues to this book, then. But ranked against these virtues are several minor and two major flaws. The minor flaws are perhaps attributable to the book's having originated as a dissertation: they consist of occasional forced readings, of narrowness of intellectual and literary reference, and of a slackening of argumentative energy and stylistic control in the book's later stages. The major flaws are both versions of weaknesses that many people believe to be inherent in deconstructionist criticism. The first is that Matthews' readings often impoverish Faulkner's text. Early on, Matthews expresses the hope that this book will "temper the common assumption . . . that Derrida's approach necessarily deadens the activity of reading." Unfortunately, when he moves away from *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* (and even sometimes when he is still discussing them), the effect of Matthews' analyses is rather the opposite of what he intends. An example from *Go Down, Moses* can serve to illustrate what I mean. Throughout his discussion of this novel, Matthews emphasizes Ike McCaslin's role as reader of the various "texts" provided him by plantation and wilderness. Ike's acts of reading are of course a central concern of the novel, and Matthews is to be commended for elucidating many of the subtle interconnections among them. Yet in deconstructing Ike's performance as a reader, Matthews deprives it of much of its artistic power. For him, Ike's acts of reading—and, indeed, all of his experiences—are instances of repetition and reenactment, not of discovery and growth. This orientation has the unfortunate effect of deflecting Matthews' attention away from the centrally important issue of when, why, and how Ike comes to know and to do what he does. In discussing "The Bear," for example, Matthews consistently acts as if knowledge of L.Q.C. McCaslin's incest were readily available to Ike and to the other characters. Surely this is wrong. The fact of the matter is that no one—not Lucas Beauchamp, not McCaslin Edmonds, not Zack or Roth Edmonds, not Ike himself prior to his moment of insight—knows what Ike learns by reading the ledgers. Significantly, this discovery occurs within a month of the deaths of Old Ben and Sam Fathers. Like his observation of these deaths, Ike's discovery of his grandfather's incest is a singular event in the irreversible sequence of his maturation. By instead treating it and its companion events as if they were merely variant rereadings of an infinitely repeatable text, Matthews deprives Faulkner's representation of Ike of one of its most important dimensions.

The second major flaw is a relative of the first. Just as Matthews abstracts

Ike McCaslin from his career in time, so does he also remove Faulkner from his. Though Matthews organizes his discussion of the fiction chronologically, he does not trace lines of development, but instead presents the movement from novel to novel as if it were a more or less random alternation among various languages of loss. Here again, the effect of his critical orientation is unfortunate. Surely Matthews is right to find anticipations of poststructuralist thought in Faulkner's fiction; but Faulkner was a transitional figure, capable both of intuiting the illusory status of the dream of presence and of yearning for a plenary fullness that was transcendentally grounded. The tension between these two aspects of his thought becomes especially acute in the second half of his career, when he senses a diminishment in his creative power. As early as *Go Down, Moses,* in his depiction of the closure of the wilderness, Faulkner writes a valedictory to the disappearance of his sense of union with his artistic voice; and in his later fiction, he searches repeatedly and somewhat desperately for ways to reconstitute his former sense of artistic fullness. To ignore or deny this tension, as Matthews does, is to rescue Faulkner from history in a diminishing way. And finally, I wonder whether Matthews' critical method would not itself have been strengthened by an acknowledgement of its implication in history. One need not agree entirely with Fredric Jameson's contention that history is the untranscendable horizon of all discourse to think that deconstructionism is no less a creature of the moment than were earlier schools of criticism. In Matthews' disinclination to consider this possibility, one may perhaps detect a desire for wholeness no less avid than the fictional ones he so assiduously analyzes.

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A Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's "The Recognitions" by Steven Moore. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1982. Pp. xii + 337. $25.00.

William Gaddis's first novel, *The Recognitions,* which Frank McConnell considers "the indispensable novel of the last thirty years in America," was published by Harcourt, Brace & Co. in 1955 when the author was thirty-two years old. With few exceptions, the reviews were inadequate or worse, suggesting that the reviewers were overwhelmed by the book's 956 page length and puzzled by its extraordinary complexity. So too were the critics, for between 1955 and 1970 only one actual article appeared.

This unfortunate situation was reversed in the '70s as anti-realistic fiction emerged from the underground to become a staple of contemporary American writing. The attention paid *The Recogitions* during that decade is indicative: several dissertations have been written on Gaddis alone or in conjunction with John Barth, John Hawkes, Thomas Pynchon, and other kindred spirits, and there has been a proliferation of published criticism by such distinguished names as Thomas LeClair, David Madden, and Tony Tanner. Gaddis's growing reputation has also been reflected in additional ways. His second novel, *J R,* won the National Book Award for the best

novel of 1975 and critical journals have devoted special issues to him—in 1977, *The Hollins Critic*; in 1982, *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*. Soon Ferman Bishop's *William Gaddis* will become a part of the Twayne United States Authors Series.

It would seem, then, that now, twenty-seven years after the publication of *The Recognitions*, the time is propitious for Steven Moore's study, about which John W. Aldridge stated in a reader's report, "I believe that Mr. Moore has indeed made a contribution to the field and that the subject is indeed important. . . . Mr. Moore will be recognized as performing for Gaddis a service comparable to that of the many Joyce annotators."

A Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's "The Recognitions" consists of seven sections: Preface, Introduction, Annotations, Appendix A, Appendix B, Bibliography, Index. Even the less crucial of these should prove useful to scholars. For example, in Appendix A, Moore has reprinted three nonfiction pieces by the author "for the light they shed on various aspects of *The Recognitions*." Included are "a kind of prefatory note Gaddis sketched out in 1949 but later decided not to use" (transcribed by Peter W. Koenig in his unpublished 1971 dissertation, "'Splinters from the Yew Tree'"), and two articles, "Stop Player. Joke No. 4" (*Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1951), "a captious investigation of . . . the mechanization of the arts," and "In the Zone" (*New York Times*, March 13, 1978), "Gaddis's own memoir of his days in Central America, written thirty years later." Helpful too are Appendix B, which juxtaposes the many inaccuracies in the available but corrupt Avon edition (1974) with the accurate wording of the unavailable but authoritative Meridian edition (1962), and the annotated Bibliography, which lists dissertations as well as domestic and foreign criticism.

The indispensable introductory section consists of two parts, an analysis and a synopsis of *The Recognitions*. Though excerpted from a longer essay that may form the basis of another study, the analysis augments Gaddis commentary significantly, for it focuses on "the immense structural design" underpinning the author's encyclopedic master-work. His remark, "Nothing is actually valid; (circumstances) exist only in their Symbolic usage," has influenced Moore, who views *The Recognitions* as "an account of personal integration amid collective disintegration." The protagonist's "quest for authenticity in life and art" becomes more psychological than physical, so that "much of the novel's symbolism is a projection of latent contents in Wyatt's unconscious." Moore, contrary to most critics, sees this quest as a return to the lost and dishonored mother instead of to the father, since "the integration of the personality . . . can result only from an acknowledgment of the supremecy (*sic*) of the White Goddess." In *The Recognitions*, which was influenced by C. G. Jung as well as by Robert Graves, Wyatt must confront and accept his anima, or the emotional, intuitive, irrational distaff elements of the male psyche. The symbolic system involved contains three main image clusters — nocturnal; lunar; marine—"associated in myth and modern psychology with both the unconscious and the feminine." These clusters are found also in the symbolic vocabulary of alchemy and alchemy constitutes "the controlling metaphor of the entire novel." Like Jung, Gaddis identifies alchemical experimentation with the "process of individuation," while his Faustian hero attempts to reconcile various oppositions: "Reverand (*sic*)

Gwyon/Camilla; sun/moon; sol (gold)/luna (silver); Logos/Eros; Christianity/paganism; consciousness (rationality)/unconsciousness (irrationality); separation/unity; activity/passivity; God (king)/Virgin (queen); day/night; intellect/emotion." Redemption, the principal concern of alchemy, is secularized throughout *The Recognitions* as the "power of art," which, in turn, assumes "almost religious importance."

Entering the novel is a bewildering experience, since, Moore explains, "far from taking the reader by the hand as would a Fielding or a Thackeray, Gaddis often abandons the reader at the various scenes of action to overhear the confused gropings, deliberate lies, and mistaken notions of the characters." Indeed, the book's "labyrinthine plot . . . requires several close readings just to understand *what* is going on," and consequently errors of fact have flawed nearly all the reviews and critical essays. We should be most grateful, then, for a correct and concise summary that will make *The Recognitions* more accessible to students of serious fiction. The synopsis lists both Meridian and Avon pagination and incorporates an invaluable time-scheme drawn from Moore's "Chronological Difficulties in the Novels of William Gaddis" (*Critique* 22, no. 1 [1980]), 79–91).

Even after the reader has untangled the plot, he or she is faced with a welter of abstruse information—"literary allusions, books titles, historical references, obscure subjects, hagiographies, details from church history, mythology, and anthropology, foreign phrases in over a half-dozen languages." The Annotations section addresses this problem; and the fact that it occupies 246 of 337 pages confirms it as the pivotal segment of *A Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's "The Recognitions."* These annotations, complete except for a few unidentified sources, represent an impressive scholarly achievement, as they embrace a range of erudition probably unmatched by any previous American novel, including *Moby Dick*, whose size, difficulty, and fate resemble the later volume's. Working without the aid of the author and only minimal assistance from dissertations (and translators), Moore uncovered "the remaining sources, other than those named in *The Recognitions*" to provide the materials needed for intelligent assessment. The titles cited on pp. 54–58 reveal some of Gaddis's concerns while composing his book: *Architecture, Mysticism* and *Myth; The Apocryphal New Testament; Fox's Book of Martyrs; Counterfeiting: Crime against the People; The Devil's Share; Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed.; *Faust: A Tragedy; The Gentle Art of Faking; The Golden Bough; How to Win Friends and Influence People; The Divine Comedy; Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers; Love in the Western World; Mithraism; Magic and Religion; The Malleus Maleficarum; Magic, Myth and Morals: A Study of Christian Origins; Mediaeval and Modern Saints and Miracles; Psychology and Alchemy; The Pilgrim Hymnal; The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism; Star Lore of All Ages; The Van Eycks and Their Followers; The White Goddess; A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth; The Waning of the Middles Ages.*

Like *Ulysses, Finnegans Wake, The Waste Land,* and *The Cantos, The Recognitions* is one of those modern works that demand and deserve the kind of treatment rendered by Steven Moore. "Demand" because of their complex nature; "deserve" because of their undeniable stature. Just as Moore is to be praised for successfully finishing an arduous task, the University of Nebraska Press is to be congratulated on the vision required to publish his splendid book.

A Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's "The Recognitions" affirms what some of us have known all along—that the author of this great novel will inevitably play a major role in the history of American letters.

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