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Book Reviews

Anthony Powell: A Quintet, Sextet and War by John Russell. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1970. Pp. xi + 238. \$7.50.

A friendly caveat for readers of this lucid and intelligent study is to discount immediately the inflated, erroneous claims on the dust cover and take the work in the spirit that John Russell wrote it: as a "provisional [but] insofar as it is able . . . comprehensive account of Anthony Powell's writing to date." While I find the epithet "provisional" unduly modest, Russell, a sound scholar, good critic, and Powell-watcher for some years, is aware throughout that the mind coming under his scrutiny is subtle, capacious, volatile and elusive; and that *A Dance to the Music of Time*—now three-quarters complete in nine volumes, and clearly the front runner to date for becoming the greatest novel sequence in English—is monumentally hewn, complexly organized, labyrinthine in patterns and motifs, and multileveled in character and action.

Rightly enough, Russell devotes over half the book (the second half) to an analysis—not as the jacket blurb puffs a "detailed criticism"—of *The Music of Time*, conscious of its immense difficulties, though bold and exploratory in offering tentative conclusions as well as charting definite directions. This particular section confirms my feelings that the more critics say about the sequence, the more apparent it is that a great many new things can and need be said. It convinces me further, however, that about Powell's five earlier novels—uncomfortably but immortally dwarfed by *The Music of Time*—perhaps enough has been said already. I therefore regret Russell's usurping space from his generally excellent, accurate and important commentary on the series and giving us instead (after a long, introductory reflection on Powell, heavy on the side of literary history): (1) thirty pages of warmed over fare on the quintet of novels from the thirties and (2) thirty more pages of fascinating, but ultimately specialized (and in places painful) anatomizing of the distinctions between Powell's pre-war and post-war styles. Attempting to be "comprehensive" about all of Powell's writing, Russell risks being sketchy about the one work unquestionably slated for permanence.

Whatever attitudes on life and class may be gleaned from Powell's biography of John Aubrey, or thoughts on literary criticism from his reviews; whoever ranks highest on the list of his literary antecedents; and however original, artistic the thirties' novels (does anyone really still feel otherwise?), such insights always appear tangential, if not actually detached from the *sui generis* thing *The Music of Time* is. Arguing as Russell does that Powell is a "classicist" and "realist" rather than a "romantic" and "satirist," that he is different from Proust here or similar to him there, that certain techniques, tensions and themes appearing in the quintet re-appear in the sequence strikes me as not merely distressingly old hat, but as being more captivated by the monochrome flickers of shadow plays than the brilliance and color of an unfolding, imaginative, substantial drama.

But when Russell gets down to cases with *The Music of Time* he gives us some of the best criticism of the novel yet. He has read it closely; studied it diligently; absorbed it entirely. Whether tracing its proliferating motifs and cross-pollination and juxtaposition of its several hundred characters, or whether developing these in relation to what he considers its main theme—"that character determines event; that unplanned action forever overturns what is planned; that the will nevertheless must be energized before life can be caught; and that tiny increments from the past . . . lead to the moods that create crises"—he is spirited, cogent, synthesizing and maddeningly exact: the two latter, I think, perhaps the most indispensable attributes of any critic grappling with the sequence's continually vital and renewable ethos, and with a structure deceptively simple on the surface yet intensely baffling beneath.

Like others before him, Russell divides *The Music of Time* into trilogies; but taking his cue from one of Powell's characters he demonstrates further how each trilogy is constructed on the dialectical principle of "commencement-opposition-equilibrium." Thus, in the three extant trilogies ([1] *A Question of Upbringing*, *A Buyer's Market*, *The Acceptance World*, [2] *At Lady Molly's*, *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*, *The Kindly Ones*, [3] *The Valley of Bones*, *The Soldier's Art*, *The Military Philosophers*), the kick-off volumes in each initiate new phases in Nick Jenkins' life, the second revolve about poles of conflict and antitheses, resolved (though nowhere made static) in the third volumes. This is certainly a tidy way of gaining a view and over-view, but more still needs to be done in explaining how the formalized and classic patterns in any single trilogy allow for correspondences, shifts and variations among all three—and eventually four—of them.

Russell is particularly good at demolishing certain half-baked assumptions that *The Music of Time* is primarily a social chronicle and quasi-autobiography and only secondarily fiction. His argument for Powell as an historian before a sociologist, a mythologizer before an historian, and a novelist before all of these comes as close to establishing a hierarchy of emphases in the sequence as anything previously written. And while Russell treats the novel's narrator as more normative and neutral than Powell's design warrants—Nick Jenkins may be the last, true modern hero in an anti-heroic world, nor would the series "work" as great fiction were he not—he seldom refuses an encounter with those interpenetrating forces of time, character and event that raise Powellian comedy and irony to metaphysical heights.

Seldom, I say, though the single exception is glaring. For by far the most curious feature of Russell's treatment of *The Music of Time* is an almost thorough neglect of Kenneth Widmerpool: "villain-hero," man of will power, of will and power, and after Nick the underpinning of the novel. To be sure, Russell makes certain feints and jabs at nailing who and what he is; but there is no hard-hitting, solid analytic blow. Why he prefers overestimating a lesser character's impact on the series, elevating him, mythifying him in a sense—Ted Jeavons and Gatsby are somewhat violently and inappositely yoked together, for example—with a commanding, tailor-made, and now full-blown mythic figure like Widmerpool around remains as tenuous and indecipherable as Widmerpool himself.

Russell's withholding any final statement on Widmerpool or the sequence may be perfectly reasonable within his set "provisional" contexts: but from here on in critics must pay less cautious tribute to the indisputable clarity of its parts

and plunder instead the rich ambiguities of the whole. *A Dance to the Music of Time* is a big novel in the grand manner, a universal human comedy, a prose-poem on England, art and history. Yet if we continue to pore over the details of its blueprint, we run the risk of missing the magnificence and power of the work itself.

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Dionysus and the City: Modernism in Twentieth-Century Poetry by Monroe K. Spears. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. Pp. ix + 278. \$7.50.

Monroe Spears is a well-informed scholar, but even he has his limitations, and they show in his treatment of the ambitious subject specified in the subtitle of this interesting book. Without knowing it, he agrees with Renato Poggioli (a critic to whom he never refers) in considering modernist art essentially a new phenomenon, a phenomenon of our time, both in its theoretical assumptions and in many of its concrete examples. Poggioli's *Theory of the Avantgarde*, published three years ago by the Belknap Press of Harvard, was more heavily weighted on the side of theory, as its title indicates, and despite its brilliance in social and intellectual analysis it tended to a Procrustean reductiveness vis-à-vis individual authors and works. This flaw is much less conspicuous in Mr. Spears' book, which on the other hand falls short of Poggioli's scope by insinuating somehow that the chief poets of the modernist movement have been those writing in English. An appropriate modifier in the subtitle could have helped. It is true that Mr. Spears, with the tact he constantly shows as man and as writer, eventually defines his topic as focused on British and American poets, and takes to task the parochialism of a Graham Hough; and it is also true that he points out how modernist aesthetics arose independently in several Western places. Nor am I forgetting the European scope he provides as general background when he correlates modern literature to parallel developments in painting, music and philosophy. But, for example, at p. 240 in discussing Robert Lowell's verse translations he says:

Lowell's imitations are based not only on poems congenial to the modern taste but on those of many periods, styles, and languages, many remote from any obvious modern affinity: for example, Racine's *Phèdre* (1961) and, in the volume *Imitations* of the same year, Homer, Sappho, Villon, Pasternak, Leopardi, Hebel, Heine, Hugo, Ungaretti, Montale, as well as the more predictable Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rilke, and Valéry. . . .

Now Pasternak, as the available English translations of his autobiography and verse may show, is a writer of unique modern poignancy, even if not openly iconoclastic; and the same holds of Montale, whose poetry has at least the grittiness of Eliot's best. These two poets (apart from any value judgments) qualify for inclusion in the modernist context for the very reasons that prompted Mr. Spears to assign his fellow-Southerners Ransom, Tate and Warren to that

context. If Mr. Spears had consulted Hugo Friedrich's *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik* (1956), he would have been disabused. My essay on Montale, published by Mr. Spears in *Sewanee Review* in 1958, should have shown him that the eschatological, apocalyptic element he considers essential to modern poetry is outstanding in Montale. As for Ungaretti, whose elliptical tensions are far more incisive than Futurist Marinetti's, he is at least as relevant to the context as Rilke is, and there is by now some critical help available in English on this subject.

I am also uneasy about Mr. Spears' incautious endorsement of Ben Belitt's statement that Lowell when translating "never uses the alien poem as a mirror to reflect himself, or as an opportunity for histrionic mimicry . . ." for a close look at Lowell's Leopardi, Heine or Montale would convince anybody of the contrary. This of course is marginal to the central theme of the book, which Mr. Spears tackles with clarity. He wisely begins with a semantic analysis of the term "modern" (in the sense of "modernist" or "relevant to the modern age"), and then encompasses several cognate manifestations of the Western mind to stress the emergence of discontinuity as the paramount factor in modern experience. Mr. Spears finds discontinuity superseding an earlier continuity in the metaphysical sphere (between the natural, human, and supernatural orders), in the aesthetic sphere (where mimesis makes room for the creation of a *heterocosm*, i. e. a self-contained imaginary world parallel to, but basically unconnected with, the existential world), in the rhetorical sphere (with the yielding of "prose" or "reason" to the "imagination" or "poetry"), and finally in the temporal sphere (where past, present and future have come apart owing to the widespread rejection of history). It would pay to compare this fourfold interpretive pattern to Poggioli's four categories defining avantgarde art: agonism, activism, nihilism, and futurism. Like Poggioli, Mr. Spears is aware of the Romantic antecedents of modernist art, and like him again he tries to avoid a reduction of the latter to the former movement—against Kermode's thesis. Both Spears and Poggioli believe in the newness of the new, chiefly the heightened quality of time experience.

Much of what Mr. Spears has to say on the phenomenology of modern art is to the point. I like his evaluation of the movies as an important manifestation of the new aesthetics, and I agree with his evaluation of scientific thought (Mendel's, Planck's, Heisenberg's, Einstein's) as an inescapable concomitant of modern aesthetic experience. I am also interested in his emphasis on the capital role painting has had in both major waves of the avantgarde (roughly, the one that took shape shortly after the beginning of this century, and the one rising in the Fifties), while there is no need to underscore the appropriateness of his reference to atonal music in the context of aesthetic discontinuity. If so, however, I wonder whether his banking on the irrationalist symbol of Dionysus, in the wake of Nietzsche, does complete justice to the complex phenomenon he is trying to chart for us. It is true that the Dionysian element, with its chthonic, subversive, orgiastic force, has played a decisive part in the unsettling of our bourgeois culture, and that to a considerable extent it has even assumed a prophetic function with regard to the catastrophic events of twentieth-century fame. Thus, for instance, D. H. Lawrence's chthonic apocalypse can be seen as a prophecy of Nazism, and Marinetti's verbal anarchy forecasts Fascism. But what about the contrary element, the intellectual element? How is one to

understand the presence of Dionysian irrationalism and discontinuity within the framework of otherwise classicist restorers like Eliot or Pound or Montale and Benn and Valéry, unless one assumes the countervailing force of intellect, a force which can be destructive analytical fury and, also, protective alienation? Poggioli did take this factor into account, though he dialectically identified the two extremes of avantgarde consciousness, namely, intellectualism and irrationalism (originally Worringer's polarity of *Abstraktion* and *Einfuehlung*). So, for that matter, does Spears when he brings ironic writers like Ransom or Tate and Warren into the discussion; but the theoretical premise is weak.

If Nietzsche, Freud and Frazer (with Marx as an uneasy fellow-traveller) stand for Mr. Spears at the headwaters of the modern Dionysian tide, the city as such provides a stage for Dionysus; and Mr. Spears traces this thematic image (without ever referring to David Weimer's *The City as Metaphor*) through the poetry of Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Crane and Williams or Cummings. Here I wonder if certain evaluations (incidental though they may be to the avowed main purpose of the book) can be lightly passed. I am not sure that Eliot's criticism and poetry should rank as unquestionably superior to Pound's (p. 152). First of all, Pound's criticism is of an entirely different nature from Eliot's, it is aggressively pragmatic, and it has an intellectually sharper edge. It is certainly less academic. As to the poetry, I happen to think that *Mauberley* and *Propertius*, with at least parts of the *Cantos*, belong in the same league as *Prufrock* and the *Wasteland*. What's more, Pound, opinionated, mad, unreconstructible Pound, has kept poetically alive far beyond Eliot's own span. When Pound kept experimenting with his *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones*, so that he could act as an inspiration on the last generation of poets in all languages, dear old Eliot had become thoroughly adjusted. And how come Mr. Spears, who has such kind things to say of Lowell as translator of poetry, forgets the immense importance of Pound in this regard? Pound as "translator" is both avantgarde and classic, a unique model and fomenter, an insuperable craftsman. Spears' condescension to him at p. 152 is unforgivable.

Another serious flaw in Mr. Spears' book is the lack of an adequate philosophical background. At p. 21 he says that Marx was, with Darwin, responsible for the rise of the nineteenth-century sense of continuous progress which modern thinkers have shattered, while at p. 29 he maintains that "the assumption that fundamental change in human nature is possible is essential to Marxist, anarchist, and other revolutionary political doctrine . . . any political revolutionary is advocating a kind of discontinuity." He could have resolved this blatant contradiction if he had stopped to analyze it closely, and if he had remembered that a dialectical conception of reality is intrinsic to Marxism as it had been to Hegel, Marx's daddy. Again, dialectical grasp of discontinuities stands out in the thought of Kierkegaard, the left-wing Hegelian whose relevance to much modern writing, from Kafka to Auden, is well known. There are also the contingentist philosophers to be taken into account. The greatest of them, Emile Boutroux, toward the end of the last century undermined Spencerian materialist gradualism by pointing out that each stage of natural reality is irreducible to its predecessor. The most disappointing part of Mr. Spears' book is the last chapter but one (No. VII, "Poetry Since the Mid-Century"), where he focuses on James Dickey rather than more valid examples like Sylvia Plath, Denise Levertov, John Logan, or Leroi Jones. His assessment of modern critics

shows no idea that Northrop Frye's system (and I share Mr. Spears' reservations on him) parallels the European wave of structuralism. In a book of such ambitious scope, European criticism (which has made itself felt in America through men like Croce, Spitzer, Auerbach, and Jakobson) should have dawned somewhere on the horizon. It would have enhanced the cultural usefulness of a book which, though far from mediocre, can be very misleading.

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Speaking of Chaucer by E. Talbot Donaldson. New York: Norton, 1970. Pp. ix + 178. \$6.50.

Chaucerians and other readers who admire Professor Donaldson's sturdy good sense in the criticism of medieval literature will be happy to see this volume. Of the twelve essays here gathered, only four are new; the others have appeared elsewhere over a period of sixteen years, and include such influential and previously anthologized papers as "Chaucer the Pilgrim" (1954), along with others less well known or less conveniently available, such as "The Ending of Chaucer's *Troilus*" (1963) and "The Myth of Courtly Love" (1965).

Despite the book's title, several of the essays deal with Chaucer only as incidental to broader aspects of medieval literature. For example, "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature: the Opposition," though it speaks at length of the "Nuns' Priest's Tale," is primarily a *riposte* to the Robertsonian school, delivered at the English Institute in 1958. "The Myth of Courtly Love" is a welcome deflation of some aspects of that scholarly figment, with the thesis that "at least a part of what is called courtly love was no more real in the Middle Ages than it had been before or has been since" (p. 163). "The Psychology of Editors of Middle English Texts" is a charming (and disarming) non-report of progress on the Donaldson-Kane edition of the B-text of *Piers Plowman*. In lieu of the requested report the author examines the neuroses and delusions of editors of old texts, rejects the pseudo-objectivity of stemma-construction, defends the exercise of "subjective" judgements by learned editors, and so elaborates a sane and realistic editors' bill of rights in the face of "manuscript authority," stemmata, and similar editorial wraiths and bogeys.

Of the four previously unprinted pieces the weakest is "Medieval Poetry and Medieval Sin," a somewhat labored restatement of the autonomy of the medieval artist *qua* artist in the face of medieval moralists like Chaucer's Parson or their modern critical counterparts like Robertson and Huppé. He concludes that "the best medieval literature does not necessarily have anything to do with sin, and it does just what Chaucer does—offers joy to the reader" (p. 173). Probably few (including Robertson) would disagree; but the argument seems forced, over-elaborate, and in fact unnecessary. Professor Donaldson's reaction against the New Exegetes makes him labor the obvious.

The best of the new pieces is "The Masculine Narrator and Four Women of Style," in which the critic reviews Chaucer's descriptions of Emily of the

"Knight's Tale," May of the "Merchant's Tale," Criseyde and the Prioress. His aim is to qualify B. H. Bronson's insistence that Chaucer's style is fundamentally very simple and open to all. Donaldson's simple and open readings of Chaucer's simple and open descriptions display a remarkable and attractive subtlety in both author and critic. The analyses represent Donaldson's technique of close reading at its most attractive and most persuasive.

The third new paper, "The Effect of the Merchant's Tale," develops at some length Donaldson's earlier contention, in opposition to Craik, Bronson and others, that the "Merchant's Tale" is an extremely bitter narrative. And the fourth new paper, "Criseide and her Narrator," is a long but brilliant exposition of the manner in which Chaucer uses his narrator to control his readers' reactions. Criseyde, he notes, is "seen wholly from the point of view of a narrator who is so terribly anxious to have us see only the best in her, and not the worst, even when it is staring us in the face, that when he is afraid we will see something he doesn't want us to see, he plunges in to muddy up the water so that we can't see anything clearly" (pp. 67-68).

Two critical themes or approaches appear repeatedly in this collection. The first is Donaldson's consistent opposition to quasi-typological interpretations, based on patristic exegesis, which read virtually all medieval literature as morality and homily, thus outraging our common-sense views of literary meaning, and even tending to obscure all literary values. "At certain periods," he remarks, "source study, philology, historical orientation, and even some of the techniques of the new criticism have tended to obliterate the meaning of the poems with which they have associated themselves. It seems to me that patristic criticism is operating under a categorical imperative to do the same thing" (p. 153). To that tendency Donaldson is firmly hostile.

The second critical theme—a hallmark of Donaldson's Chaucer criticism—is his regular insistence on a distinction between the poet Chaucer and his narrator-persona, as well as his concern with Chaucer's use of that narrator to delineate theme and manage narrative structure. This approach is best known from "Chaucer the Pilgrim," which first appeared in 1954. That piece no longer seems especially exciting or provocative; but since its appearance numberless discussions about author, narrator, implied narrator, poet-persona and the like have cluttered our journals and classrooms, and if the critical stance of "Chaucer the Pilgrim" seems a bit tame or commonplace today, we may take that as a sign of its complete success: it has become part of the common currency of Chaucer criticism. Donaldson uses this approach with good results in all three of the essays in the present volume which deal with *Troilus and Criseyde*. "Criseide and her Narrator," to which I have alluded above, seems especially perceptive. Nevertheless, the relations of Chaucer-the-Poet to that elusive *Doppelgänger*, Chaucer-the-Pilgrim, or Chaucer-the-Dreamer, or Chaucer-the-Narrator, remain obscure and controversial. It is by no means certain that Chaucer-the-Courtier, reading before an intimate and congenial audience, understood as well as we do the latter-day distinction which we have thrust between him and his narrator.

Critically Professor Donaldson is an empiric, beholden to no school: he lays claim to no universal solvent for medieval literature, no critical Philosophers' Stone, no special vision of the literary Emyrean. The closest his readers will come to "standard Donaldson" is the reiterated distinction between Poet and Narrator. Beyond this his chief claim as a critic is that he reads closely and

with experience, and merely reports what he sees. Like it is. There is abundant room here for sanity and good sense, simple Chaucerian virtues in which Professor Donaldson is gratifyingly strong. Like Chaucer also he takes joy in literature, and discusses it with charm and wit. But what he has said of Chaucer's deceiving simplicity might well be applied to himself. While he poses his simple persona as the honest, straightforward, clear-headed reader of Chaucer, all sorts of rich and subtle critical operations seem to be going on quietly in the background.

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America's Heroes: The Changing Models of Success in American Magazines by

Theodore P. Greene. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. Pp. 373.
\$9.50.

Upon the conclusion of the nineteen forties, the debate that followed Leo Lowenthal's article, "Biographies in Popular Magazines," was brought to popular notice by Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Mills's *White Collar*, and Whyte's *The Organization Man*. In sum, the disjunction between the American past and the American present could be defined by the change from the inner-directed Idols of Production to the other-directed Idols of Consumption. Historians who opposed the idea that American cultural history could be split in two so neatly or that the switch in models of the cultural type could be defined so clearly pointed to the observations that appeared on other-directedness in American society as early as the writings of Tocqueville and Martineau. The anti-Riesman historians argued, in Professor (American Studies Department, Amherst College) Greene's words, that "the polar values of individualism versus conformity were not . . . a difference between the past and the present. Rather these represented the continuing tension between the historic American values of personal achievement and of social equality. Americans had always lived within this tension, their views of the successful life had always reflected it, though from time to time one pole might be emphasized more than the other." (By the way, it should be noted in fairness that Lowenthal joined Lipsett in editing the book—*Culture and Social Character*—in which Lipsett's rebuttal of Riesman appeared.)

Mr. Greene sets himself the task of examining American popular magazines to discover where the truth lies, and in a dozen pages of admirable "Prologue," he raises rich substantive and methodological questions about the problem. Unfortunately, the rest of the book does not support the expectation that we are to be treated to germinal speculation about the relationship of liberty to equality, of individualism to fraternity—such perennially and immediately and violently vexing questions in American life!—or of stages of social development to the definition of successful human personality as these relationships are disclosed by an examination of the American hero through his various avatars in the pages of the popular magazine. However, the rest of the book does provide a very clear sense of the relationship of the past to the present in the changed models

of the hero, and herein lies the book's strength and weakness. Although Mr. Greene does not take sides in the controversy with which his "Prologue" introduces his book, he might as well have. The chronological development of his models discloses a change only in surfaces between two of his heroic types before World War One and a crucial substantive change between those heroes and the hero who emerges during and after World War One. What is the difference? Most briefly, it is the difference between the inner-directed and the other-directed man, the difference between the entrepreneurial personality, and the managerial bureaucrat, which is, in effect, what Riesman, Mills and Whyte were asserting in the first place. In providing the specifics for the hero's profile, Mr. Greene gives his book the good strength of usefulness, and it is the particular usefulness offered by the ever-welcome specifics one hunts for when he wishes to prove "what everybody knows" (where *did* you read the scientific proof that the sun does not ride in a horse drawn chariot?).

But because, finally, even though this was not his intention, the book succeeds most in substantiating the hypotheses of Riesman et al., and in fact does provide exactly those stereotypes of the shrewd and ruthless Rockefeller go-getter, the Teddy Roosevelt bully boys and the robustly Christian Horatio Alger phoenixes, it creates its own inevitable weakness by becoming unavoidably and tediously predictable in its findings, which are presented in four parallel sections. To illuminate the nature of the book's predictability it is necessary to present those sections briefly.

Each section is a division into an examination first of the nature of the magazines of the period and an explanation of what could be expected of them, and second of the features of the hero as he emerges from the magazines. Very wisely and very competently Mr. Greene sketches (with occasionally vivid writing, for which he is to be thanked) the peculiar and salient features of the different magazines he works with. He advises you thereby that the magazine's heroes will have certain special characteristics that are not revelations of national culture as much as they are reflections of the particular magazine. But there are certain features that are common to all the magazines regardless of their differences, and at those points where features meet, one can draw national conclusions, like the child connecting the numbered dots on the play-page to make a picture.

Part one, "The Idols of Order," is one "in which our hero emerges as a Patriot, a Gentleman, and a Scholar in magazines of gentlemen, by gentlemen, and for gentlemen" in the early Republic, from 1787 to 1820. The *Monthly Anthology*, the *Columbian*, and the *Analectic Magazine* provide the materials from which arises the portrait one would expect: the rational public servant whose success was to be measured not in his rise from rags to riches or the amount of money he made but in the honor and statesmanship with which he fulfilled the duties of public usefulness within "the traditionally valued institutions of society—the government, the military services, and the church." Anyone familiar with the cultured citizen of the American eighteenth century is familiar with the Ciceronian idol of order.

Then with an unsatisfactorily explained (really unexplained) leap of three quarters of a century, Mr. Greene jumps to Part two, "The Idols of Power, in which our hero has become the Master of his Environment and gains national stature in new magazines of the people, by business entrepreneurs, for profit," and

which is an examination of the magazines from 1894, the year following the annus mirabilis of change in the history of American periodicals (from gentlemen's subscriptions to mass circulation popular journals), to 1903, which rounds out the *fin de siècle* decade. The best-selling magazines representing the greatest cross-section of contemporary journalism were *McClure's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Munsey's*, and *Century*, and in them Mr. Greene traces the Napoleonic model who, whether muckraked by Tarbell and Steffens, delineated by the gentlemanly socialism of John Brisben Walker, adored by Frank Munsey, or defended by the vigorously Christian *Century Magazine*, emerges as the baronial hero whose success is primarily a result of the drive for fame and only secondarily a drive for money. His expansive and magnetic power is what Russell Conwell and Horatio Alger saw as a possibility for every man with CHARACTER in the land of manifest destiny. As *Cosmopolitan* summed it up in 1903, "The fact remains that millions still bow to Napoleon Bonaparte because he was the greatest embodiment of physical force in all ages." In ways that Emerson never intended, the successful individual proved that one's character is one's fate.

Part three, "The Idols of Justice, in which our hero dons some social garments to protect his individualistic frame in magazines at the peak of their power," looks at magazines from 1904 to 1913, the decade closing off the years prior to World War One. Now the magazines are *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Everybody's*, and *Munsey's*. The Napoleonic conqueror is dethroned as the culture tried to find a continuing model for individualism and at the same time recognize the inescapable and necessarily collective aspects of society in an urban and industrial age when the nation turned from farm and town to factory and city. In the Progressive era the robber baron became a villain and standards of success changed from personal fame to social contribution. Even achievement in one's field became a more frequent standard than money. Yet beneath the robes of Progressive politics, the hero remained essentially the same driving individual. Instead of his force riding roughshod over others, his magnetism enlisted others to join him in a glorious and Christian crusade for the social good. But insofar as the hero is "an aggressive, militant, independent individual," John D. Rockefeller of the robber baron decades and T. R. of the Progressive decade remained American brothers despite all their very real differences.

Part four, "The Idols of Organization, in which our hero becomes a Manager of Massive Organizations portrayed in magazines for the masses," continues an examination of *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Saturday Evening Post* during the war years, 1914-1918. The War brought with it a chilling and central change in the conception of the hero, who now becomes the smooth, cool nice guy whose depersonalized equanimity and managerial talents oil the cogs of the Big Machine engaged in the War Effort that United Us All. When old style success-bosses like Carnegie appear in magazine biographies now, they appear not as examples of the glamor of individual personality making its crusty, iron, driving way for good or for evil, but as profiles of the shrewd and successful bureaucrat. Conversely, the New Style heroes were given all the glamor of the Old Style heroes—it is the successful office manager who makes the girls' eyes shine. The organization man becomes judged not by personal fame but by the success of his organization. He is Herbert Hoover, the great Food Administrator, a man no longer afraid to be bourgeois, to lack small talk, or to have a dearth of finished manners. His personal life is as smooth and punctual an organization

as his office. Babbitt enters in all his antiseptic optimism. His son is the hero of the lonely crowd.

Although standards of success change (personal fame, money, achievements in field) as do the hero's qualities (his relation to others, to environment, to self-cultivation, to religion) and the hero's occupations (the military, business, politics, arts, sports, clergy), one cold fact remains constant in all the profiles—all the American Idols are never viewed in the popular biographies as having a personal life. The hero's is a work-centered life and his major, if not his total identity is provided in his accomplishments. So too, the magazines of the early republic viewed their heroes as physiques, minds, and dispositions; the idols of power were defined as robust characters, as broad-shouldered and vigorous physical forces; the heroes of justice too were defined as robust characters, as broad-shouldered and vigorous social consciences; but the idol of organization is seen as neither mind nor body but rather as a rational, mechanical force, a marvel of statistics. The process in which Horatio Alger gives way to Robert MacNamara is one in which man gives way to process, the human to the technique, the personal to efficiency.

But in concluding his book, Mr. Greene curiously seems not to see the picture he himself has drawn. There is no closing burst of speculation to match the opening creation of expectation. There is a strange lack of response—neither fear nor evaluation—of Mr. Greene to Mr. Greene's book. Nevertheless, this is a useful book representing an enormous amount of work well digested and well presented; one should not belabor it for not being another book than it is. But in what it is, it demonstrates the difference between the useful and competent writing of history on the one hand and seminal and potentially great writing of history on the other. To say that Mr. Greene's book is not brilliant history is a silly charge to level. However, it is just to say that for all its goodness the book is mildly disappointing in its refusal to speculate and evaluate in the presentation of materials that cry out for an imaginative statement of their possibilities. One must be grateful for *America's Heroes* because it provides the kind of content analysis that Frank Luther Mott's monumental *History of American Magazines* does not; it allows us *really* to know what we always thought we knew. But it indicates once more that the histories that move and make are those that do more than describe and quantify.

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Three Novels by Flaubert: A Study of Techniques by R. J. Sherrington. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. Pp. x + 363. \$11.25.

Flaubert's popularity is at its peak, judging by the number of recent editions and studies of his works published in this country and in Europe. Sixteen dissertations were devoted to him in the United States between 1942 and 1968. As Raymond Giraud wrote: "A fair sign of greatness in a work of art is its inexhaustibility, [. . .] to survive changes and even revolutions in critical per-

spectives."¹ This is certainly the case with Flaubert whose works have been commented upon by people as varied as G. Sand, C. Baudelaire, E. Zola, M. Proust, C. Du Bos, P. Lubbock, J.-P. Sartre, G. Poulet, E. Auerbach, G. Lukács, J.-P. Richard, J. Rousset, M. Blanchot, and M. Foucault.

For a long time, critics like Descharnes and Dumesnil were interested mostly in this author's life and style. Nowadays various aspects of Flaubert attract attention. R. J. Sherrington's new contribution is devoted to a study of Flaubert's narrative techniques. What has been published on this subject before? Only two short studies devoted to *Madame Bovary*. The first one forms Ch. v and vi of Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*, printed in London in 1921.² The second one is due to a professor of l'Université de Genève, Jean Rousset, in an essay on the point of view in Flaubert's novels, published in 1960.³ These studies needed however to be completed and sometimes corrected. They serve as point of departure for R. J. Sherrington.

Flaubert's techniques, notably his handling of point of view, can be related in a systematic way to his artistic theories developed in his early works. In his novels, variations in the point of view provide new insights into his ways of achieving two qualities he considered essential: impersonality and a unified structure, accompanied by some moral criticism. Mr. Sherrington studies closely Flaubert's methods, and reaches an interpretation of them somewhat different from the one commonly accepted, while at the same time consistent with the author's theories. The critic limits his investigation to the three "true" novels of Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*, *Salammô* and *L'Education sentimentale*, but brings light to these novels with frequent references to his other works and his correspondence. After a resumé of Flaubert's explicit theories, the critic presents a brief study through the writer's early works, of his increasing awareness of how he could use point of view to imply his moral and philosophical position while remaining impersonal. Then the critic examines the progressive refinement of techniques which culminated in the extremely subtle and original construction of *L'Education sentimentale*, in which the interplay between reality and the individual's interpretation of it is presented in a way which involves the reader with the author and the characters simultaneously. Flaubert claimed that the two aims of a work of art must be Truth and Beauty. Therefore in his novels he reported facts of human behavior and arranged them into a unified structure. The source of these facts could be observation as well as personal feelings and experiences. He chose facts as to illustrate what he took to be permanent, universal aspects of human behaviour, that is why Flaubert's characters have "family resemblances" in spite of their differing cultures and historical periods. They were chosen also for their relevance to the work of art, and had to contribute to a pattern and a structure. Life is often not beautiful,

¹ Raymond Giraud, ed., *Flaubert. A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), p. 1.

² The second edition was published in New York (The Viking Press) in 1957.

³ "*Madame Bovary* ou le livre sur rien. Un aspect de l'art du roman chez Flaubert. Le point de vue," in *Saggi e ricerche di letteratura francese* (1960), I, 185-208. Reprinted as Ch. v of Rousset's *Forme et signification* (Paris: J. Corti, 1962).

but art must always be; its beauty comes from elements added to life by the artist: unity, pattern, rhythm, style. For Flaubert, a work of art is complete and self-sufficient; it excludes the personality of the author, because it should be potentially applicable to all. Of course inevitably the author's personality is reflected in the choice of facts, and in what he makes his structure say, Flaubert limits his intervention. He finds it necessary to develop a means of presentation which will separate him, as author, from his characters. He can have no real sympathy for them, nor judge them. Therefore his third-person omniscient narrator must not comment upon the situation he reports, but he should efface himself in order to allow the artistic illusion, and let the reader feel involved.

Flaubert was interested not only in externalized behaviour, but also in causes of it, in the relationship between a human reaction and material reality; for him there is no Truth but manners of seeing. He wanted to show the processes of a mind, by showing that mind looking at the object. He transfers his own preoccupation with reality to his characters, except that the latter believe they are looking at reality whenever they are looking at their own point of view. By following the character's thoughts and perceptions, he can achieve the illusion of immediacy.

The novelist wanted also to convey to his readers the critical level of which his characters are usually unaware, while at the same time following the characters' point of view. The two solutions he most commonly adopted were showing several points of view, and showing the same point of view in different circumstances, illustrating thus that each isolated view is inadequate to present the total situation. On the other hand, the individual in society was as important for him as the individual in isolation. Therefore he tried to present society objectively, while underlining the subjectivity of the individual's attitude to it. To achieve this he uses in addition to the narrator presentation, the combined point of view and direct speech, or his very special *style indirect libre*.

Let us congratulate Mr. Sherrington on this brilliant and clear analysis of Flaubert's narrative techniques.

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The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth Century Fiction by John Preston. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970. Pp. 220. \$8.00.

John Preston's *The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth Century Fiction* is a marvellously clever and rewarding book, an exercise in close reading of four classic eighteenth-century novels, *Moll Flanders*, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, and *Tristram Shandy*. Such close reading is partly a traditional and familiar approach to at least the last two of these books, for they have always been recognized as overtly rhetorical works. But Mr. Preston's book is a thoroughly impressive extension and deepening of these traditional responses, an extension made fully possible, as he acknowledges, by the influence of Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Mr. Preston asserts that Defoe and Richardson were, like Fielding and Sterne, crucially aware of their readers and designed their books to give them much

more than the simple involvement and identification that eighteenth-century moralists like Dr. Johnson and Sir Anthony Absolute feared were the only gratifications fiction could provide. All four novelists, says Mr. Preston, were out to varying degrees to create situations where the reader by virtue of his act is a self-conscious participant in the work of the novel, not an immersed consciousness but a critical and moral intelligence who is always essentially outside the imaginative world of the novel. The novel is not a received text, a world we believe in fully, but consists rather of a self-conscious relationship between text and reader. Under such an arrangement, of course, the ultimate lesson and benefit of fiction is personal epistemological clarity rather than social or historical truth.

Predictably, the most satisfying and really convincing part of the book is its concluding section, two long chapters on *Tristram Shandy*. Here Mr. Preston is on firm ground and his assumptions about the nature and purpose of the best kind of novel reading are clearly appropriate. Tristram is involved in reading his own past to make sense of his present; Walter and Toby are also essentially "readers," trying to decipher themselves and each other. All the characters, in fact, are defined by their efforts to imagine themselves and one another, to find a person behind the rhetoric (in the largest sense) which is all individuals have to present themselves with. Mr. Preston says very well, then, that *Tristram Shandy* is both a critique and a model of this rhetoric, for the reader, like the characters, is made aware of a pervasive artifice. And yet it is through the awareness of that self-consciousness that reality is affirmed and grasped. Toby and Trim for example, says Mr. Preston, construct a world and thereby become authentic, but not because they accept that world as a substitute for reality. The process of re-creating the siege of Namur is exactly like the reader's imagining the world of *Tristram Shandy*; both are creative and liberating acts. Mr. Preston reminds us that in reading the novel we choose fiction over fact, just as Toby and Tristram and Sterne himself do, and in accepting them as authentic rather than mad we are led to see that reality is finally no less than that which we can imagine. As Mr. Preston puts it, Sterne "wants the reader to understand that imagining, the writer's imagining for instance, is really a way of reading the meaning of things."

This is, I think, very well said. It is at once familiar and fresh, for it represents an informed distillation of the best that has been written about *Tristram Shandy*. Mr. Preston's treatment of the book is an imaginative application and refinement of the work of critics like Traugott, Fluchère, and VanGhent. To be sure, like all commentators on Sterne, he tends toward over-ingenuity and over-statement. He insists, for example, that Sterne's comic asterisks are more than rhetorical tricks, that at times they point to the ultimate philosophical issue of the book by requiring the reader actually to create, to insert a meaning without being certain that it is the writer's meaning. This is, in fact, the main point of the weaker of the two Sterne chapters, subtitled "the reader as author." The sub-title points to the strength and weakness not only of these chapters but of the book itself. Mr. Preston is obviously a splendid and sensitive reader in whose hands the act of reading does become a creative act. And it may even be granted that *Tristram Shandy* is a book where the reader is literally free to create, as Mr. Preston says, "a different version of the story," a book which

achieves "a kind of rhetoric that will permit a genuine conversation" between author and reader. But it seems to me that such an exclusively rhetorical approach impoverishes the novel. It reduces the point of *Tristram Shandy* to a moral-epistemological insight deprived of the specific moral-historical overtones that are so important for understanding its exact comic meaning. Tristram and Toby and Walter are deprived in such a reading of their status as historical beings who are committed to engaging and self-preserving absurdities that we can fully understand only if we see them in their various social, historical, and literary contexts.

It may be, of course, that Mr. Preston feels (with some justification) that *Tristram Shandy* has escaped those contexts and achieved a more generalized context, that of a moral-epistemological problem we have in common with Sterne. The same, it seems to me, cannot be said of *Tom Jones*, and yet it is precisely what Mr. Preston contends when he says that the plot of that novel "helps us to see how we acquire our knowledge of human experience; it is a clarification of the processes of understanding." Here Mr. Preston's attempt to read novels purely in the un-historical inner space of his moral and critical intelligence clearly leads him astray. He is thus led at one point in his argument to represent the narrator of *Tom Jones* as a pompous persona of Fielding, a bad writer whose presence represents "an ironic repudiation of spiritual arrogance." The narrator in such a view is truly surprised by a plot which reveals not the order he promises but the sudden, the unexpected, the unpredictable. The famous plot "is designed to tolerate the random decisions of Fortune," to "reflect our actual experience." All of these comments seem to me to overlook the pervasive and complicated irony of *Tom Jones* which tells us over and over again that everything is under the narrator's control and that such control (implicit in the act of narration, in the invention, after all, of the whole story) is the ultimate irony in the context of a vulgar genre such as the novel with its elaborate commitment to the irregular and the unexpected. The narrator, for Mr. Preston, is subordinate to the creative reader who takes the complicated dramatic ironies offered him and makes much more of them than a literary joke (for Fielding, it should be remembered, a literary joke was a deadly serious matter). Such a reader extends the experience of the plot to the experience of life. He sees that the mixture of omniscience and ignorance reading *Tom Jones* involves is the exact mixture of actual moral experience.

Mr. Preston is too ready, as perhaps too many critics have been, to speak about *Tom Jones* as if it were a readable *Amelia*, to rescue it from Dr. Leavis' myopic scorn and to treat its situations and characters with perfect seriousness as actual moral issues. It is hard not to sympathize with such an effort. I can, in a sense, accept the justice and fineness of Mr. Preston's moral reading of the book; I am persuaded, for example, that Allworthy is the "tragic hero" of the book because he lacks knowledge and irony (those things we acquire as creative readers of *Tom Jones*). But I think Mr. Preston is ultimately wrong in dismissing Andrew Wright's suggestion that *Tom Jones* is "festive," wrong in supposing that such an emphasis trivializes the novel. Fielding's book engages and involves us as readers precisely by making us superior to the events and characters and reminding us that literature (especially what Fielding would have called "modern" literature) and life are only indirectly and ironically related.

Mr. Preston is better on *Clarissa*. Here he is an impressively acute theoretical critic who reminds us that Richardson's characters are conscious of themselves as writers and are thereby, as he puts it, "estranged" from themselves and from others. We are always conscious in reading *Clarissa* not of reading reality but a literary version of it. (One might argue that this is a tribute to Richardson's instinctive genius, for reality is always just that—a reading, a report; consciousness is always awareness of a self enacting a story among other selves.) *Clarissa* is thus about writing, about what Mr. Preston calls the "existential dilemma" this raises for us as well as for the characters. *Clarissa* is the heroine because she graduates from literature into life, from writing to acting. She stops writing letters and decides to die (her actions, Mr. Preston notes, are mainly reported by Belford and others at the end). Mr. Preston is led to conclude rather incredibly that *Clarissa* warns us that we had better stop reading and get on to life, pass on to "a mode of existence [we] cannot share without ceasing to be readers."

I think that Mr. Preston has paid so much attention to the ultimate implications of Richardson's epistolary format that his logic has forced him into such pseudo-profundities. *Clarissa* is not, common sense and simple historical awareness tell us, simply about the difference between writing and acting. The letters do in fact record performances other than themselves. We frequently forget that we are reading letters, and the format becomes merely a narrative formality rather than an expressive form. Both *Clarissa* and *Lovelace* have historical identities that precede and influence in a crucial way their existential roles as writers and readers. Indeed, their writing takes place in the context of those roles, their writing always assumes action to write about.

The issue which emerges from my disagreement with Mr. Preston is whether novels such as *Clarissa* can be read as purely verbal constructs, whether the moral-epistemological issues they raise for Mr. Preston and which he identifies as their meaning can be said to explain them adequately. That *Clarissa* and *Lovelace* are members of different and opposing social classes at a crucial moment in history for those classes must remain an irrelevant fact for Mr. Preston. What matters for him, I gather, is that the novel can dramatize, principally through its formal structure or its quality as a linguistic entity, some presumably trans-historical moral-epistemological dilemma. It comes as no surprise in this light that his reading of *Moll Flanders* makes tidy sense of what most critics see as appropriate and expressive confusion. Once again, Mr. Preston is a fine critic and almost convinces me even here that one must begin with the final implications of what he calls, following Roland Barthes, Defoe's totally instrumental style. *Moll's* honesty is exactly parallel to the style Defoe lends her to speak to us and exactly the opposite of the various fraudulent styles she has to adopt to speak to her fellows in the novel. This state of affairs not only illuminates the ironic conditions of *Moll's* survival but shows us that we are guiltier than she because we lack her totally honest style. To use Mr. Preston's terms, the meaning of *Moll Flanders* lies in the transaction between narrative voice and reader; we are instructed by the disparity between *Moll's* styles and between her honesty and our self-deceit in thinking that we do not live as she does. I have again to object by saying that I am not *Moll*, that her dilemma is not exactly mine, and that her survival and its ironies speak to a stage of bourgeois individualism different from our own. I have finally to object that I simply do

not experience Moll's style consistently as the expressive device Mr. Preston says it is.

Reading fiction is for Mr. Preston "good practice" for the moral imagination, and his imagination is a rich and versatile power that can range freely over four works which he himself admits at the very beginning of his book "have very little in common." What he manages to do in *The Created Self* is to make these diverse books into opportunities of varying richness for the same kind of self-discovery. This is at times a dubious procedure and leads to results that I cannot accept. Mr. Preston is consistently extreme and single-minded in extracting the implications created by his perspective on the novel as an open rhetorical form, and the result is at last an illegitimate extension of our ideas of rhetorical openness, for the eighteenth-century novel (even *Tristram Shandy*) is not an open form. It is rather rhetorical toward certain ends, moral, social and/or aesthetic ones and is not designed to create the open-ended involvement and ambiguity Mr. Preston describes.

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