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The Imagery of John Donne's Sermons by Winfried Schleiner. Providence: Brown University Press, 1970. Pp. x + 254. $7.50.

In this study Mr. Schleiner seeks to answer the question "What are the central causes of the images Donne uses in his sermons?" As he makes quite clear, for him it is the image's final cause, its uses in illuminating its tenor, that determine its choice, along with two other principles of selectivity: the image's place in a traditional body of *topoi* derived from Biblical and Patristic sources, and its conforming to an accepted decorum of "high" and "low" terms ranged on the "chain of being" treated as a hierarchy of value. In contrast to other methods for carrying out image studies (including Milton Rugoff's *Donne's Imagery*), where the emphasis is thrown on the images themselves as generated either out of the author's psychological set of mind or his day-to-day experience, Schleiner insists that images can only be grasped adequately when their tenors are included as part of their total make-up. This insistence leads Schleiner to look for the images' sources in neither Donne's personality nor the concerns of his daily life, but rather in the common repositories for metaphors where the specific conjunctions of vehicles and tenors to be found in Donne had been for centuries available to all preachers: The Bible, St. Augustine and the many scriptural exegetes from his time to Calvin's.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first argues that the various *artes concionandi* available to preachers in the Renaissance, though it is not clear which of them, if any, Donne was familiar with, set forth a decorum for matching images with their tenors according to a hierarchy on which various items were arranged according to their intrinsic worth. At its most orthodox this decorum required that "the things that must be compared to something bad are generally of a base degree or quality, which are likened completely or in part. Such are filth, poison, viper, venom, captivity, ulcer, slime, snake, etc. To signify an honest man, the things to which one may compare his life in part are generally of a high nature. Such are the sun, firmament, prince, and others which indicate something good completely or in part" (Didacus Stella, *De ratione concionandi, sive rhetorica ecclesiastica*). Available within such a hierarchical norm of decorum are also the possibilities for both *meiosis* and *amplificatio*, for dispraising or heightening the subject matter. For instance, Donne's comparison of fallen man to a wolf, a viper, a spider, to slime and excrement, and his reduction of him (following the Psalms) to something "worse than a worm," and finally to "*that Nothing*, than the which what can be imagined more vacant and vile?" presupposes such a hierarchy in which man's sinfulness makes it "decorous" to compare him only with the lowest things. At the other end of the scale, amplification becomes a means of speaking of God, where such Biblical connections between vehicle and tenor allow Donne to speak of God as the Sun and as a King, with

the rhetorical intention of expressing chiefly the fact "that the Divine is beyond human motivation" (p. 49).

The main sources of these images and of their particular tenors are discussed in the second and third sections, where Schleiner is particularly concerned with demonstrating that the various nexes between vehicle and tenor found in Donne's sermons all belong to "fields of imagery" already long traditional by the 17th century. A field of imagery occurs when there is a conjunction between an image and its meaning which allows a wide variety of correspondence between the various accidents, adjuncts, purposes, and so on through the various lists of *loci* or *topoi* available to the Renaissance writer. Schleiner finds that classification of images either by the vehicles or by their tenors alone will distort their place in Donne's work, because such separation ignores the fact that within Donne's rhetorical practice both vehicle and tenor were chosen "together," as it were. He is critical of students of Donne's imagery who see it as a photographic negative, rendering a congeries of perceptions and psychological reflexes. As Schleiner says after investigating a particularly fertile field of imagery, "Sin as Sickness,"

> In drawing psychological conclusions one must distinguish between figurative and nonfigurative discourse. The mere presence of such words as *anatomy, antidote, dissect, fever, gangrene, physick, plaster,* and *purge,* and other medical imagery does not justify the conclusion that Donne took a special interest in medicine as a science. I have tried to show that in the field of imagery in which sin is seen as sickness, words like *gangrene, plaster, fever,* have their figurative predecessors in Augustine's *putria, emplastrum, febris* (p. 81).

Other fields of imagery that Schleiner investigates include "Life as a Journey," "The Book of the World," "The Seal of the Sacrament," "Salvation as a Purchase," and "The Eyes of the Soul." All of these fields make themselves felt through "scattered tropes that [are] identified as explicating some central analogy." Schleiner treats "such structures . . . [as] of the nature of a paradigm: the bare structures exist, although they are not overtly present as such anywhere in the spoken sermon or on the printed page" (p. 159). In these fields the principles of decorum dealt with in the previous section are supposedly operative, although the author makes no attempt to apply them here overtly.

However, in the last section, which deals with images derived from traditional Biblical exegesis, Schleiner is specifically concerned with metaphorical junctures which seem quite definitely to violate the hierarchical principle of decorum, and are therefore in need of further explanation. As he says, "certain semantic theories that were the basis of conventional biblical exegesis supplied a pattern for what otherwise often appears only abstruse, overingenious, or shrewd" (p. 164). The fourfold levels of Biblical interpretation practiced throughout the Middle Ages distinguished first between the *vox* of the text itself and the *res* which the text referred to. The *res* in turn was nothing less than the whole of creation and the witnesses to God's hand in history which the Bible recorded. Therefore *res* themselves were inherently symbolic: as one exegete whom Schleiner quotes says: "For as many properties as thing has, so many tongues does it have, which enunciate something spiritual and invisible, and through the diversity of which the meaning of the same word is varied" (Peter of Poiters; p. 171). Schleiner shows that Donne often drew images from the Bible and gave them

tenors associated with them in traditional Biblical exegesis; that, while not going as far as the literalism of Calvin, Donne distrusted some of the more ingenious interpretations he had access to; that he overtly introduced the terms of the fourfold levels both in the divisions of his sermons and in the bodies of them as well; and that he occasionally took time to argue before his auditory with his various exegetical sources. Far from being simply a function of the plastic imagination, Donne's images were carefully and consciously drawn from a Biblical source, which meant that the relation between vehicle and tenor was not so much created by the preacher as rather created by the Creator and discovered by the exegete.

Schleiner has performed a service for Donne's sermons similar to that performed by Rosemond Tuve for Renaissance poetry at large. No longer, we would hope, will critics "explain" Donne's images as Don Cameron Allen did in a passage quoted by Schleiner, comparing medical images in Donne and Herbert: "'Syrup of rhubarb is the favorite of Donne, whereas Herbert likes the more gentle effects of a distillation of white and damask roses' for which contrast the explanation is given that 'Donne being of a more explosive temperament advocates the use of more potent herbs than Herbert.'" On this Schleiner remarks dryly: "As far as I know Donne did not advocate the use of any herbs in his writings, though he sometimes referred to them by way of analogy" (p. 81). For the sources of this analogy and others like it, Schleiner cites the Psalms, Jeremiah, St. Augustine, Robert Cawdrey's *A Treasurie or Store-House of Similies*, St. Paul and, of course, Christ himself. Such citations are typical of the thoroughness with which the sources of Donne's images are searched out and compared.

To the question, then, which I posed at the beginning as the one implicitly underlying the answers which make up Schleiner's book, I would have to say he gives full and convincing answers. I would have, however, to make a further distinction between the book's method and its methodology. A literary method is a technique for answering certain critical questions; a methodology, for lack of a better term, is the acquired wisdom of knowing what are important questions to ask. As an illustration of the method of image study, I think Schleiner's study succeeds admirably. But I find also that the study's methodical success marks also its essential methodological failure. On this second level one might well ask "Is the question this book asks one which will lead to a larger understanding of Donne's sermons?" and the answer to this question must be that it does not.

Other image studies, including the more naive studies by Caroline Spurgeon and Rugoff, or the more sophisticated studies of G. W. Knight and Wolfgang Clemen, make the essential methodological assumption that image studies do in fact yield significant statements about certain texts, because it is likewise assumed that "diction" (out of Aristotle's six parts of a verbal mimesis) gives the radical representative anecdote for a piece's whole verbal action and meaning. Even granting that any piece of criticism has to start somewhere and cannot hope to take into itself all possible considerations, or perhaps because of this fact, a critic needs to examine his own methodological presuppositions about what do or do not constitute significant questions about literature at large, or at least about the text he is confronting. On this score the question which this study answers fails of prime relevancy on two counts: the study implicitly conceives the meaningful context of the images it works with to be neither the individual sermon nor even the whole corpus of Donne's sermons as specifically such, but rather

all the other occurrences of these images in the whole of Christian discourse up to Donne's time. This commits a mistake typical of historical criticism, namely, making the significance of a work totally a function of its external relations and sources. Secondly, the study fails in that it implicitly treats Donne's sermons, and overtly the imagery in them, as if both derived from motives and embodied rhetorical intentions no different from those of any other literary work, the end of which would be to move the beholder aesthetically only.

On the first point, Schleiner's intention has been overtly to assemble image patterns repeated with variations through Donne's sermons, and to exhibit these repetitions as primarily a function of Donne's indebtedness to traditional sources. Now, what exactly has been said through this? For one thing, the author's purpose shares nothing with those of other critics who are bent on demonstrating some sort of psychologically based pattern running through Donne's writing, for Schleiner overtly eschews this approach. On the other hand, he is not concerned with the functional approach to imagery, which sees it as the radical representative anecdote of the work's meaning, because this viewpoint necessarily commits the critic to examining works as total wholes, internally organized and susceptible to organismic criticism. Schleiner does not follow this approach to Donne's sermons either, for he never takes up the question of a given image's function within its specific context. Thus we have here an image study without either of the methodological underpinnings which have in the past been advanced, however inadequate they might have been, for making image studies in the first place. What we have in fact is a contribution to the history of traditional Christian *topoi*, much in the manner of Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (to which Schleiner is openly indebted), an approach which, however valid and useful it may be in the history of ideas or culture, is necessarily committed to ignoring what constitutes the marks of a work's specificity and autonomy, to making a literary work's significance—and by implication, its meaning—entirely a function of what it shares with the total context of common *topoi* to which it is seen as itself a contributor. From this viewpoint, Schleiner's study told me very little about Donne's sermons, however much it illuminated some of the ways Donne went about writing them. Methodologically, such an approach generates questions which implicitly ignore the fact of the sermons' specificity, and which sacrifice this to a larger historical entity called "the Christian exegetical tradition." As such, this study really constitutes a contribution to what Cassirer calls the study of "symbolic forms."

On the second point, this study's implicit treatment of Donne's sermons as differing in no way from any other oration in its means of persuasion, Schleiner makes an interesting admission late in the book:

> It must be said, however, that answers to the questions of how Donne thought about allegorical readings of Scripture, what he understood by the various senses of Scripture, and what his stand was concerning certain controverted interpretation—interesting as such problems may be—are of only very limited help when one comes to examine Donne's tropes. The rhetorical level has its own validity, . . . Whether beyond that [a concern with the ways Biblical exegesis provided Donne with metaphors], a metaphor based on biblical allegory had the special "truth value" for Donne that it had for the medieval exegetes is a different question, which I intend to discuss only in passing (p. 164).

In other words, along with ignoring the imagery's place within the totality of a given sermon, Schleiner's approach likewise ignores the specific rhetorical function of this imagery insofar as this is determined by the ends peculiar to the sermon itself as a genre in its own right, or for that matter, as Donne understood this genre. Though he occasionally throws a glance in the direction of the specific audience for Donne's sermons, for the most part Schleiner assumes that Donne conceived the imagery he drew from the Bible as working on his auditory in a manner no different from that drawn from any other source. Though he shows himself familiar with the work of Dennis Quinn on Donne's sermons, particularly an important article on Donne's indebtedness to the Bible (*ELH*, 1960), he seems for one reason or another to have ignored the essential point which Quinn makes. As Quinn shows, Donne derived his understanding of God's "Word" from St. Augustine, from whose *De doctrina christiana* Donne came to understand that what "persuades" and converts the auditory is not the preacher's eloquence, but rather the preacher's using and expounding the eloquence of the Holy Spirit itself as found in the scriptures. As Quinn says there, "The psychology of preaching in general is, for Donne, the same as the psychology of the Bible, which works directly upon the soul and only indirectly upon men's reason." "The preacher cooperates in the sacramental application of Christ's merits to men's souls by imitating the divine process visible in the Scriptures." "The eloquence of the Holy Ghost actualized the Word of God, and the preacher reactualizes the text by applying it to the immediate needs of the hearers. The meaning of the Holy Ghost is, thus, made flesh in the Bible and in preaching" (pp. 283, 284, 285). Schleiner certainly shows himself aware of the fact that for the biblical exegetes and for Donne as well, the *res* which the scripture's word refers to has a spiritual significance which the preacher discovers rather than creates: "[Donne] draws his analogies from the natural world less in order to explain the divine than to infer by his carefully worked out paradoxes the supernatural quality of the event" (p. 183). The implications of Schleiner's approach would seem to be simply that Donne went back to scripture as a somehow conventional, "appropriate" source of imagery, just as a humanist poet felt himself duty-bound to return to Horace and Virgil for appropriate tropes and *topoi*. On the contrary, Donne's indebtedness to traditional Christian *topoi*, which Schleiner discovers and exhibits with such care, nevertheless came about for reasons which the author shows himself for the most part unaware of. Biblical *topoi* were for Donne unlike any others, because they were the manifestation of the hand of Providence, and therefore claimed absolute priority for a preacher wishing to move an auditory of the faithful: for a sermon of the Word of God persuaded not through the preacher, but through that Word itself.

A definitive, or for that matter even an adequate study of Donne's sermons has yet to appear. Nevertheless, within the limits I have suggested, this book should make an important contribution to the ongoing scholarship on the sermons; and if it cannot pretend to be the last word on the sermons, it at least shows us much of how the writer of those sermons went about composing them.

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Art and Pornography by Morse Peckham. New York: Basic Books, 1969. Pp. viii + 306. $6.95.

One cannot read Morse Peckham's *Art and Pornography* without recalling the old joke involving the dialogue between an instructor and his student in the high school gym class. The two had reached an impasse while debating the number of possible positions in sexual intercourse. The besieged instructor had proclaimed that there were a maximum of ninety-two positions while the insurgent student insisted upon the possibility of ninety-three permutations, when a second student urged them to settle their dispute by orally itemizing their respective lists. The student commenced his list by saying, "Well, first there is the one with the man on top and the woman below, facing him heart to heart." The instructor sheepishly apologized to the class, correcting himself by admitting, "I guess there must be ninety-three positions after all." As is true of so many instructors, one has the suspicion that Professor Peckham has left out an important "position" while attempting to secure his own by chastizing those who would theorize less and experiment more.

But, like the defeated gym teacher, Professor Peckham probably went astray long ago, and in attempting to repair the damage, substituted omission for commission. It's a common error in sexual encounters. In *Man's Rage for Chaos* he defined art as the consequence of a particular mode of behavior which, being conventionalized and socially validated, could best be schematized as a social role. The artist's role then was simply defined as that of producing works (as opposed to "play"?) to serve as the occasion for adapting the art perceiver's role. For Morse Peckham every artist must alternate his own role with the perceiver's role in order "to judge whether or not he is fulfilling his function." Never mind that most artists think of function only in highly self-conscious terms and ignore the fact that some of the best art of this century has been produced by those whose role as a potential "art perceiver" was physically or emotionally impaired. Monet's near-blindness seriously impeded his role as a perceiver of those splendid water lillies and Duchamp's decision to cease painting and yet have the act thought of as art, by some even the beginning of "minimal" art, in effect involved him in the willed self-surrender of his role as a potential perceiver. Nevertheless, given a work of art that offers considerable perceptual discontinuity, Peckham argues that repeated exposure to that work results in a steadily decreasing perceptual discontinuity since the perceiver will eventually build up a perceptual model, the expectancies of which will correspond to the particular work. Such a work of art then no longer offers perceptual discontinuity, hence new works must be created propelling man toward aesthetic chaos. *Man's Rage for Chaos* then envisioned a sort of adaptability theory working in modern art; in order to prevent art from wearing out, we invent a "nonfunctional stylistic dynamism." The proliferating democracy of form is sufficient evidence that art is wearing out:

> . . . if a series of artifacts of the same functional (or semantic) aspect are arranged in chronological order and exhibit stylistic changes that are independent of their function, then each member of that series functioned as a work of art. (*Art and Pornography*, p. 79)

Surely, art wears out only for tired eyes. And what Professor Peckham has done is to counter aesthetic fatigue by proposing a banal, if not antiquated, notion

about the conservation of aesthetic energy in the perceiver—a kind of self-adjusting murine mechanism that is but the masquerade for an application of phony nineteenth century science to modern art. The most vulnerable feature of Freud's dynamics is thus taken over completely and applied to a realm where it has considerably less relevance. But the dangers are familiar ones; Peckham's "nonfunctional stylistic dynamism" in effect severs form from content and makes style an added ingredient. Of course, perceptual discontinuity is a logical paradox since it is both the cause and effect of a widening of the breach between function and style. Yet the history of art might suggest the opposite—notably, that where medium and message come ever closer together, the radical discontinuity exists only in Professor Peckham's mind. After all, Andy Warhohl's soup cans are about as "condensed" as the undisguised object itself. Even more importantly, the discoverer of nonfunctional dynamism attempts to explore the artistic consciousness from the "outside," and critic's vantage point, rather than the interior consciousness of the craftsman, then excuses it by saying that every artist responds initially as a critic anyway. In addition to its presumption, the argument inevitably confuses the critic's chronology, the history of art, with the artist's chronology, made up of his own career and the urge to personal development. Add to these two diverse time schemes, the self-conscious primitivism of much modern art which seeks to return to the medium's beginnings (drip painting, earthworks-as-undisguised-landscape, environments, etc.) and one can easily understand the confusion that ensues whenever the author discusses the temporality of art. Fortunately, it is the confusion of the critic rather than the artist.

Such comprises the premise from which Professor Peckham's *Art and Pornography* derives. It is a theory which sees the human race moving toward ever higher levels of discontinuity in an effort at renewing aesthetic adaptation to a hostile environment. Pornography is part of an aesthetic demilitarized zone where society's rage to order and control and the individual's rage for innovation are temporarily suspended within a gentleman's agreement that allows both repression and experiment. Like so many buffer zones, the boundaries of pornographic art are drawn with sufficient looseness so that each party can claim a partial victory while simultaneously recognizing the nature of the aesthetic conspiracy. George P. Elliott made a similar case in his essay, "Against Pornography," published several years ago, and freighted it with considerably less non-cognitive cargo. Just as Morse Peckham finds a great deal of modern art to be more confusing than either aesthetically or sociologically functional, so he finds considerable uncertainty and confusion at what he calls the "theoretical-explanatory" end of the semiotic spectrum. In more simple terms, he sees the increase in interest in pornography as a response to a culture that has totally relativized sexual experience, where there are no longer any answers. This heightens the tendency to move toward the immediate "end." Hence one powerful appeal of pornography; it consists mainly of exemplary verbal mediating signs and visual mediating signs. The greater the confusion, uncertainty, and logical conflict at the theoretical-explanatory level, the less limiting the selection at the immediate goal of the semiotic spectrum. It follows that pornography offers a way of gratifying the interest in mediating signs for those unable to gratify it in immediate signs. The virtual if not the real appeal of pornography is in its offer of relief from the

cognitive strain of genital selection inadequately supported by a clear, unequivocal, and conflict-free theory of sexual behavior. Again, Professor Peckham's vocabulary gives all away. Phrases like "conflict generation," "adaptational aggression," and "relief" reveal just how much *Art and Pornography* is dependent upon the shabby foundation of over-simplified Freudian dynamics. Pornography is invariably an outlet, a healthy substitute for blockage at the hands of a hostile culture. The bias of such a system, of course, lies in its normative presumptions; pornography is "useful" because it educates us into an adaptive socio-sexual role. The price that Professor Peckham pays for such a system is very high indeed. Invariably it places pornography within an adolescent framework and its artistic manifestation within the category of a self-adjusting apprenticeship. Surely Picasso and Nabokov have a prolonged adolescence!

In the last chapter entitled "Pornography and Culture" the author recognizes that the privacy of sexual behavior permits and encourages the presence of non-genital factors which are explained by the notion of role interests. This notion is justified by the presence of the same factors not only in the general performance of sexual roles but also in non-sexual roles. Although admitting that actual genital performance is a responsible (to whom?) activity insofar as it demands interaction with the environment, pornography is seen to be irresponsible because it permits the presentation in mediating signs of any selection of the full range of interests at work in any sexual role. The interests are those of adaptation (through tension discharge and reduction) and the more nebulous concerns of the culture itself. Although Morse Peckham never precisely defines those cultural concerns, he does see pornography as providing "cultural insights." De Sade, for example, diluted the Enlightenment notion that man yearns for harmony with nature and other men by conclusively demonstrating that man really longs for mastery and the suffering of others.

Actually, Peckham's argument is in itself obscene and that very feature may redeem it by giving his theories a certain tangential relationship to pornography. At one point, he asserts that the interests of pornography are always sexual and that may well be his first error. Genital in the sense that the form tends to reduce people to members or receptacles, pornography is dehumanizing in a way appropriate to the myths of modern science. The repetition of random events with such frequency as to be subject to prediction; sensual bombardment; experimentation; and the anatomy of "fields" of experience which can be joined and exited at will all make pornography appear part of modern scientific consciousness. A universe where originality is limited, where matter can be neither created nor destroyed, is a universe of substitution, fatigue, and the rearrangement of particles. Unlike most forms of human consciousness, which have more or less clearly defined beginnings and endings, pornographic art, insofar as it is a very enacting genre, always confuses fantasy and communication and, one suspects, plays a fictional fugue upon real connections. In so many pornographic novels, one is never sure where novel begins and where the apparatus leaves off. The technique is remarkably similar to the reader's experience of pornographic art; the aisles of drugstore bookshelves are filled with readers who never begin on the novel's first pages, but always begin in the middle thumbing through it more or less at random, creating their own beginnings and endings and prey only to the limitations of boredom. Such a compatibility between the reader's experi-

ence of pornography and the author's self-conscious technique would suggest the extent to which pornographic art is a very sophisticated participatory art form. Not only is there present plot reduction, but also character reduction. We seldom remember the names of characters in pornographic fiction precisely because they have lost their subjectivity, have had it reduced, often quite literally, to a *Story of O*. This feature surely qualifies pornographic art as part of the experience of liberation. That which is private parts or private property must be made communal if the spatial dimension of the fictional form is to approximate the spatial physics of the sex act. Perhaps this accounts for the widespread use of letters, notebooks, and private memoirs by the authors of erotica. Hence the question of delayed access is inextricably bound up with the forms of pornography: the access to the opposite sex; the writer's access to that which would normally be private; and the reader's access to purchase the material without legal hindrance. But total access deindividuates so that not only the characters, but recently even the authors, remain anonymous; in the activity of both there is a proliferation of the mask as psychic equipment.

Rather than viewing pornography in the Freudian terms of Professor Peckham's scheme, could we not use more current psychoanalytical theory? If my suspicion that pornography is a kind of paradigm of modern civilization where private spaces are turned into public places is accurate, then could we not say that it is a highly defensive mode. When women have been turned into screwing machines with the total loss of identity, then the male cannot be rejected except in the way in which machines reject. And machines cast out deformed products—an analogy which may well account for the abundance of grotesques in pornographic art. Nowhere does Peckham talk about the relationship between prison literature and pornography and the nature of the voyeurism involved when one has lost his authenticity of being. Like so many of the technological "environments" of modern art, the prison is completely introverted and yet without privacy. Clearly, the Victorian era saw the heightened interest in both forms. As the mythology that all society is repressive and ultimately incarcerating arises, all of us are born into a condition of imprisonment, and the frequency of the pornographic experience may well be a direct function of the paradoxes of our freedom, emblamized in the gaze of the voyeur voluptuary who indicts himself in the act of making fictions.

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Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition by Thomas McFarland. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969. Pp. xl + 394. $9.95.

Professor McFarland has written an immensely learned study of an enormously difficult subject. Coleridge himself is difficult enough, but add the problem of his relationship to the pantheist tradition and the difficulty becomes awesome.

At first glance, it seems odd that McFarland begins with a fifty-two page chapter on the much-vexed problem of plagiarism in Coleridge. This would seem rather to be matter for footnotes in such a study as this. But it soon becomes

clear that McFarland knows what he is about. The discussion of this seemingly pedestrian problem becomes a way of entry into Coleridge's philosophical methodology, and McFarland concludes: "we are faced not with plagiarism, but with nothing less than a mode of composition—composition by mosaic organization rather than by painting on an empty canvas" (p. 27). As McFarland summarizes earlier in his excellent chapter-length Introduction on "Coleridge and Philosophical Originality," "a great philosopher's originality lies not in terminology, but rather in viewpoint and tone, and, above all, in the organic quality of his position. His historical importance doubtless depends upon factors of race, moment, and milieu, but his intrinsic quality, that which distinguishes him from other thinkers of similar persuasion, is almost wholly dependent upon the character of his work as an organism" (p. xxxi). McFarland is concerned then with the influence of Spinoza, the Neo-Platonic tradition, Jakob Boehme, and the like, on Coleridge, but he never loses sight of the fact that Coleridge was his own man, that the ideas of the "pantheist tradition" are often given new meaning in the fresh context of the Coleridgean mosaic. The plagiarism problem is perhaps not completely resolved—there remain certain "borrowings" which seem inexplicable even under McFarland's hypothesis—but it is placed in a perspective which seems generally convincing and illuminating.

McFarland's grasp of the pantheist tradition, be it said, is broad and firm. His documentation of that tradition—not only in footnotes, but also in fifty pages of endnotes and seventy-six pages of "excursus notes"—will be of great value to Coleridge scholars.

A *caveat*, however. For all the good grasp of the philosophers traditionally seen as "pantheist," it might be asked whether there are not occasional oversimplifications of matters which are still moot. It is not at all clear to all Plotinus scholars that Plotinus was a pantheist (pp. 122, 144, *et passim*); nor is the easy equation between "mysticism" and pantheism acceptable to all students of the history of religious thought (p. 130 and note); nor is it immediately evident that "pantheism is inescapably inherent in the monism of the Unitarian denial of the Trinity" (p. 177). And the *caveat* occasionally extends to McFarland's reading of Coleridge as well. It seems to me all too facile simply to read pantheism in "Religious Musings," in such lines as "There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind, / Omnific" (pp. 172-173), especially in view of Coleridge's later comment (which McFarland quotes to another purpose on the following page) that his reference to the Deity in that poem as "the sole Operant" may "easily be *misconstrued* into Spinosism" (my emphasis). Granted the possibility of the alterations of hindsight, Coleridge's own protestations to the contrary should not be left too much out of account.

All the same, it is true enough that Coleridge struggled through much of his early and middle life against the blandishments of pantheism, and McFarland's focusing of the struggle is generally clear and useful.

It is in his last chapter, on "The Trinitarian Resolution" of the problem of pantheism, that the focus goes awry. It is true enough that Coleridge's acceptance of Trinitarian doctrine was the resolution of the pantheist dilemma, ultimately the problem of the "One and the Many." By now, however, the "One and the Many" on which McFarland has come to focus is not the relationship between God and creatures (which was actually Coleridge's basic problem *vis-à-vis*

pantheism), but on the "One and the Many" within the Godhead. Hence the discussion of the "resolution" of the Trinitarian problem itself (distinction of the three Persons of the Trinity) is not enough. Coleridge went beyond, but McFarland does not seem to see his way clearly enough to follow. At this point, two crucial elements in Coleridge's thought are left out of account. Coleridge *did* come to a reasonably satisfactory resolution of the problem, but in terms of principles which McFarland does not enunciate.

First, there is Coleridge's notion of the "consubstantiality" of all being, much akin to the traditional notion of the "analogy of being"—which allows him to speak of God and creatures analogously, not univocally. This is closely tied in with Coleridge's conception of symbol, which in turn demands close consideration of the faculty of imagination. Imagination is discussed cursorily by McFarland, symbol not at all; in particular, there is no reference to Coleridge's important discussion of symbol in Appendix B of the *Statesman's Manual*. Yet, it seems to me, here is the heart of Coleridge's response to the problem of the One and the Many, and hence of his escape from pantheism.

Secondly, the pantheist problem in Coleridge cannot be resolved without a consideration of his views on the Logos (Alterity) not only within the Godhead but as the pattern of all Creation. It is crucially important in Coleridge's approach to the problem of the One and the Many that Creation had a *beginning*. God is "I Am" from all eternity; the created world of the Many was not, but now is—and its pattern is the Logos.

Without these two keys—the consubstantiality of all being (with its concomitants of symbol and imagination) and the Logos as the pattern of Creation—any resolution of pantheism in Coleridge's thought is impossible.

It is fairly clear why McFarland has failed at this point. Despite the impressive breadth of his reading in the pantheist tradition, McFarland has missed some important texts of Coleridge himself. First of all, he has not used—except for the few pages in the appendix of James Boulger's *Coleridge as Religious Thinker*—the numerous as yet unpublished later notebooks (after 1808), and has thus cut himself off from a vast mine of Coleridge's important later ideas. More importantly, he has not used the large remnants of the "Opus Maximum" manuscript —the three vellum-bound volumes in the Victoria College Library in Toronto and the separated chapter on the Divine Ideas in the Huntington Library. It is in this unpublished material—and, I believe, only there—that Coleridge was able to focus at all clearly his speculations on the Trinity, on the Logos as the pattern of Creation, and therefore on the metaphysical relationship between God and the created world.

Let there be no mistake; McFarland's book is useful indeed. If it is flawed in its conclusions, it remains incomparably rich in its exposition of the pantheist influences on Coleridge's thought.

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Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire by J. Hillis Miller. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970. Pp. xvi + 282. $6.95.

Hillis Miller's new book on Hardy has the same kinds of strengths and weaknesses his first four distinguished books have. Its ideas are expansive, leading us toward new areas of critical thought, and opening doors where before there seemed none. Sometimes, however, the surer sense of Hardy is sacrificed to the needs of the large ideas, and the abstracting, theorizing critical mind loses its sympathy with the literature. When Miller's sympathetic understanding fails—or is not engaged—he seems to miss the tone of the works, to miss the sense of Hardy's art.

Perhaps this weakness comes from Miller's habit—followed now through *Charles Dickens: the World of His Novels*, *The Disappearance of God*, *Poets of Reality*, and *The Form of Victorian Fiction*—of building his arguments on phrases clipped from the text before him, and used without reference to their context. Obviously, this technique is in part what enables Miller to range through an author's works as he does. He offers a defense in his preface to the Hardy book—"By detaching a passage from its contiguous web of language, however, I have hoped to be able to show its deeper affinities to passages in other works"—but the defense does not justify, or satisfy.

Miller's thesis is that Hardy sees man caught in a "foolish pursuit of happiness," a futile "infatuation" with love, or being in love. Miller describes this way of life as focused "in absorbed attention toward the future." This future is, of course, a dream; and rather than the self "transfigured," he says, what Hardy's people achieve is disillusionment, frustration, defeat. "The detachment given by falling out of love gives me enough distance from my life so that I can see it as whole," and in this begins "a change in orientation from future to present to past," which lets man see his "fated" failure.

Miller describes Tess as travelling "a determined course through life toward her fated end," and then explains:

> Hardy's concept of fate is neither that of some all-powerful transcendent force, malign or benign, consciously manipulating the lives of its puppets, nor is it like Faulkner's notion of some single catastrophic event after which life is doomed to follow a certain sequence to its end. Each man for Hardy remains free until his death, but when the moment of retrospective illumination comes he sees that he has all along been the victim of an unconscious power which has used his free acts as part of the irresistible forward movement which hurries him on, keeping him from fulfilling his intentions and from attaining any desirable life.

"Hardy's image of the total working of the Immanent Will," for Miller, is that of "a complex web of causes interacting simultaneously," of "a chain of small causes, each effect becoming a cause in its turn. . . . The whole forms a linear sequence which is the course of a life." He calls this "an unintentional fate"—an unhelpful phrase!—which leads men "inevitably toward an ignominious death," "for all is fated to happen as it does happen." Men's lives "have had their meaning not in relation to the willed design they have tried to impose on it [sic], but in relation to . . . a force working within their lives which alienates them from themselves."

There are two problems with this definition of fate. One is its turgidity. The other is that it misses, finally, the tone of Hardy's voice and the sense of his art. Miller describes brilliantly and persuasively the movement in Hardy's novels from passionate subjectivity—the willfulness of Jude, Tess, Henchard—to an objective, detached consciousness of what has been. But Miller reads this objectivity pessimistically, and the consciousness becomes the consciousness of a "predetermined" fate. He chooses "It is as it should be" as Tess's last words, and explains that she is now aware that she has done what she was forced to do in life; whereas "I am ready" is actually Tess's last recorded sentence, and the whole scene and the speech seem to indicate, tonally, an almost mystically transcendent awareness on Tess's part. She is "free" now—freed *through* her consciousness—and her "Fulfillment" is more than simply ironic.

Miller argues that Hardy's characters are released in death from "the weight of life, of consciousness, of individuality, the weight of time." A few pages later he says that in death man is "freed from limitation, freed from anxiety, freed from all narrowness and blindness, [but] nevertheless not freed from consciousness." But "death" is not the point, whether or not it frees one from consciousness; the meaning of life is what Hardy's vision is about. It is a tragic vision—but tragedy is not pessimistic, as Miller knows from Shakespeare and from Yeats.

Insisting, however, on this black version of existence, Miller has Hardy's characters reach at "the end of their lives . . . a moment when they see with approximate clarity that they have been deluded puppets of an alienating force." Thus he has Hardy's narrator call Henchard "Cain"—it is in fact Henchard who calls himself that—and ignores Henchard's earlier awareness that his fate is not merely blindly assigned suffering, but "what he had deserved." Thus Miller chooses to focus his attention on Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*, and to accept her adolescent self-indulgence—"I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control," etc.—as awareness "that the cause of [her] suffering has been external to [her] conscious intent," rather than measure her life according to Hardy's moral scheme of cause and effect, or look at the positive consciousness Clym achieves at the end of the novel, and the use to which he puts this large awareness. Rather than see Tess's and Jude's ends as tragic, and achieving the dignity of tragedy, Miller sees them as cheaply "fated." Death is not the death of the hero who knows—and accepts—his responsibilities, but the "ignominious death" of the victim whose only knowledge is that he has lived a meaningless life in a meaningless world.

Miller collects numerous and varied evidences to support his argument, and one is impressed by his comprehensive and agile familiarity with Hardy's works and his life. Finally, however, the argument from the life to the works is gravely distorting and distorted, and there are too many times when Miller's method—habit—of quoting out of context lets him misuse his evidence or simply make mistakes with it. Early, he quotes the first stanza of "Nature's Questioning" as evidence of Hardy's withdrawn and separate attitude toward life; but he neglects the last stanza of the poem, which corrects and reverses this. Similarly, he cites "To an Unborn Pauper Child" as Hardy's argument that "best of all would be not to be born at all"—again forgetting the final stanza of the poem. He uses the title of "God's Funeral" with similar disregard for the poem itself.

There are other, more serious errors. Miller uses as though they were the narrator's comment two lines spoken by Angel Clare concerning the reason Tess

has murdered Alec; the evidence with which he makes his point is false. In arguing that Tess, like Henchard and Jude, would like to blot out her life at its end, to "have [her] life unbe," Miller cites the poem "Tess's Lament"—but fails to record that the *novel* gives us nothing of this feeling at all. Indeed, Tess's last words to Angel give us exactly the opposite sense. In commenting on the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Miller selects from what the narrator says concerning Elizabeth-Jane so as to make her one who "expects little from life," whose "stoic detachment . . . renders her unwilling or unable to take full advantage of the opportunities for happiness which she now has." This is not Hardy's conclusion to the novel, but Miller's; and a full quotation of the last two sentences would make this clear. In alleging Henchard's pessimistic resignation at the end, Miller has him "understanding that happiness is 'but the occasional episode in the general drama of pain,' and seeing that in an unjust universe no 'human being deserved less than was given'"—whereas these lines actually have nothing to do with Henchard, but are the narrator's description of how life once seemed to Elizabeth-Jane. The words are borrowed from that final sentence —selected, again, with a bias toward pessimism. In *The Return of the Native,* in an attempt to invalidate the rest of the novel after Eustacia's death, Miller argues for the unwritten pessimistic version of the story's tying up which would have Diggory Venn disappear rather than marry Thomasin. He makes it seem that Hardy had speculated on making this the conclusion of the novel—which is not the case. The conclusion was written as it is written, with Clym standing atop Rainbarrow. The much-discussed footnote about Diggory and Thomasin is at the end of the penultimate chapter, not "a ghostly footnote on the last page," as Miller alleges.

These complaints are, of course, serious matters. A critic as good as Miller should not be so careless with his texts, or so easy on his own ideas. One wonders, at the end of the book, if Miller's conclusions—Hardy's withdrawal from life, his idea of the separated consciousness, his sense of Hardy's fatalism and his characters' "fatefullness"—would not change, slightly, if Miller read his texts more carefully, and more in sympathy with their sense than with the ideas which can be abstracted and organized from them. One would hope so—for Miller's earlier work marks him as one of the finest and most sensitive of critics of our modern literature.

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The Barb of Time: On the Unity of Ezra Pound's Cantos by Daniel D. Pearlman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. Pp. x + 318. $8.50.

Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real by Herbert N. Schneidau. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969. Pp. viii + 210. $5.95.

Daniel D. Pearlman has made a major contribution to Pound studies by demonstrating that the parts of *The Cantos* "cohere in a pattern of cumulative thematic development." The developing theme is time: all the poem's sub-themes "interrelate and reveal their full significance in the light only of the single unifying major theme of time." Previously, as Mr. Pearlman notes, there have been those

who attempted to conceive of the poem as a whole, whom he calls integrative critics; but these did not point out the pattern of development which he considers an indispensable feature of a major epic poem. In any case, many critics of the poem, designating it this or that kind of majestic failure, have given up the attempt to see it whole and have tended merely to appreciate one part or another, swimming back to the wreck, as it were, only to salvage the ship's biscuits or the carpenter's tools.

The developing theme that imposes the major form in Mr. Pearlman's reading is the conflict between historical, linear time, which is inimical to the human spirit, and cyclic or organic time, in which the spirit thrives and is renewed. Associated with the former are false abstractions, usury, bad art, social tyranny, and disorder; associated with the latter are precise terminology, economic justice, good art, individual freedom, and social order. The *Cantos* has three major phases: in the first, linear time is predominant, and the confusion and decay of western history are reflected. Nature is controlled by man. In the second, nature becomes the model for the ordering of self and society, and its mode of operation is organic time: "From Cantos 31 through 71 Pound uses segments of history . . . to show that only those men and societies governed by a reverence for organic time have the inner strength to resist the destructive efforts of those who live by mechanical time." In the third phase, the *Pisan Cantos*, organic time is seen to be the "universal expression of suprarational benevolent love."

Of anyone submitting such a formal scheme for the *Cantos* one wants to ask, How conscious was Pound, has Pound been, of his own controlling structure? One has in mind in particular the place in the whole poem of the *Pisan Cantos*, where the accidents of his own biography have most marvellously become an integral part. Pearlman investigates the matter of intentions carefully, citing the places where Pound speaks of the project. Then he says, "A profound intuition, I believe, gave Pound a sense of the whole from the very start." Later, he adds, "One almost feels that if they had not actually happened to him, Pound's experiences in a prison stockade would have had to be invented for the sake of the major formal demands of the poem."

As he proceeds with his thesis, Mr. Pearlman studies certain cantos in detail, and these parts of the book are full of original insights: one is amazed at some of the perceptions of this critic: a Daniel come to judgment indeed! But it is in the presentation of the major form that he provides the most revealing light that has yet been shed upon *The Cantos* and goes beyond his predecessors in this field, even such distinguished ones as Hugh Kenner and Donald Davie.

Speaking of the anti-novel, Frank Kermode has said that "Even when there is a profession of complete narrative anarchy, as . . . in a poem such as *Paterson*, which rejects as spurious whatever most of us understand as form, it seems that time will always reveal some congruence with a paradigm—provided always that there is in the work that necessary element of the customary, which enables it to communicate at all."[1] So now some such congruence is found in the *Cantos*. It is a question whether paradigms will be found for all poems, long or short, especially such recent work as seems to make a point of its irreverence

[1] *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 129.

for the western virtues of rationalism, abstraction, and order, in its search for the purity of the concrete, its effort (with the impact of Zen) to submit truth as revelation of being, its war against interpretation, and its aim to become itself a brave new world full of scattered bright things. Herbert N. Schneidau, for his part, believes that the *Cantos* belongs to this kind: he guards against taking literally some of the expressed hopes of Pound that the form would appear in time, and indeed he believes that the very precision in the etching of the details in the poem "prevents them from being subordinated to any unifying principle . . ." With its massive texture now subdued to order in Mr. Pearlman's reading, on the other hand, the poem becomes not an exhibit in this modern trend but a commentary upon it, a commentary that opposes and prefers a primitive notion of time to the western linear sense. And we shall surely see more, much more, of exhibit and commentary both, partly as an implicit or explicit questioning of the western mind and the phantasmagoria it has bequeathed us since, somewhat by chance and somewhat by the momentum of Plato and his "shift out of being into consideration,"[2] Europe took the direction of rationalism, science and technology, which last has brought us what it has brought.

Mr. Schneidau's main interest is not in the *Cantos* but in Pound's poetics. He has studied—sometimes scrutinized—the letters, essays, and miscellaneous writings, Pound's and others', and is enabled thus to identify precisely the meanings of such terms as imagism, vorticism, *logopoeia*, and others. For one instance, he demonstrates that imagism was primarily a matter of discipline, taking its character from the qualities of good prose under the tutelage of Ford Madox Hueffer; it had no necessary, exclusive relation to the visual image. This was Hulme's thing, and Mr. Schneidau carefully sorts out Pound's relationship to Hulme in the growth of the imagist poetic and describes the minimal influence of the latter.

These statements and others are all carefully and thoroughly argued, and the reader is indebted throughout the book for the clarification of many various issues. Mr. Schneidau occasionally corrects the pronouncements of predecessors with a little undue verve: the critics who came before him generalized in these matters, as men do and should, before they could safely generalize; and it is obvious that they are vulnerable to the masters of nuance and scruple whose way they have prepared. But this is not by any means to suggest that Mr. Schneidau takes a narrow approach; certainly not: the discussions repeatedly open up into broad considerations—the concrete universal, incarnation, epiphany, typology, and the old debate between realism and nominalism. The book has value beyond that derived from the more local issues which it definitely and very usefully settles.

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[2] The trend of modern American poetry away from rationalism et cetera, is discussed by Ray Benoit in "The New American Poetry," *Thought*, 44 (June, 1969), 201-18.

Form and Frenzy in Swift's Tale of a Tub by John R. Clark. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970. Pp. xvi + 237. $8.00.

Twentieth-century approaches to Swift's *Tale of a Tub* can be tentatively divided into several categories. There is the time-honored extrinsic approach which investigates source and tradition, as in the series of articles by Clarence Webster in the early 1930's. Another valid extrinsic approach is the study of intellectual background, as in Phillip Harth's thorough *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of A Tale of a Tub* (Chicago, 1961). There are also several approaches which combine the extrinsic and intrinsic, the most ancient of these being biographical criticism, as in Emile Pons' famous *Swift: Les Années de Jeunnesse et le "Conte du Tonneau"* (Paris, 1925). Closely related to the biographical critic is the one who, though not strictly a psychologist, manages to psychologize a great deal, as in R. E. Hughes' "The Five Fools in *A Tale of a Tub*," *Literature and Psychology*, XI (1961). Or one may combine the extrinsic and intrinsic by using a comparative approach, as in J. A. Levine's "The Design of *A Tale of a Tub* (With a Digression on a Mad Modern Critic)," *ELH*, XXXIII (1966), which aligns Swift's piece with Nabokov's *Pale Fire*.

The intrinsic critics may be divided into two groups: those who study *A Tale of a Tub* as rhetoric and those who study it as satire. Among those who have distinguished themselves as rhetorical critics are Robert C. Elliott ("Swift's *Tale of a Tub*: An Essay in Problems of Structure," *PMLA*, LXVI, 1951) and Martin Price (*Swift's Rhetorical Art*, New Haven, 1953). Two of the better students of the *Tale's* satire are John M. Bullitt (*Jonathan Swift and the Anatomy of Satire*, Cambridge, Mass., 1953) and Edward Rosenheim, Jr. (*Swift and the Satirist's Art*, Chicago, 1963).

Still another approach to *A Tale of A Tub*, one which would be somewhat mislabeled if we were to call it either intrinsic or extrinsic, is the *study of studies*—i. e., surveys and analyses of trends in Swift criticism. Such an approach is very useful when the critical and scholarly issues are as intricate and controversial as those surrounding the *Tale*. Two scholars who have been of great service here are Milton Voigt (*Swift and the Twentieth Century*, Detroit, 1964) and the "Dean" of Swift critics, Ricardo Quintana ("Emile Pons and the Modern Study of Swift's *Tale of a Tub*," *Études Anglaises*, XVIII, 1965).

It has been necessary to sketch the several categories of criticism in order to set the scene for the entrance of John R. Clark's *Form and Frenzy in Swift's Tale of a Tub*—not that it fits into any one of these categories: on the contrary, it belongs to *all* of them. In spite of Clark's assertions that his purpose is merely "to examine the *Tale of a Tub* as a work of art," that he wishes to approach the *Tale* "centripetally" (p. 5), *Form and Frenzy* is much more than an ordinary "close reading." It is a study of the long tradition of "Fools and Knaves" on which Swift drew (Chapter I); it is an analysis of the intellectual background of the ancient-modern quarrel (Chapter III); it uses biographical criticism to separate Swift from his persona (Chapter I); it psychologizes in the chapter entitled "The Decorum of Modern Madness"; it is occasionally comparative, as in the efforts to align Swift with Aldous Huxley and Nathaniel West (p. 85); it is a sustained assessment of the *Tale*'s rhetoric, even though Clark at the outset vigorously rejects the rhetorical approach (pp. 3-13); it is a useful guide to the work's satirical strategies; and it is, lastly, a study of studies, for scarcely any

earlier Swiftians escape mention and evaluation. *Form and Frenzy* is probably one of the busiest books ever written about a literary work, as though Clark had been inspired (or seduced?) by the contagious energies of the *Tale* itself. The wonder is that everything Clark does, he does well; the reader comes away signally more informed and enthused about Swift than before.

Because Clark's logic is sturdy, to disagree with him is not so much to argue with his local insights as to question the fundamental assumptions on which his logic rests. And because these assumptions are received standard opinion in recent criticism, one hesitates to go against the tide. Even so, this reviewer feels it necessary to offer two objections.

In the first place, Clark, like too many modern critics, overemphasizes unity. As a Chicago-School Neo-Aristotelian he is committed to the doctrine that masterpieces are always made coherent by certain consistent principles and that to discover these principles is to discern what makes the work of art successful. Accordingly, *Form and Frenzy* contains a number of proclamations like this:

> Yet let it be said—emphatically—that the *Tale*'s content should reveal an internal artistic continuity transcending any mere catering to the opinions of William Temple, any mere opportunism or artistic helplessness, or any particular instances of cantankerous *ad hominem* name-calling. If the *Tale of a Tub* is to reveal itself as a coherent work of art, then the ancients-and-moderns controversy of the 1690's in England must be understood as the work's occasion only, not as the work's tyrannous cause. (pp. 95-96)

The dangers attending such a critical attitude may be phrased as rhetorical questions. What, after all, is so sacred about unity? And is it not possible that this "unity" often resides not in the work but in the mind of the critic? Would it not be more accurate—and more refreshing—to argue, as in Morse Peckham's *Man's Rage for Chaos* (Philadelphia, 1965), that what fascinates us in art is not its consistency and order, not its *routineness*, but rather its swerving surprises and instabilities; not its themes but rather its variations on those themes? An acknowledgement of the volatile vagaries of art is especially pertinent to the study of satire, which is usually a random and hodgepodge kind of composition, as the derivation of the word suggests ("satura," or a mixed dish). And to drive it into a neat pattern, as Clark tries to do, is to go against the dominant spirit of the satiric tradition, a spirit that for centuries has sought such loose forms as the familiar epistle, the picaresque tale, the anatomy, or the confession, all of which are exploited in the profound and dazzling laxity of Swift's *Tale*. (One might remind himself that the *Tale* is literally unfinished, which would seem to call its unity into question.)

A second major assumption underlying *Form and Frenzy* is the belief in the device of the persona. Students of satire feel an urgency here, for to equate the speaker with the satirist is often to suggest that the author himself was nasty, irrational, and perhaps even insane. Thus the doctrine of the persona is frequently employed as a means of whitewashing the writer: Swift, some recent critics have maintained, was not really fascinated with excrement; rather, we are told, he was merely scoffing at *others* for being fascinated with man's lower regions. Though Clark is less naive in his glossings, he is still too eager to clear Swift of even the most trivial charge. Thus the portrait that emerges out of Clark's

book is of a wise and honorable Swift, pure in his motives and totally opposed to the foul and foolish Modern who is the narrator of the *Tale*. *Form and Frenzy* is largely the product of the great reaction against the Victorian image of Swift as a hideous misanthrope; but in "resurrecting" him recent criticism may have swung too far in the other direction, trading one simplism off for another. The truth would seem to lie somewhere between: Swift, like a number of major writers, was a man who articulated great thoughts and feelings but who also had a broad streak of eccentric nastiness. The so-called "persona" of the *Tale* is probably the author himself, broadly seen in one of those stances which reveals the gleeful dark backside of the mind, the anti-self that refuses to be suppressed. That the mask is the man has been suggested by Irvin Ehrenpreis ("Personae," in *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, Chicago, 1963); but Clark relegates Ehrenpreis to a footnote (p. 153) and proceeds to argue the question of *how many* personae exist in the *Tale*, begging the more basic question of whether there *is* such a thing as a persona.

One may conclude, then, that John R. Clark's well-written *Form and Frenzy in Swift's Tale of a Tub* is as excellent as its assumptions permit it to be.

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The Birth of Modern Comedy in Renaissance Italy by Douglas Radcliff-Umstead. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969. Pp. ix + 285. $12.50.

What is especially disappointing about Mr. Radcliff-Umstead's study is its failure to approach the promise of its title. What the author means by "modern," it turns out, is whatever appears in Renaissance Italian comedy that is not to be attributed to the practice of Plautus and Terence upon which it is based. The book's failure to place Renaissance Italian comedy somewhere in the spectrum between Aristophanes and Jonson or Molière or Goldoni or Pirandello or Shaw or whomever would not be so disappointing if the author had delivered a helpful synthesis or new perspective for what did take place in the comic theater of the period he deals with. The reader has a difficult time piecing together what it was exactly that got born in the Latin humanistic comedy of the trecento and quattrocento and the vernacular *commedia erudita* of the first half of the cinquecento.

Radcliff-Umstead's approach is to survey selected plays and show mainly in each case how a work reflected on the one hand the influence of Plautus and Terence and how it reflected on the other hand Italian novelle or the mores and conditions of Italian life. Thus here we have a typical Terentian character or here a plot from Plautus—there we have a character or situation from Boccaccio and there a scene drawn from Italian life. Here a play follows the theory of the unities or the tightly organized intigue of Roman comedy—there an author defies the unities or works more with character sketches and episodes than with intrigue.

There is helpful detail in the book. For example, the reader can discover how in a play like Ariosto's *Il Negromante* the central character specifically reflects

conceptions of magicians in the novelle, and how which plays of Terence furnished models for a particular theme, situation, or character. Or for a play like Nardi's *La Commedia di Amicizia* the reader learns which novella of Boccaccio was the chief source and how one scene was based on a typical episode of medieval sacred drama. The author's review of Machiavelli's *La Mandragola* gives us the various ingredients, its classical economy, the folk legends involved, the sources and methods of characterization, the focus on contemporary environment, and the "local texture."

Sometimes such details gather into whole impressions about a playwright—for example, Aretino's variety of techniques and themes and range of characters, or Beolco's love for the country setting, the folk tradition, the peasant character.

One can piece out well enough some rather obvious general points, for example that Renaissance Italian comedy is peopled with Italians and concerned with problems peculiar to the times, like corrupt churchmen and Spanish intruders. And one catches in Radcliff-Umstead's review that the *commedia erudita* was more erotic than Roman comedy, in its more expansive concern with both sensual love and romantic love.

Yet the study fails over-all to gather its threads into a whole cloth. The heterogeneous details of the Italian comedies of the period are presented just that way—heterogeneously, and a significantly new conception about Italian comedy or modern comedy fails to emerge. In his conclusion Radcliff-Umstead claims that the Renaissance Italian playwrights created "a comic theater that helped determine the course of modern European drama." Perhaps so. But the author does not really tell us how so.

Roman comedy was a comedy of manners. Perhaps the *commedia erudita* was simply a transfer of the Plautine and Terentian idea of comedy to a new set of manners. To show otherwise one perhaps needs to pursue the *commedia erudita* on to the end of the sixteenth century, relating it along the way to the emerging *commedia dell' arte*, but such is not the author's scope. Or perhaps one needs to look for the germ of a comic idea that informs the comic art form of the earlier period. To explain what comic idea there was in the novelle and how it differed from that of Roman comedy might have been a helpful preliminary approach that Radcliff-Umstead did not adopt.

The reader feels there is something in the comedy with which the author deals that is germinal, something the author hits upon flint-like now and again, "something unchaste, irreligious, and definitely salacious," as he says generally in speaking of the attraction the *commedia erudita* held for Elizabethan authors. Perhaps something irreverent and reverent and absurd, we want to say, like Machiavelli's irreverent hero in *La Mandragola*, who overcomes society's rules and achieves his erotic desires by invoking absurd myths about the power of a mandrake potion to kill and to generate.

Susanne Langer said that "Comedy is an art form that arises naturally wherever people are gathered to celebrate life, in spring festivals, triumphs, birthdays, weddings, or initiations" (*Feeling and Form*, New York, 1953, p. 331). Wylie Sypher defined comedy as "a Carrying Away of Death, a triumph over mortality by some absurd faith in rebirth, restoration, and salvation" (*Comedy*, Garden City, N.Y., 1956, p. 220). Theorists like Langer, Sypher, Northrop Frye, and others have looked to ritual for a conception of comedy that precedes and infuses comedy as an art form. F. M. Cornford's *The Origin of Attic Comedy*

(London, 1914) revealed such an infusion at one point in the history of comedy. And we conjure Aristophanes and a play like *The Birds* and understand the ritual of irreverent reverence that informs the art—the rascal hero fleeing the taxes, law courts, and other civilized nonsense of Athens, establishing a new Olympus in the skies with the birds as divinities, ejecting false men and foolish gods, and wedding himself to Sovereignty, the beautifully adorned Basileia.

Renaissance critics defined comedy as "an imitation of life, a mirror of custom, an image of truth," a definition they got from the fourth-century Terentian commentator Donatus, who got it from Cicero. And we think, as the Renaissance theorists did, of the plays of Plautus and Terence where typically a young hero with the help of a clever servant managed his way through a society of foolish fathers, braggart soldiers, misers, sober matrons, courtesans, slave dealers, parasites, and what have you, to achieve his youthful desires, sometimes irreverently, but not very absurdly—and the hero seldom was allowed to disturb society very much, or edge it from its dead center for very long, especially not so in Terence.

After the evolution of Aristophanic comedy into the "new" comedy of Menander, Plautus, and Terence, comedy evolved again in association with the folk festivals and sacred drama of medieval Christianity. The Renaissance humanists looked back to the Roman comedy of manners for a form for a comic art, the Italians the first to do so. What the reader might expect, or hope for, from a book with the title that Radcliff-Umstead gives his is an understanding of a new synthesis, an understanding of some comic idea that took hold when an old comic form of manners was imposed as successor of whatever comic traditions developed in medieval ritual, festival, and story.

But the author does not approach his material with such a perspective, or with any other perspective that gives us any clear notion of what did get born in Italian Renaissance comedy. We are left with a notion that here was a comic theater that was somehow "vital" and "modern" in its assimilation of Roman comedy, the novelle, and Italian life—and a few other things that appear here and there, like some folklore, some echoes of the *sacre rappresentazioni*, and some sense and spirit of carnival. Perhaps that's all that can be said for this Italian comedy, that it was a new version of an old comedy of manners, with bits and pieces of other things—and that a "modern" comedy never got born here at all—maybe that happened in some other time, and some other place.

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D. H. Lawrence and the New World by David Cavitch. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. Pp. x + 232. $6.00.

This book sets out to examine Lawrence's conception of a new world but turns out to be an attack on his integrity as a writer. Cavitch's conclusion that Lawrence was unable to face the truth about his own personality and therefore falsified his art is a serious indictment and one which ought not to go unchallenged. The labyrinth of the critic's argument runs from Lawrence's earliest novels to the final poems. At times the evidence is plausible, at other times too far-fetched to be taken seriously—in the end it breaks down under the weight of Lawrence's

own pronouncements, many of which are quoted at length. The book simply does not prove that Lawrence's "creative self was so closely bound to his image of woman that he needed constantly to defend the genius of himself against the conscious shame of effeminacy (p. 29), nor does Cavitch establish that the "unsatisfied need for masculine identification enters all of Lawrence's works" (p. 30). The attempt to reduce to a single proposition the complex being and artist that was Lawrence by trying to find a simplified psychoanalytic explanation for the well spring of his art results in a welter of questionable critical exegesis and biographical speculation.

There is a sensational overtone in this book as well. Cavitch *discovers* latent homosexual tendencies in Lawrence. There is that wrestling scene in *Women in Love*, and later the nursing of Rawdon Lilly by Aaron Sisson; there is Lawrence's encounter with Maurice Magnus. The conclusion is that in America Lawrence learned the awful truth about himself, and his subsequent work became an evasion of reality. According to Cavitch, Lawrence "wrote himself into a state of utter withdrawal from a commonly experienced world" (pp. 107-8) and "in his works records his progressive devaluing of outer reality and his venturing away into psychological isolation" (p. 108). While pretending to search for an ideal society, Lawrence was in fact running away from his "sexual ambivalence" (p. 150), and his "lofty quest for a freer world where men can share eternal, unisexual love, ends in America; for he came to recognize that his idealization of manly love was a symptom of his lack of masculine identification" (pp. 150-51).

Cavitch is bent on seeing Lawrence's writing as motivated by a suppressed homoeroticism. Thus, Gudrun, in *Women in Love*, is a character to whom Lawrence transfers "the feelings that would have been Birkin's if his homosexuality had become explicitly the central issue in the fiction" (p. 67). Such a reading of *Women in Love* ignores the complexity of Lawrence's view in that novel, and the emphasis on the homoerotic element leads the critic to misread Lawrence's prescription for an ideal society. By taking out of context Lawrence's ideas on the necessity of "manly love," the need for some sort of *Blutbruderschaft*, Cavitch overlooks Lawrence's other requirements for a new era. It is Lawrence who writes: "And upon what is this new era established? On the perfect circuits of vital flow between human beings. First, the great sexless normal relation between the individuals, simple sexless friendships, unison of family, and clan, and nation, and group. Next, the powerful sex relation between man and woman, culminating in the eternal orbit of marriage. And, finally, the sheer friendship, the love of comrades, the manly love which alone can create a new era of life" (p. 98). Although Cavitch quotes this passage, he apparently fails to grasp its meaning, for he argues that the only important relationship for creating "the new world" is some sort of homoerotic relationship between men. The shape of Lawrence's "new world" is indeed a worthy subject for a new study of Lawrence; the excursion to America and the search there for some remaining thread of a new society needs to be explored by those who want to understand Lawrence; but a fruitless attempt to reveal in Lawrence a subconscious fear of homosexuality will not define the shape of the "new world."

When Lawrence collapsed, after finishing the novel *The Plumed Serpent*, it was the imminent prospect of death which forcefully impressed upon him that life is much too precious to be squandered. It was not, as Cavitch would have

it, that "he no longer experienced feelings of sexual desire for either women or men, but that his libido was latent and narcissistic" (p. 189); nor was it that he decided to throw "off his burden of sex" (p. 190). He decided that there was no more point in preaching to others about sex, or about anything else. As he says of Gethin Day, "the sheer joy of life," the "marvellous joy of life" here was the important thing, and it "is a beauteous thing to live and to be alive," for it "is the *Deed* of life we have now to learn."

Yet it would be unfair to say that Lawrence learned this lesson so late in life—his reverence for life in the flesh is the quality which very early set him apart from other writers. Although the collapse in America reinforced his former sense of values, he could not remain long without preaching. Cavitch would have it that he turned to "idyll and romance," that in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence's "attack against modern culture is only superficial" (p. 198). The reading of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as a work in which "Mellors has unchecked possession of Connie's body which he adroitly and hostilely uses" (p. 201), in which there is "no reverence for individual being" is too distorted to merit consideration. This novel, which was once called *Tenderness*, is Lawrence's supreme attempt to find a small measure of human joy in an otherwise joyless world. As for *The Man Who Died*, it is more accurate to say that in the story Lawrence renounces his own mission. He realizes that all forms of compulsion are evil, even those that would have people love one another.

Once, he had aptly compared himself to Carlyle who wrote fifty volumes on the value of silence. For one who would have men and women behave spontaneously and respond to the rhythms of their natural beings, Lawrence no longer felt the "need to force the mind or the soul in any direction" (p. 209). Having always, as he says, laboured at the same thing, "to make the sex relation valid and precious, instead of shameful," in his later work Lawrence was certainly not escaping into "idyll and romance." Even Cavitch admits that "Lawrence's best art considers the plight of human individuality in an immensely powerful, obscure universe" (p. 217). And Mellors and Connie, as Lawrence shows, must cherish that small bit of tenderness which they have managed to redeem from a world which constantly threatens "to overwhelm and extinguish the small, true flame of real loving communion" which alone can save them. Far from the "detached narcissism" which Cavitch sees, Lawrence's later fiction shows us a writer who pursued to the end his early commitment to bringing about a change inside the individual which, as a novelist, was his real concern.

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