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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* by Michel Foucault edited with an Introduction by Donald F. Bouchard. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. Pp. 240. \$12.50.

*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* contains seven essays by Foucault, the summary of a course he gave at Collège de France on the will to knowledge, the transcript of a discussion between him and Gilles Deleuze, and an interview—under the auspices of the journal *Actuel*—in which he discusses revolutionary action. It also contains a good introduction by Donald Bouchard, a large number of editor notes giving directions for further reading and bringing out the continuity in Foucault's work, and a revealing index ('death,' 'event' and 'language' are among the stars). First published between 1962 and 1972 and arranged in logical rather than chronological order, the Foucault pieces were, of course, picked on the basis of significance and range. But other criteria also played a role in the selection. Thus, Bouchard tended "to omit essays dealing with authors whose works are unavailable in translation" (pp. 7-8): Foucault's outstanding essay on Blanchot and "La Pensée du dehors" (the experience of the void in which language finds its space and speaks itself) is consequently excluded. Similarly, important essays were left out probably because they had already been translated: "Réponse à une question," which appeared as "History, Discourse and Discontinuity" in *Salmagundi*, no. 20 (1972) and which provides a remarkable definition of Foucault's enterprise, is conspicuously absent. All in all, however, Bouchard's collection achieves its aims: the pieces included show Foucault's profound and peculiar interest in the nature of discourse and discursive practices, indicate the methodological guidelines he follows, reveal the political consequences of his work, and constitute sound evidence of his accomplishments.

The collection is divided into three sections: "Language and the Birth of 'Literature,'" "Counter-Memory: the Philosophy of Difference" and "Practice: Knowledge and Power." According to Foucault, language finds a body ("literature") toward the end of the eighteenth century and, as a result, the writer experiences his limits, his otherness and the unknowable as such. Some of the forms taken by this experience are the subject of the four essays in the first section: desire in Sade, the absence of God in Hölderlin, the meticulous phantasmagoria of Flaubert's *Temptation*, Nietzsche's "origin without positivity," Bataille's transgression. In the second section, Foucault examines the consequences of the radically intransitive language of "literature"—it does not express—as it penetrates the domain of discursive thought. The notion "author," for instance, becomes extremely problematic and, instead of wondering about the identity of the speaker, we can and should investigate the modes of the spoken ("What is an Author?"). History can sever its

connection to memory, continuity, metaphysical and anthropological modes and can become a corrosive counter-memory ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"). Finally, Platonism can be reversed—as in Deleuze's *Logique du sens* or *Différence et répétition*—and the discursive event can be thought in its immediacy, materiality and difference ("Theatrum Philosophicum"). In the last section, the practical implications of Foucault's philosophical stance become obvious. The course summary underlies the links between forms of knowledge and forms of justice and power; the discussion with Deleuze defines the place of theory in political struggle (theory is practice) and stresses the enigmatic and diffuse nature of power; and the interview on revolutionary action calls for a rejection of all forms of general discourse.

If Foucault is less formidably seductive in English than in French—Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon's translation is good without being dazzling—he is not less irritating: the affection for hesitant prophesy ("perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian"!) and the frequently obtrusive imagery (I am referring more particularly to the essays in the first section and their attempt to think language in itself) are still there. Nor is he less interesting. Few contemporary writers have dealt so forcefully with death as a foundation of language ("A Preface to Transgression"); few have denounced so ruthlessly the repressive nature of humanism ("Revolutionary Action: 'Until Now'") or the explanations of a present by a past ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"); and few have raised so insistently the question of the possibility of truth. Sartre's Roquentin must be one of Foucault's cousins.

But what Bouchard's collection demonstrates most clearly is what Foucault himself has explicitly said or written on other occasions: in spite of his fascination with language, the author of *Madness and Civilization* and *The Order of Things* is not a structuralist (and probably never was). He is interested not in codes but in events, not in rules but in accidents, not in laws of intelligibility but in modes of existence. He prefers multiplicity to unity and surface to depth. He studies order as disorder rather than disorder as order. He teaches discontinuity, decentering, dispersion. His hero is Nietzsche as opposed to Saussure, the idiot as opposed to the system-maker. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* is an excellent portrait of a misleading French intellectual.

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*Letters on Literature and Politics, 1912-1972* by Edmund Wilson, edited by Elena Wilson. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Pp. xxxvii + 768. \$20.00.

"The great men of culture," declared Matthew Arnold, "are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the

clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the best knowledge and thought of the time." Edmund Wilson would almost certainly have dismissed Arnold's whole lofty formulation—he rarely had anything good to say about Arnold, thought him something of a philistine, and distrusted what he called the "gospel" of culture. Nor had Wilson much patience with the familiar notion, most recently proposed by Leon Edel, that his own critical project involved an intention to mediate "between artist and public": "This is one of the clichés about me," he complained some years ago, "but I don't remember to have said it. It is not my idea of what I do."

Yet Arnold's remarks seem to me to provide as adequate an account of the Wilsonian undertaking as any we are likely to find; for surely it must by now be apparent that Wilson *had* a passion for diffusing knowledge and making reason prevail, that he shared Arnold's dedication to the thoughtful reordering of society and to the general enlargement of the human prospect: "The end is not art or science," he once wrote to Allen Tate, "but the survival and improvement of humanity." If the solemn piety is slightly out of character (Wilson was "bored" by Albert Schweitzer and suspected that there was "something phony" about him), the statement nevertheless defines the essential nature of Wilson's secular creed and establishes his commitment to the rational mastery of experience: "For me," he affirmed only a few years before his death, "all the constructions of intellect and imagination... are inventions directed to enabling us to get through life and explain the world." Wilson must accordingly be recognized as a late representative of what may now seem an antiquated faith; for although in some of his finest work he sought to make intelligible the disaffected self-absorption of the modern imagination, it was to the ideals and assumptions of the Enlightenment that he ultimately referred. Literature, he insisted, was above all an errand of understanding, an attempt to confer some necessary coherence upon the disarray of ordinary experience and thereby to redeem it for human purposes. "That was the paradox of literature," he observed in an early essay: "provoked only by the anomalies of reality, by its discord, its chaos, its pain, it attempted... to impose on that chaos some order, to find some resolution for that discord, to render that pain acceptable." Even in his moments of bitterness and disgust—and he often enough found the human spectacle dispiriting—Wilson seems to have refused to abandon the belief that life might be made "more practicable," that the sustained exertion of mind and will might yet introduce "some logic and some meaning into the ceaseless struggles of men to make themselves at home in the universe." And it was thus toward those same large ends of order and understanding that Wilson directed his critical effort, laboring with exemplary discipline and steadiness of purpose. In *Axel's Castle* and *The Triple Thinkers* and *To The Finland Station*—in volume after volume for more than half a century—it was in fact the Arnoldian enterprise that Wilson carried forward, as he sought to humanize and to make efficient the best ideas of his time.

As a part of the continuing project which includes the publication of Wilson's notebook and diaries, Mrs. Elena Wilson has now made available a portion of her husband's correspondence. "A comprehensive collection is planned

for a later date," Edel notes in his Foreword, and we shall have to wait until then for the voyeuristic pleasures afforded by material bearing directly upon the private life. But Wilson lived chiefly in and through ideas—they were the medium through which he experienced the world; and of the development of those ideas, their origins and struggles and vicissitudes, these letters provide a most valuable transcript. Covering the whole of Wilson's long career, from the period of his education at Princeton to his last years "in two old-fashioned country towns: Wellfleet, Massachusetts, and Talcottville, New York," the selections contained in the present volume inevitably contribute to the autobiographical record already begun in *A Piece of My Mind*, *A Prelude*, and *Upstate*. But they are principally a chronicle of Wilson's professional and intellectual activity, the business letters of a man whose business was what used to be called the life of the mind. As such, they provide a partial history of friendships (and quarrels) with Christian Gauss and John Peal Bishop, Louise Bogan and Morton Zabel, Tate, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Nabokov; they show Wilson presiding over the literary affairs of *The New Republic* and *The New Yorker*—conceiving projects, encouraging writers—and struggling, always, to hoard the time and the money needed for shaping his own exploratory essays into more permanent forms, into the "long-range" writing by which he insisted that his achievement should be judged; they chart his representative passage through the political labyrinth of the thirties—his early responsiveness to the Marxist assessment of a commercial civilization in which he never felt at ease, his travels in the Soviet Union, his determined disengagement from what he once called "the literary class war": "I've tried . . . to keep outside the whole thing," he tells Dos Passos in 1935. "My policy at present is to keep away and in writing to try to ignore all parties and special doctrines." The letters remind us of Wilson's loving mastery of languages—at sixty-seven he thinks of taking up Chinese—and of the astonishing catholicity of a mind that can shift in the space of a few sentences from the question of Trotsky's complicity in the death of Gorky to a learned discussion of the history of Punch and Judy. They display all of Wilson's characteristic severity—his rigid and belligerent secularism ("I always feel depressed and let down when religion raises its ugly head"), his intolerance of cant and pretension, his contempt for the newer modes of literary discourse with what he took to be their sterile virtuosity of textual explication; and they document, finally, Wilson's profound disaffection, his growing disgust with the values and the institutions of his country, the sense of anger and estrangement which defines the last phase of Wilson's discordant encounter with American life.

"I have always been keenly aware," Wilson wrote to T. S. Matthews in 1960, "that literature demands not only all one can give it but also all one can get other people to give it." There is of course nothing very remarkable about such a conviction—the claim may even seem a form of high-minded posturing. And yet Wilson's stubborn individualism did not diminish his sense of involvement in a *collective* undertaking, and it is a part of his great distinction that he pursued his task with a kind of selfless devotion to the enterprise of letters. Fitzgerald long ago remarked that Wilson had for twenty years been his "intellectual conscience," and all through the twenties and thirties we find

him calling friends to account—criticizing, harassing, commiserating, and always insisting that writing well is the best revenge. "Brace up your artistic conscience," he urges Fitzgerald in a pair of early letters. "*Il faut faire quelque chose de vraiment beau, vous savez!*" When Phelps Putnam suffers a mental collapse Wilson reminds him of his own earlier breakdown ("my work didn't stop") and suggests that he put aside poetry for a time in favor of translation—"quite interesting...it keeps the hand in." And when Louise Bogan retreats to a sanitarium he offers similar encouragement: "Do some writing while you are in there.... The only thing that we can really make is our work. And deliberate work of the mind, imagination, and hand... in the long run remakes the world."

It is thus especially appropriate that Sherman Paul's fine book on Wilson should have had as its subtitle "A Study of Literary Vocation in Our Time"; for no other word so directly proposes the sense of personal calling and professional discipline that Wilson brought to the practice of his craft. Neither private crisis nor public confusion deflected his attention from the business at hand; scarcely any department of human knowledge was beyond the range of his voracious curiosity. Working in all genres, Wilson transfigured every experience of self and world into the objective forms of art and idea: he was one of the people on whom nothing is lost. And yet there is a disquieting corollary to this single-minded intensity, for one suspects in Wilson a certain attenuation of emotion, a kind of Jamesian deprivation of the affective life. Norman Podhoretz has shrewdly argued that although Wilson's mind was "open and...generous," his character was "rigid and closed." And the letters suggest a personality essentially stern and inflexible—formidable, demanding, unresponsive to pleasure and incapable of repose. Wilson seems to have lived in a state of constant mental alertness which is at once admirable and obsessive: he had seen his father crippled and frustrated by a society that had no use for his ideals; he had witnessed the waste and demoralization, the failures of nerve or will, among the members of his own generation; and he therefore sought to make of his purposiveness and intransigence a weapon against the temptations to mediocrity and ease and acquiescence. His father, Wilson recalls in an autobiographical essay, had "a horror of my not making something of myself"; and the repeated emphasis in the letters upon the salvific properties of "deliberate work" forcefully reminds us of the imperious Puritan conscience, the tyrant sense of moral obligation, that Wilson had always to placate and to serve.

Wilson's father belonged to a class of men who had been trained "for what had once been called the learned professions" and for whom an ideal of disinterested public service still retained much of its old authority. But such men were out of phase with American life in the late nineteenth century; they had no way of adjusting to the new political and economic order that had emerged after the Civil War. And Wilson's own political radicalism, as Podhoretz has suggested, must be understood in relation to this process of dispossession—as a response to the mercenary standards which had displaced his father's patrician values. Wilson's socialism was the expression of an aristocratic ideal. It was not a form of "parlor Bolshevism" or a version of

what is nowadays referred to as "radical chic"; but it had less to do with a commitment to the worker's revolution (Wilson explicitly rejected the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat) than with his vision of an eighteenth century civilization "based on something more comfortably human than commercial and industrial interests." If to orthodox Marxists the revolution makes its appeal entirely in terms of "the future," Wilson was capable of hoping that it might actually help to repair the broken continuity with a more generous and livable past. It is therefore not at all surprising that he thought of Marxism as "the real second blooming of the Enlightenment," of Marx and Lenin as "a part of the humanistic tradition."

And yet what is finally most important about the sense of public purpose that was Wilson's legacy from his class and family is the awareness it promoted of the sustaining connection between literature and society. "Although my single aim has been literature," he wrote from France in 1917, "my great men have never been Pater and Symonds but Dante and Socrates and Voltaire, who can certainly not be said to have been indifferent to politics; and how should I remain *au-dessus de la mêlée*." A part of Wilson's continuing importance has to do precisely with his insistence that the products of imagination engage the ordinary actualities of human experience and his refusal to accept as necessary or useful "the indifference to politics of literary and artistic people." Responsive at once to the claims of literary modernism and of revolutionary thought, Wilson undertook to heal the schism in modern consciousness by negotiating a rapprochement between the literary and social imaginations. All of which is to say that Wilson's political preoccupations of the thirties, far from indicating a revision of intention, continue and extend the project in which he had been engaged from the beginning. If *Axel's Castle* (1929) and *To The Finland Station* (1940) may be said to enact the dialectic of the decades which they consummate, they also, in their separate ways, speak to an ideal of wholeness and integration. "Axel's world of the private imagination in isolation from the life of society," Wilson writes near the end of his study of the Symbolist tradition, "seems to have been exploited and explored as far as for the present is possible... who hereafter," he asks, "will be content to inhabit a corner... in the shuttered house of one of these writers?"

But what then are we to make of that other shuttered house to which Wilson more and more withdrew, that ancestral mansion designed by a haughtier age where for twenty years he preserved both his greatness and his bitterness: "If one chooses... the way of Axel," Wilson had written, "one shuts oneself up in one's own private world, cultivating one's private fantasies, encouraging one's private manias, ultimately preferring one's absurdest chimeras to the most astonishing contemporary realities." And although it would be foolish to propose that Axel's choice was also Wilson's—few writers have been less self-indulgent or have valued objectivity more—it nevertheless seems clear that "contemporary realities" came to have a diminished claim upon his attention and that the stone house upstate served to insulate him from the intrusions of a world that he viewed with growing irritation and unease.

There is a remarkable moment at the end of Wilson's meditation on "The Author at Sixty": "I may find myself here at the center of things," he writes of Talcottville, "—since the center can be only in one's head." It is a baffling and a disturbing assertion, for surely it was just such a notion that Wilson began by opposing and resisted for so long; it suggests precisely that failure of connection, that "dreadful isolation of the artist," which the unnamed narrator of *I Thought of Daisy* tries so desperately to escape. And what one finally feels about the last years of Wilson's career is that he was *not* at the center, that in withdrawing to the citadel of his own fierce intergity and to the house which was its symbol, in pursuing his studies of devils and monsters, the Dead Sea scrolls and the minor writers of the Civil War era, Wilson had in fact abandoned his position of centrality in the culture of our time.

But symbols are of course complicated things, and it would be wrong to forget that the house which represented a kind of retreat also represented a kind of triumph. "Life in the United States," Wilson once remarked, "is much subject to disruptions and frustrations, catastrophic collapses and gradual peterings-out. I have felt myself at times, when younger, threatened by some such fate; but now, in my sixty-first year, I find that one of the things that most gratifies me is the sense of my continuity." And after an early visit to the house at Talcottville Wilson wrote to Louise Bogan: "I find I take a certain pride in it—and satisfaction in something that stays the same through all the upheavals."

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TOM SAMET

*Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romances* by Susan Wittig. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1977. Pp. 223. \$15.95.

*The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance* by Robert W. Hanning. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977. Pp. xi + 303.

The problem with structural analysis on the conceptual model of Lévi-Strauss, as we have it in Wittig's book, is the construction of patterns "at a fairly high level of abstraction" which suggests a programmed and computerized approach. To the common reader the arrival at structural generalizations is, by now, itself something of a formulaic and ritual process. The poet, anonymous or not, "is not a deliberately creative artist in the sense of wishing to produce a new and unique thing; the poet's only purpose is to reproduce the story as it should be told." Slots are filled with linguistic codes to result in formulaic units of composition and narrative type-scenes.

The significance of Miss Wittig's book lies in the fact that it is, to my knowledge, the first structuralist analysis of a series of Middle English romances within a rigorously defined framework of theoretical principles. The study is an original accomplishment, for it has finally aligned the approach to a



whole group of Middle English poems with the theories impelled by Roman Jakobson and Milman Parry, and has done so in a thorough, systematic, and authoritative way.

Miss Wittig has chosen a group of twenty-seven non-cyclic Middle English romances for her analysis of linguistic and narrative structures. Five of these, *Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Landeval*, *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Perceval of Galles*, *Ywain and Gawain*, have not been fully treated by Laura Hibbard Loomis (*Mediaeval Romance in England*, 1924) but are discussed in Dieter Mehl's more recent *Die mittellenglischen Romanzen des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts*, 1967. Loomis and Mehl are our only comprehensive studies of the non-cyclical verse-romances. Thus, we now have, in the format of a book, a radically new departure from sources and analogues and literary interpretation: "What we need now, I am going to argue in this study, is a generic description based on linguistic and structural analysis which will not only clarify the formal and stylistic affiliations of this group of narratives, but will also attend to the problem of why this form came into being and what cultural needs it satisfied." The objective is carried out with impressive competence but, regrettably, not without jargon, giving the book the technically intellectual "air" so common to this type of "scientific" investigation (contrast the pleasure of reading Edmund Leach).

With inexorable logic, the exposition proceeds from a description of oral-formulaic patterns of style that are perceived as elements supportive of ritual, i.e. formulaic action, in the community at large. The three main chapters analyze, define, and classify (with tables) recurring patterns of structural narrative units ("motifeme," "type-scene," "type-episode"), firmly binding the group of romances into a system of correspondences.

What strikes one in Miss Wittig's highly controlled ordering of the texts is the way in which she deals with loose ends that do not quite fit her systematization. In discussing the "type-episode" of *threatened marriage and rescue* as a structural frame, she links the Arabian *Floris and Blancheflur* and the Celtic *Sir Orfeo* in the following manner:

"In both of these poems the action begins with the abduction of the heroine. In *Floris* the low-born Blancheflur is sold to merchants and finally to the Admiral of Babylon because, interestingly enough, she poses a threat of an unsuitable marriage to Floris, the son of the king of Spain. In *Orfeo* Heurodis is stolen by the Fairy King and taken away to his castle. In both poems, the body of the narrative is concerned with the search for the lost lady and her final recovery. The very different surface features of the two poems have obscured this common framework, however, and their similarity, so far as I know, has not been pointed out before." This statement is accompanied by the following note: "The abduction of the lady by the fairy king (and *Floris* almost certainly represents a rationalized version of the same story) seems to have been a favorite story type among the *Celts*."

With all the respect one can muster for "deep" common structures that underlie the surface of conscious or unconscious human constructs, the high-handedness with which the totally different historical context of the two poems is dissolved is breath-taking. Occasionally an element is also shoved aside when it does not conform to the schema. Thus the theme of betrayal

in a structural configuration of "the eager lady and the reluctant groom," as, for example, in *King Horn* or *Bevis of Hamtoun*, is swept away by saying that "the attachment of *betrayal* to this type-episode may well be a product of some contemporary situation."

However, the formalized delineation of structural repetitions also yields new insights into themes that have been long taken for granted: "revenge in the romances does not appear to be obligatory or essential; it often occurs in answer to certain kinds of villainy, but not always. And when the death of the villain does take place, it usually comes about within the framework of an impartial justice—that is, judgment is often a community verdict upon the guilt of the offender rather than judgment summarily executed by the victim or the victim's kin." When there is an exception, we have a pointer to an affiliation with saga.

The generic affinity of the group of romances which is demonstrated in this book by structural affiliation is grounded in the thesis that the romances are constructed on a common model reflecting basic cultural patterns of community ritual and belief. Like Lévi-Straussian myths, these poems function as "mediation" to cope with the most disturbing contradictions and conflicts within the communal family as, for instance, the tension between classes which the romances bring into balance. There is a puzzling element in Miss Wittig's conclusion at the very end. Having methodically worked her way into an ideological clearing of structures, she feels impelled to distance us, categorically, from the medieval world of the romances: "Our own view of the world is very different, and what was coherent and ordered to a time long past is undecipherable confusion to us now." This, surely, is untenable. The historical use and influence of discernible literary conventions in the romances makes them clearly decipherable from points of vantage other than that of structuralist analysis. However, Miss Wittig's book is a belated methodological landmark in medieval studies and should be welcomed on its own terms.

The critical premise of Mr. Hanning's book is clear at the outset: the author defines his approach to twelfth-century romance as a "metaphor of social reality" removed from the abstractions of "patristic" and "aesthetic" critics.

The central problem of individuality is familiar to every reader of nineteenth-century novels. It is the relation of the individual to a strictly defined code of behavior within which the individual moves and which is regarded as the norm of social order and moral survival. What happens in the twelfth century—the brilliant age of scientific renaissance and medieval humanism—is that the human condition, depicted in the literature of the earlier Middle Ages as totally subservient to God, is transcended in an exaltation of the individual, the knightly hero of romance, who through love and adventure pursues an ideal of personal, inner worth. His very individuality ennobles his native ground, the society which contains and sustains him.

The integrating element in Hanning's concept of twelfth-century individuality is the quality of "engin," to the manifestation of which, in personal history and chivalric romance, he applies a rigorous analysis. The word, derived from the Latin *ingenium*, essentially renders the characteristics de-

scribed in Southern's study of medieval humanism: ready wit, cleverness, practical wisdom; as Southern puts it, "fertile in invention, rapid and irrepres-sible in action."

In Hanning's view, "engin" is the crucial and special endowment which marks the individual in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes (in particular, *Cligès*, *Erec and Enide*, *Yvain*), in *Ipomedon*, *Partonopeu de Blois*, and the *Roman d'Enéas*, in contrast with the inflexible epic virtues of *La Chanson de Roland* in which "engin"—"trickery"—is unworthy of Christian heroes and is attributed to the Saracens.

While the quality of "engin" is shown by Hanning to give all distinctive characters of romance (Lunette, Urraque) the stamp of individuality, the dynamic principle propelling knightly destiny is formulated in the idea of "kairos," the critical moment in the individual's inner awareness which, according to Hanning, constitutes the most dramatic moment in courtly romance. It is the point "in which self-awareness undergoes revolutionary change, leading to a profound modification of the basic desires which shape the actions and goals of a protagonist."

The chivalric quest for honor and love is thus seen as the literary expression of an individual-centered world in which the code of chivalry, while still exemplary, is tested and questioned by poet and reader.

The book is well organized, tightly knit, and thoroughly analytical. The first three chapters define the concept of individuality in the twelfth century, culminating in a close reading of the French courtly texts; chapters four and five discuss the mimetic techniques of the chivalric poets, to represent individuality, and chapter six, the final chapter, examines romance individuality in relation to romance plot.

An "Afterword" raises some interesting questions about the evolution of Arthurian romance in the early thirteenth century from what Hanning calls "the first generation" of chivalric romance in the second half of the twelfth century, the subject of his book. Hanning's conclusion is that "the Arthurian vision, insofar as it is both social—and individual-centered, contains an inner contradiction which must sooner or later destroy it." In spite of its relentless logic, the conclusion does not seem to be so clear-cut. "The love relationship," says Hanning, "because it was private and, in its origins, arbitrary, could well lead to a knight's loving another man's wife—as happened to Lancelot and, of course, to Tristan." Though striking in its formulation, this strict separation of "private" and "public" in the treatment of love in chivalric romance, is somehow unconvincing. In the Arthurian cycle, "Arthur's almost wilful blindness to his wife's infidelity" may, in fact, also be viewed as a manifestation of individual self-awareness. It has the dignity of a conscious act for the public good in which there is a private and kingly vision of the social role of the individual.

This sophisticated awareness of the individual in his interplay with social and historical forces, as presented in the Arthurian cycle and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, strikes one as an inevitable development after reading Mr. Hanning's book, for it is the differentiation of the individual as an autonomous moral and psychological, not anarchic, unit which the twelfth century accomplished.

The personal history of Abelard, with which Hanning begins, is the classic example. Hanning uses the *Historia calamitatum* to establish the groundwork for his discussion of "engin" so that Abelard's "ingenium" ("genius" in Klibansky's translation, "talent" in Muckle's) becomes the prototype of chivalric individuality in real life. (Gilson, incidentally, calls Abelard "a knight errant.") There is one aspect in Hanning's treatment of Abelard which I find unsatisfactory. It is the failure to distinguish between Abelard's consciousness of his genius and his actual practice of "engin" in the less elevated sense in which it occurs in the romances and in the *Life of Christina of Markyate*, Hanning's second example to illustrate the quality "in situ."

Abelard's ingeniousness—"low" ingenium—is expressed in a passage in the *Historia calamitatum* which would have been worth including: "God knows I fell into such despair that I was ready to depart from the Christian world and to go to the Saracens, there, by paying whatever tribute was demanded, to live a Christian life among the enemies of Christ. I thought that they would be the better disposed towards me as they would suspect from the charges made against me that I was not a Christian and so would believe that I would therefore be more easily induced to join their religion."

The passage also conveys the sense of alienation and victimization to which Hanning devotes close attention as an important aspect of individual self-awareness in the romances. His analysis of *folie* as essentially a paradox of *engin*, as we see it in *Ipomedon* and *Partonopeu de Blois*, brings the whole problem of individual entrapment into sharp focus. The matter of entrapment and enclosure is carried over in Hanning's view of time and space in the romances. "Limited perspective", regarded as a significant representational innovation in the literary emergence of the individual, is contrasted with the "spatial uncertainty" of epic (e. g. *Beowulf*). "Multiple perspective"—the way in which different characters view a particular episode—serves to emphasize the individual's subjective experience of reality.

The disciplined neatness of the interpretative edifice cannot help arousing some feeling of reservation. Things cannot be as tidy as all that. In the intermingling of literary form, human experience, and cultural vision there is overlapping and crossbreeding. Odysseus, an epic hero, is full of "engin," though Mr. Hanning calls him "atypical." We find dialectic "ginne" in the debate of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, as Mr. Hanning notes. We also find a version of it used by Christ in the Harrowing of Hell in *Piers Plowman*:

"Thow, Lucyfer, in lykness of a luther addere,  
 Getest by gyle tho that god loued;  
 And I, in lyknesse of a leode that lorde am of  
                                       heuene,  
 Graciousliche thi gyle haue guytte go gyle ageine gyle:  
 And as Adam and alle thorw a tre deydenn,  
 Adam and alle thorwe a tree shal torne ageine to lyue;  
 And gyle is bigyled and in his gyle fallen.

(B XVIII. 352-358)

*Ars ut artem falleret* (C XXI. 395)

Hanning's central concept of twelfth-century individuality thus also fits Langland's portrayal of the divine that, by taking an individual man's nature, seems human.

The achievement of Hanning's book is that it firmly adjusts our conception of chivalric romance to a crucial stirring in medieval renaissance thought, while providing us with a close and penetrating reading of individual romances.

DOROTHEE METLITZKI

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*Samuel Johnson and Poetic Style* by William Edinger. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 272. \$17.00.

This is a very good book. Directing his attention to a crucial feature of his subject's critical theory, the author treats Dr. Johnson's concept of poetic style chiefly as a reflection of an empiricism rooted in the nominalism of Bacon and Locke. He prefaces his analysis with two chapters on the premises and methods of the neoclassical theory which Johnson both inherited and modified. Like the rest of the book, these are ably organized, terminologically accurate (a vital point in theoretical discussion), and engagingly written. Mr. Edinger doesn't waste words—or paragraphs. In commendably small space, he examines not only those neoclassical critics, including the Frenchmen Arnauld, Rapin, and Fénelon, whose thinking represents the historical antecedents of Johnson's own, but also, and most enlighteningly, *their* classical mentors: Cicero, Longinus, Quintilian. Apart from its main purpose and in convincing refutation of a currently held opposite belief, this survey supports the further conclusion that English neoclassicism is a distinct historical phenomenon, though definable not by the consistency of its theory but by "the orthodoxy of its taste" (p. 157).

Mr. Edinger thinks that the troublesome inconsistencies in Johnson's critical thinking can in large measure be reconciled. In this endeavor he succeeds best on the issue of the particular and the general, effectively discriminating Johnson's position from superficially similar neo-Platonic views by assimilating it to the Hegelian concrete universal. He also argues skillfully to exonerate his man from Professor Wellek's charge of "naive literary realism" (p. 94). This task is ungrateful and so finally, I think, less than fully convincing. The embarrassment felt by Johnson's admirers (this reviewer among them) arises not so much from his generalizations as from the theoretical implications of specific passages in his practical criticism, e. g. his declaration that Shakespeare's dialogue is "level with life." By the term *fiction*, Mr. Edinger believes, Johnson meant mainly hackneyed classical mythology (p. 82). Yet when we recall his complaint, among several similar ones, that *Lycidas* is false and insincere because Milton and King are known never to have been shepherds, we are not so sure.

The author's analysis of his specific topic is perhaps disproportionately brief.

One could wish, for instance, that he had explored more fully the *quaestio vexata* (in de Quincey's phrase for it) of poetic diction.

But these issues are highly debatable and not likely to be settled very soon or by a single book, even one as fine as this. In the meantime, the quality of what he has done will make even Mr. Edinger's most exacting readers hope for more to come.

EMERSON R. MARKS

*The University of Massachusetts—Harbor Campus*

*Ruins and Empire: The Evolution of a Theme in Augustan and Romantic Literature* by Laurence Goldstein. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977. Pp. xiv + 272. \$12.50.

This is a fine book, wide-ranging, provocative, critically graceful as well as incisive in its relating of ideas of ruins and empire to their literary embodiments, and unusually illuminating in its tracing of the historical evolution of a major, and often personally decisive or determining, theme in the lives and works of a large number of literary figures from the Renaissance through the mid-nineteenth century in both England and America. Ruins, Professor Goldstein posits in his introductory chapter, ubiquitously appear in literature as "a means of mortifying in the public those worldly desires which caused the great empires, like Persepolis and Egypt, to decline and fall" (3). As a "mental construct" the "ruin sentiment" (one that discovers and dramatizes "significant patterns of change and decay in everyday scenes and events") was "capable of universal application and for that reason a determinant of policy and conduct in a time of expanding empire" (4).

In the Renaissance, exemplified here by Spenser's *The Ruines of Time*, the standard "bardic assumption" was that the poem, itself an artifact of civilization and hence an epitome of the very creative impulse it celebrates in the ruins contemplated, became (or could become) a prophetic goading of society to construct in the present edifices or civilizations, a life worthy not only of its illustrious predecessors but also of posterity's regard. Thus Spenser (unlike Sir Thomas Browne, for example, who in *Religio Medici* and *Urne Buriall* sees ruins as the decaying and fallen body, the relics of original sin, and hence glorifies them as "providential finality" rather than "immortal longings") provides in his ruins poems avatars of the Renaissance belief that the glories of past civilizations are a "spur to virtue" (16). Poetry is thus the "memorie" of the race, the "embalming" of objects in words so that they may not, as exemplars, be lost to the world (17). Yet, paradoxically, in the later books of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser acknowledges the contrary thrust of the same myth, a "recognition of the inevitable ruin of empires" however greater the perfection of our own as it emerges out of a perception of the reasons for decay in the past (43).

By the eighteenth century the ruin sentiment takes on the tone of the latter view rather than the former, "the prophet's scorn for wordly splendor":

When we reflect on the sinking fortune of nations, and the sudden falls of mighty kingdoms, we are impressed with an awful idea of the supreme Disposer, in Whose hands a whole nation is but as one man. . . . How can we persist in building our pride upon such transitory foundations [as past empires of "greatness"], and in sacrificing the repose of our minds for such unstable rewards?

While this passage is quoted by Goldstein (5) from an anonymous writer in a 1793 periodical, he regards it as a summing-up of the principal features of eighteenth-century ruin sentiment. Goldstein's own summary of the theme's development is equally apt:

My aim is not to catalogue or classify the many expressions of the ruin sentiment but to select representative works spanning three centuries which demonstrate how the experience of horror [at ruins] results in renewed loyalty to some enduring symbol of potentiality, be it place, persons, or artifact. . . [and how] those writers. . . invest immortal longings in some wordly place which they conceive as the site of a new heaven and new earth. (8)

Chapter 2, on Spenser and *The Ruins of Time*, is devoted to that poet's paradoxical view, as I have noted, of the English state as such an earthly paradise. Chapter 3 contains an impressive analysis of John Dyer's radical shift from the "unadulterated joy" of his *The Country Walk* to the "continuous gloom" of his *The Ruins of Rome* (31). In the former Dyer is convinced that "the architecture and social landscapes erected beyond the basic needs of man will crumble or be superseded; the simple home man builds, the fields and animals he cultivates, represent his own and his country's chief resources"—as well as the bulwark against present or future ruin (28). In the latter, contrary to Addison's and Thomson's grand descriptions of Italy, Dyer "taps the roots of horror" and "frightened by the voice of time" inherent in ruins is driven toward "an enthusiastic embrace of the unruined future" in what Goldstein describes as the "defensive posture" that we recognize as our own best effort to stave off the trauma of horror (35, 39).

That "embrace" we find in Dyer's *The Fleece*, a "fusion of pastoral poem and commercial tract" reflecting "the Whig strategy to undermine not only monarchical power but the *mortmain* of influence passed down through the great families" (47). It is also, of course, a Utopian poem, based on the assumption that "England as a paradise uniquely bequeathed ideal conditions for the most rewarding and noble enterprises" (51). Even so, as in Spenser, paradox abides here, for the pastoral Golden Age Dyer envisions for England—replete with its virtues and piety as well as its home-based "industry"—clashes head-on with the progress of empire and the long-range development of world trade and manufacture. The latter, Goldstein shows in a remarkable chapter (5), is most graphically detailed in Defoe's *Roxana*, in which the avoidance of ruination is equated with capitalistic expansion and the thrust toward greater and greater empire.

The graveyard poets—especially Young, Blair, Hervey, and even Cowper—return in a sense to the views of Sir Thomas Browne, imaging the fallen

natural world (and of course man's own internal half-acre) in the crumbling of past empires, and urging by their meditations on self-ruin that their contemporaries guide themselves toward a spiritual commonwealth more glorious and fruitful than the Indies (74). These writers are thus not merely religious prophets (or ranters) but political propagandists as well. Connoisseurs of imperial decay Goldstein calls them (84), not the least of whom is Goldsmith (Chapter 7) whose *Deserted Village* is seen, strikingly, as a discovery that his own alienation is mirrored by a historical problem such that Goldsmith can establish "spiritual dispossession as a permanent fact of modern life" (106). At the same time, emerging out of the graveyard school and its insistence on a fallen past and present is the growth of mental pastoral Utopias, "dreamscapes of perfect happiness" (88), a process by which religious modes of defense are secularized into nostalgia for childhood—however paradoxical that imaginative retreat was, oscillating as it did (for Cowper, for example, and later for Byron) between being "an asylum from the chaotic and disturbing present" and an inaccessible, irretrievable, and sentimentalized loss (ruin) and hence even the "soul's hopeless alienation from grace" (88-89).

The link between the child of the past (and the associated landscape of the mind impervious to decay) and the man of the present remained for Wordsworth to forge, and Goldstein's analysis of *Home at Grasmere*, major portions of *The Prelude*, the relatively neglected *The Tuft of Primroses*, and the Immortality Ode (Chapters 8-11) establishes Wordsworth as not only the inheritor of a powerful literary-philosophical-political-imaginative tradition but its most consummate artistic and prophetic analyst and the supreme internalizer of the entire historical process. This analysis is far too complex for me to outline here. It is also too good to spoil via fragmentary quotation. But I do want to mention especially the insights it yields into Wordsworth's conception of the child (with the political as well as imaginative and social implications of that concept), into his later "lapse" into orthodoxy and conservatism (I don't know of a better explanation of this still much-vexed problem), into the central issues of the dream of the Arab rider in *The Prelude*, into the function of repetition (of event as well as language and image) in his poetry, and into the all-important idea, obviously related to the former point, of the "continuous self" which transcends all ruin.

Goldstein concludes his book with a brief analysis of the continuity of his theme in American literature, particularly in Bryant, Cooper, and Thomas Cole (both his poetry and his Herculean series of paintings *The Course of Empire*). Each "perceived the sorrow of the human condition in the same way: that man is not only fated to destroy Eden but to want its destruction as a proof of his manifest destiny" (231).

There are other books that deal with this subject, and separate analyses of all the poets and poems included in Goldstein's book that necessarily pay attention to the theme of ruins, if not always of empire. Goldstein has read them all and they have served him well. But there is no sustained synthesis that I know of comparable to his. Though not directly related to *Ruins and Empire* other new books like Richard Feingold's *Nature and Society: Later Eighteenth-Century Uses of the Pastoral and Georgic* (just issued by Rutgers)



and the sumptuous *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* (edited by U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson for the California Press) may complement, supplement, and extend Goldstein's—as does the previous work in this general area by Paul Zucker, Paul Fussell, Lois Whitney, Maynard Mack, Henry Nash Smith, R. W. B. Lewis and other scholars—but I intend it as no small compliment to Goldstein's achievement to be included in this company.

ROBERT F. GLECKNER

*Duke University*

*The Literature of Change: Studies in the Nineteenth Century Provincial Novel*  
by John Lucas. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1977. Pp. xii + 217. \$18.50.

Taking the theme of social alienation for his subject, John Lucas explores the ambiguities of community, class and family in three provincial novelists, Elizabeth Gaskell, William Hale White and Thomas Hardy. The treatment of Hale White is perceptive and illuminating as Lucas defines the "disciplined stoicism" that sets White apart from the moral fervour of Eliot and the social dedication of Ruskin. Certainly it does no harm to be reminded that Hale White is not Mary Rutherford.

It is in White's women characters that Lucas finds the sharpest disjunctions between social aspiration and personal identification. For White's women there are only blind alleys as they struggle to escape the confines of self and society. Marriage is sought as a "consolation or refuge from the limitations of community." In a brilliant interpretation of *Clara Hopgood* Lucas traces Clara's painful deliverance from a succession of concealed traps to a future that offers a terrible freedom of spiritual preservation and physical death. *Clara Hopgood* is a difficult work but Lucas' reading is persuasive because he does not accept a sentimental interpretation of Clara's final choice. To be alone in death is better than to be dead in marriage.

These days it requires a critic of some courage to declare that *Jude the Obscure* is a muddled work, and Sue a character that irritated the writer as much as she does the reader. According to Lucas, Hardy clearly wanted Sue to be a "standard woman," representative of her kind, then blurred the argument by introducing the idea that it was not the social process that made women like Sue victims, but "the inexorable laws of nature." For Lucas it is the women characters that reveal most clearly the social misgivings and indecisions of Hardy. In *The Woodlanders* Lucas sees Hardy's "most perfect fiction and one in which he hardly ever puts a foot wrong." *The Woodlanders* admirably sustains Lucas' themes of alienation from class and self in its modulations of change and loss, loneliness and regret. Some Hardy scholars will undoubtedly question Lucas' understanding of the relationship between Melbury and Grace. There is surely more than social aspiration and property rights involved in Melbury's attitude to his daughter.

Elizabeth Gaskell is moving steadily into the ranks of major Victorian novelists and changing from David Cecil's "gentle dove" into something of a

social hawk. Although it has been stated before, Lucas does well to iterate Gaskell's superiority to Engels as a social critic. Thanks to W. O. Henderson and others we now know where Engels found most of his information on Manchester. Like Marx, Engels' research is more redolent of the library than the factory. Nonetheless, as Lucas demonstrates, *Mary Barton* and *North and South* offer difficulties that show the characters moving in one direction while the narrator points resolutely in another. The narrator seems bent on soothing the liberal reader's trepidations while John Barton murders the mill owner's son. It is at this point that we surely need to attend to the problem of social censorship in the Victorian novel.

We are all acquainted with Moodie's ubiquitous "unmarried daughter" who forced writers into convolutions of sexual evasion, ranging from Thackeray's mermaid to Dickens' "little" heroines. However, an equally powerful restraint was that form of Podsnappery which made social comment difficult and a realistic treatment of trades unions and strikes impossible. Sex and strikes were both subjects that had to be treated obliquely, if at all, and the former was more easily rendered into coded prose than the latter. It is this which accounts to a large degree for the gaping incongruities between narrative voice and incident in Gaskell's social novels. John Barton dies in Carson's arms, an emblem of social reconciliation, but Carson weeps over his old enemy believing that his son died from a father's desire to defend a daughter's honour. No one told Carson why his son was killed and, when he asked, no one "rightly knew." The narrator says one thing, but Job Legh and his mates know what silence and solidarity mean. Gaskell realized that her readers, like Carson, would find sexual vindication more defensible than any form of social retaliation.

The technique of evasion is often clumsy in Gaskell's novels but the need for it was imposed upon her by a reading public that did not want any change in the class structure beyond the Dickensian call for more sympathy and good will. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote sharply to a friend that she had not been fair to the manufacturers in *Mary Barton* because all her sympathy was with the workers, but the narrator could not address her readers so freely.

John Lucas does well to draw our attention to the merits of "Cousin Phillis" and "A Dark Night's Work," but his interpretation of Preston in *Wives and Daughters* is open to question. Far from being "intensely disliked" by the narrator, there is a measure of sympathy for the first of Cynthia's victims. It is not his social arrogance that is condemned but his sexual aggression which encompasses all women, including Lady Harriet.

Perhaps it is carping to complain of shortcomings which are clearly in the publisher's domain. However, for \$18.50 one expects more than a brief and inadequate index, no bibliography, a meagre sprinkling of footnotes and typographical errors that offer George Elliot, and Charlie Kinraid contending with Charlie Kincaid on the same page. Despite these failings *The Literature of Change* is a stimulating book written in a fresh and lively manner that immediately sets it apart from those interminable theses trundled up the critical hills.

CORAL LANSBURY

Rutgers University

*The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Carlyle.* Edited by Charles Richard Sanders and Kenneth J. Fielding Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1977. Vol. V (Jan. 1829-Sept. 1831), Pp. xxii + 448; Vol. VI (Oct. 1831-Sept. 1833), Pp. xvi + 450; Vol. VII (Oct. 1833-Dec. 1834), Pp. xv + 442. \$20.00/vol.

*I Too Am Here*, edited by Alan and Mary McQueen Simpson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xx + 307. \$13.95.

*Thomas Carlyle: A Bibliography of English-Language Criticism 1824-1974* by Rodger L. Tarr. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976. Pp. + 442. \$20.00/vol.

Revival of interest in Thomas and Jane Carlyle continues with the recent publication of volumes five through seven of the *Collected Letters*, a bibliography of criticism on Carlyle's work, and a thematically-organized edition of Jane's letters.

Professor Tarr's clearly-stated goal is "to be comprehensive, listing in standard format the response of the English critics to Carlyle from the earliest found review in 1824 to the present." In comparison with what was previously available to us, Tarr has succeeded. He began by reviewing and checking each item that Isaac Watson Dyer published in his 1929 *Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's Writing and Ana*. Tarr has extended and written in standard bibliographical form Dyer's incomplete citations, thereby clarifying ambiguous references in the earlier title, and he has added 1200 entries to the 2200 published by Dyer. Of the new listings, approximately 400 were written during Carlyle's life.

The problem for any bibliographer of a major literary figure is that comprehensiveness can never be absolute. In part, that is because of the utter impossibility of discovering every title that contains major sections on the author; in part because errors of transcription do occasionally slip in and later become the cause of pleasure for nit-picking reviewers. Tarr acknowledges such limitations in his study as an incomplete index of British and American newspapers and a decision to omit "twentieth century reviews of works on Carlyle... except in the case of review-essays or those that contribute directly to Carlyle scholarship." Judgment, then, is part of the bibliographer's baggage, and it frequently collides with completeness. Not in this collection are such titles as *Number Five Cheyne Row* (1950) by John B. Cowan, *Alms for Oblivion* (1946) by George Carver, "Carlylean Courtship" (1938), which is also the first fifteen chapters of *Speaking Dust* by E. Thornton Cook, *Leaders of the Victorian Revolution* (1934) by John W. Cunliffe, and *Benevolent and Useful Lives* (1891), Robert Cochrane, ed. Such are the impossibilities of bibliographic completeness.

The format of Tarr's book is photographed typescript with unjustified right margins. Although such publications are not aesthetically appealing, they need suffer no other weaknesses. In Tarr's work, however, I note the occasional typographical awkwardness of an organizing date (such as 1950)

appearing as the last item on one page and the alphabetized items for that year on the page following. As one would expect, however, each item is located within chronology by year of publication and information is consistently and concisely given in standard format. Apparatus at the end of the book includes an appendix of cited journals and newspapers, an author index and a subject index. When items have been reprinted, that information is part of the citation and double entries are therefore avoided.

The need for additional work is obvious. Tarr notes that a bibliography derived from foreign language journals and one of Carlyle's primary materials should be written. I would add the need for a selected annotated bibliography of Carlylean criticism. Such a text would be a valuable companion to Tarr's work which aims for comprehensive coverage rather than critical assessment. I am, however, indebted to Professor Tarr for compiling a bibliography that is superior to and more inconclusive than any other work on Carlyle.

Quite a different book has been produced by Alan and Mary Simpson. It is not a book that will significantly alter perceptions about the Carlyles, nor is it a basic sourcebook for scholarly examination. The Simpsons have done precisely what they set out to do—to write "a book for enjoyment—for bedside, weekend and vacation—with the minimum of scholarly apparatus."

An emphasis of the 1970's that runs through the letters selected is that Jane, in her marriage, was kept from intellectual self-fulfillment. It is clear that Jane was a brilliant writer and that Geraldine Jewsbury and Carlyle frequently urged her to produce public writing of her own. That she chose not to do so is well known though the reasons for her choice bear examination. Her life centered on her husband and her household. She was the guardian angel in charge of noise control, taxes, maids, house cleaning, painting, and rebuilding. She was intellectually alert, the lion's wife who accepted the strictures of the age against the "forward wife." Like wives in every age, she would have been pleased with more husbandly concern, a closer relationship and less competition for Carlyle's attention. But Carlyle could give only scant attention to his wife's feelings and it was impossible for him to develop a close physical relationship with her. And so, when Carlyle began to spend days, then weekends, then weeks with the Ashburtons, Jane felt pushed aside. Since physical intimacy did not undergird her marriage, she had very little left to herself when she had to share intellectual closeness. Especially annoying was the further imposition of sharing her husband at the whim of the first Lady Ashburton and in the Lady's several homes.

At times, then, Jane had little of Carlyle to herself. She did, however, have a wit and a genius that are revealed again and again in her letters. Though the Simpsons make little of it, Jane's rhetoric deserves analysis which it has not yet received. Her nervous energy, her sharp perceptions, her flair for storytelling are all brilliantly revealed in her private correspondence. She was mistress of hyperbole and italics, and her dramatic flair molded her world into scenarios and anecdotes. Her powerful sense of the incongruous impregnates her story of the maid who gave birth to an illegitimate child at Cheyne Row. "I shall only say that while she is in labor in the small room at the end of the dining room, Mr. Carlyle was taking tea in the dining room

with Miss Jewsbury talking to him!!! Just a thin small door between them!" Jane's life was filled with stories that she recounted artfully and with gusto, and their retelling seemed to bring perspective and balance and humor to her own life.

The Simpsons' introduction provides an overview of Jane's biography with some commentary organized to the theme of women's liberation. The biography traces Jane's genealogical connections to John Knox, explicates her hero-worship of her father and then discusses the unusual five-year courtship of Jane and Thomas, a courtship that ended in a wedding ceremony attended by four guests. Three chapters of the letters deal with subjects long debated in the old "Froude-Carlyle controversy." "Lady Ashburton," "Illness" and "Living Miracle" center upon material that was extremely important to James Anthony Froude as he published the four-volume biography, the letters and memorials, and the reminiscences. The introduction also has three segments that deal with the same controversy. In repeating well-established assumptions, the Simpsons underscore the self-pity that emerges from Jane's letters and Carlyle's ready though posthumous acknowledgement of his love for his wife.

Such a book should not be attacked for doing what it was intended to do. To complain about a paucity of footnotes or the generous use of the ellipsis is to offer criticism that the editors disclaim in prefatory remarks. The Simpsons have given us a book for casual reading; they aimed low and hit the mark.

Of a very different nature is the *Collected Letters*, the "Duke-Edinburgh" edition of the letters of Thomas and Jane Carlyle. All of the promise of volumes one through four (1970) has been developed in volumes five through seven. This, the most comprehensive and accurate edition of the letters, is a model of painstakingly accurate scholarship. Footnotes are thoroughly but not excessively detailed, and yet the editors acknowledge their inability to trace a reference whenever that problem infrequently appears. Many previously unpublished letters are printed here with fidelity to the Carlyles' occasionally idiosyncratic punctuation, spelling and capitalization, becoming part of an edition that will give readers data as long as the Carlyles are discussed.

Volume five covers several themes: the illness of "our Sister Mag," Carlyle's respect for Goethe, his deep attachments to his mother and father, his concern that brother Jack, the doctor, make something of his life ("His *worst* fault, indeed almost only one, is *procrastination*."), various ideas he was to develop in *Sartor* ("my prodigal son"), and brother Alick's farm problems. One of the previously unpublished letters reveals that Carlyle considered writing about Frederick the Great as early as 1830, and another by Carlyle presents an insightful remark that "I am one of those that forget nothing; on whose hard heart only *Diamonds* will write; but once written, the letters stand there defying all tear and wear" (July 3, 1830). Previously unpublished letters in volume six number 32, in volume seven, 28. Although some letters are as incidental as an invitation to John Stuart Mill to have coffee with Carlyle, others comment on the Reform Bill, family responsibilities, publishing matters,

death, reading and moving. The editors have also included Carlyle's previously unpublished review of Abraham Hayward's translation of Faust, the translation that Carlyle, as an elderly man, was to consider the best that had ever been published. In volume seven appears Jane's "The Rival Brothers," a fragment of manuscript verse-drama that was located too late for chronological placement in the *Letters*.

Two other works can only be mentioned here. A very recent publication is *Carlyle's Friendships and Other Studies* (1977), a collection of eleven previously published essays by Charles Richard Sanders, this country's most productive and best-known Carlylean scholar. Also recently announced for publication in December 1977 is John Clubbe's edited and abridged version of Froude's *Life of Carlyle*.

Carlyle's admonition to his readers was that they "Produce, Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name!" Nearly 100 years after Carlyle's death, his students live his advice.

EDWARD SHARPLES

Wayne State University

*Thoreau and the American Indians* by Robert F. Sayre. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977. Pp. xix + 239. \$14.50.

The central argument of this important book is that Thoreau very largely accepted the nineteenth century idea of savagism, that complex of stereotypical notions which whites held about "the Indian." Savagism defined "the Indian" as a self-reliant and solitary hunter, a childlike figure capable either of nobility or fierce cruelty but always uncivilized, anti-cultural, and doomed to extinction. The idea served the white imagination in at least two important ways. To the expansionist advocate of Manifest Destiny, savagism lent cosmic inevitability to the extermination of native Americans. To pro-Indian savagists like Thoreau, however, the idealized Indian provided a figure for identification, who at once humanized the wilderness and enjoyed the desired original relationship to nature. The "Indian" became Thoreau's "predestined moral ally" in a philosophic and cultural war against civilization.

Sayre ably develops his thesis with detailed readings of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, *Walden*, *The Maine Woods*, and pertinent sections of the *Journal*. He also makes skillful use of material from the "Indian Books," Thoreau's 2,800 manuscript pages of reading notes and quotations now at the Pierpont Morgan Library. Seeking a unifying principle in *A Week*, Sayre convincingly reads the book as Thoreau's abbreviated history of Indian-white relations in America. Less effective is the chapter on *Walden*. That *Walden* represents Thoreau's "vision quest" is an intriguing notion, but Sayre's development of the idea uncovers little about the work that is not already familiar. Focusing in *The Maine Woods* on Thoreau's relationships with his guides, Sayre contends that "Chesuncook" and "The Allegash and East Branch" reveal Thoreau's "progress in breaking through many of

the prejudices of savagism." Thoreau was able to present Joe Aitteon and Joe Polis as "both Indians and complex, interesting individuals"; indeed, in Joe Polis Thoreau created the most realistic portrait of a native American by any white writer of the nineteenth century.

The "clearer knowledge" of the American Indians which Thoreau eventually achieved was largely the fruit of the careful study recorded in the "Indian Books." These fact-books have themselves long been the subjects of speculation. One popular theory, originated by F. B. Sanborn and repeated by many scholars, holds that they were source books for a monumental work on the Indians which Thoreau planned. Presumably this work was part of the "broken task" left by Thoreau's death and mentioned by Emerson in his eulogy. Sayre vigorously challenges this belief, suggesting instead that the "Indian Books" should "be construed more broadly as self-education and preparation for what he *did* write." What Thoreau did write about the American Indians was considerable and highly deserving of study, as *Thoreau and the American Indians* richly attests.

FRITZ OEHLISCHLAGER

Wayne State University

*Boccaccio's Two Venuses* by Robert Hollander. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. Pp. xi + 246. \$17.50.

The focus of this study is on Boccaccio's so-called minor Italian works (*opere minori in volgare*.) Hollander's intent is to show the inaccuracy of the prevailing notion that the earlier works were written by a pagan Boccaccio dedicated to praising the joys of carnal love while the last of them was by a convert who had finally embraced traditional Christian values. He argues convincingly that the minor works represent a consistent "attack upon the religion of love" by an author whose Christian values are never in doubt, even if those of his poet-lover/narrator are. It is not Boccaccio but the nature of his narrative that undergoes a transformation as it moves from the ironic mode of expression of the early works to the unblunted directness of the *Corbaccio*.

There is no doubt that there are two kinds of love in the *opere minori*: one which is good and governed by a celestial and marital Venus, and another which is bad and presided over by the same carnal Venus who inspired the Ovidian passions of the *Ars amatoria*. Hollander finds that all of Boccaccio's writings "involve the central opposition of the Lord of Love and Christian morality," and his conclusion is that Boccaccio presented carnal love only in order to condemn it. What ultimately emerges is an author who thinks of himself as the "new Ovid" because he writes of love, but one who cannot be Ovidian because he recognizes the sinful nature of carnal love.

*Boccaccio's Two Venuses* will not go unchallenged, but it should make a significant contribution toward changing the image of an author who, too often, is thought of, anachronistically, as the spokesman for a "naturalist" moral doctrine.

ANDREA DI TOMMASO

Wayne State University

*Shakespeare's Sonnets* edited by Stephen Booth. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977. Pp. xix + 578. \$25.00.

Obviously the result of many years of thoughtful, sensitive, and persistent engagement with Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, this edition, which reproduces the 1609 Quarto alongside a cautiously modernized text, not only offers the fullest and best annotation for these poems, but also extends the mode of criticism of *An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets*, still the finest book on the subject. In his preface and in the brilliant essays appended to the notes on sonnets 116 and 146, Booth includes a critical manifesto for the kind of reading, understanding, and (uncloseable) interpretation he advocates. He proposes a "conservative" (p. 517) criticism that does not exclude any of the "Multitudinous meanings, overtones, and suggestions of reference" (p. xiii) found in the *Sonnets*. Attending to the clash of syntactical and logical patterns, to Shakespeare's "constructive vagueness" (p. 419) through which the fullest "ideational potential in words" (p. 371) is realized, he demonstrates repeatedly the ways the poet typically can "invest abstract statements with the urgency, vividness, and apprehensibility of concrete particulars" (p. 387).

Using the Bible, Tilley's proverb collection, *The Book of Common Prayer*, the OED and the rest of Shakespeare to help define the *Sonnets*' rich polysemy, Booth produces a leisurely, but perceptive and informative, series of glosses, composing, by the way, an unalphabetized dictionary of Elizabethan idioms. Since he can assume the availability of the Rollins *Variorum*, he mainly cites the work of editors and critics of the past three decades, pointedly ignoring, however, most of the perennial controversies with which they and their predecessors have been concerned. Booth relegates to an appendix brief discussion of dating, arrangement and grouping, biography and identification of the young man, rival poet, and dark lady, and Shakespeare's "homosexuality." Militantly anticontextual, except in the spheres of language and intellectual history, Booth restricts his commentary to the idioms the hypothetical reader of the 1609 Quarto would have understood. He thus avoids the problem of dealing with the *Sonnets* as a large unit or of defining their sociocultural situation as coterie literature. In glossing subsidiary meanings of words like "arising" (29.11) as "advancement" and "countenance" (86.13) as "patronage" he reveals a keen awareness of the social encoding of Shakespeare's poetic language, but he does not choose to discuss the phenomenon on a larger scale than that of the occasional word or phrase. For both good and ill, this kind of formalism ignores some of the contextual constraints on interpretation.

Booth unabashedly discusses imitative form, the stylistic mirroring of thematic content, even to the point of stating that Shakespeare sometimes deliberately confused his reader. Here, as elsewhere in this kind of affective stylistics, the issue is a psychological one, though Booth eschews psychological models or vocabulary. When, however, he discusses the ways suggestions and innuendoes (especially sexual ones) counter the ostensible meanings and tones of particular passages or when he refers to Shakespeare's technique of flattering accusation, the emotional conflicts and psychodynamics of critic and author need to be illuminated, perhaps, by the insights of depth psychology. A critic



like Booth, who so skillfully interprets verbal, metaphoric, and syntactic condensations, who argues for the "extra-logical coherence" (p. 370) of these masterful lyrics, and who has passed beyond a "Verbal Icon" formalism to a response-centered criticism, deals with issues psychoanalytic critics are self-consciously attempting to articulate. Though, like sociology and biography, psychology is deliberately excluded as a subject, psychological perspectives, insights, and models are implicit in the critical methodology of this book, which should be valued for a long time for its perceptiveness as well as its usefulness.

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