

1971

## Book Reviews

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### Recommended Citation

Editors, Criticism (1971) "Book Reviews," *Criticism*: Vol. 13: Iss. 3, Article 7.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism/vol13/iss3/7>

## Book Reviews

*Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism* by Maurice Evans. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970. Pp. viii + 244. \$5.95.

Maurice Evans' *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism* forms a corrective to much recent criticism of Spenser. It tries to see the whole of *The Faerie Queene* against a definition of the heroic poem. For this definition Evans goes to writers like Tasso, Sidney, Puttenham as well as to Hallett Smith's discussion of the genre in *Elizabethan Poetry* (1952), and the reader has, on beginning the book, the expectation of another intelligent study like Evans' earlier *English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century* (1967). One is willing to agree with him that "recent Spenserean criticism, although doing ample justice to the myths, the verbal techniques and the rhetoric of the poem, had tended to play down what once seemed the element of most importance, namely its didacticism," and to welcome his placing "the emphasis once more upon Spenser's didactic intention"—"to fashion a gentleman." Yet, one soon finds that Evans, in pursuing his definition, has slighted the audience for which the didacticism was intended and that his final reading of the poem slights even his definition of the genre in pursuing a rather eclectic methodology whose value resides too often in its unstated premises and the strength of Evans' own sinewy, individual and accurate insights.

The "gentleman," as it quickly turns out, is more indebted to F. R. Leavis than to Spenser and the Renaissance. As Evans reasons, since all the characters of *The Faerie Queene* are fated for marriage and progeny, the didactic purpose of the book is a kind of "progressive self-discovery through relations with others" which in *The Great Tradition* (1950) Leavis associated earlier with an artist's "serious interest in life" and, in Joseph Conrad's "mature" work, with realizations like Axel Heyst's that Lena offers "a greater sense of his own reality than he had ever known in all his life." In his discussions of Books III-V, Evans surrounds Britomart's own awakening to sex and marriage with terms similar to Leavis'. To argue with either Evans or Leavis on this matter is difficult, for, as Marsilio Ficino's "Commentary on Plato's *Symposium*" asserts, the physical union of lovers is the first step toward recovering the supernatural light man lost in Aristophanic original sin. Nonetheless, the modern bias Evans reveals by playing down Ficino's higher goal as well as his own discussions of the heroic genre cannot be mistaken: "Spenser is more like Yeats than Eliot, and his essentially unmythical type of mind has little place for transcendental vision. He prefers the struggles of life to the artifice of eternity, the mirror-scaled serpent, multiplicity, to the One."

Evans' terminology and thinking also have debts to Freud. Repeatedly he indicates that "sexual repression" is bad and that heterosexual union is the only good—a position that runs counter to Spenser's placing sexual union beneath friendship: "For naturall affection soone doth cesse, / And quenched is with Cupids greater flame: / But faithful friendship doth them both suppress" (IV,

ix, 2). Like Ficino's love, this friendship is of three kinds—male, female, and mixed, and Ficino's connection of each to an Aristotelian virtue may have influenced Spenser. Justice, for example, is bisexual, and its bisexuality may account for the hermaphroditic Venus (IV, x, 41) as well as the hermaphroditic emphasis of Book V. But, as Ficino's purely feminine Temperance argues, it would be dangerous to insist on too close a tie. The confused thinking which prompts a contextual definition of a genre only to betray that perspective with an audience in agreement with the findings of Leavis and Freud typifies what is wrong with Evans' approach. Its complement is an insistence that Spenser is a careful writer while blurring what Spenser is at great pains to keep separate, Cleopolis and Troynovant, faery and Briton, myth and history. At the same time, Evans ignores apparent lapses like Spenser's having Artega's sword Chrysaor broken by Radigund (V, v, 21) to reemerge whole (V, xii, 28) or his having Sir Terpine hanged (V, v, 18) to reappear (VI, iii) or, on a lesser scale, his giving Una's dead lion still enough life to be last seen following "her far off, ne ought he feares / To be partaker of her wondring woe" (I, iii, 44).

A reading of the whole of *The Faerie Queene* should have a sense of complementarity which *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism* lacks. The variations on the magician's role, for instance, prove highly illuminating. One has good magicians like the Palmer, Glauco, Merlin, Hermes, Cambina, as well as the evil Archimago, Acrasia, Busyrane, and Witch, and one gets through them not only a range of magic but a connection between art and life. They offer an internal, oblique discussion of the whole problem of the poem's attempt to construct a realistic world. Like the Witch's false Florimel who is composed of raw material turned Petrarchan cliché (III, viii, 6-9), the poet's world will melt when put side by side with the real (V, iii, 24). This says much more about Spenser's intention and audience than Evans can. Moreover, it is consistent with the fact that *The Faerie Queene* was written for readers who were already gentlemen or at least a court which fashioned itself gentle. The dalliance of the various knights, the whole achievement of virtue by confronting its opposite and by a reparation of lapses seems to be the right way to educate a court too quick to fall into vices as "Colin Clouts Come Home Again" indicates. The poet's illusions like Merlin's prophecies or Hermes' cures or Archimago's visions will melt into truth or health or sinful deception.

Interesting in regard to Evans' own concern for Britomart is how this sense of complementarity works to illuminate her relation to Radigund. In many ways, Radigund springs from Britomart's own tendency to domesticate Artega: "But her therewith full sore displeas'd he found, / And loth to leave her late betrothed make, / Her dearest love full loth so shortly to forsake" (IV, vi, 42). Radigund's apprehensions regarding Artega (V, v, 27) are made rhetorically identical to Britomart's (V, vi, 19), and Britomart's suppression of her tendency to emasculate in her suppression of Radigund must occur if the successful marriage prophesied by Merlin is to be brought about. This sense of complementarity, as does Ficino's love, extends beyond the boundaries of sex and type. Britomart is also a complement to Arthur and, as such, Artega, a second complement to Arthur, becomes among other things a comment on Gloriana and Elizabeth. Lastly, a great deal of the wit of the poem comes from Spenser's striking up complements both to life and former literature which in interesting ways he both violates and remains faithful to. The opening canto, for example,

which sets up its parallel to Dido and Aeneas forced by a storm to seek shelter in a cave where they eventually make love, shows Redcrosse and Una forced by a storm first to a cave where they find Error and then to a hut where, in a dream induced by Archimago, Redcrosse completes the seduction of Una. Thus the elements of the parallel are fulfilled but in a different and unexpected manner.

Already hampered by this lack of complementarity, Evans' reading, as it turns out, falls into errors as well. Evans reads Merlin's prediction of Artegall's death (III, iii, 28) as meaning that Artegall shall suffer like Achilles "an early death" when in reality what Merlin says is that Artegall after a "long time" shall not be allowed a natural death. Likewise, his insistence that Redcrosse and Guyon are carefully distinguished by shields fails to account for III, ii where they merge into the same person, and his statement that "Guyon's Palmer . . . always has his eyes upon the road . . . and personifies the same right-reason as Una, though directed downwards now to the rational control and conduct of life" seems absurd against the Palmer's control of things by a wand in II, xii, 26. Wands do not seem integral parts of rational control. Nonetheless, there are thirty pages of Evans' book—the last four sections of Chapter 6 and the opening section of Chapter 7—which I heartily recommend for their intelligence and perceptions to any reader of *The Faerie Queene*.

JEROME MAZZARO

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*The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* by Lawrence Lipking.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. Pp. xiv + 503. \$12.50.

Lawrence Lipking's book is without question one of the most significant contributions to eighteenth-century studies to appear in many years. Its topic—for which there seems to be no more accurate name than the author's cumbersome "ordering of the arts"—is so typical of its age, so richly expressive of the intellectual orientation of the Enlightenment, that the wonder is that no one before now had thought of giving it exclusive and extended treatment.

By 1750, the double interest in history and in the arts prevalent in the century of Hume and Gibbon, of Burke and Kames, almost predictably led to the writing of literary and art history. And even apart from these interests, the time was ripe for a kind of general stocktaking in the arts, for enquiries into their origins and developments, and for formulations—sometimes *pari passu*—of their principles. It is by their common generative impulse in this felt need for "ordering" the three major arts that Lipking justifies his comparative study of such otherwise differing works as Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*, Sir John Hawkins' and Charles Burney's general histories of music, Thomas Warton's *The History of English Poetry*, and Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*. The disparate-ness of his materials enforces a certain disunity of method, as Lipking moves in consecutive sections of his thirteen chapters from psychography to history of ideas, comparative evaluation, and theoretical analysis. He recognizes that his

book is "complicated," necessarily so because it deals with three different arts and because "the works it examines are many-sided" (p. 4) as well as "irregular" and "idiosyncratic." So he contents himself with an initial rough division of the great ordering works into two kinds, "canons" and "surveys," the first (Reynolds, Johnson, and Burney) essentially critical, the second (Walpole, Hawkins, and Warton) more purely historical and antiquarian.

Part One, treating "Themes and Precedents," comprises four rather disjunct chapters: one on Junius' *Painting of the Ancients*; another (most absorbing) on the subtle and not-so-subtle transformations suffered by Du Fresnoy's *De arte graphica* in English and French translation and commentary; a third on William Oldys' painstaking antiquarian spade-work in the contiguous fields of literary history and literary biography whose full cultivation awaited the Wartons and Johnsons; and a fourth on the critical ideas of the "metaphysical" James Harris and the empirical Samuel Johnson.

The remaining three Parts explore the grand orderings of painting, music, and poetry made respectively by Walpole and Reynolds, Hawkins and Burney, and Johnson and Warton. In these, Lipking does not neglect pioneer and subsidiary figures. "The Ordering of Painting" begins with Jonathan Richardson's admirable attempt to raise the status of his art by founding it in logical principles. Part Three is introduced by a chapter on Charles Avison's modest but epoch-opening *Essay on Musical Expression*. Avison's theory is admittedly inadequate and will seem downright naive to the rare modern reader who comes on it fresh from his Hanslick. But after the largely barren theological, philosophic, and literary (*ut musica poesis*) disquisitions that preceded it, his expressionism not only established music criticism proper but could immediately appeal to every English lover of the art which Sir Philip Sidney had dubbed "the most divine striker of the senses." Lipking's analysis is enriched by discriminating reference to earlier scholarship, notably the series of important articles by H. M. Schueller.

Lipking's own effort to order subjects intrinsically (if not historically) incommensurate is not unsuccessful. The excellent chapters on Hawkins and Burney, temperamental opposites, gain special cogency by exploiting the theoretical contrast between Hawkins' conception of music as a science and Burney's conception of it as an entertaining art answerable not to eternal laws but to an educated taste. Especially apposite to the interests of literary students will be the pages Lipking devotes to Burney on taste, in which he shows how much the enduring readability of parts at least of the *General History* owes to Burney's "wide range of critical sympathy" and appropriately reminds us that this genial friend of Dr. Johnson lived to review "a disturbing little volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, and in particular a poem about Tintern Abbey" (p. 294).

Lipking is least effective in those parts of his book which deal (or sometimes fail to deal) with theory as such. Perhaps this weakness reflects the "personal" engagement with his subjects to which he makes frank allusion on page 16. Nonetheless, in a work on the ordering of the arts a reader may fairly find disproportionate the space given to the personalities of Walpole and Burney as against their critical theories and methods. Granted, there is, in these two cases, little for a theorist to take hold of. The brief "Essay on Musical Criticism" with which Burney prefaces his third volume is thin and derivative; and it was confessedly to compile *anecdotes*, not analyses, that Walpole mined George Vertue's notes. But Lipking fails to exploit what there is. He rightly singles out

Walpole's discussion of Hogarth as a main exhibit of the *Anecdotes*, "for once . . . a critical estimate" (p. 157), and he clearly sees its literary bias. But if, as Lipking notes, Walpole saw only scenery, drama, or literature in paintings (p. 158), so, we may add, did almost everyone else during the long reign of *ut pictura poesis*. On the other hand, Lipking is silent on the greater interest the passage in question has for the notion of parallel genres between the sister arts, an idea that crops up in England at least as early as 1702 in the writings of John Dennis. Though he spells out Walpole's limitations as critic, Lipking's accounting for Reynolds' enduring theoretical value is spotty and often blurred in focus.

He fares rather better with Johnson's much-discussed *Lives*, which "represent the permanent value, the *ponere totum*, of eighteenth-century criticism" (p. 405). His estimates of the *Cowley*, *Milton*, *Dryden*, and *Pope* largely confirm current evaluation of those *Lives*. Lipking's notion that Johnson's blending, in the *Dryden*, of "the character of the poet, the nature of poetry in his time, the requirements of a literary career, and literary criticism both practical and theoretical" (p. 448) represents a new genre seldom since exemplified, seems so doubtful that one regrets the paucity of supporting argument.

It should in fairness be conceded, however, that theoretical analysis in the strict sense is less germane to Lipking's purpose than what might be called accurate description, or characterization, of the several "orderings"; and this he does easily and well. His review of the *Life of Pope*, which he thinks "the paradigm of Johnson's mastery" (p. 448), leads to the insight that

where Johnson excels all other biographers is not in method but in his profound analysis of behavior, an analysis which unites the virtues of the novelist and the moralist. (p. 452)

Johnson's achievement stands out from the rest because his work

consciously assumes the burden of summing up a century of English poetry, as well as the human talents and careers that lie behind the poetry. Johnson contracts all the wisdom of his age into his canon of poets. Joining received opinion about the conduct of life to a scrupulous examination of the art that represents life at its highest point of achievement, he measures human experience both in its daily rounds and in its final ends. The *Lives* is a book of conduct; it is less interested in the psyche of the poet than in how well he has performed, less interested in individual poems than in the models of excellence they provide. As biography, as criticism, it aims at being exemplary. (p. 460)

The more accurately one recalls the *Lives*, the sounder this firmly phrased characterization will appear.

Two excellent chapters on Thomas Warton are generously informative on those antecedents of his *History* to be found in the work of Pope, Warburton, and Spence as well as in Warton's own earlier work on Spenser. Only less informative are the conjoined critiques on Joseph Warton and Richard Hurd. Lipking's analysis of the "sprawling and diverse collection of unassimilated matter" (p. 354) that is *The History of English Poetry* ably exploits its link, via an obsession with poetic language, to Warton's own poems. Lipking traces in discerning detail Warton's unsuccessful struggle to find an ordering principle for his great project, which was saved from chaos by certain polarities, the largely

unplanned dialectic of the author's own contradictory and shifting aims and ideals: "romance" versus reason, the multitude of facts versus critical selectivity, primitivism versus progress.

For all three arts, the reigning faith in progress seemed to provide an ordering principle ready to hand. Burney concluded his history with the declaration that "the progress of science, and the principles of its declension can only be discovered by tracing the steps by which it has advanced towards perfection or tended to corruption." Yet by Lipking's convincing demonstration "progress" proved, for Burney as for Warton, a dubious guide to organization. Their taste, enlarged in the very process of composing their histories, raised questions. Was Haydn, in every respect, a qualitative advance over Purcell? Pope (primitivism aside) over Spenser? For Warton, the answer, Lipking shows, was yes—and no. "At times he applies the idea of progress dogmatically, at times he dogmatically contradicts it" (p. 396).

Embellished with eight aptly chosen illustrative plates, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* is a handsome book, such as we have come to expect from Princeton University Press. It is also an important book, on an important topic, which the author has elucidated with a commendable mixture of erudition and personal sensitivity.

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*Joseph Stella* by Irma B. Jaffe. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.  
Pp. vii + 262. \$25.00.

Professor Jaffe did much of the research for the Whitney Museum's retrospective of Joseph Stella's work in 1963, produced a doctoral dissertation on him in 1966, published this volume in 1970, and seems to have been conventionally seduced by her subject. Stella, she concludes—though only in the strain of rhetoric and at the height of argument—"must be accounted a major American artist."<sup>1</sup> He was, of course, no such thing—neither major nor particularly American—and I suspect he knew it. It is a mere detail but a revealing one that although, as one of his contemporaries reported, "he loved to talk about Raphael, Pisanello, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, Mantegna, . . . Giotto [, and] Masaccio" and although "his love for Titian, Giorgione, Uccello, Donatello, Pollaiuolo, [and] Bellini was boundless," "*he had a special feeling about the major-minor masters* such as Melozzo da Forlì, Antonello da Messina, Fra Angelico, [and] Lippo Lippi." (Italics added) Although woefully unself-knowing, at heart he knew the kind of artist he was. In the works of private delectation—the silverpoint drawings, some of the delicate pastels, the torn-paper collages he never exhibited—Stella reveals the exquisite sensibility of a minor master. But he aimed higher, fell lower, and was torn apart. He tried to

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Stella was born near Naples in 1877, came to America in 1896, and died here in 1946. He spent about ten of the years between 1909 and 1934 in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.

be an American Modernist, an Italian Primitive, and finally was neither. It is very sad. Like the Slav Tchelitchev and the Mexican Rivera, two other exquisite draughtsmen, Stella could neither rediscover an older convention nor comply with a newer one. After Cubism the search for a style becomes an international malaise, and unless one is, like Picasso, a master of conventions old and new, one had better learn modesty as Morandi did, and Gorky.

But Stella wanted to paint "important" pictures with important subjects, and produced such florid congeries as *Tree of My Life*, *The Birth of Venus*, and *The Apotheosis of the Rose*. Professor Jaffe reserves her highest praise for *New York Interpreted* (1920-1922), the five-panel series Hart Crane thought "marvelous," but it seems to me that two of the panels, *White Way, I* and *White Way, II*, are tropical fantasies in glass and steel, like Castro Convertible furniture the fruit of a vulgar and decadent imagination; and the other three, *The Skyscrapers*, *The Port*, and *The Bridge*, are nowhere as structurally convincing as that authentic instance of Italian folk architecture, *The Watts Towers* of Simon Rodia. Professor Jaffe informs us that if we cant *The Bridge* ninety degrees to the left and look hard, we shall be able to see "disguised as dots representing the windows of a building . . . the letters PAID. . . . It is as if Stella has branded the city with the image of materialistic greed." But what can one say of a serious modern artist whose esthetics encourages this sort of unironic social commentary? It is one thing to be an unsophisticated man—Rodia and Rousseau were unsophisticated men; but neither created an unsophisticated art.

Stella's masterpiece is surely the first *Brooklyn Bridge* (1919)—the painting which will insure his modest place in the anthologies of twentieth century art—but even that painting is as much Italian as American. Professor Jaffe takes Stella too simply at his own too simple word, that his literary influences were Whitman ("divine message from above") and Poe ("subterranean passages to infernal recesses"), for these poets, in Stella's version, are transliterated and partitioned aspects of Dante, whom Stella often recited, his *Paradiso* and *Inferno*. And beneath those Futurist lines of force the *Brooklyn Bridge* is partitioned into Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, a medieval arrangement in comparatively shallow space, the bottom third of which prominently displays a vortex descending into a fiery pit and the upper a pinnace irradiated in white (search) lights. In *Brooklyn Bridge* Stella achieves, however naively and unselfconsciously, the reconciliation of the American Modern and the Italian Primitive in terms of the only myth of harmony he knew, Dante's, but, having achieved it once, he was never able to achieve it again. The index of his failure, a failure he surely intuited, is that variations of the iconic Bridge haunt his later work like dreams he could never interpret, reappearing in 1929, 1936, 1939, and, in a virtual imitation of the original, c. 1941. At the end, terrorized by the prospect of death, he contravenes his divine comedy. *Brooklyn Bridge* (1939) and the *Song of the Barbados* (1938) are, despite their obvious differences, allegories of a common obsession: for each is an anthropomorphized death's-head, a nightmare mask of death.

Joseph Stella provides an extensive check-list (Professor Jaffe has done particularly well at dating the *œuvre*), an exhaustive bibliography, and one hundred and fourteen illustrations, though it is not a catalogue raisonné. It suggests the lineaments of a life, though it is neither a critical biography nor a psychobiogra-



phy. It publishes large sections of Stella's unpublished writing, though the English translations are quite stilted and misleading. And since it is difficult to envisage another big book on Stella, it is unfortunate that this one is not a more substantial critique, for it is, at most, the prolegomena to further study.

MARTIN POPS

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*The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens: The Rhetoric of Sympathy and Irony in his Novels* by Harvey Peter Sucksmith. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970. Pp. xiv + 374. \$9.75.

Dr. Sucksmith's central thesis is that Dickens is a highly conscious artist who makes use of a complex rhetoric combining the emotional involvement of "sympathy" and the critical detachment of "irony" into an increasingly unified artistic vision. Much material from the manuscripts of Dickens' novels is presented here for the first time, with considerable attention to the effects of revisions upon the success of rhetoric. For a number of reasons, the parts seem to me more impressive than the whole. First of all, the view of Dickens as an "instinctive or intuitive novelist, or a writer under a spell of various kinds" (p. 9) against which Dr. Sucksmith poses the figure of the conscious craftsman and rhetorician, is, on the evidence of Sucksmith's own footnotes, something of a straw man. Of the several critics cited as evidence of the persistence of such a view, only two are post-nineteenth century, and neither makes quite the claim that Sucksmith attributes to him; thus, although A. O. J. Cockshut does write of Dickens' self-hypnosis, he also stresses "the wonderful development in imagination and technique"; and Taylor Stoehr, in remarking "the apparent absence of control" in Dickens' narratives, has in mind something more complex than the notion that Dickens did not exercise conscious control in composition, for Stoehr goes on to stress that "in truth a great deal of control is constantly being exercised in the perception of this fragmented world." Sucksmith's use in this connection of the word "unconscious" is a good deal simpler than that of his purported adversaries, and his lengthy quotations from the manuscripts, insofar as they demonstrate that Dickens *did* exercise conscious control and choice in composition, are at best trivial, and at worst tedious.

Equally unconvincing are the attempts to parallel to the practices of Dickens as a writer the theories of fiction of Poe, Bulwer, and Edward Mangin; surely Dickens learned immensely more from the practices of his predecessors, and above all from the practice of writing himself, than from the highly abstract theories quoted by Sucksmith, even if he did read them.

Fortunately, there is quite a bit more than this to Dr. Sucksmith's book. The minute analyses of how Dickens achieved various effects, both of reader involvement and detachment, are original and rewarding, though one may wish that the critic did not find it necessary to tilt, *passim*, at such moribund windmills as Q. D. Leavis' 1932 disparagement of Dickens, or to rely so heavily upon the near-platitudes of William McDougall for definitions of the various kinds of

sympathy. The best chapters are those on Structure, Characterization and Modes of Vision (vi-viii), in which the critic is dealing with larger issues, and thus more extensive, less fragmentary elements of the novels (though he never treats any one novel as a whole). The analysis of how "'Hard Times' . . . compresses the ideas of inflexibility, harshness, and abrasion together with the concepts of time as industrial setting, as historical period, and as the medium of fate" (p. 225), is a much more convincing extrapolation from Dickens' list of potential titles for that novel than I would have believed possible. The distinctions Sucksmith makes between pathos and sentimentality, in which the latter is seen to result from an attempt to deny pain—as in the death of little Nell—constitute the best discussion I have seen on this subject; and the use of Jung's concept of the "persona" to clarify Dickens' grotesque characterization results in a brilliant series of discussions of such characters as Quilp, Pecksniff and Heep—Dickens shows us, for example, "that Pecksniff's wickedness is a vital reality to which we feel instinctively drawn because it reflects the living, resilient evil within ourselves" (p. 269).

There are, scattered throughout, many other interesting facts, analyses, and analyses of facts, and the book is one the professional Dickensian will return to as a useful source of raw materials. As a unified critical study of Dickens, however, this book must, I think, be judged a failure; and a substantial element in that failure is the author's use of Jung—not so much the fact that he uses Jung, but the way in which he does so. Many of the citations of Jung—with the notable exception of the concept of the "persona"—seem as superfluous as citing Northrop Frye to justify using the term "mode" (p. 277)—they are unilluminating to anyone except perhaps a Jungian adept, who could conceivably gain some insight through the sharing of a secret language.

But in part of the penultimate chapter, and throughout the final one—a peroration upon the Nature of Vision—the employment of Jungian concepts leads to serious distortions of critical vision. In a section on tragedy, Sucksmith cites the storm scene of *David Copperfield* as an achievement of truly tragic vision; to substantiate this claim, he quotes at length from the novel, and then asserts that the "stormy sea and inundation are potent archetypal symbols of the catastrophe engineered by cosmic powers. In dream and myth, the overwhelming ocean or flood frequently represents divine retribution or the reaction of the offended forces of Nature" (p. 310). The footnote here is to *Genesis*, *The Odyssey*, and Jung's *Psychological Types*; but such an argument from myth seems illegitimate if we also feel that Dickens has, in the storm scene, attempted to manipulate the reader's sympathies in order to evade the problems implied by David's neurotic identification with Steerforth—cosmic forces, in other words, may not be so much "primordial" images, as creaking stage-machinery for disposing of a troublesome character.

In his climactic chapter, Sucksmith makes much use of the Jungian concepts of "introversion" and "extraversion," arguing that Dickens' vision is of the former kind, since it focuses ultimately upon the subjective significance of experience. Fine, so far. But in assuming the Jungian position that subjectivity has a kind of absolute, "eternal," "archetypal" value, which enables Dickens to achieve "an awareness of the mystical unity of things" (p. 347), the critic begs a number of important questions. Is a sense of a "numinous" quality in the world always a genuine vision, or is it sometimes an evasion? And which is more

useful: to say, as Sucksmith does, that Dickens' treatment of the railway in *Dombey and Son* as a "dragon" and "an emblem of the course of Death" (p. 344) stems from his contact with the "collective unconscious"; or to show that the dragon derives complexly from contemporary iconographic treatments of the railway panic of 1845, and Dickens' own ambivalence towards industrial progress, and that the train-as-death is also related to these elements, but is primarily a depiction of Mr. Dombey's narcissism?

Ultimately, the issue becomes almost an ideological one, as when Sucksmith argues that Dickens' "Manichean" vision "may even give play to those old gods whom we can sometimes hear laughing cruelly within ourselves at the fates of humankind" (p. 357). Perhaps we should grant the critic the right to something approaching a rhetoric of dogmatism in his final chapter; but making such an allowance cannot fully still my sense of a disjunction between Dr. Sucksmith's discrete critical discussions and his total critical vision. I suspect that when I return to *The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens* it shall be as to a mine, rather than as to a mint.

MICHAEL STEIG

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*On Modern German Literature* by Paul Konrad Kurz, S. J., trans. Sister Mary Frances McCarthy. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1970. Pp. 249. \$8.00.

Good books on modern German literature, especially in English, are rare. There are, of course, the traditional and often quite useful period accounts as well as numerous studies on individual writers and literary schools. But there are few inspired guides to the underlying structures of German literature, books combining a systematic knowledge of intellectual history with critical analyses of significant authors and specific literary works.

The book under discussion here narrows the existing gap considerably. Rather than giving the usual often tiresome chronology of names and events, Kurz concentrates in a series of essays on a few distinct subject areas and communicates in this manner essential aspects of modern German literature. The nine essays or chapters, written between 1963 and 1967, deal either with individual authors (Kafka, Heissenbüttel, Nelly Sachs), or with literary pieces (*Die Schlafwandler*, *Hundejahre*, "Ein Landarzt") and offer polemics as well as critical surveys ("Vicissitudes of the Modern Novel," "Perspectives in Kafka Interpretations," "Literature and Theology Today," "Literature and Science"). It is fair to say that each essay presented in the collection constitutes an important probe into the artistic conscience and consciousness of our time. And while the book was obviously not conceived as a literary survey, it reveals a deeper pattern that might well be called a structural history of modern literature.

Not since Wolfgang Kayser's celebrated essay on the novel has there been a discussion of that genre as succinct and striking as the one offered by Kurz in his introductory chapter. It is an excellent sketch delineating the development and metamorphosis of the modern German novel; and it touches, through its

very presentation, on the broader—and most problematic—issue of defining genres. The second chapter is no less fundamental: the confusion, scope and frequent one-sidedness of Kafka interpretations reflect the capriciousness of scholarship and hermeneutics. "Literary criticism," Kurz writes, "is not a simple, horizontal activity. A literary work of art contains many levels of meaning. Psychological, sociological, philosophical, or theological interpretations, when they proceed in isolation, encompass only one aspect, one level of meaning, and this leads to distortion." (p. 55) Such declarations, one is apt to conclude, are all too simple and perhaps a bit truistic. And Kurz has a penchant for such declarations. Yet, while they offer no new insights, these statements warrant repetition; and often enough they appear as unequivocal axioms of literary scholarship.

What is the function of literature, the nature of science? What is the relationship of literature to religion and to modern man's crisis of faith? These questions are examined in chapters three and four, perhaps the most interesting section of the book. It is there that Kurz' original title finds justification: *Über moderne Literatur*, for these issues are viewed from the perspectives of literature in general rather than from within the German realm. And it is here, too that a message emerges, the clear and valid message that the literary profession is in danger of becoming ineffectual, perhaps obsolete. Men of letters, Kurz urges, must move out of their mirrored halls, must invite scientists and theologians to their colloquia and align themselves with all groups interested in the physical and metaphysical needs of man—or face growing inaccuracy in the understanding of man and in the interpretation of his documents.

Kurz' splendid essays on this subject are not entirely flawless. One might, for instance, after some debate, agree with the first half of the following assertion: "For Rilke, the greatest of the German lyric poets of the twentieth century, science played no role," (p. 66) but one could hardly accept the second. Rilke's poetic vocabulary contains a number of scientific terms which he not only used effectively, but also with a good understanding of the science involved. Such errors, however, are rare—even though the book always offers room for disagreement. Consider the critique of Günter Grass and his novel *Hundejahre*. Kurz finds that the novel shows a "pejorative lack of differentiation" (p. 147) and thinks the spirit of the novel negative and even destructive. "We recognize too few values in the author of *Hundejahre*," (p. 146) he sums up. What an odd judgment! Is it the author or is it his art that must pass moral review; whose values are involved: Kurz', Grass', or the novel's? Clearly he has difficulties with Günter Grass and the barbaric world of *Hundejahre*, difficulties arising perhaps from Kurz' own moral bent and from a slight unwillingness to accept Grass' literary and historiographical phenomenology.

Kurz seems more at home in the artistic world of Hermann Broch. His portrait of the Austrian romancier as an analyst and diagnostician of his time is both sharp and attractive. But more important: he is eloquent and convincing in his argument that Broch's masterpiece, *The Sleepwalkers*, has lost nothing of its artistic power and social relevance, and that its applicability to our own time has not been fully discovered. Man's search for sexual and religious redemption, the nature of anarchy and revolution, both in art and in political life, are only two of the fundamental themes presented by Broch which give his work a historical lineage as well as a sense of contemporary urgency.

In his second Kafka essay Kurz takes one narrative, "A Country Doctor," and,

in a dazzling display of interpretative scholarship, uses it as a key to Kafka's world and artistry. The lack of initial exposition in the story, the absence of a "friendly hand extended to the reader," (p. 155) the atmosphere of doom and isolation, and finally the expulsion of the hero from the bliss of Paradise (which was minimal to begin with), all this reflects the basic human experience and literary pattern that was typically Kafka's; and it can serve, according to the cogent argument of the discourse, as a valid general approach to an understanding of Kafka.

In his last two chapters Kurz juxtaposes Helmut Heissenbüttel, a dominant figure of the contemporary literary scene in Germany, to Nelly Sachs, the late German-Jewish poetess and Nobel Laureate. Heissenbüttel emerges from this excellent presentation as the intellectual poet who scorns metaphor, who has reduced his speech to the essential—"das sagbare sagen"—and to a logical minimum. His "Texte" not only reveal him as a sober realist, but also as a superb craftsman, economical, precise and factual, a linguistic philosopher in the tradition of Wittgenstein. Nelly Sachs, by contrast, appears as the ageless pilgrim in search of grace, the poetess of suffering, blending the psychological realm with history and religion in a language rich in imagery and symbols. The essay is penetrating and moving and an appropriate conclusion to this engaging book which is more than a book on German literature, which is, in fact, an exploration of the artistic, intellectual and religious fabric of twentieth century man.

Sister Mary Frances McCarthy deserves high praise for bringing this book to the English reader. The few errors which occurred in the transfer from one language to another are negligible (on p. 8 "Fredrich Schlegel" should read "Friedrich Schlegel," and on p. 198 "Dortmund" instead of "Dortsmund." Also: Pope's *Essay on Man* appeared in 1733 rather than 1773). The linguistically accurate translation preserves one of the most refreshing aspects of the original: the clarity of thought and style. Kurz knows his subject matter well enough so that he obviously has no need to hide behind linguistic acrobatics. He writes with precision and simplicity, making the book useful to readers of various backgrounds and accomplishing thereby a true work of scholarly enlightenment.

Kurz' sometimes synthetic, sometimes analytic eclecticism, his multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach is not new. Others, notably Walter Jens, have written similar "non-histories" of modern literature, books centering on issues and problems rather than attempting a complete presentation of external events. But that does not minimize the importance of Kurz' work. There are few books on the subject that can claim the variety and depth of this study and there are fewer still that can rival its vividness and intellectual verve. The English version indicates that this is volume I; it is to be wished indeed that volume II will soon appear.

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*Poems Without Names: The English Lyric, 1200-1500* by Raymond Oliver.  
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970. Pp. xvi + 165. \$6.50.

A suitable summary of this book, provided by the author himself, may be found in *Dissertation Abstracts*, 28:4643A (1968), except that poems "mentioned or discussed are given in the appendix" to the dissertation, whereas in the book "I have interlarded my prose with eighty-six medieval lyrics quoted in full" (p. ix). Poems are thus quoted at an average rate of one every other page, at times (as pp. 74-84) occupying half the space, producing "an anthology as well as a study of short poems in Middle English" (p. ix).

An appropriate assessment may begin, I believe, in a consideration of the audience likely to learn most from the book and to respond most favorably to it. A member of that audience—to note a truly elemental matter—will be at home with the late Middle English of Chaucer and will not be disturbed by variations among dialects and orthographic systems (the variations that repeatedly have inspired philologists to use the word "chaos" to characterize Middle English). Glossing of texts is rather full. Yet the same reader who has got on that far in the language of late medieval England will not have read many literary texts; he need not be familiar enough with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for example, to require only a reference to a prominent passage, but will benefit instead from a long passage quoted in modern translation. He may not have known the dates and devastation of the Black Death. The audience for this book, in short, will have linguistic credentials in Middle English but will lack credentials in that period of literature and history.

*Poems Without Names* will appeal principally to two types of taste in literary criticism. The first (which will be less thoroughly satisfied) appreciates quotation and accompanying commentary like the following. Of the first stanza of a poem:

O man vnkynde / hafe in mynde  
My paynes smert!  
Beholde & see, / Þat is for þe  
Percyd, my hert.—

Oliver notes that "percyd" draws "attention to itself because, as an inverted foot in the first position, it breaks the pattern of the first three lines," the enjambment throwing "added weight onto the word." "The sense of line 3 is suspended briefly after 'þe' [*thee*], the final and therefore climatic word; its resolution in 'Percyd' is as sharp and forceful as a spear-thrust" (p. 96). In the final clause of this commentary the license of literary extravagance is large. It may be in fact too large for the analysis it concludes: enjambment and line-position of a word are obvious but inadequate explanations (or even indicators) of the poetic force these lines do have. Observations on the syntax of the stanza and on the collocations and fields of choice in diction, to name but two critical resources, could tell much more about the effectiveness of the stanza—and perhaps show it more accurately. But other resources aside, the metrical analysis in Chapter 5, "Sound and Rhythm," remains conventional, leading to a general statement that "the anonymous medieval poets"—or the manuscripts of their poems—do not observe precise syllable count and foot structure; and because "their meaning had *only* broad contours," because "there is little to be qualified" by refined meter, "the meter can accomplish little; it is [in the finely

modulated poems] like a fine arabesque around the edge of a very simple manuscript illumination" (pp. 91-92). The possibilities of a systematic manipulation of metrical units larger than foot-in-line are not explored.

Part of the purpose of the chapter on meter is to complement the rest of the book in satisfying the type of literary taste to which *Poems Without Names* will appeal most. That is a taste for classifying. A subsection of Chapter 2, "Public, Practical, Anonymous," illustrates "the second main public intention" of Middle English lyrics by grouping several poems under the heading "Persuasion." One is the brief and poignant "O man vnkynde / Hauē thow yn mynde"; another is "Verses on a Chained Horae," a journeyman piece of practical versification; another is "Alysoun," the much-admired and sprightly piece that finds its way into every anthology; yet another is "Wenest þu, huscher," a kind of schoolboy verse against a superior, on the order of graffiti. All do apparently reflect an intention to persuade, though whom, to what, and with how much literary virtue remain subordinate to the categorizing in which the poems are presented. "Seȝ, wist y þe brom" is labeled as expressing antifeminist ideology (p. 37). Other poems are classified in Chapter 4, "The Three Levels of Style," under the headings "low," "high," and "middle" ("the broad range between low and high" (p. 84)). The famous "Corpus Christi Carol" is quoted in Chapter 6, "Large Structures," to illustrate repetition as a structuring device; the commentary does not develop any explanation of how repetition helps create "the aura of hieratic mystery" (p. 108).

Chapter 7, "Conclusion," considers the Middle English Lyrics in comparative terms with other European lyrics and in historical perspective of English literary development, in coming to a recapitulation of the thesis of the book. That thesis is given explicit statement in Chapter 1, "Theory and Method." The unity of the poems "is deep and distinct, but also various" (p. 4), and it is the author's intention "to define the tradition of *the* anonymous short poem in Middle English" (*Ibid.*, my italics). Restated, but in terms used only rarely again (e.g., p. 74): "my task is to write the grammar of a poetic sublanguage" (p. 5). The intention of defining the tradition necessitates setting aside changes, of interest to others, in the three-hundred-year span of texts (p. 3).

The critical mode of Oliver's book is essentially definition-classification, and the book will appeal to those who will be concerned to find unity in diversity; who will take categorizing of texts as a self-sufficient process of literary analysis; who will not as a rule be concerned with literary assessment or explication of loci of literary excellence (or lack of excellence); who will, as the author, aspire to learn "the rules of the game" by which one may compose a Middle English short poem; who will accept poems as illustrations in an extended essay in definition; who will perceive "The English Lyric" in a three-century sampling of "Poems Without Names."

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*The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* by Milton R. Stern.  
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970, pp. xiii + 462. \$10.00.

This is a splendid book. It is generous and just in its appreciation and assessment of Fitzgerald; rich of texture throughout most of its many pages; complex in the diversity of its critical resources; stunning in its coherent and persuasive view of American literature and culture; and masterful in its sustained, detailed readings of Fitzgerald's four novels—especially *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. I say all of these nice things after two close readings and a third over-reading. This book holds up: it is the work of a large, vital, and energetic mind; of a deeply committed moral self. There is a lot of true American gold here.

So large and varied a book is hard to encompass in a brief review; one can only identify some of its central concerns and render a sense of the complex analytic and hermeneutic matrix from which it was generated. A loaded passage which Mr. Stern quotes from Wright Morris's *The Territory Ahead* is helpful with both of these tasks. "In plumbing" nostalgia "to its depths," Morris argues, "Fitzgerald dropped to the deep, dead-end center of the American mind. He let his line out deeper than Hemingway and Twain, deeper than the Mississippi and the Big Two-Hearted River, down to that sunken island that once mythically flowered for Dutch sailors' eyes." (quoted on p. 453) The metaphor of deep, dangerous, imaginative exploration of the American mind, American history, and American myth is the root metaphor used throughout the book for both the novels and the critical procedures necessary to apprehend them. This book tries to follow Fitzgerald down to the "deep, dead-end center of the American mind" where the American dream was born, lived, and died; back and down to our own lost Atlantis sunk in the vast oceanic depths of our fictions and of all our American minds. Everything in this book converges on America, the fictions of America, and the profound Americanness of Fitzgerald. It is also from the deep living center of Mr. Stern's own American mind that this whole book issues, as the following short quotations will show.

"Fitzgerald's perennial appeal," he says, "is essentially the same as Twain's: both writers evoke a particular vernacular in speech and in manners through their sharp eye for representative detail, and make their materials a microcosm of the history of the nation." (150) Or, in summing up one of the hermeneutic axioms of the book: "With as deeply national a good writer as Fitzgerald, one can no more exhaust the crucial significance of art as cultural expression than one can exhaust the tactics of the work [here, *Tender is the Night*]." (300) Or, in attempting to pursue the romantic sexual metaphors so prevalent in Fitzgerald to another level of discourse; "Except for Twain and Whitman, no American writer has had so sadly, with such fascination, repudiation, and longing, such an intense love affair with his country, and no writer has calibrated the affair as delicately as did Fitzgerald." (408) Or, in a pair of declarative statements: "If Fitzgerald was anything, he was American to the marrow" (456); and, "Fitzgerald is 'one of the most 'American' writers this nation has produced.'" (460) The whole book is written to demonstrate the truth, in detail, of these two statements. This final quotation is an example of how one American generalization is applied to Fitzgerald: he "expressed better than any of his contemporaries," Mr. Stern says, "perhaps better than any writer except, possibly Whitman, the rich ambiguities and ambivalences and complexities of the future-facing man turning to the past for good values because it was in the past that the sense of the future was best and purest." (455)



It is from this American matrix that all of the major and most resonant perceptions are generated; that is why the book is as much about what it means—in the deep, disturbing sense—to be an American as it is about the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald or the golden moment in the lives of Fitzgerald's composite characters or America as the golden moment in the history of the human race. (258) Nothing but massive quotation could possibly render the continuous, dense texture of these American perceptions. I'll quote one representative passage and then move on, acknowledging by this means how the book echoes in the mind long after it is read and recalls those of us in the field to one of our most important and exacting tasks: "Gatsby sums us all up. He sums up our American desire to believe in a release from history, to believe that our early past did indeed establish redemption, to believe that in our founding the *idea* of our superb and hopeful heritage was actualized. He sums up the 'vast, vulgar, meretricious beauty' that our wealth has made and in which we dress the romantic sense of self that the idea of American possibilities keeps whispering is at hand. He sums up, too, the fast-movietime we have made of history, wiping out past, present, and future in the whirling certitude that the new, that our wealth and power, will make time do our bidding." (253) Yes. How can anyone in 1971 read that without a terrible sadness; or the first part without thinking of Ike McCaslin and one of those other profoundly American fictions, *Go Down, Moses*.

The fictions of America are what this book—and Fitzgerald—is all about. The study can be read as a model (a completely worked out demonstration) of how to apprehend a good American writer and show how he has been able to "capture greatly the peculiarities of our national experience" and touch "upon one depth or another of the composite personal experience of all men everywhere." (460) The whole book is organized to this end. The logic of its structure and its length are both functions of this double need: to account for and to render adequately the true sources of the great fictional and imaginative power that is so obviously present (and increasing, it seems) in Fitzgerald's two major novels, and to show how the man, the life, and the two prose fictions are peculiarly American. The book ends, for example with a marvelous discussion of how in Fitzgerald can be found that same profoundly ambivalent and apparently simultaneous liberal/conservative motivation which makes so many modern American writers seem to be going backward and forward at the same time, without contradiction, and in a variety of combinations—for example, radical forms and traditional values, conventional forms and radical values. This ambivalence is deep in the American mind and part of the structure of our American dreams. When Mr. Stern says that "in many ways, Fitzgerald illustrates the dilemma of the liberal in America, and in this provides another reason why his culture finds him so perennially fascinating and significant. . . ." (453), he delivers Fitzgerald and his major composite fictional selves to us in a sudden new and illuminating way.

The book begins with a long (one hundred and fifty-six pages) two chapter unit in which analysis and interpretation of the first two novels (*This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and the Damned*), in the context of the whole development, are combined with the systematic presentation of the coherent and persuasive view of American literature and culture referred to above. A complex alternating structure is developed here which enables Mr. Stern to go repeatedly through a round of topics, working out both the nexus of relationships he is concerned with and the basic dialectic (or drama) of creation and destruction

he follows through all the works; Fitzgerald's life; the lives of the composite fictional selves; Fitzgerald's development as a writer and the various complicated interactions between the destructive life and the creative works, with the two feeding and renewing each other in mysterious and wonderful ways; the times, mainly from WW I to WW II—the destructive brackets of the period; and finally, American history.

There is a lot going on in this book all of the time; yet it has a very specific double focus which each movement through the round of topics makes more precise. One of the great virtues of the book is that it always keeps the double focus clear and generally avoids the various inversions, reductions, distortions, and misplaced emphases inherent in its literary-cultural approach. The main concern is always with the four novels as American fictions (rather than just fictions): as a development: from this Mr. Stern is also concerned with the composite fictional selves as Americans and with the national drama reenacted in each novel with ever greater complexity and mastery as Fitzgerald grew in experience, knowledge, and skill. The hazards in this approach are all critical inversions whereby the fictions are reduced to a variety of things which they are not, as if it were possible to decreate them and then use the elements out of which they were made as reliable sources of historical, cultural, autobiographical, or national data. The main reason for the length of the book is that Mr. Stern has undertaken the enormously difficult but necessary task of demonstrating how all of these things (and more) are *in* the novels, *intrinsic* to them and the tactics of the works as an organic part of their created verbal substance and reality. Mr. Stern knows that, critically, only the texts are real and that there is always an unaccountable element of mystery about the inexhaustible plenitude of created reality present *in* great texts. The long, lovingly detailed, and often brilliant readings of *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night* which Mr. Stern sustains through the last three hundred pages of the book are living affirmations of these critical postulates. Mr. Stern quite literally reads nothing out of these two novels; he reads very deeply into them—a term which is to be understood spatially, as an act of analytic, hermeneutic penetration—and finds what has always been there in the deep structure of the novels. One can certainly misread these novels, and Mr. Stern points out very tactfully some of the ways both have been misread; but one can hardly over-read either of these profound fictions of America. That is one of the lessons of this long book.

The power of the book is almost equally divided between the coherent and persuasive view of American literature and culture laid out in the first two chapters (I: "A Brummagem God"; II: "The Ironical-Pessimistic"), and the amplifications and applications of it in the long, dense, detailed, and convincing readings of *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night* undertaken in the last two chapters (III: "A Willingness of the Heart"; IV: "The Broken Decalogues"). Here, better than anywhere else I know of, one gets a true sense of Fitzgerald's peculiar greatness as an American novelist. Anybody who writes about Fitzgerald from now on should read this book; not because Mr. Stern's analyses of the fictions are definitive (they're not), but because, as Dylan Thomas said in another context, he would be a damn fool if he didn't.