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Book Reviews

The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis by Irving Massey. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976. Pp. 236. \$10.00.

Metamorphosis is a confounding and unpleasant subject, this study tells us, because it characteristically takes place after language betrays language; more particularly, it manifests itself when privacy is violated and the self invaded by forms of public meaning and gesture. The truth of the private speech of dreams is habitually betrayed by the impersonality of public language, and the metamorph is the figure upon whom is focussed that particular betrayal. Yet, as Professor Massey points out, metamorphosis can only occur within some form of language, as language's critique of itself from the inside. This crucial relationship of language to itself is the special route (rather than the more conventional ones of philosophy and psychology) by means of which Professor Massey approaches his subject.

In his view, the individual character crosses over, in the act of metamorphosis, to the alien or animalistic in order to protect himself from more "civilized" and more terrible violations that public speech provides. The results (bestial silence, grotesque exaggeration of individual parts, or the literalization of metaphor and symbol) are typically "gross and shocking"; metamorphosis of this kind occurs in a climate of crisis and is at times accompanied by terror and cruelty. The "gaping pig" of the book's title (by Shakespeare and Shylock) is an animal whose ambiguous gaze, half smile and half threat, represents a communication from an alien sphere where standardized human languages are not in control; because language is voided in such a sphere, the metamorph—in this particular form—must turn into something, not someone, else. This observation is only one part of the complex structure governing the book, but it is one of the great strengths of *The Gaping Pig* that structure does not tyrannize substance. There emerges, throughout the book, a counterbalancing attention and sensitivity to the tonalities of texts, important since only within such tonalities can literature respond to the difficulties that language itself creates.

The greater part of the texts that Massey examines contain this element of the alien and the monstrous. Beginning with brief overviews of passages from the *Odyssey* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, he subsequently turns to Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. Apart from an intricate interpretation of Lucius' transformation, the chapter contains a brilliant contrast of "naïve" and structuralist readings, a contrast that ultimately justifies the "naïve" methodologies in other chapters (though Massey's modesty in calling his character-based interpretations "naïve" is rather remarkable in view of his erudition and his insights, which are "naïve" only in some advanced sense). In a fine chapter on Gogol, Akaki's transformation from a simple and blessed copyist to a bedeviled cloak-owner to a harried ghost is seen as an inadvertent fall from silence—a copyist need not read what he writes—into public language and meaning, both of which

furnish only false rewards in an endless proliferation of noise. Akaki loses his innocence by tapping the spring of meaning and convention; having done so, he cannot retrieve his innocence.

Massey here and elsewhere contrasts this initial innocence of being behind or under language to a later phase in which meaning and subjectivity are deliberately exiled from it, violently distorted until they disappear. In between these two states is the nowhere of "ordinary language" of "the real world" and of science, a language of nothing for a place that doesn't exist. As Massey points out repeatedly in his chapters on Lewis Carroll's Alice books, on "third self" and horror literature (*Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Jekyll and Hyde*), on Hoffmann and Chamisso, the ordinary language of common usage, most recently glorified by the Wittgensteinians, cannot redeem or save anyone; it is against ordinary language and its delusions that metamorphosis sets itself. In a complex theory that I must grossly simplify, he argues that ordinary language cannot reach into the most private or profound sources of experience. Instead it points toward the false gold of a "reality" (its advocates' favorite word) that extends itself infinitely with meanings that do not and cannot stop at themselves. As long as fundamental needs remain unsatisfied, no closure is possible, the result being a Bouvard-and-Pécuchet-like explosion of competing texts and readings in the hope that language will deliver on its promise of providing answers. At another level, this search deprives the individual of his true integrity (common in literature concerned with scientists), and in Massey's chapter on *Frankenstein*, it is argued that the creation of the monster is in fact an effort by an empiricist-of-sorts to create a body that will enfold a subjectivity that he himself lacks. In Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl* these ideas are taxonomic by nature, but their inadequacy—and Peter's misplaced dedication to them—can only lead to the loss of his shadow, sign of his substantiality.

In the most complex chapter of the book, an examination of Flaubert's "Legende de Saint-Julien l'Hospitalier," Massey's great sensitivity to tonalities leads to a reading of the text through which Julien is raised to heaven, not by means of any particular dedication to "good deeds," but through a refusal to fall into subjectivity and expressive language, a refusal to betray the most private part of the self through a compact with language, ordinary or otherwise. Julien's refusal is, of course, also Flaubert's, in the peculiar, hammered one-dimensional prose of the story, which rescues its events and characters from appropriate articulation and which leaves Julien, in Massey's phrase "in a place where speech is nothing." And because the "silent language" is preserved Julien is redeemed, "after the story is over," in the most advanced kind of metamorphosis Massey describes.

This profound and disturbing book is, in one sense, as concerned with the limits of language as it is with metamorphosis; those who seek interpretations of the several texts Massey uses will be disconcerted. The stakes are much higher than that: it appears to be Massey's intent to preserve a form of critical humility that, in turn, treats the text as an object capable of transforming both itself and the reader; the experience of reading is metamorphic only when such humility—such ignorance, as Massey calls it—allows itself to be preserved. To pretend that there is no such ignorance either in the author's or protagonist's text is to move into the pansophistry of modern taxonomic critical methods,

which are "realistic" and implicitly anti-metamorphic, and which argue that the critic recognizes, at all levels, what the controls are upon his text, another version of the omnipotence of thought. In contrast, Massey's approach assumes that the reader, author, and protagonist encounter one another (and their experiences) in an atmosphere compounded of as much ignorance and fear as control, and that metamorphosis itself cannot be understood or generated otherwise. To this extent, the book's insights eventually branch out and implicate several trends in modern criticism and philosophy. Yet the tone has none of the aggressive Let's-set-the-record-straight quality of much contemporary language theory and criticism; if anything, the atmosphere of crisis in the texts seems about to spill over into the commentary, which itself has touches of empathetic anguish.

Two final notes: a quotation attributed to Stanley Kunitz (but not footnoted) more probably derives from a poem about America by Marianne Moore. Also, the persistent sadism that dogs the texts Massey examines is perhaps not given the attention it may warrant. Massey accounts for it by arguing that sadism may be "a protest at having been caught in the human condition," but since it turns up in virtually every one of the literary works he chooses to discuss, it seems more classical than that, like a half-articulate gesture made in an effort to force an inert natural world to come to life. This omission, however, would take a great deal of material to fill, and is hardly noticeable in an otherwise brilliant and illuminating study.

CHARLES BAXTER

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Process of Speech: Puritan Religious Writing and Paradise Lost by Boyd M.

Berry, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Pp. xi + 305. \$13.50.

Boyd Berry's *Process of Speech* divides, like many of the Puritan texts it examines, into "Doctrines" and "Uses." The first section opens with the dispute between English Protestants and Roman Catholics (and later between Puritans and Laudians) over bowing at the name of Jesus. From this "point of departure" (p. 25) Berry's text unfolds to consider a wide-ranging and impressive set of issues: Puritan Sabbatarianism, debates about the celebration of Christmas, Puritan and Anglican theories of history and typology, opinions about the calling and conversion of the Jews, and many others. There are also short treatments of Herbert and Crashaw, Lancelot Andrewes, and an entire chapter devoted to "Anglican ascent," which deals with Royalist attempts to "transcend" the political divisions of the Civil War.

In "Uses," which pivots on the topics of "Puritan soldiers in *Paradise Lost*" and styles of spiritual autobiography (Donne and Bunyan), Berry considers *Paradise Lost* placed in its polemical contexts. He claims as his thesis that "*Paradise Lost* is a poem in the Puritan style" (p. 1), and intends, by the organization of his book, to inform his reader about "the contemporary controversy out of which [the poem] was written" (pp. 2-3). The term "back-

ground" is carefully avoided, because (one suspects) it would implicitly devalue the Puritan context in favor of its major literary achievements; Berry hopes to reveal the contexts and *Paradise Lost* as inter-related, their concerns and styles inter-woven, and refuses to assert priority or privilege. To "democratize the tools of the literary critic" (p. 273) rules out evaluative distinctions between "passionate polemic" and "lofty poems": "I cannot necessarily claim that Stephen Marshall is more important than John Milton, but I cannot make the counterclaim either" (p. 273).

The chapters on doctrinal and polemical issues are judicious and often perceptive. Berry points out (to cite a single example) that the Puritan habit of assigning all agency and glory to God clearly manifests itself in "choices" (a key term for Berry) of style and diction. The controversialist Henry Airay, writing against "bowing," deploys concepts (election, reprobation, sanctification) rather than actions (electing, reprobating, sanctifying), nouns rather than verbs—a stylistic "choice" which reflects "God's overarching power" and Christ's eternal nature (p. 41). A metaphoric style should be rejected, since it suggests "shape-shifting" motion and activity, rather than a prose (and way of looking at the world) governed by divinely-ordered concepts. Similar insights are finely developed in Berry's discussions of Christian historiography (pp. 64ff.) and typology used as a polemical strategy (pp. 128ff.).

Berry's chapters on *Paradise Lost*, which acknowledge their indebtedness (it shows) to Joseph Summers and Stanley Fish, concentrate on the major figures: Satan, the Son, the Father, Adam and Eve. Berry re-opens the debate about Satan's status as "hero," and argues interestingly that "Satan will find his future apologists again" (p. 218). In several provocative pages on the "deep psychological structure" of the poem, he observes that our difficulty in working out its ideology (and in easily placing Satan) implies the antinomian thrust of Milton's argument. Milton's antinomianism, the impact of which few critics have recognized, impels his characters towards "self-deification," "the ultimate expression of that transcendent pressure in Puritan thinking, the last, great attempt to distance oneself from politics by rising above one's fellow-men" (p. 219). The case for Satan could be waged more successfully, Berry argues, if undertaken not in opposition to, but in conjunction with, the Father, the Son, and Adam and Eve. This kind of analysis, opening up the tensions between authority and individualism in the poem, might well "provide an explosive picture of [its] deep structure and emotional core" (p. 220), and also engage those who convict Milton of divided loyalties or polarized conscious and unconscious meanings. Additional points about *Paradise Lost's* "polysemous poeticalness" and its power to align its critics into champions and detractors are also well-taken; and it is regrettable that Berry cuts short (cf. p. 219) his speculations about the work's "deeper structures."

In his analysis of Adam and Eve, both before and after the Fall, Berry notes that Eden, rather than being dull and unappealing, instead offers "the perfect format for constantly imposing order on one's existence" (p. 245). In fact the need to shape and order life in the Garden suggests that in important respects the change from pre- to post-lapsarian life is "neither radical, dramatic, nor conclusive"—similar responsibilities exist for men both before and after the Fall, despite the crucial theological differences (cf. p. 244). For the problematical separation scene in book IX—why does Eve decide (and Adam

agree) that she should work alone?—Berry doesn't propose a new answer, but deals incisively with the significance of the question: "It is impossible to say" what "causes" Adam and Eve to behave in this way; "we do not see here the *causes* of the argument but rather a couple arguing" (p. 249). Books XI and XII—another crux for students of the poem—are also treated carefully and well. Borrowing from (but not bound by) Milton's chapters on regeneration in *De Doctrina*, and beginning with book X, Berry traces Adam's "ascent toward saving faith" (p. 264). He argues cogently that Adam's advance is "obscure, non-linear, and slightly discontinuous," difficult to fit into a neat pattern. Adam's final speech (XII, 533ff.) is quoted to exemplify the "Puritan soldier of Christ": "By stopping his story at this point"—unfortunately Berry neglects Eve's last speech (610ff.)—Milton demonstrates his faith in God's will and recognition that Adam's warfaring career will be consummated only "beyond time."

Some of the shortcomings of *Process of Speech* are minor, others are more serious. The style is, first of all, marred by frequent (and distracting) colloquialism. Better phrases than Milton "was weaned on a Puritan pickle" (p. 3) and "Adam's lunch" (i. e., his decision to eat the fruit) perhaps should have been pursued. The terms "Puritan" and "un-Puritanical" are sometimes loosely and imprecisely used, as when the "Nativity Ode" is judged to be an "un-Puritanic exercise" though reinforced by "decidedly Puritanic habits of thought and art" (cf. p. 114). Milton's sense of organization and method may mark *De Doctrina* as "one of the most Puritan things Milton ever did" (p. 256); but this deployment of method to produce a personal theology may be less "Puritanical" than unique. Puritan tracts may well be (for the most part) "as peas in a pod" (p. 86), structured "within a framework of thought already at hand"; yet to strictly oppose this "Puritan" habit to "innovation" may not allow for necessary distinctions. Another recurrent term, used especially with reference to *Paradise Lost*, is "optimistic"—the last three "redemptive books" are said to reverse many readers' attitudes towards God and the Fall, and thereby testify to the poet's "hope, that newly emergent and clarified Puritan optimism" (cf. pp. 230, 242). Possibly Berry should have been more careful to explain how his certainty on this point subverts the readings of other critics (E. M. W. Tillyard, Louis Martz, Thomas Greene, et al.). Tillyard, for example, writes in his *Milton*, p. 241: "I do not see how any honest reader can fail to detect the underlying pessimism of the poem."

The chief problems with *Process of Speech* involve its emphasis on "choice." For Berry the writer's stylistic decisions illustrate his "coherence" and "consistency" as a human being: the writer freely selects among alternatives, and does so in ways which conform to his personality. "Choice" is opposed to "psychological or socioeconomic determinism" and "the more rigid areas of Marxist analysis" (p. 125). The issues, however, are likely far more complex; and the idea of "coherence"—which may be a function not of the personality, but of the intention of the analyst to look for it—should not be imprudently used. The writer's "process of speech" allows for (one would like to think) personal "choice"; but to relate these areas of "choice" (once somehow specified) to political, social, and other pressures forces the critic to run considerable risks. How is Berry's reiteration of "choice" complicated by his fine discussions of the "rules for writing and setting tone" (cf. p. 50) which arose among the

controversialists?; and what principles govern the writer's and critic's selection of a "point of departure," from which all other choices "radiate" (p. 25)? On one occasion Berry writes: "...Once a man chose to move in one direction rather than another (to praise bowing rather than Puritanically attack it, for example), a whole series of other choices were, in effect, ready made for him. Language and theological thought matched" (p. 38). Here he simultaneously supports "choice" ("chose to move") and undercuts it ("ready made for him"). It is one thing for Berry to open his own text with the bowing controversy, but quite another to tie this methodological step to the larger suggestion of a locatable origin, free from the pressures which complicate, if not enforce, other "choices." Elsewhere Berry seems to assert "choice" only to imply a kind of historical necessity. He writes, for instance, that "it was only a matter of time, once Englishman had fallen out with Englishman, that Puritan would fall out with Puritan" (p. 89)—one would be interested in the possibilities for "choice" once this stage in the "process" has been reached. For all his subtlety and skill in dealing with other texts, Berry is unable to perceive this fissure in his own.

In a footnote Berry states: "I believe Milton thought he was divinely inspired. I do not believe that he was" (p. 295). Clearly he wishes to preserve the writer's freedom of "choice"—to stress that Milton in fact is not, as William Kerrigan argues in *The Prophetic Milton*, "inspired" and therefore merely an "instrument" taking (divine) dictation. But if Berry intends to convert "choice" into a theory of historical study, then he will have to be more precise in defining his opposition both to Kerrigan and to others—the Marxist historian Christopher Hill, for example—with whom he disagrees. Perhaps he should also be more observant of the implications of his own critical rhetoric. When Berry states in his final pages that Milton's narrator and Satan can be fully understood "only [through] an analysis of Milton's poetry which refers the lines not to other lines, other poems, or the poet's insulated canon but rather to the activities of mankind and to the turmoil of the society in which the poet wrote" (p. 275), he forcefully restricts the "choice" of critical and scholarly attention to be devoted to *Paradise Lost*. Here he also implicitly rejects critical work which valorizes (say) Milton's poem at the expense of Marshall's texts, and which assumes the priority of literature and strictly "literary" studies. These claims are far too significant not to be clarified and elaborated. Berry's historicism perhaps implies more than he realizes; his introductory chapter on method, which refers to the issues of "choice" and "coherence," is too brief and well-lubricated to prove satisfactory.

Process of Speech merits special and sustained consideration. It contributes important insights about many Puritan and Anglican texts; and its treatment of the separation, the Fall, and the concluding books advances our understanding of these problematical scenes. But for me the impact of the book lies in the methodological issues—freedom of "choice," historical study, relation of text to context—which are present throughout, but never addressed. Perhaps Berry might have applied to his own text a sentence from his excellent section on typological reading: "It is impossible to evade the problems of language" (p. 142).

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The Novels of Theodore Dreiser by Donald Pizer. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976. Pp. ix + 382. \$20.00.

A Glossary of Faulkner's South by Calvin S. Brown. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976. Pp. 241. \$12.50.

Both useful books, Donald Pizer's *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser* is a carefully written, informative study based partly on manuscripts, and Calvin S. Brown's *A Glossary of Faulkner's South* is a compendium of factual material and critical applications.

Pizer's book begins with attention to Dreiser's first published stories, four written during 1899. A close reading of "The Shining Slave Makers," "When the Old Century Was New," "Nigger Jeff," and "Butcher Rogaum's Door" locates the elements of theme and character that were to recur in the eight novels. Even in these early stories, Pizer finds the coupling of research and autobiography that marks Dreiser's best fiction.

Working with many kinds of possible factual sources for the novels, Pizer seems to rely most heavily on manuscript versions and on autobiography, although he also stresses that Dreiser was eclectic in his borrowings: "Like Henry James' ideal novelist, Dreiser was one on whom nothing was lost." Some of Pizer's material is fascinating, as is the account of the versions of *An American Tragedy*, its cutting and revising at the hands of both Dreiser and his "staff"; others of his accounts, unfortunately, seem simply redundant. This book should be comparable, in scope and approach, to Michael Millgate's *The Achievement of William Faulkner*, yet it is longer and somehow less incisive. Most of Pizer's conclusions, however, are apt, and one would not, finally, quibble with his wealth of material. Such a summary as this below is both accurate and helpful:

Dreiser's basic tendency as a novelist was to establish a clear central structure (Hurstwood's fall and Carrie's rise; Cowperwood's alternating business and love affairs; Clyde's parallel life in Kansas City and Lycurgus; Solon's double life as businessman and Quaker), to pursue this structure to its seeming conclusion (death or an emotional stasis), yet to suggest both by authorial commentary and by a powerful symbol within the narrative (a rocking chair, deep-sea fish, a street scene, a brook) that life is essentially circular, that it moves in endless repetitive patterns (p. 25).

From Calvin Brown's *Glossary*, one learns many things—practical things like the reason Nancy (of the bones in *The Sound and the Fury*) must be a cow, or what "skun the hen house" literally means ("raided the women's quarters"); interpretative things like the Appalachian ancestry of characters in the story "Mountain Victory." Besides the wealth of factual information, Brown's account of Southern customs is anecdotal and somewhat humorous, as when he glosses "Miss" with the reference, "My mother, who was considerably younger than Faulkner's mother and was named for her, called her 'Miss Maud' until the latter's death at the age of about ninety."

As Brown explains in his introduction, "The purpose of this book is to help the Shreves to understand what Faulkner is saying." Since Brown is not only a literary critic but also a fellow Mississippian, his readings of these terms are probably as close to accurate Faulkner as any would be.

The book also includes an appendix on "Faulkner's Geography and Topography," in which Brown makes sane distinctions between Faulkner's fictionalizing and the facts of the locale. He also includes useful area pronunciations (SAR tor is and La FAY ette, for example).

Both useful books . . .

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Marlowe, Tamburlaine, and Magic by James Robinson Howe. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976. Pp. 214. \$11.00.

The thesis of this book is that Marlowe was influenced by Hermeticism—especially by Giordano Bruno—and that his career as dramatist sloped up to and away from *Tamburlaine*, the earlier *Dido Queen of Carthage* being apprentice work and the four later plays representing a decline from power and insight. Everything comes to a head in the two central chapters on *Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two*, and upon these the present review will mainly focus.

Tamburlaine himself is for Mr. Howe intellectually and morally perfect: "Man is ideally like this, like the gods" (7). Again, Tamburlaine is "the ideal man in whom outward appearance and inner virtues are one" (58). His nature is "allied to divinity" and therefore itself determines right and wrong (63). His chief motive is "to govern himself fully, to be perfect outwardly as he is inwardly" (56). The explanation of his cruelty is to be found in his "high-mindedness" (54): the "insight behind" his murderings and burnings was "what made them possible" (13). His mercilessness is the perhaps inevitable result of his purity of honor and faith (94-95); and—an especially curious observation—he is "the perfect shepherd of the pastoral convention now taken literally" (75), as though all the shepherds from Theocritus and Bion down, including Virgil and Spenser, secretly yearned to fulfill themselves by swash-buckling and ranting through oceans of blood. Tamburlaine's most tyrannical acts are therefore to be regarded as admirable. His burning of the town in which Zenocrate died is the result of "a higher inspiration than morality or love of physical life can give" (92). We are wrong to pity the virgins whom he causes to be executed because we do not "see from Tamburlaine's exalted height," and the virgins are allowed to speak at length merely "to demonstrate how pitiable they would be to the average person" (67). When Tamburlaine wounds himself and invites his sons to bathe their hands in his blood, "It is a scene mildly but clearly reminiscent of the Christian communion" (103). Once more, his killing of his cowardly son Calyphas is "merely the most personal and forceful of his demonstrations of higher spiritual inspiration" (92). In sum, *Tamburlaine*, especially Part One, is "a spiritual exemplum, an adaptation of medieval religious dramatic form which is also the essential Elizabethan play" (85).

How did Tamburlaine manage to ascend to the morality of a Charles Manson or the worst sort of Hell's Angel? Through becoming a Hermetic *magus*: "the system of ideas he tested is most fully discussed in the Renaissance with

reference to the figure of the magus" (4). The proof of this startling claim is made partly through a modish but unreliable interpretation of images. Zenocrate, for instance, because the stars gaze upon her, becomes "the supreme astral talisman and charm, the supreme emblem of the magic art, indicative of the extreme profundity of Tamburlaine's understanding" (107). No matter that she performs no magic (nor does anybody else in the plays); if we can invoke, from outside the text, such words as "astral," "talisman," and "supreme emblem," all doubts are dissipated. When we read of Tamburlaine that "His looks do menace Heaven and dare the gods; His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth" (I, ii, 156-57), we are to understand that "Here is the union of heaven and earth, of spirit and body, of the ideal and its outward expression" (172). When Theridamas exclaims that Fame hovers above Tamburlaine with "eagle's wings joined to her feathered breast" (Part Two, III, iv, 62), we are to say of Tamburlaine anything that might be said of the eagle. In his *Heroic Frenzies*, Bruno describes one type of heroic lover as "a nude boy lying upon the green meadow" with his head resting on his arm and his eyes turned toward the sky. Tamburlaine is indeed "not a nude and youthful lover, but a warrior wearing armor"; nevertheless he too "sees visions beyond the reach of more mundane eyes" and therefore is like the boy (173). The fact that both have their eyes turned upwards is enough to establish a relationship.

This hermeneutic method, which in recent years has grown in popularity to the point where it appears to invade half the doctoral dissertations now in progress, resembles the codes by which Bacon is said to have asserted his authorship of Shakespeare's plays: anything whatever can be proved by it.

There is, however, a second strand in the proof, and this has to do with the probable influence upon Marlowe of Bruno, who was in England in 1583-85. True, Marlowe is not known to have met Bruno, and indeed was a student at Cambridge when Bruno was in London or Oxford. There is, however, "some evidence that Marlowe's attendance at his university was spotty in the extreme" (36). What more likely than that the two may have met, or, lacking that, that Marlowe heard of Bruno through Raleigh's School of Night (35)?

The intellectual weight of these arguments, and of others that I have no space to rehearse, is roughly equivalent to that of the proof from imagery. Anyone who knows the Hermetic writings at first hand and has not merely skimmed them to find support for a *parti pris* is aware that the ancient and authentic Hermetists—at least those who forged the documents—were desert hermits whose followers grew a few vegetables but themselves studied and meditated without attempting to operate upon the world at all. Their Renaissance followers often studied and occasionally practised magic, but always, at least allegedly, for the relief of the world's suffering, and usually after ritual purifications. Mostly, however, the Hermetic *magus*, like the Chaldaean *magi*, the Indian gymnosophists, the Greek *philosophoi*, and the Latin *sapientes*, was the Lover of Wisdom, The-One-Who-Knew. He had mastered Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and—through the Hermetic fragments—Egyptian wisdom and had added to them Christian truths, with the result that he understood God, the good and bad daemons, the universe as a whole and in its parts. To add Tamburlaine to their company would be comical if it did not go beyond humor to absurdity.

The publication of such books as this makes one wonder, in one's gloomier moods, whether an embargo should not be put for a decade or two on "scholarship" in the discipline called English. Of course it should not be. Excellent studies are printed as well as those which are negligible, or worse. I do not wish to restrict explorations of Hermeticism to already established experts. Nevertheless I assert, as emphatically as I can in such a brief review, that not every Renaissance writer was a Hermetist, and that Marlowe's Tam-burlaine is a classic example of a literary personage who was not.

If what I have written is severe, I claim the right, so insistently urged by Mr. Howe as the basis of all sound morality, to express myself regardless of pain to others. To the author himself, as a human being, I wish no ill. Of his book I must say that its value is richly negative. My heart quails when I think of the student papers it may spawn. The sole virtue I have found in it is that the proofreading was excellent.

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Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Toward a Discipline of Folk Studies. By Richard M. Dorson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Pp. x + 391. \$12.50.

Richard M. Dorson has been at war for twenty-five years. His opponents have been fellow folklorists, other academics, popular authors, amateur scholars, congressional committees, university administrators, anyone, in fact, who dared to write on folklore without acknowledging that it was not a collection of curious relics but a distinctive area of study with its own independent theory and methodology. *Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Toward a Discipline of Folk Studies* is one more salvo in this war, one more attempt to support "...the proposition that folklore is an independent humanistic discipline worthy of academic recognition in every university" (p. viii). To prove his assertion, Dorson offers twelve essays, nine of which are reprinted and three which appear for the first time, organized into four broad categories, theory, the oral process, in the field and folklore in the mass media, and introduced by an essay which details the rationale underlying his approach.

Because Dorson demonstrates his theses with a collection of articles spanning his career (the earliest, "Comic Indian Anecdotes," dates from 1946 and several others are from the 1950's) instead of with a unified theoretical and methodological presentation, the particular choices are not as important as the overall profile of folkloristics they present, and the validity of his ideas depends much more on their ability to articulate a natural unity to folkloristic practice than it does on their individual assertions.

At the heart of Dorson's thesis is the concept of "oral traditional culture." For Dorson, the "folk" are not the uneducated, rural mountaineers hidden in the backwoods of America of popular belief: "Folk signifies [the] anonymous masses of tradition-oriented people. . .[who] move in a culture different from that of intellectuals although living under the same flag" (p. 46). Cultures he sees as naturally divided. On the one hand, there is the culture of the public

world embodied in television, newspapers, written literature, and on the other, there is the private culture of the common man embodied in his unnoticed accomplishment of everyday life. He argues that "the unofficial culture can be contrasted with the high, the visible, the institutional culture of church, state, the universities, the professions, the corporations, the fine arts, the sciences" (p. 46). Within this context, the majority of peoples live out their lives creating their own explanations for the great and not so great events of experience, generating in the process their own answers to the fundamental questions of human life in the form of folk literature, folk belief, folk history, folk religion, and the like. Though this special culture exists outside, and often in antagonism, to mainstream life, it is traditional rather than exclusively ancient: "Traditions are continually being updated," so that "...the unofficial culture reflects the mood of the times as much as does the official culture..." (p. 46).

Wedded to this concept of tradition is the idea of "oral recreation" which Dorson believes is the legitimate process by which folklore is created. What distinguishes folklore from other cultural artifacts is the existence of many variants of the same text. For an item to qualify as folklore, Dorson argues that it must be the product of the transmission of many performers. He believes "...that repeated acts of memorization will inevitably produce variation," whereas, "If an oral poem or recital is the unique product of one mind, it will represent a creative energy and artistic imagination of a different order..." (p. 135). Since the processes at work in the latter material necessarily resemble those at work in the creation of written literature, and since such material represents the official culture, it cannot be folklore. He concludes: "Non-traditional oral creations remain unique texts" (p. 133). At issue is Dorson's desire to distinguish between what he terms "individual creativity" and "collective traditionality" (p. 135). Though he is quick to point out that there is by no means unanimity on this point, the former, he asserts, represents a moment of experience awaiting the verdict of tradition. Such a verdict can only be rendered if the newly created text has the ability to excite beyond the moment of its enactment. If it can survive beyond its initial performance and transcend its creator, then it will have proven value to the "folk." If not, then it will have been but a passing gesture.

Oral traditional culture, therefore, offers Dorson a distinctive focus of scholarly attention, unexamined by other disciplines through which it is possible to come to terms with the ordinary lives of ordinary people. As folk, such people, living within but not as part of the world, offer insight into the hidden recesses of modern American culture; and such insight offers us the potential to see ourselves as the others among us see us. Accordingly, the inherent validity of folklore scholarship derives from this conceptual universe, and it is in light of its meaningfulness that Dorson's desire to establish folkloristics within the humanistic context of the university stands or falls.

For those unfamiliar with folk studies interested in encountering a major folklorist's vision of the state and future of the discipline, this book is a worthwhile introduction. Those already familiar with the discipline, especially those seeking a programmatic statement of the particular place of folkloristics in the humanities, will be disappointed. The work is disappointing because it is inadequate to the task assigned it. As rigidly defined by Dorson, oral traditional

culture reduces folk studies to a devitalized science remote from the social life of the people it attempts to study. Because acts and events must transcend individual experience and become culturally anonymous before they can be folkloric in Dorson's schema, scholarly attention is focused on, and ultimately limited to, the recognizable text within the event. Since the validity of any performance is determined by its ability to survive through time, folkloristics becomes a discipline in which the fundamental goal is not the exploration and critical analysis of the potential creative aspects of everyday lives but one in which the object of scholarship is the enshrinement of verbal icons. This elevation of the historically validated text to primacy creates a science in which methodology and practice are reduced to the validation of the already known. Performances are examined for how well they conform to preconceived and developed formulas. Instead of discovery, the folklorist is left to cataloging analogues until neither he nor those who possess the lore are visible. The final result is an unbreachable dichotomy between the folk and their lore and the folklorist and the folk. The very humanism Dorson seeks to promote is therefore vitiated, and folkloristics becomes singularly inhumane.

Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Toward a Discipline of Folk Studies is, then, an interesting, informative, but finally disappointing testament; interesting in its ability to catalogue the hindrances which have inhibited the scholarly advance of folkloristics, informative in its ability to detail from whence modern folkloristics has come, disappointing because it fails to provide a workable vision of the future.

MICHAEL J. BELL

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Lucan: An Introduction by Frederick M. Ahl. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 379. \$19.50.

Dante accorded Lucan a position among the great poets of antiquity, placing him in the company of Homer, Vergil, Horace, and Ovid. The modern world has shown less generosity, and at best ranks him among the most minor of writers. In the minds of many his name is merely a source of confusion with Lucian. Even classical scholars have little sympathy for him, and modern handbooks of Latin literature tend to dismiss the *Pharsalia* as the product of an impetuous *wunderkind*, whose passion for rhetoric was the bane of any poetic talent he may have possessed. Fortunately, the epic is drawing the attention of favorable critics, and some scholars are attempting to restore at least in part the stature attributed to it by the medievals. Much of the credit goes to German scholarship, which has produced several excellent studies. British classicists have ignored Lucan almost entirely, in spite of A. E. Housman's fine edition, while in America the last major book was Mark Morford's valuable *The Poet Lucan*. Professor Ahl's book is a welcome contribution and makes a very timely appearance.

The book is an introduction to a poet who is certainly in need of one. Ahl aims to examine the meaning of the *Pharsalia* and hopes "to provide some

fresh perspectives on the poet and his work and to present them in a form accessible to the Latinless reader as well as to the classicist." The author makes a promise of objectivity in dealing with a controversial poet and promises to ground his interpretations firmly on the text of Lucan. Accordingly, the study makes liberal use of quotation and *explication de texte*. The choice of passages for analysis is judicious, and Professor Ahl is to be commended for his translations which are crisp and faithful to a highly idiosyncratic original. One would like to see the author undertake a much needed English translation of the entire epic.

The *Pharsalia* is very much a product of the Neronian Age. Full appreciation of its merits and meaning is possible only if the poem is viewed in light of the political, moral, and social developments of the day. For just as the *Aeneid* is inextricably bound up with the achievements of the Augustan dispensation, so the *Pharsalia* is in large part a reaction to the rule of Nero. The book's first chapter sets about the task of relating the poet to his age. Ahl rightly sees the epic as the product of a literary tradition which sprang up out of the alliance of stoics and disgruntled republicans. The author's discussion should once and for all dispose of the theory that the poem is favorable in any way to Nero and the principate.

While Ahl succeeds in his efforts to place Lucan in his historical milieu, he might have treated somewhat more fully the literary background of the *Pharsalia*. The epic everywhere exhibits the influence of the declamatory schools, and critics from the time of Quintilian to the present have attacked the work for being rhetorical. It is surprising, then, that the book neglects to treat the influence of Roman rhetorical training on the poem's style, outlook, and content.

Ahl's explication of episodes and characters in the *Pharsalia* often proceeds by way of comparison and contrast with the *Aeneid*. This can be a valid means of interpretation and leads to some fruitful discussions. The method, however, does have its pitfalls. A case in point is the analysis of Curio's landing in Africa, which the author compares to the landing of Aeneas in Italy. The complex of similarities and differences adduced by Ahl is somewhat bewildering, and some of the parallels have but a modicum of significance. An example: "Aeneas may be too huge to enter the small dwelling of Evander, but Curio is no less obviously too small to follow in the footsteps of Hercules and Scipio." (p. 99). In addition to Curio, every major character and almost all the minor ones are discussed with reference to Aeneas. The problem here is that the relationship between the *Pharsalia* and the *Aeneid* is never established. Ahl certainly does tell us that Lucan's poem represents a revolution against the *Aeneid* and that the poet "wanted to match words and ideas with Vergil," but leaves unresolved a number of questions. Given the many contrasts with Vergil, is Lucan writing an anti-*Aeneid*? What is the nature of Vergilian inspiration in a poem which has so many points of contact with the *Aeneid*? Did Lucan have Aeneas consciously in mind when delineating the characters of the *Pharsalia*?

The book devotes separate chapters to the three major characters of the poem, Pompey, Caesar, and Cato. The *Pharsalia* has no hero in the conventional epic sense, and Ahl shows sound judgment in not trying to designate one. The discussions of the major figures are generally well-balanced and add considerably

to our understanding of them. Ahl shows special sensitivity in his treatment of Pompey, whose contradictory character and motivations have been misunderstood by many critics of Lucan.

Ahl makes several good points in his discussion of Caesar, but misinterprets him in the section entitled, "The Problem of Caesar's *Clementia*." Citing the Afranius episode, the author feels that Caesar's clemency and humanity force themselves into the epic despite Lucan's effort to argue them away. In reality, far from disguising Caesar's tendency towards mercy, Lucan goes out of his way to point it out in order to underscore its perverse nature. The reasons for this are thematic. The *Pharsalia* deals with the destruction of individual and political liberty. Lucan makes it clear that after Pharsalus the only liberty left to Romans is the decision to die. By pardoning his enemies and forcing them to live against their wills, Caesar robs them of their last moral freedom and establishes himself as master of their lives. There is nothing humane about this mercy, which is simply Caesar's most potent weapon in the attack on his opponents' last vestige of freedom. It is this insidious clemency which is evident in Caesar's encounters with Domitius, Metellus, and Afranius, and it is this clemency which Cato and his men seek to avoid as they march through the desert. Cato, in fact, says this in so many words (9.272 ff.)

Ahl ends his book with a discussion of the poem's scope and title and adds an appendix on the chronology of Lucan's works. The material is handled with impressive scholarship and lucidity. After presenting the various theories on the terminus of the epic, the author proposes the death of Cato as the probable ending. The thematic and structural reasons he adduces are plausible and will render obsolete much earlier speculation.

JOHN F. MAKOWSKI

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Hawthorne, Melville, and the Novel by Richard H. Brodhead. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976. Pp. 216.

Richard Brodhead analyzes the complex formal inventiveness of Hawthorne and Melville between 1850 and 1852. Equivocally committed to the novel as their most usable form for great art, they wrote a series of books—*The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Pierre*—which are highly self-conscious even self-reflexive, confessing their own illusory nature. Brodhead's contribution lies in his sensitive reading of each novel in terms of the pressure on its author of genre, convention, speculative impulse, and hard fact. His perspective is not original, particularly on Melville, though he does persuasively demonstrate the diversity of Hawthorne's attempts to accommodate conflicting demands of reality and form.

The five novels are finally less remarkable for their images of life than for their sense of the process of a mind envisioning and ordering experience, exploring and experimenting technically, and then discarding the form itself. By 1852 both writers were discouraged, Melville more extravagantly, by their recognition of the delusory nature of all art forms. Hawthorne's failure to control the

disparate elements in *Blithedale* and Melville's exposure of *Pierre* itself as a sham invention signify their sense of failure. Both writers, says Brodhead, had always had imaginations "hostile to the kind of formal procedure that the novel's organization requires." That could be said, however, about nearly every outstanding original novelist. The novel has thrived as a romantic genre, protean in its adaptability to an aesthetic based on organically developing form.

The major problem in evaluating this lucid, well organized, useful book is that it may not be the kind of book required to do the task implied at the beginning; or perhaps it does but half the task. A satisfactory study of the generic significance of these five novels must be grounded in more historical contexts than Brodhead's formalistic assumptions allow. First, the aesthetic disillusionments of Hawthorne and Melville should be considered as somewhat puritanical versions of a common pattern in romantic aesthetics, the quasi-religious acceptance of art as a successor to faith. Second, although the English novel of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, and the American novel of Cooper, Simms, and Paulding may not have directly influenced Hawthorne and Melville, their sense of available form was affected by their traditions and their achievements are significant within those traditions. Third, these books were not typical; an overemphasis on three or four books, in fact, has always distorted our perspective on continuities in American fiction. Even our usual terms—Romance and Realism—need re-analysis. The popular romancer Scott, by emphasizing verifiable details, was also a father of the Realistic novel. Around 1900 most American novelists were still struggling to reconcile the conflicting demands of factual reportage of daily life and the conventional romantic plot. Finally, the despair of Hawthorne and Melville at their failure was, as Brodhead hastily notes, produced by many factors including their relation to their public, as well as personal problems he does not explore.

JOHN BASSETT

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The Illustrator and the Book in England from 1790 to 1914 by Gordon N. Ray.

New York: Oxford University Press and The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1976. Pp. xxxiii + 336. \$59.95.

This magnificent book is less a record of book illustrators than a bonanza. Based mainly upon Professor Ray's personal collection of illustrated books, and occasioned by an exhibition at the Pierpont Morgan Library, *The Illustrator and The Book* is frankly a catalogue and not a history or a critical evaluation. Its purpose is to present in a precise but chiefly visual way the whole course of book illustration in England during its most exciting years. As a result, though much information about the methods of book illustration is provided, the true appeal of the work is its reproductions, and these are both splendid and ample. Those included in the catalogue are necessarily reduced, but at the end of the catalogue are 100 full-page plates.

The notes to the various entries do not pretend to be thorough critical statements, but merely serve to explain some aspects of the works listed. It must

be remembered that this is a catalogue of illustrated books and not a chronicle of book illustration. Although each individual reader may lament the absence of a rare or favorite illustration, those chosen for reproduction are invariably appropriate for the larger purpose of the book. The selection from George Cruikshank's *The Drunkard's Children*, for example, is the best of the series—the suicide of the fallen daughter.

This beautifully designed and executed book will clearly become a standard reference work for scholars in the field and is an achievement in book-making in its own right. Professor Ray's "Introduction for Collectors," mainly an explanation of the decisions involved in the planning of the book, is also a genial personal essay on his experiences in the collecting of illustrated books. Altogether, this fine book constitutes both a generous act of preservation and a gesture of great good taste.

JOHN R. REED

The Romantic Will by Michael G. Cooke. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976. Pp. xviii + 279. \$15.00.

The principal virtue of this study is that by concentrating on a single significant topic, it provides a basis for some provocative new readings of individual poems and some helpful interpretations of the Romantic period in general. Using such central poems as Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Blake's *Jerusalem*, and Keats' *The Fall of Hyperion*, Cooke describes different manifestations of will in Romantic poetry. For example, will may determine the nature of identity, as in *Mariner*, it may undergo a healthy tutoring, as in *The Prelude*, or, more complexly, the poet's will may interfere with the treatment of will as a poetic subject, as in *Jerusalem*. Ultimately, Cooke argues, the Romantic poets sought transcendence through the esthetic act, and thus the "will to art" was a means of commanding experience. But the poetic impulse had to be restrained. The result was that the Romantic exertion of will moved from an impulse to license in poetry toward self-restraint and a form of stoicism.

The Romantic Will offers an involved examination of poetic texts with supporting evidence from poets' letters and theoretical writings, as well as from modern critical commentators. What is lacking in the book is a sense of what other thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—from philosophers and theologians to medical men—conceived of the will to be. Without such a picture of the prevailing definitions and explanations of the will in the Romantic period, the readings in this study must remain, to some degree, unpersuasive.

JOHN R. REED