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Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century by Ronald Paulson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975. Pp. 256. $25.00.

This is an important and ambitious work, though less ambitious than its subtitle suggests. Because iconography in the sense of "traditional structures of meaning" was "moribund" in the eighteenth century, "other structures of meaning were in process of being sought and developed." (p. 9) In examining "the way in which artists brought up on verbalizable structures of graphic art try with varying degrees of success to find substitute languages of meaning or non-meaning," (p. 9) Professor Paulson focuses attention on the "meaning" (the "intended sense" in historical context) of each of the works he examines. These are chiefly the paintings and engravings of Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Hogarth's "followers." Paulson is not concerned with sculpture or architecture, though there is a chapter on the "poetic garden." In tracing the development of nontraditional "structures of meaning," Paulson draws various analogies between eighteenth-century literature and art.

The book, then, undertakes three primary, related tasks: (1) to provide detailed commentary on numerous art works and artists; (2) to trace the transition from "emblem" to "expression" in eighteenth-century art; and (3) to use literary criticism to help explain the "meaning" of paintings, engravings, and gardens. Paulson is far more successful in the first two endeavors than in the third.

His discussions of individual art works are usually discerning and often provocative, and he generally makes effective use of such considerations as a work's historical context, "internal" evidence, and the artist's personal life in establishing "meaning." Occasionally, speculation or simple assertion is allowed to do the work of evidence ("one suspects" that Reynolds' *Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy* "is also about himself, the Garrick of painting, who can equally paint Tragedy ... and Comedy" [p. 80]; lacking evidence to the contrary, one might continue to suspect that the painting is "about" Garrick), and some readers may feel that the intentions of individual works are sometimes distorted in Paulson's search for illustrations of his primary thesis, but the kind of casualness that characterizes his use of conceptual terms from literary criticism is generally absent in his analyses of individual paintings and engravings.

In tracing the eighteenth-century transition from "fidelity to the imitated text" (through traditional iconography) to "fidelity to 'nature' and ultimately to self-expression," (p. 14) Paulson begins with Hogarth, who connected "contemporary subject matter with the iconography of history painting" (p. 36) and "was in some sense making fun of the traditional iconography" (p. 9); compares and contrasts Hogarth's work with "the alternative tra-

dition of literary painting" (p. 80) represented by Reynolds; discusses selected developments on the continent; and, in the longest and most interesting of the book's three sections, turns to an examination of the "post-Hogarth generation"—Zoffany, Stubbs, Wright of Derby, and Gainsborough. In this final section, Paulson clearly demonstrates how each artist responds to the need to find alternative structures of meaning: Zoffany, by combining public with separate and personal meanings in a single work; Stubbs, by achieving "the intensity of primary myth," accomplished by returning man "to those scenes or relationships in which he is not primary or central but faces the most primitive forces" and by "balancing a rationalist organization of detail with an enveloping emphasis on natural forms and instinctual responses" (p. 181); Wright of Derby, by "demythologizing" nature; and Gainsborough, whose work, despite its formalism, shows the "impossibility of a complete break" from "the old tradition of art as a sister to poetry or to moral philosophy," ultimately by forcing the viewer "to take part in the metamorphosis that is at the heart of [Gainsborough's] painting." (p. 230)

Paulson's book, then, is useful for its analysis of individual works and evaluations of artists, as well as for its account of the development of various structures of meaning, although the latter is marred by somewhat facile attempts to relate artistic changes to eighteenth-century theories of the association of ideas. Paulson says there were two "traditions"—one, "descending from Locke to Alexander Gerard and Hume (and Sterne), believed that the association of ideas in the mind is accidental, whimsical, and altogether diverse," and the other, "supported by Mark Akenside, David Hartley, Burke and Reynolds, held faith in the power of the uniformity of the senses, if not the intellect." (p. 136) In fact, these writers do not constitute two distinct traditions. To take only one example, Gerard does *not* believe that the association of ideas is "accidental, whimsical, or altogether diverse"; although the minds of various men may be ruled by one or more of several different principles of association, men associate ideas in systematic, consistent patterns that can be clearly defined and rationally explained (see Gerard's *An Essay on Genius* [1774]). And though Gerard does not believe that men's judgments or imaginations are equal, that is not the same as saying that he lacks "faith in the power of the uniformity of the senses."

"Poetry and painting," Paulson says, "are inherently different, and yet the difference is perhaps less between the arts themselves than between historical and cultural epochs" (p. 8); hence he feels free to use literary concepts to "describe graphic art" and to draw analogies between eighteenth-century literary works and the period's paintings, engravings, or gardens. Presumably, the point of such analogies is to help us better understand either the paintings/engravings/gardens or the literary works or both. Occasionally, his analogies do further understanding when they are concerned with works whose subject matter and ends are nearly identical and whose differences in media do not preclude similarity of effects (as in his observation that Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* is a better analogue than Pope's *Dunciad* to Piranesi's views of Rome because Gibbon and Piranesi both "want to relate, as dramatically as possible but as truly, the illusion of Ancient Rome to the present ruined reality and also to the original structural reality" [p. 120]).

Frequently, however, the analogies do not, partly because inherent differences in the media that necessarily lead to different aesthetic effects even when comparable devices or conventions are used are lost sight of, but more often for other reasons. In some instances, differences in artistic intentions and differences in the use of various devices or conventions in specific artistic contexts are ignored ("the questioning of . . . outmoded systems of signification . . . turned into a suspicion of books in general. Parson Adams' throwing his Aeschylus into the fire . . . was related to Tristram Shandy's questioning of the whole matter of sentence structure, syntax, and semantics . . . [much as] Hogarth's avoidance of all 'style' or artifice . . . led to the attempt of the next generation to paint just what was there" [p. 199]). At times, Paulson merely asserts that this or that analogy exists without demonstrating that the elements in the analogy *are* comparable in any important way (as in the preceding example), or bases historical speculation on parallels between the arts rather than on historical evidence ("It may have been through the mediation of [Hogarth's] prints as well as of the garden that writers became aware of those structural potentialities of their own medium that had been borrowed and adapted by art" [p. 48]). Perhaps because Paulson's chief subject is painting, he is inclined, I would argue, to overestimate the influence of visual on verbal arts. For example, he says that "it seems clear that the importance—the centrality—of Hogarth and the garden lies in the fact that while the interaction between the arts in the eighteenth century went both ways, the powerful pull was from the direction of the visual . . ." (p. 48); it was not at all clear, however, and would in fact come as a surprise to the overwhelming majority of eighteenth-century theorists who were concerned with comparisons between verbal and visual arts. And, finally, throughout much of this combining of art history and literary criticism there is a peculiar mixture of declaration ("In a way that derives from poetry but exceeds it, the garden introduces spatiality and the dimension of time . . ." [p. 21]) and imprecision ("The effect [of placing a statue so that it can be seen from several perspectives in a garden] is something like that of 'take' in Queen Anne 'does sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea'" [p. 22]).

Despite these shortcomings, *Emblem and Expression* is an important work dealing with a subject eminently worthy of scholarly attention. There is much that one can learn about the general development of various structures of meaning in eighteenth-century art from Paulson's book, and much that is gained from the author's analyses of individual works. *Emblem and Expression* should stimulate interest in further investigations of eighteenth-century art.

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The Art of John Martin by William Feaver. Oxford: Clarendon Press and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp. xv + 256. 8 illustrations in color, 165 in black and white. $18.25.

The Art of John Martin, first full-length book on this English artist in twenty-eight years—since Thomas Balston's *John Martin*, 1947—would seem to represent a full-fledged revival of interest in Martin, somewhat abortively heralded by Christopher Johnstone's picture-book, *John Martin* (1974), which renders some of its color reproductions of gigantic apocalyptic paintings well, but fails dreadfully with Martin's popular masterpieces, his mezzotint illustrations of Milton, and is negligible, where not simply inaccurate, in text. Surely few artists' achievements are so difficult to convey through book reproductions as are Martin's, since his force depends on the collocation of seemingly infinite and precise small details and the grand conception and sweep of sometimes terrifying destruction (as in *The Great Day of His Wrath*, and going back to the early days of Martin's career) and sometimes breath-takingly beautiful landscape (as in *The Plains of Heaven*). In general, Clarendon Press has done well by Mr. Feaver, although one might have wished for a *few* more color plates, and the tone of some of the mezzotint reproductions is a bit too soft and lacking in contrast.

Certainly this volume is a great advance, visually, upon Balston's, which is practically useless as a source of any conception of Martin's accomplishment; and for most art-lovers, even those resident in the British Isles, Feaver's book will remain the primary source, since, although the Tate Gallery now has the three great Last Judgement canvases, Martin's work is spread thinly around, from Torquay to the Isle of Man, from Manchester to Liverpool, from Southampton to Cambridge, and in many private collections. That said, one must next question whether Mr. Feaver's text is equally an advance on Balston's. It is certainly a more readable book, for where Balston confusingly intersperses chapters on Martin's private life during extended periods among others of a chronological, work-by-work summary, Feaver helps us to see John Martin whole, and gives a much clearer sense of the intellectual and social contexts of various phases and aspects of his career. Balston, on the other hand, gives more solid documentation and detail, largely in the form of lengthy quotations from contemporary reviews and from Martin's own writings.

Some of the liveliness of Feaver's text derives, necessarily, from conjecture: thus, the contemporary history of floods, blizzards, murders, and other natural and human disasters in the area and time of Martin's birth, along with Hadrian's Wall and the local lead mines are linked by Feaver to Martin the "artist of flood, apocalypse, and disorder time-scales," (p. 1) the cities of Martin's experience to the infernal or heavenly regions of his paintings, and William Bewick's description of his own first thrill at painting in oil to Martin's parallel experience. This kind of conjecture diminishes as the evidence of Martin's life increases with his age, but Feaver has recourse throughout to such devices as comparing various Romantic poems on certain subjects with Martin's paintings on the same subjects, where there is no known causal relationship; and surely only a severely literal-minded pedant could object to this kind of fleshing-out of the book's central figure and his art.

If *The Art of John Martin* has a thesis, it is that this artist is special because he flourished between the cultures of high and popular art, "not just as a painter and printmaker but as artist and engineer" (p. 214); and Feaver's chapter on Martin's decades of involvement with schemes to purify the Thames and salvage sewage for fertilizer far more clearly places Martin in the context of his times than does Balston's comparable chapter which, however, is much fuller in detail. For Feaver, Martin's apocalyptic vision in his paintings is in a direct continuum with his ecological and architectural visions of the possible alternative futures of London, and he is perhaps best on the paintings when he is able to make such connections–although it should be said that on the whole Feaver's critical discussions are admirably enlightening, concise, and lacking in pretentiousness. If there is one pervasive quality in this book that gives me pause it is the attempt to treat Martin as if he was, though a genius, essentially a normal, balanced man; the protestation against the old cliché of "Mad Martin" is a bit too partisan for my comfort, and it leads, I think, to an underemphasis of certain aspects of Martin's personality and work which may actually be a distortion.

It is curious, for example, that his brother Jonathan's stupendous act of arson at York Minster, together with the suicide of Jonathan's son Richard–whom John had virtually adopted as a son after Jonathan's commitment to Bedlam–are dealt with each in a brief sentence, and are not directly referred to in the Index. Surely it can be dangerously easy to exploit such spectacular events in a biography, but Feaver seems to have gone rather to the opposite extreme, conjecturing virtually nothing about the effect of these events on Martin, or on the possible parallels between Martin's mad and eccentric brothers (William is a decidedly odd case–the self-proclaimed anti-Newtonian philosopher) and himself.

In general, I feel the lack of any attempt at a deep personality sketch of Martin: for it is difficult for a modern viewer, upon seeing *The Great Day of His Wrath,* or *The Last Judgement,* not to feel that Martin's vision was that, if not of a madman, of a genius exceptionally closely allied to madness. Among other things, I am struck by the way Martin combines immensely sweeping cities, landscapes, and rocks and earth in motion, with myriad tiny, precisely executed human forms. It is for me an image of the human being, sure only of his own bodily existence and of nothing beyond, terrifyingly overcome by uncontrollable physical forces outside of himself (but which may be projections). Martin's fear of the destruction of London through its inadequate sanitation facilities had a strongly rational component, but it is difficult for anyone with the slightest psychoanalytic leanings not to see something deeply irrational as well in Martin's concern for the saving of manure, especially when he argues that now-defunct cultures may have been destroyed by "a too ignorant waste of manure," that England is casting "away its real wealth" in not recovering sewage from the Thames, and that it is best to follow the example of those who "most scrupulously save every particle of manure" (from Martin's *A Plan for Improving the Air and Water of the Metropolis,* 1833, quoted by Balston, pp. 122-23).

In this regard, Martin is of course very much a child of his times, and it is surprising that Feaver does not cite Edwin Chadwick's parallel proposals of a

later decade. But the interest of these obsessions is more than historical, for the connecting of wealth and excrement, together with certain kinds of fanatical precision in living or creation, as well as a fear of loss of control (as in a preoccupation with Apocalypse), are likely to be characterologically related. To brand John Martin an anal character might not get us very far, but to consider how these elements of his personality may be related from a psychoanalytic viewpoint could lead to a better understanding of both the man and his art.

But then it is always ungenerous to complain about the book an author hasn't written, and William Feaver's book is a true contribution to our knowledge of nineteenth-century British art, one not likely to be surpassed in the foreseeable future, and one that should provoke considerable interest in and further study of John Martin.

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Cooper's Landscapes: An Essay on the Picturesque Vision by Blake Nevius. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976. Pp. xii + 127. $8.50.

Over the past twenty-five years or so, a small but growing body of scholarship has appeared on the interrelation of literature and art in early nineteenth-century America, especially the artistic connections between the works of the New York writers and their friends among the Hudson River painters. In addition to a number of seminal articles, two books and at least two dissertations have been written. Each has taken a different approach to the subject. James T. Callow, in *Kindred Spirits* (1967), has written a detailed history of the personal and artistic relations among the many writers and painters of New York between 1807 and 1855; I have discussed, in *The Pictorial Mode* (1971), the thematic use of that mode in Bryant, Irving, and Cooper; and in their dissertations, Alan F. Sandy (Berkeley, 1965) and Ernest Redekop (Toronto, 1973) have concentrated more specifically on the use of landscape conventions in the works of James Fenimore Cooper. Blake Nevius's book, therefore, appears as part of an ongoing discussion and takes its place in a well-established context of criticism. Nevius is well aware of this fact and attempts in his preface to set his book against the background of published material.

Because he believes that the aesthetic origins of Cooper's landscapes have not been fully studied and that previous critics, focusing on the sublime, have overly stressed the metaphysical meaning of Cooper's descriptions, Nevius offers his monograph as a needed corrective. Placing strong emphasis on Cooper's use of the picturesque, he argues that Cooper's major aesthetic education took place during his sojourn in Europe between 1826 and 1833. Nevius shows that in his early fiction, Cooper's characteristic mode of description was not the landscape but the prospect; that the travel books describing his

European experience show a new awareness of the picturesque as a mode of perceiving; that an interest in landscape gardening can be traced throughout his career; and that the effect of this education is apparent in the picturesque landscapes of his late forest romances, where, for the purposes of his fiction, Nevius argues finally, Cooper shaped the native landscape to what he had learned abroad. Though Nevius cannot show the specific sources for Cooper's knowledge of the picturesque, his analysis of selected set pieces of description from the travel books and the late romances indicates that his thesis is, within certain limits, a perfectly reasonable one.

Those limits, however, deliberately self-imposed, are so exceedingly narrow as to restrict seriously the usefulness of the book for anyone but the specialist, who can place the results in a broader perspective than any provided here. To present the aesthetic education of Cooper as primarily conditioned by what he learned in Europe is to minimize what he might have derived in America from his painter friends and from the works of British poets and romancers and of the Scottish associationist philosophers. To focus so sharply on the picturesque is to suggest that Cooper was more careful in making distinctions among the aesthetic categories than all of us, Nevius included, know he was. And to limit one's examples of Cooper's late artistic practice only to set pieces of landscape description in the forest romances is to distort the final aesthetic vision that Cooper reveals both in the broader sweep of those books and in his tales of the sea, which are at least as important to Cooper's aesthetic as are those of the wilderness. The limitation, in other words, creates the impression that Cooper fits snugly into the picturesque convention, a conclusion that can only be reached by leaving out of account vast areas of Cooper's artistic practice.

The issue is important. Nevius takes so narrow a view of literary pictorialism as to distort the meaning and significance of Cooper's fiction. His themes, as described in this book, are almost exclusively presented as social and political—words that recur like an underlying refrain—and the great moral, metaphysical, and religious concerns that dominate even some of the books that Nevius discusses are completely ignored. From the treatment of *The Crater*, one would never imagine that the book ends with an apocalyptic vision as sweeping as anything in Poe or Melville; from the discussion of *The Oak Openings*, one would never conclude that a powerful religious vision of life informs the novel—as, indeed, it does its successor, *The Sea Lions*, which, because it is a tale of the sea, is rigorously excluded from consideration here. But this late tale of the Antarctic, as Thomas Philbrick has shown in his fine study of Cooper's maritime fiction (1961), draws heavily on pictorial devices to present its theme. None of this is mentioned in Nevius's book. We are left instead with a picture of Fenimore Cooper drawing neatly picturesque landscapes in his late forest romances.

One must, of course, grant Nevius his donnée. In writing his book, he may limit the subject as he pleases, and by title and intent, this volume focuses exclusively on the picturesque landscape. It tells us something of interest about the development of Cooper's use of the principles of the picturesque and the concepts of landscape gardening in certain parts of his later fiction, and it argues persuasively that Cooper developed a "picturesque eye" which

led him to see the native landscape in a particular way. What one misses, however, is any attempt to relate these findings to the sweeping moral vision of life that Cooper maintained, a vision that was recognized by Howard Mumford Jones a quarter of a century ago and that has been amply developed by others in the intervening years. The Cooper specialist will, of course, place the findings of this book in the proper perspective. The more general reader, however, will do well to inform himself on what Cooper scholarship has been about during the last twenty-five years before he accepts the implications of this monograph. There is a great deal more to Cooper's aesthetic vision, both early and late, than is presented here.

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Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgement by James J. Wilhelm. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1974. Pp. xiv + 187. $8.95.

The Cantos of Ezra Pound: The Lyric Mode by Eugene Paul Nassar. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. Pp. xii + 164. $7.95.

Ezra Pound by Donald Davie. New York: The Viking Press, 1976. Pp. x + 134. $7.95.

In his brief tribute to T. S. Eliot (1966), Ezra Pound acknowledges that "His [Eliot's] was the true Dantescan voice." The acknowledgment is itself Dantescan, echoing Sordello's tribute to Vergil in Canto VII of the *Purgatorio* and Guido Guinizelli's subsequent recognition in Canto XXVI of Arnaut Daniel as "il miglior fabbro." Readers will have to decide for themselves if Pound is correct in his judgment of Eliot, recognizing as Pound did that "one can no longer put Mt. Purgatory forty miles high in the midst of Australian sheep land" and that "Dante" is not a fixed value. The corpus of his work is neither always consistent nor coherent but is "the outcome of strong individual reaction to facts and events." Without denying the claims for Eliot, James J. Wilhelm's *Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgement* and Eugene Paul Nassar's *The Cantos of Ezra Pound: The Lyric Mode* provide valuable arguments on Pound's behalf. Wilhelm sees three ways in which Dante assists *The Cantos*: "first, by lending color to the Poundian canvas or by casting a moral dimension over the work; secondly, by lending characters whom Pound could adopt as personae; and finally, by yielding his very psyche, which Pound seemed to assimilate in his final years." In seeming opposition, Nassar maintains that "it is not up to a transcendental reality that the modern poet of Pound's consciousness must go (as with Plotinus, Augustine, and Dante) but down, a descent into the mind's own light." Yet this descent merely involves a reader more deeply in the importance to Pound of *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the *Convivio*, the *Epistles*, and *De Monarchia*.

Wilhelm presents Dante and Pound as both concerned with epics of judgment. Epics of judgment differ from the usual epic in that they strip the form "of

most of its narrative trappings" and emphasize "its potential for qualitative analysis." Wilhelm sees Pound's interest in such an epic beginning with an early comment on the Portuguese writer Camõns: "An epic cannot be written against the grain of its time: the prophet or the satirist may hold himself aloof from his time, or run counter to it, but the writer of epos must voice the general heart." Yet the book's argument is less intent on tracing theoretical formulations than on seeing as a base a "general pattern of youthful separation from native land, embracing of foreign and even treasonable causes, attempted reconciliation, and final separation, although in Pound's case the last severing proved to be rather amicable." This "general pattern" allows in *The Pisan Cantos* "a true assimilation of Dante in Pound's work": "Dante's citizens of Hell merged with Pound himself, lending him sustenance....Feelings of guilt, suffering, and finally compassion suddenly showed in Pound's writing....In a golden flow of words, the *Cantos* transform [sic] themselves from an intellectual exercise into a genuine expression of self." However, the "general pattern" does not guarantee exact congruence. Wilhelm notes, for example that Pound's design is "never as settled as Dante's" and that, by choosing to speak of Dante's three regions as states of mind, Pound should have left his Hell "simply a whirling place, a vortex, as it is in many of the Early Cantos." Wilhelm also recognizes that "Dante, with a dogmatic structure to back his poetic imagination, can afford to be liberal. Pound, constantly striving to create a sense of order, to hammer his points home, is forced to be much cruder and more severe."

Dante and Pound rejects a view of some Poundians that divides *The Cantos* into units of which Cantos 1 to 30 are Pound's Hell, Cantos 31 to 71 his Purgatory, and Cantos 74 to 84 his Paradise, with Cantos 85 to 117 acting as fields for reprises. Also, despite two of the book's finest chapters dealing with Cavalcanti, Wilhelm is unwilling to pronounce, as Eliot had in *After Strange Gods* (1934), that "one can hardly read the erudite notes and commentary to his [Pound's] edition of Guido Cavalcanti without suspecting that he finds Guido much more sympathetic than Dante, and on grounds which have little to do with their respective merits as poets: namely, that Guido was likely a heretic, if not a sceptic—as evidenced partly by his possibly having held some pneumatic philosophy and theory of corpuscular action which I am unable to understand." Wilhelm rightly perceives that "the general frameworks of both the *Comedy* and the *Cantos* are idealistic, mystical, and visionary; the executions of the works are precise, empirical, practical. Cavalcanti could be used in developing the methodology of the work, but when it came to root ideas, Guido finally had to yield to Alighieri." This insistence allows readers to bypass peripheral considerations like bigotry and treason to get to what is perhaps the crucial similarity between Dante and Pound—their common interest in exact language and "civility" (Dante's *cive*).

Herbert Schneidau's *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real* (1969) has dealt excellently with the influence of *De Vulgari Eloquentia* on Pound's concepts of precision but few critics have made enough of Pound's notion that civilizations are founded on poets like Homer and Dante. No less than other "classic" American writers, Pound envisioned the American Revolution as an experiment challenging the American artist to create a language and art concordant with a

new American spirit. When Pound published *A Lume Spento* and *A Quinzaine for This Yule* in 1908, Walt Whitman's "success" in having become *the* poet of America was in no way secure; yet by 1918, Carlos Williams could perceive that Pound's internationalism was leading him astray: "E. P. is the best enemy United States verse has." Hugh Kenner has argued well for modern poetry's having borne in whatever country "from Pound's early days until now. . .an unmistakably American impress," but no critic thus far has seen the situation as similar to the problems of civitas, imperium, and ecclesia that A. P. d'Entrèves handles so skillfully in *Dante as Political Thinker* (1952). Just as Dante saw himself simultaneously a citizen of Florence, the Roman Empire, and the Catholic Church, Pound sees himself a citizen of both America and world culture, and for both writers the harmony of these citizenships became the "reason" of their poetry. The premise is Augustinian: Poetry is rational rather than mimetic; it functions sympathetically to hold difference in tension.

Nassar picks up on this dualistic pull of poetic language in his study. Maintaining that "the primary interpretive data ought to be the radiant lyrical nodes. . .and in descending order. . .the nonlyrical portions of *The Cantos*, Pound's other poetry, his prose, and, finally, his sources," he insists on Pound's beliefs in "Platonic absolutes, ideals, forms, or universals" as well as in the magical effects of words in contexts that do not encompass absolute or transcendental truths. Nassar cites Pound's affirmation in Canto 113 that the Gods "have never left us" to assert a shift in *The Cantos* similar to the shifts from sensitive to intellectual memory that occur in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia*. However, Nassar does not set as the direction of his book the measure of these "intellectual" radiant nodes against the work's larger, "sensitive" prose passages. Nor is he interested in discriminating among the positive or negative figures who have created the poem's worthwhile and bad contexts, though, he recognizes, "the bulk of *The Cantos* is concerned with discriminations between such figures and their contexts." For Nassar, by continually affirming "man's made beauty ('crystal' from 'water') in the face of inevitable cyclic drift toward dissolution, personal and societal," the lyrical passages establish the "permanent products" against which the present "capitalist imperialist state must be judged." The imagery and diction of these passages create "a special language that keeps developing and flowering in such a way as to make the vision of the late cantos (say, 90-117) a true culmination aesthetically (I would say also philosophically) of the whole."

In focusing on these "lyrical nodes," Nassar goes a long way toward delineating what George Herbert Mead defines as "the voices of the past and of the future" that anyone who wishes to go against the views of his society needs in order to have a voice of reason. These "aesthetic culminations" give substance to Pound's judgment of the present and make viable *The Cantos* as an epic of judgment rather than idiosyncrasy. As early as *After Strange Gods*, Eliot had objected to a disturbing determinism and personalistic drift in Pound's writing, "If you do not distinguish between individual responsibility and circumstances in Hell, between essential Evil and social accidents, then the Heaven (if any) implied will be equally trivial and accidental." In 1958, Clark Emery presented a very Protestant answer to Eliot, suggesting a wholly subjective resolution. Evil became "not looking straight into the heart" and "directing

the will against sincerity, fidelity, humanity." Subsequent studies like Giovanni Giovannini's *Ezra Pound and Dante* (1962) have built upon the essentially American cast to what Eliot characterized as the aesthetic, humanitarian, and Protestant principles of Pound's vision. With the appearance of Wilhelm's *Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgement* and Nassar's *The Cantos of Ezra Pound: The Lyric Mode*, critics may now begin to see the principles as being even more involved with nationalism. The dream of America's Founding Fathers was to legislate much if not all evil out of existence, and critics like Alvarez have seen, as a typically American trait, if the American poet "wants a moral world complex enough to satisfy him, [he] must in some manner build it for himself," and this building results in an "extreme inwardness."

Nonetheless, neither Wilhelm's nor Nassar's study answers definitively whether Whitman, Pound, or Eliot stands in relation to American civilization in the same way that Homer and Dante stand in regard to Greek and Italian civilization. Nor do they question, as does Kenner, if in a growing "global village" nationalism is still a viable force. Shouldn't readers be interested in "Modernism" or, as Frank Kermode might say, a "Metropolitan tradition"? If so, what, as Williams asked in 1918, is to be the "language" of this tradition? Dante's own position in regard to the superiority of the mother tongue to learned language is not as clear as scholars would like, and Pound's modulation between American usage and a language created and overseen by poets is equally unclear. A good dose of Augustinian rhetoric might prove useful in answering these questions, and these questions must be answered if a fixed relationship between Dante and Pound is to happen. In the meantime, readers do have the fine insights of Wilhelm and Nassar to gauge Pound's humanity against Dante's and Pound's interest in "permanent products" against the industrial imagination as well as against the moralism of Dante's world. One can no longer pretend that in *The Cantos*' erudite and lateral structure and relentless self-examination and self-promotion, there is not something that reflects importantly the nature of both art and politics in the twentieth century. But it may be too soon to argue backwards from the historical pretentions to the work's artistic value, especially since, as Eric Homberger warned in 1967, "the state of the text of Pound's work, both poetry and prose, is a disgrace." Many of Pound's most relevant and challenging statements on civilization are still buried in defunct magazines.

Donald Davie's *Ezra Pound* is concerned less with the relationship of Dante and Pound than with the effects of Georges Duhamel and Charles Vildrac's *Notes sur la technique poétique* (1911) and Allen Upward's *The New Word* (1908) on the shaping of Pound's voice. Davie sees Pound deriving from Duhamel and Vildrac as well as from the poetry of Thomas Hardy an interest in "falling rhythm (. . .dactylo-trochaic) rather than the familiar English rising (or iambic rhythm)." From Upward, Pound derives not only modern concepts of "native" (mother) and "Babu" (learned) language but also equivalents to sensible and intellectual memory in Upward's definitions of Matter and Idea. Upward images these conditions in a "waterspout" similar to a Middle Ages' "Jacob's ladder" or "ladder of ascent." From whirl and swirl, one has formed a double vortex of fixity and dynamic form much like the interlocking gyres of W. B. Yeats's *A Vision* (1925). In a poem like "In

Durance" (1907), Pound's "language is a chronically unstable mix of linguistic elements from the European past, held together by will, by nothing more than the urgency of the poet's need." By the completion of *The Cantos* (1969), the language is "still perhaps unstable, but not so easily dissoluble." Pound comes, thereby, closer to realizing his desire "to create or re-create" for a literary civilization "a *lingua franca* of Greco-Roman Christendom in which English would operate as a sister language with French and Spanish and Italian."

Davie's Englishness allows him to see a conservative strain in Pound's desire to be part of a literary civilization whose centers are the Mediterranean and the *Commedia*. At the same time, Davie's Englishness prevents him from appreciating sufficiently the American character of the desire. The picture of Pound as "an Edwardian man of letters like Edmund Gosse or George Saintsbury," better read in Swinburne, Hardy, and Rossetti than in Emily Dickinson, Melville, or Hawthorne, omits the particularly American drives that a Puritan work ethic and the absence of a Shakespeare generate. Given a Puritan emphasis on labor and Matthew Arnold's statement that, in the failure of religion, poetry "will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing can," no American poet can take lightly the work of poetry. Nor can he remain "off center" an English poets after Shakespeare have done. There are no achievements in American language and myth comparable to those of Shakespeare. The American writer may, as in the cases of Pound and Eliot and, before them, Longfellow, Henry James, and Charles Eliot Norton, attach himself to an older European or English tradition to escape an "earnestness" which bothers some readers, but the attachment in no way resolves the situation. Rather, the attachment produces contradictions and love-hate relationships like those which occur in Dante's writing and which Davie, like any Dante scholar, feels will be resolved when critics have established the facts of who the poet is and "where he was (and with whom) on such and such a day," and "how he behaved on occasions when we know he was present."

In rejecting the "mythic" underpinnings of studies like Wilhelm's and Nassar's, Davie relies more on the questionable accuracy of articles like Victor C. Ferkiss' "Ezra Pound and American Fascism" (1955) than on the more responsible work of Giovannini. Davie, also, has a tendency to defend his "amateurism" against the failed "professionalism" of academics. Davie's "amateurism," particularly in regard to music theory, allows certain blindness in his fleshing out Pound's interest in and knowledge of music theory. One wonders what a reading of Boethius' *De Institutione Musica* (A. D. 525)—the school textbook of Dante and the Middle Ages—might do for future Pound scholarship. One also wonders if Davie doesn't at heart consider the American idiom a form of "Babu English." Or why, given Pound's preference for Basil Bunting's Northumbrian poems, Davie doesn't recognize the importance of place in Pound's view of language. All the same, along with Kenner's, Davie's analyses of Pound's poetry continue to be the best available. His chapters on *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly*, *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, and *The Cantos* are marvels of sensitivity and models of what can be done with Pound's writing. Any future critic of Dante and Pound will have to deal with these chapters, for like Randall Jarrell before him, Davie understands that "a poem, like

Pope's spider, 'lives along the line,' and all the dead lines in the world will not make one live poem." Ultimately, it is here—in the line—that the validity of any comparison of Dante's and Pound's voices is most relevant.

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The Drama of Revolt: A Critical Study of Georg Büchner by Maurice B. Benn (Anglica Germanica Series 2) New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. Pp. viii + 321. $21.00.

This exceptionally fine study deserves a high rank within the extensive literature that has accumulated on Georg Büchner in recent years. Its interest for readers of a journal devoted to the problems of literary criticism may well lie in the fact that it confounds some of our contemporary notions as to what makes a good critical book. For one thing, the late Professor Benn (who died while the book was in press) felt the need to build his general study of Büchner's art and thought around a single thesis, indicated in the book's title—yet the real qualities of his book are only peripherally related to this thesis. It is no news that Büchner was revolutionary in his political and philosophical ideas and in the literary techniques and attitudes manifested in the three plays and the short narrative he composed during his brief lifetime. Yet the reader feels somewhat uneasy with Benn's use of the concept of revolt to tie together Büchner's ideas and art: the "revolutionizing" of earlier literary conventions is an activity in which every major writer, whether politically radical or conservative, to some degree engages, and if we wish to use the word *revolt* to talk about both politics and art, we must also recognize that the availability of a single word may also hide the fact that we are describing two quite diverse orders of phenomena. Fortunately, Benn uses his thesis largely as a skeleton to hold the book together, and for long stretches he is so intent on grappling with the intricacies of Büchner's texts and ideas that he is able to ignore, sometimes even to question, his central theme. Thus, when he ties Büchner's concept of nature to Goethe's, his pessimism to Schopenhauer's, and his aesthetic notions to those of Young Germany, Hugo, and Stendhal, the very affinities which he portrays so well also serve to compromise his image of Büchner as a figure of revolt.

If the book easily transcends the thesis it propounds, it also manages to portray Büchner's achievement as a writer without utilizing any of the theoretical frameworks which have been developed in European and American criticism within the last decade or two. When he discusses matters such as the genres which Büchner was reworking, the parodistic techniques he often employed, and the influences that were exercised upon him or that he exercised upon later writers, Benn shows little or no cognizance of the fundamentally new insights into the nature of genre, parody and influence which criticism has developed in our time. As one who has been much concerned with these

theoretical problems, I felt myself forced, while reading this book, to account for my admiration. Benn's success is due first of all, I believe, to a combination of sensitivity to language with a learning that is steeped in Büchner's texts, his intellectual and social milieu, and the past scholarship on him. Just as important, Benn is working within a critical tradition whose virtues have all too easily been underestimated in recent years. One might call this the British "empirical-and-common-sense" tradition. At its best, as in this book, this tradition is able to present us with comprehensive portraits of writers and their work. Social and aesthetic matters remain inseparable within the total portrait (even if the theoretical framework that binds them together comes to look a bit naive). Old critical problems and judgments are re-examined in a fresh and enlightened way: in what is perhaps the most valuable section of the book, Benn refuses to look at *Woyzeck* as a single text, but instead discusses each successive draft of this masterpiece both as an independent entity and as part of a developing if never-to-be-completed whole.

As always within this critical tradition, sanity and discrimination prevail over enthusiasm and method. Indeed, it is a tribute to Benn that he was able to practice these particular virtues as rigorously as he did, for, before writing this book, he experienced a personal tragedy which may well be unique among literary scholars—namely, conviction on a capital crime. At only one point, when he argues that Büchner intended to have Woyzeck judicially convicted rather than drowned, does he allow a passionate interjection to cut through the mature stance that otherwise informs the book: "It is no doubt very convenient for society when its victims remove themselves by accident or suicide; it is spared the invidious necessity of having to dispose of them itself." (pp. 235-6) In this statement those familiar with the much publicized case in which Professor Benn was involved in Australia will recognize the affinities he must have felt with the problems Büchner treated with such compassion in his last play. And they will also recognize his immense achievement in creating a learned and lucid work of scholarship in the wake of his tragedy.

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Style and Structure in Literature: Essays in the New Stylistics, ed. Rodger Fowler. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975. Pp. viii + 262. $13.50.

A short review cannot do justice to the seven essays collected in this book. These essays, delivered at a one day conference at the University of East Anglia, are Donald Freeman's "The Strategy of Fusion: Dylan Thomas's Syntax," E. L. Epstein's "The Self-Reflexive Artifact: The Function of Mimesis in an Approach to a Theory of Value for Literature," Fowler's "Language and the Reader: Shakespeare's Sonnet 73," "Defining Narrative Units," by Jonathan Culler, "Analytic and Synthetic Approaches to Narrative Structure: Sherlock Holmes and "'The Sussex Vampire'" by L. M. O'Toole, "Story, Character,

Setting and Narrative Mode in Galdos's *El Amigo Manso*" by John Rutherford and "The Structure of Narrative Transmission" by Seymour Chatman.

These papers exemplify "the new stylistics" for at least three major reasons. First, as Fowler states

> All papers are set in motion by intuitions, hypotheses, problems, which are external to linguistics itself, but even if the motive force for each of these papers derives from problems in literary criticism, these problems are assailed with the equipment of an established battery of language sciences. (5)

Second, these essays elucidate the ability of contemporary linguistic analysis of a literary text to support and lead to interpretative conclusions that integrate linguistic factors with the philosophical and aesthetic factors necessary to the full appreciation of literature. Finally, they are "new" because through the interaction of literary criticism and linguistic theory they probe such issues as the legitimacy of affective criticism, the efficacy of New Critical analytical procedures, the validity of performance versus competence grammars, the psycholinguistic nature of the reading process, and the role of the reader as he interacts with a literary text.

This interaction of reader and text is a central concern to each of these essayists who weigh the assumption derived from New Criticism and popular with earlier "linguistic criticism" that a literary text exists as an independent entity apart from its creator and its recreator, amenable to fully objective analysis. That is, a text has an objective dimension analyzable with linguistic or other approaches, but is dynamic as well and interacts with a reader. These writers would not agree with MacLeish that a poem "should not mean, but be." "To be" implies, indeed requires, "To mean" for a linguistic artifact, whether or not it is literary. Deriving in part from the pervasive concept of linguistic creativity, somewhat broadened from its Chomskian source, linguistic analysis leads to a search for "deep structures" and thus to the question "what *might* a poem mean, and how can the reader discern these meanings?" rather than to simply "what *does* a poem mean?"

Fowler attempts to demonstrate "how significant literary structures are coded, for the informed reader, in his knowledge of the conventional regularities of language, and how they are 'realized' in the sequential experience of reading." (88) Rutherford, in searching out the narrative mode of *El Amigo Manso*, states his position:

> It will be recalled that story belongs solely to the objective plane of the narrative text; it is composed of actions and situations as the reader, when he has finished reading the text, imagines them to have occurred; which is by no means how they are actually presented in many texts. (186)

When seen from the perspective of these essays in the new stylistics, then, a literary text becomes a ground upon which reader and writer meet to exchange ideas, rather than an artifact for analysis. There are constraints, however, built into the work and within the reader that control this interaction. Fowler assumes as a working principle "that there is a set of permissible readings *controlled by the verbal structure of the poem*...." (102, italics are Fowler's) And Rutherford says that

> A literary work has a multiplicity of meaning, but not an infinity of meanings: indeed an infinity of meanings–total freedom for the reader to interpret the work as he pleases–would be the same as no meaning. (195)

Freeman demonstrates the notion of constraint built into the poem, the literary artifact itself, in his analysis of three of Thomas's poems. He says of "A Refusal to Mourn":

> ...Thomas's syntactic strategies do not allow us to see the individual death of the girl apart from its context in the entirety of human history. The poem's grammar first proposes from their natural order modifying elements which speak of the first creation,... and then syntactically fuses that creating and fructifying darkness with the darkness of the last day.... (38)

Thus, as Freeman explains, we are compelled by syntax (as well as other aspects of the poem) to see "the unity of man and natural processes which is one of the central principles of Dylan Thomas's poetics." (39) Epstein's explication of "The Tyger" is based on an analysis of Blake's manipulation of question structure which presents the reader with "husks of questions" which in turn are really "disguised exclamations," thus leading the reader from an apparent confusion to an apparent resolution.

The expectations and constraints the reader brings to literature are less clearly presented in these essays. Jonathan Culler does consider the problem of defining narrative units as in part the nature of "readers' expectations."

> That is to say, a theory about the basic elements of forms of plot constitutes a hypothesis about what readers look for in identifying and constructing the plot of a story.... The basic problem which each theory must confront is how one moves from the sentences of a text to a representation of its plot...." (130-131)

Both Freeman's and Epstein's analysis imply that the reader processes the text linearly, but both writers retain a notion of the more traditional "wholistic" perception of a literary work, wherein the reader returns to the poem with a preconceived notion of what it means. Culler, too, is aware of the linear versus gestaltic problem in reader perception of a literary text, and he says of the reader, "As he goes through [the story] for the first time he can, retrospectively, resolve his initial uncertainties about the function of certain elements and recognize which are properly constitutive of the plot." (130) Later in his discussion Culler says "Units must, in short, be defined retrospectively." (136) Culler, then, prefers a gestaltic theory of perception for the reader who is determining what the story means.

Fowler, however, prefers an analysis based on the assumption that reading is a "sequential experience" through which the reader builds his interpretation of the text. He accepts Stanley Fish's position and rejects Roman Jacobson's notion "of poems as spatial (rather than temporal) and static (rather than engagingly kinetic) constructs." (9) O'Toole seems to agree with Fowler when he says, "We may define the short story as an idea given dynamic form; dynamic involves movement and this movement may be physical or psychological." (155) Earlier, O'Toole has said in defining Fable and Plot "If the

Fable is temporality as perceived by the characters, Plot is causality only partly (and sometimes not at all) perceived by the characters, but gradually reconstructed by the reader." (154)

Because this collection incorporates differing notions of how readers process printed texts, it calls for a knowledge of current thinking in psycholinguistics, and can lead literary critics and linguists alike to a reconsideration of the psycholinguistic nature of the reading process. The literary criticism in this collection casts an interesting light on the critical process itself by looking at old questions with new techniques. Good criticism should reach beyond the literary work to questions of the human condition and the nature of being human. These essays do just that. They are good traditional literary criticism in the explications they present to us; they are good "New Stylistic" criticism because they reach beyond the literary text to question our role as humans using language to read.

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