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Chaucer and the Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure by Robert M. Jordan. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967. Pp. xii, 257. $6.95.

Here is an appealingly brief, handsomely produced, book, with an enticing dust jacket and a bold title. Perhaps, as a result, I expected too much, or perhaps it is that I disagree frequently with what Professor Jordan has to say—at any rate I was left disenchanted. Certainly it is not the fault of the writing, for the author writes engagingly, and certainly he has something to say, although some of it has already been said by him in articles. If I concentrate in this review on those points where I disagree with Professor Jordan, it is by way of indicating that I take him seriously, and that I do not intend an essay on disenchantment, but an essay about basic issues.

In a brief introduction Professor Jordan tells us that D. W. Robertson, Jr. is right in noting that medieval is not modern, but "must demur . . . from his extravagant estimate of the importance of Christian exegetical tradition in the poetry of Chaucer." (2) For Jordan the heart of the matter lies to the contrary in medieval inorganic structure, that is, the "inorganic discontinuity between fiction and experience. . . . the conscious awareness that the "literature,' the visible data, being untrue, is distinctly separated from the truth, as the letter of Scriptures was known to be separated from the spirit." (6-7) With this statement, as phrased, it is difficult to quarrel, but the statement apparently means something different to Professor Jordan than it does to me, for he goes on to say that in "the 'Retractions' following the *Canterbury Tales* and the 'Epilogue' of *Troilus and Criseyde* . . . the poet anxiously questions the bases of his art and condemns all that is not conducive to piety and spiritual enlightenment." (7-8) To argue that the distinction between the letter and the spirit of Scriptures is echoed in Chaucer by a split between his "art" and his "doctrine" is to argue by an analogy which actually proves, if it proves anything, the opposite; that is, that Chaucer sees his "art" at the service of his "doctrine." The spirit (doctrine, meaning) of Scriptures is not separate from the letter; rather it follows from it. Chaucer's "mistrust of fiction" is simply the mistrust of the letter which kills because it is not informed by the spirit, but as Professor Robertson and I have both argued Chaucer's "letter" is directed by the "spirit." To hold that the "Epilogue" to the *Troilus* is a "denial" of its art is either to trivialize the poem, or to suggest an essential hypocrisy in Chaucer, a charge which Professor Jordan seems to accept, however gently, when he says of the "Retractions" and the "Epilogue" that they, "however fervent, are after all only statements." (8)

In Chapter Two Professor Jordan sets seriously to work on his task of emancipating Chaucer's "art" from its enslavement to the Augustinian tradition. He begins again with Professor Robertson, who, like Chaucer's doctrine, is not to be gotten rid of. Agreeing that in *A Preface to Chaucer* Robertson has made

"an impressive beginning" toward defining the elements of medieval aesthetic theory as they relate to Chaucer's art, Jordan finds, however, that the book "as a study of aesthetic norms is weakened by an ambiguous definition of the scope of the subject." (10) Apparently this ambiguity results from Robertson's dwelling "much more extensively upon spiritual and moral than upon aesthetic considerations." (10-11) Professor Jordan proposes to rectify this imbalance by stressing the "Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition of aesthetic theory," in particular, "the significance of the *Timaeus* for medieval aesthetic." (11-12)

Too brief to establish a successful counterweight to Robertson, his remarks in this chapter suffer from a failure to take proper cognizance of the scope of the theory he is trying to rectify. Concentrating exclusively on the *Preface*, he ignores all else which introduces and complements that admirable book; i.e., *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition*, and *Fruyt and Chaf* by Robertson and Huppé; *Doctrine and Poetry*, and *A Reading of the Canterbury Tales* by Huppé. There is nothing ambiguous about the principles of medieval literary theory propounded and applied in these works. Professor Robertson and I are properly aware of the importance of the *Timaeus*, and of pagan literary theory, in the formulation of Augustinian literary theory, to which, we believe, Chaucer adhered. At the heart of this theory is the principle that the letter and sense (poetic and narrative structure) are at the service of the sentence (a meaning consonant with doctrinal truth.) Perhaps we are wrong, but it does no good to say we are ambiguous by ignoring what we have said. There is simply no way, if we are right, albeit extravagant, to disengage "pagan" from "Christian," "aesthetic" from "moral" considerations. Professor Jordan has done excellent service in designating Chaucer's art as "inorganic," but in separating this art from its source in Augustinian literary theory Professor Jordan creates more ambiguities than he cures.

Thus his simplistic view of allegory leads him to wonder at "Curtius' inclusion of Chaucer among the company of Prudentius, the *Romance of the Rose*, and Spenser in the allegorical tradition." His wonder is caused by his seeing allegory simply as "personified abstraction," a definition which leads him to a curious bit of special pleading; "Sophisticated efforts to read Chaucer as though he were practicing allegorical expression, as though his characters were as simplified as, say, Guillaume's Deduit, and as though he were as industriously devoted as Augustine to 'using' all temporal things as means to eternal Truth have proved to be unconvincing." (33) Here is black and white. Allegory is personification, as with Guillaume's Deduit; Chaucer is complex; therefore, Chaucer is not an allegorist! Obviously, stated as Jordan states it, the attempt to relate Chaucer to the central allegorical tradition is bound to be unconvincing, but in actuality, Chaucer as I understand him, does ascribe to the Augustinian doctrine of "use," which gives to art the function of revealing eternal truth. In his own "Epilogue" Professor Jordan seems to agree; "The fiction of the *Canterbury Tales* [does not] lose any of its literary persuasiveness for standing in its place within the edifice of Truth." (241)

Professor Jordan's simplistic view is also suggested in his remarks on Dante's *Vita Nuova*. Jordan sees only the formal statements of division as exegesis, and fails to grasp that all the prose sections are commentary on the allegorical book of Dante's life, as Dante himself makes clear.

In Chapter Three, Jordan summarizes the works of Panofsky and von Simson

on the Gothic cathedral by way of setting up an analogy to the "inorganic" structure of Chaucer's two major poems. The analogy is interesting although Jordan uses it in curious ways in the remaining chapters. For the *Troilus*, the analogy seems to work something like this. We watch all the motifs of recurrent design—Jordan is most perceptive here; we enjoy this display, and then in the "Epilogue" we look upward and see that it is a cathedral after all.

In Chapter Five, Professor Jordan attacks the concept of the *Canterbury Tales* as dramatic. He is good at setting up straw men to knock down. Note, for example, his assertion; "But the fact is that the *Canterbury Tales* circulated as a gathering of fragments, as an unfulfilled intention." (117) This interpretation of the facts, presented as a statement of fact, is based on an assertion of Manley's (116), but ignores completely the contrary evidence presented by Carleton Brown and many others. When hypothesis becomes fact it is a short step for conjecture to be equally dignified, "The important point is that Chaucer was a maker of tales, and in the present case he also made a framework." (117)

Of the individual tales, his discussion of the Merchant's Tale leads to the conclusion, "Structural and stylistic evidence seems to indicate conclusively that there is no single viewpoint governing the narrative." (150) This conclusion is reached by way of assuming a straw man, i. e., that the Merchant alone can in the dramatic view be the "I." As soon as one shifts the frame of reference where it belongs, that is, to the mind of the old January, Professor Jordan's thesis falls. In his discussion of the Knight's Tale, there are many good observations, but they are spoiled by an attempt to relate the humor in the tale to a shift in point of view. The humor of the tale is simply part of the tale; it is an essential aspect of its point of view. The discussion of the Miller's Tale is good, but then Jordan leaves the tale hanging as a thing in itself; "A kind of miracle has been accomplished, but it is primarily an aesthetic achievement, not a moral one." (196) This is simply and cavalierly to leave out of account its relation to the Knight's Tale, and the rest. In his discussion of the Clerk's Tale, Jordan simply fails to see that its design rests on the "trick" ending, the play with levels of expectations. (Cf., *A Reading of the Canterbury Tales*, pp. 136 ff.)

His discussion of the Wife's Prologue is a good study of irony, but one should note how Jordan is led to a statement which sounds almost like a caricature of the solemnity which he decries in Robertson, "The appetite for sensual gratification which is so dominant in section one is nowhere evident here; lechery has been displaced by avarice." (222) Chaucer, one assumes, must have slipped somewhere and become the allegorist Jordan claims he is not.

Suitably enough, since the *Canterbury Tales* are analogous to a Gothic cathedral, Jordan ends with the Parson's Tale. I find that the following remark (230) speaks for itself, as suggesting the quality of Jordan's approach, and I conclude with it, without comment; ". . . we may justifiably maintain that for ourselves the *presence* of the Parson's Tale at the end of the *Canterbury Tales* is more important than the tale itself. The knowledge of what it is is more meaningful and more illuminating than the experience of reading and rereading it."

BERNARD F. HUPPÉ

The State University of New York at Binghamton

The Poetry of Emily Dickinson by Ruth Miller. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968. Pp. x + 480. $10.00.

Dickinson criticism has characteristically sought authority outside the poems, summoning discrete bits of the canon to the service, in many cases, of a biographical thesis. The reasons for this are manifest: the body of poetry is large, fragmented, and linguistically intricate, while the poet's life is a fetching void, at least in its commonplaceness, that invites conjecture through the dense psychological experience in the poetry. There are exceptions to the persistent extra-literary concern, principally the studies by Charles Anderson, by the writer of this review, and most recently by Brita Lindberg-Seyersted. In this present study, which is not an exception, Ruth Miller Kriesberg undertakes a criticism the method of which gives promise but becomes pretentiously diffuse. A grossly ruminative book, *The Poetry of Emily Dickinson* laboriously constructs the argument that the poet was rebuffed by both Samuel Bowles and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and consequently turned inward in "communication with herself," attaining finally at great effort a sustaining contentment.

Yet Miss Miller describes her objective as nothing less than the "resolution" of Emily Dickinson's "meaning and manner." The critical method is at once ambitious and undisciplined, involving, in the author's words, "a new kind of scrutiny, one that derives not from [Emily Dickinson's] biography or background or the climate of opinion in the nineteenth century, but from an analysis of the metaphors and syntax and context of the works themselves." Three separate contexts of diverse material come under investigation. The first is the Higginson cluster, which includes that eminent man's article "Letter to a Young Contributor" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1862, and Emily Dickinson's letters and enclosed poems to Higginson in the remainder of that year. The Bowles cluster contains some of the poet's letters and poems to the editor of the *Springfield Daily Republican* from 1860 to 1862 and certain of his letters and newspaper pieces. The third context consists of the threaded gatherings of poems Emily Dickinson preserved. From her consideration of these selected materials the Bowles relationship emerges as Miss Miller's center of concern, a sort of *locus delicti*.

In that relationship she discovers "the demoralization" of the poet: "Emily Dickinson loved Samuel Bowles. . . . She told him so. . . . She met him one night, began to speak, but failed, failed to make herself understood, failed to move him or convince him, and when questioned further, failed to articulate another syllable of the matter. She presented herself and was not taken. She offered her poems and they were not taken. And although only she knew what she had meant, she was herself not certain whether she had muffed it or missed it or let the moment pass her by. She was tormented for many years after that with the need to justify her silence, with a need to justify her offer. And in her solitude she began to speak out her endless answer and she created her fantasy of ardent love. But always she writhed under the shame of this double refusal and called it her Calvary." That nocturnal confrontation, we are advised, may be "verified from the many lyrics that have as their action a crucial encounter which ends with silence and withdrawal." Several poems are invoked, the last being poem 1072, "Title divine—is mine!" which is said to contain the "evidence that she called him to her side" in order to defend her poetry and offer her love.

Supposed details of the meeting are extracted from poem 643, "I could suffice for Him, I knew": "They seem to have stood there a longish time; the sun went down, the stars passed over, and still no decision. When at last she does speak it is scarcely audible" (a debilitation not surprising incidentally, Emily in this version having stood the night through). Other documents are ransacked. A letter to Bowles, for example, in which Emily Dickinson pleads "Teach us to miss you *less*. . . . You didn't *mean* to be worse—did you?" Miss Miller describes as Emily's "prose conclusion" of her "signal experience" with Bowles. In a less literal view, however, these expressions must surely be regarded as the effusions of a woman trading in the purple commerce of the flourishing friendship cult. Moreover, restoration of the passage which Miss Miller excised from this letter (erroneously dated 1862 instead of 1864 here) alters our reading: "Austin told—Saturday morning—that you were not so well. 'Twas Sundown—all day—Saturday—and Sunday—such a long Bridge—no news of you—could cross!" We have, in fact, Emily Dickinson concerned not about Bowles as a refractory lover, but a sick man!

The sections on Higginson, intended to demonstrate the validity of the critical method, seem aimless and inconclusive. Prior sections, which retrace the early editing and the sporadic controversy-ridden publishing history, draw heavily on Millicent Todd Bingham's version in *Ancestors' Brocades*. Miss Miller's otherwise useful discussion of the poet's angle of perception suffers enervation because of vague critical terminology. On the poem beginning "Their Hight in Heaven comforts not," for example, Miss Miller comments: "Some readers may detect in this poem a wistful tone, but that is still somewhat on the middle segment of the spectrum of emotion." Much labor is expended in the explication of "There came a Day at Summer's full," drawing upon the poem's "context"—the letter to Higginson which accompanied the poem, another poem in the letter, "variant" poems (the term refers to poems with similar metaphors) and Higginson's *Atlantic Monthly* article referred to earlier. The conclusion of this discussion is framed as an answer to the sort of cramped question Miss Miller repeatedly poses in her search for the "meaning" of individual poems. With regard to this poem, he asks, "if God gives nature, what does the poet give?" Her answer: "A very close reading, paying particular attention to the unusual syntax, recalling the context of this poem to be the letter to Higginson and the companion poem, and relying on variant poems transcribed into the fascicles for further illumination, we can arrive at an answer: the poet gives her poems."

The constricted reasoning from which Miss Miller's critical approach derives cannot but produce such hard knots of interpretation. Despite wide sweeps through materials deemed relevant, often along paths of quite promiscuous association between poems and letters, it is the single meaning Miss Miller is after. This critical narrowness is based on the author's assumption that "Emily Dickinson was above all a poet of occasions." The method then is inevitable: "As in the case of everything Emily Dickinson wrote, be they letters or poems, the first question to settle is the circumstance which provoked her to write." Yet given the best-documented of circumstances, such a method courts irrelevancy because it treats poems in terms of something else; in the beckoning void of Dickinson biography, it is an invitation to fiction. Furthermore, only narrow measures of critical illumination show through such rigid pronouncements as this: "Higginson understood the quality of poetry to reside in its craftsmanship;

Emily Dickinson believed it resided in the subject matter." (This seems to be contradicted further on: "Take the poems with the most banal, the most trite and hackneyed themes we can find, they will be great poems nevertheless because of the manner of rendering.") Here is Miss Miller's comment on the famous poem "A Bird came down the Walk": "This poem has no message, no lesson; it has no biographical or historical significance. But for itself we cherish it. That bird is a real bird; he eats and drinks and jerks about as birds do when they are on the ground; he flies off with a different kind of motion, it is true, but so do real birds fly." Distorted readings occur, the most extraordinary perhaps on page 127 where Miss Miller, inspecting the poem "'Faith' is a fine invention" in the light of the poet's accompanying note to Bowles, concludes that the poem *really* demands of Bowles "Publish [my] poems in the Springfield paper. Print them clear in the small newspaper." Finally, there is a bland dismissal of the crucial problem of when the poems were composed. "It serves no purpose any longer," Miss Miller writes, "to bemuse ourselves with the riddle of chronology. At this distance from the events of 1858-1862 we must be satisfied with an approximation."

Miss Miller's chapter on the fascicles is intended to show that the contextual approach holds here, too; i. e., poems in a single gathering are mutually illuminating. A chart and a "blueprint" are presented in support of this view and indeed they are said to be applicable in all cases: "So similar are the fascicles it seems possible to chart one and obtain a blueprint for all." The principle behind the construction of the fascicles, Miss Miller writes, is "in a word, dramatic." Further on Miss Miller declares that the fascicles "do not all say the same thing, but they all do have an intrinsic dramatic narrative as their central structure." We are not told the extent of revision of the blueprint made necessary by Professor Ralph Franklin's proposed re-ordering (accepted *in toto* by Miss Miller) of some of the packets. Fascicle 12, the single gathering presented for demonstration, is described as "a long link-poem, a single poem composed of discrete but intricately related parts." The relatedness depends upon Miss Miller's enormously capacious concept of "modulation," by which an illusion of purposeful order is maintained: "The final poem brings together all the acts and images that opened the fascicle: the vision of course has cleared; the window has modulated to a mirror; the timid heart that split earlier has modulated to a flawed soul that winks; the news that might strike her dead has become the lightning that does not frighten the sound soul. . . ."

Despite the author's claim that "Emily Dickinson's literary influences are as much a surprise as anything one can say about this unique poet," the evidence presented is not uniformly convincing. Miss Miller mistakes hardy clichés that clot Dickinson's poetry for borrowings (she sometimes calls them "echoes") or she seizes upon single words from which she hastily extrapolates. For example, the lines "Twas when the sea's tremendous roar / A little bark assailed" from *Hymns of the Ages* (1860) she says supposedly triggered the Dickinson "variant" "If my Bark sink / 'Tis to another sea . . . ," lines of course from William Ellery Channing. Lengthy and unanalyzed excerpts from books Emily Dickinson might have read (the relevance to her poetry is not clear) appear in the voluminous back material. Throughout this long book a confining literal mindedness obstructs imaginative critical movement, as when, for a final example, Miss Miller turns repeatedly to Webster's 1847 dictionary for the "meaning" of words in

particular poems. The result is that the full performance of a poem is slighted while the tracking down of meaning proceeds narrowly along a line from the poem's supposed "occasion." The method, on the other hand, neither rigorous nor always tactful, induces elaboration which in turn ravels out into misplaced attention in irrelevant corners.

DAVID PORTER

University of Massachusetts

Blake's Humanism by John Beer. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1968. Pp. xiii + 269. $9.00.

Much literary criticism is still being written from the view that some unknown number of close analyses of individual works, compiled and collated, yield a picture of something we might call "literature." If this were true, then we might also argue that the interestingness of criticism inspired by a particular writer reflects the quality of his work, that the greater interest of Blake criticism over, say, critical writings on Coleridge is some sign of Blake's pre-eminence. That this canon would be false reminds us that the relation between criticism and literature is parabolic, tangential and incomplete.

Less eccentric, in the case of Blake, might be the assertion that he has more successfully conditioned his critics than any of the other major English poets. In this he is much like Thelonious Monk, the jazz pianist, whose compositions are so structured that convincing improvisations on them by other musicians seem bound to echo the temperament of their inventor. There is no question of improvising or significantly qualifying the original. A tacit acceptance of the sponsoring conception is always implied in the performance. In the tight game that Blake plays with his readers and critics, an unstated rule seems to be that the player is seldom allowed to retrieve a bone of understanding without swallowing a morsel of assent. By the time he has gone through the labors of analysis and explication, his independent judgment as an evaluator has been deeply compromised, co-opted. To quarrel with Blake, we must use terms so heavily saturated by his frame of reference that our counter-arguments become so much reinforcement of his ideology. And if we too strenuously resist this frame of reference, our counter-thrusts fall out of bounds as irrelevant.

All of this helps explain why virtually no criticism in the traditional sense has been written on Blake. Significant works about him are invariably book-length studies, rather like Biblical commentaries: the baroque apologetics of Frye, the compendious glossaries of Damon, the evangelical paraphrases of Harold Bloom. Even less pure and less tractable in critical dialogue is that higher form of Blake criticism, the creative borrowings and assimilations of poets like Yeats and Cummings and in novels such as *Finnegan's Wake, The Crock of Gold, The Horse's Mouth, Henderson the Rain King* and untraceable others.

Apart from Frye's "Blake After Two Centuries," the only Blake criticism of the classical sort, in the manner of Johnson's essay on Shakespeare or Arnold's on Wordsworth, is Eliot's short piece in *The Sacred Wood*, treasurable for its rarity among writings on Blake as an essay in literary judgment, spacious in perspective, conversational, pointed, confident in its attempt to arrive, in brief

compass, at a whole view of the man. His sharpest impression, however, that Blake's genius "sadly lacked . . . a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of a poet," shows the hazard of this approach, since it asks Blake's genius to be something other than what it certainly was.

Professor Beer's *Blake's Humanism*, as it opens, promises new resolutions in Blake criticism; it suggests his attempt to hold an independent course before Blake's usual compromisation and co-optation, and before the precedents of Blake's previous critics, without falling into the misunderstanding dissympathy of Eliot's pronouncement. The prospect is neither that of a handbook or guide through Blake nor of an Olympian resumé, but something of both, essayistic and discursive, which will "place" Blake, but upon a foundation of careful and precise readings. Rather than pursue Blake through one "key" idea, as in several monographs on the poet, Beer seeks Blake's "more complex identity" through theme and motif of his poetry and pictures. The manner recalls the tough-minded tack of F. R. Leavis; what seems offered, a revaluation of Blake within the context of some great tradition.

The book falls short of its admirable ambitions, however. Its theme—Blake's effort to supplant a fruitless dialectic between Reason and Energy with a fruitful dialectic between Desire and Vision (the levels of four-fold vision, respectively) and restore human nature to its supra-natural basis—emerges obscurely from the rather finicky and sometimes dubious explications that the discussion settles into. Along with such motifs as Blake's use of light-dark imagery, this theme as here developed makes a thinnish net in which to catch Blake's complexity. Sharp insights alternate with stretches of drossy paraphrase. The gains are valuable, however. Beer surpasses his predecessors, in my opinion, in his reading of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, and draws some bold, clarifying patterns upon *The Song of Los*. An appendix uncovers an unmistakable debt owed Dryden's translation of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* by Blake's *Gates of Paradise*. Another offers an interesting paradigm of Blake's mythology.

The book's failure to crystallize for the reader a whole view of Blake is perhaps related to its author's feeling that Blake's vision is itself not a whole one. In a final chapter ("Unwanted Prospero"), Beer suggests that there is something human lacking in Blake's humanism, some quantity found in Fielding, Cobbett, Wordsworth and Dickens; "some final barrier, reared within his personality, prohibited him from trusting the earth whole-heartedly." This sounds to me like accusing Blake of having *lost* something he intentionally and clear-sightedly left behind, something very near to those things that Christ and Tolstoy relinquished.

It is a commonplace that when we write about Blake we really write about ourselves (the most interesting part of his game). More telling, possibly, is what each of his critics who hopes to pursue him in the "desarts wild" beyond the cultured gardens of conventional criticism, and faced with his co-optative demands that we surrender much of our usual operational gear, refuses to surrender.

CLYDE TAYLOR

California State College, Long Beach

John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order by Mark Stavig. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968. Pp. xx + 225. $6.95.

Does John Ford attack or support "the traditional moral order"? Mr. Stavig argues for the latter view, finding in both Ford's early, non-dramatic works and in his plays an advocacy of Christianity, Platonism, and neo-Stoicism. Ford's traditionalism prevails even in his two most sensational tragedies, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Love's Sacrifice*; hence one errs not only if he sees Ford championing libertinism or unbridled individualism but also if he thinks the playwright disinterested in ethics while preoccupied with aesthetic effect and psychological analysis.

As an introduction to his book—as well as a justification for it—, Mr. Stavig reviews nineteenth and twentieth-century Fordian criticism. He properly distinguishes between "the Hazlitt school," which condemned Ford as a decadent romantic, and "the Lamb school," which praised him as a sympathetic portrayer of human suffering; he next notes S. P. Sherman's conception of the dramatist as a critic of society, then turns to later scholarship (that of M. Joan Sargeaunt, M. C. Bradbrook, Una Ellis-Fermor, H. J. Oliver, and Clifford Leech), which he describes as agreeing upon Ford's avoidance of moral judgments. Preferable to these approaches, according to the author, are those of Irving Ribner and Robert Ornstein, who in recent studies "stress the traditional vision of Jacobean dramatists . . . dominated by Christian rather than secular philosophy" (xix).

With Mr. Stavig's denial of Ford's libertinism I must concur. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, for example, is no plea for incest. Discussing Ford's most controversial play in what strikes me as the book's central chapter, he points out the gradual deterioration of Giovanni, who, after his rejection of Friar Bonaventura's orthodox advice, proceeds from incest to blasphemy, adultery, and murder and remains a lustful lover throughout. I also agree with Mr. Stavig's contention that traditional morality pervades Ford's non-dramatic works: that *Fame's Memorial* praises the Earl of Devonshire as an ideal courtier rather than as the adulterous lover of Penelope Rich, that *Christ's Bloody Sweat* presents the doctrine of redemption, and that both *A Line of Life* and *The Golden Mean* preach neo-Stoicism. And I find plausible his novel interpretation of the prose pamphlet *Honor Triumphant* as satire, ridiculing by means of overstatement and deliberately inept illustration the excesses of pseudo-Platonism.

My principal disagreement with Mr. Stavig concerns the extent of "the traditional moral order" in Ford's plays. In my opinion, he finds too much. One of the book's main points, sometimes stated and often implied, is that Ford undercuts his tragic protagonists (Giovanni in *'Tis Pity*, Fernando in *Love's Sacrifice*, Ithocles in *The Broken Heart*, and Warbeck in *Perkin Warbeck*) by satirically portraying them as "the rationalizing fool," a term coined by Mr. Stavig. No audience can take Giovanni seriously, for instance, because "he transforms himself into a grotesque and almost ludicrous figure who elicits our shock and at times amusement at his arguments" (p. 96). To buttress this position, the author in his early chapters has set up several premises: Ford is capable of subtle satire (as in *Honor Triumphant*), supports traditional morality (as in all of his non-dramatic works), and writes for a Caroline audience much more idealistic, much less cynical, than is generally supposed. Regarding the last premise, Mr. Stavig argues that Jacobean pessimism and Stuart decadence have

been exaggerated and, in addition, that most of the Cavalier plays written for Queen Henrietta Maria's coterie staunchly support Platonism.

Mr. Stavig's view of Fordian tragedy is provocative, and the premises he marshals on its behalf can be defended. The plays themselves, however, would seem to challenge his thesis. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, while not condoning incest, presents Giovanni more sympathetically than he indicates. If Ford intends us to see Giovanni as a "rationalizing fool," why does he expend so much effort in alienating us from Giovanni's antagonist, the cuckolded Soranzo? Before the violent final scene, Soranzo has seduced, then abandoned Hippolita, dragged Annabella by the hair, and prepared a death-trap for Giovanni; Soranzo's confidant, Vasques, has added to our hostility by his brutal treatment of the servant Putana. Thus, when Giovanni defiantly accepts Vasques' invitation to the deadly banquet, we side with Giovanni in his fatal fight with Soranzo. Mr. Stavig also maintains that Giovanni's arguments with Friar Bonaventura about incest make him ludicrous. But this is debatable, for in the play the Church's concept of justice, as practiced by both a cardinal and the friar himself, is far from adequate. In short, whereas Mr. Stavig sees Ford espousing traditional morality and belittling Giovanni, I see the playwright inducing a double, or paradoxical, view that depicts the folly of incest but is compassionate towards those involved. I differ similarly with him about *Perkin Warbeck*. He states that the audience must decide whether Warbeck, in falsely claiming the English throne, is hypocritical or demented, and that the latter judgment is unavoidable (p. 183). My interpretation is more favorable to Warbeck, for again I find the dramatist resorting to paradox: the protagonist is self-deluded and politically incompetent yet personally courageous and admirable. Traditional moral order certainly is supported, especially in Ford's characterization of Henry VII, but not to the extent of denigrating Warbeck.

Nor do I share Mr. Stavig's view of *Love's Sacrifice*. He asserts that its three principals (Fernando, Bianca, and the Duke of Pavia) are rationalizing fools since they hold "improper views of love" and concludes, "The satiric impulse dominates, and the audience would probably have come away from the play as much amused by the foolishness of love as appalled by the tragedy of it" (p. 122). My interpretation of *Love's Sacrifice* is quite different, and is stated at length in a forthcoming book on the playwright. Briefly, my thesis holds that illicit sexual intercourse (*lust*, with this meaning, is the drama's key word) constitutes the one unforgivable sin in Ford's Pavia. Bianca's husband, the duke, erroneously believes that she and Fernando are guilty of "lust," so kills her; when he learns that they are not, remorse drives him to suicide. Herein, I believe, lies the tragedy. One possible objection to this view concerns its emphasis on Bianca's technical chastity; after all, the duke discovers his wife and Fernando embracing. My answer would be, simply, that in the world of *Love's Sacrifice* only "lust" justifies homicide, for all personae consistently accept such a code. Furthermore, unlike Mr. Stavig, I do not think that Queen Henrietta Maria's coterie would have responded with "amused superiority"; chiefly because of its very interest in and familiarity with various forms of Platonism, the group would have been much more receptive to and less puzzled by the play's unusual moral code than are twentieth-century readers.

DONALD K. ANDERSON, JR.

University of Missouri

Hart Crane: An Introduction to the Poetry by Herbert A. Leibowitz. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968. Pp. xii + 308. $7.50.

During the past year, within a broader interest in the literature of the thirties, a growing effort has developed in Hart Crane criticism to turn itself into a major industry. Numerous articles in magazines, full-length critical studies by R. W. B. Lewis and Herbert A. Leibowitz, a catalogue of Crane material by Kenneth A. Lohf, and incessant buzzings of the imminent arrival of John Unterecker's long-promised critical biography and of a new edition of the selected letters have proved enough indication for those purveyors of the market to sense that the time may be right to buy low and wait for the coming boom. Certainly, over the years, Crane stock has proved a durable, though not a high-yield investment. Books by Philip Horton (1937), Brom Weber (1948), H. D. Rowe (1955), L. S. Dembo (1960), Samuel Hazo (1963), Vincent Quinn (1963), Monroe K. Spears (1965), and Alan Trachtenberg (1965) stand as evidence of Crane's appeal. Nevertheless, the objections raised earlier in Crane's career still obtain and may cause the more conservative stockbuyer to think twice before investing.

These early objections to Crane by critics like R. P. Blackmur, Yvor Winters, and Allen Tate concern his Romanticism and his idealism—as Romanticism and idealism in general and as his specific brands of both; and, although it is fashionable at the moment to play down these critics, it is dangerous to discount out-of-hand what they have to say. Their objections are generally to Crane's views which accepted reason as the source of all evil, the automatic man as a mystic, and any change as progress. Such views tended toward a loss of ego rather than a projection of it. In these critics' work, ego, as a matter of course, tends to take priority, usually in the form of will, whereas in Crane's writing, ego gives up its priority to sensuality as man dissolves his will in sensual perceptions. As Winters points out, carried to its logical conclusion, this leads to suicide and insanity, and the image of the American Ideal which, in the absence of vision, it projects is certainly sensual excitement rather than an archetype of futurity. There is no hero, no pius Aeneas nor cosmopolitan man embracing contradictions here to rescue our self projections from the process of dissolutions into already realized artifacts.

Complicating these objections—often part of the same feeling—is an unstated objection to Crane, a rejection of the notion that a homosexual can speak for America. Aren't Crane's confusions (his refusal to formulate clearly a vision) the confusions of a homosexual (a refusal like his life to accept himself finally for that), a failure to transform these tendencies into an archetype? Wasn't Crane's real failure a failure to understand that archetypes come from life and past literature and not spontaneously from imagination? One feels that he would have fared much better had he drawn the mantle of Whitman about him more as Vergil drew about him the mantle of previous poets and poems. But, perhaps, too, only in American criticism are these prudish questions ever asked, for they are asked also of Whitman, who seems indisputably major. No one, for example, in art criticism asks if Michelangelo's homosexuality is a problem in the Sistine Chapel, or, in French criticism, if Arthur Rimbaud's homosexuality diminishes his poetry. If the artist is good or intense enough, these matters are minor, for as Samuel Johnson remarked long ago of Shakespeare's characters, at moments

of emotional intensity all people speak alike. Yet, a tendency in criticism today to make the artwork the artist allows questions to be asked which should not obtain. I mention this, not because I want to scandalize anyone into accepting Crane, but simply because criticism has tended to make out of Crane a shadow figure, an echo of Fedallah whom one cannot bargain with, for even the most innocent-seeming bargains a critic might make have in them seeds of a destruction like Ahab's.

Even when these objections are not stated overtly, they invade the rhetoric: Crane is a "seductive" poet, etc.; and even those who try to redeem him do so by the same rhetoric of enticement—"dazzling," "inspiring," "prophetic," "transforming." The need for such a rhetoric by critics who have no intention of promoting homosexuality suggests something deeper—that perhaps only through some reconciliation with her shadow figures can America attain her cultural fulfillment. This last explains a kind of urgency in those favorably disposed to Crane to overstate his case and overlook his faults. It also explains the unreasoned repressiveness of his detractors. In either case, despite whatever attempts at depicting his pedestrian upbringing, his job disappointments, his friendships, etc., the rhetoric belies Crane's humanity for a concept of Crane as the "good" or "evil" magus, the superhuman planner of the epic to direct or pervert the American myth in "The Bridge." In that failure of grasping the humanity of Crane, the criticism has failed to grasp the humanity of the inconsistencies inherent in the poetic personal.

Unfortunately in Leibowitz's study, he does not come to grips sufficiently with these larger problems before he tackles the smaller ones. His book divides into two parts, the first five chapters dealing with the relationship of Crane to his poetry and the remaining five chapters with stylistic analyses. In the opening half, a lateral sliding from biography to biographical criticism to *explication de texte* to generic criticism forestalls a going deeply into the subject. In this half a certain fuzziness of style and thought adversely complements the fuzziness of Crane's thought and style, and it extends to both Leibowitz's perception and his expression. So, for example, when critics complain of Crane's rhetorical faults (his confused depiction of the Ideal, not his pursuit of it), Leibowitz counters their objections with an irrelevant philosophical argument (an "unseen power" exists beyond the material, something few Crane detractors would take issue with); and when they argue against a Cusanian philosophical position which insists that the Ideal can only be apprehended in matter, he responds in Ionesco fashion again in terms of an optimistic view of life which he had been willing to play down in the opening pages—though to his credit he admitted there "a closeness to life." Likewise, in matters of rhetoric, he fails to bring his writing into organization and coherence and to develop himself a clear image of the poet to bring his parts into line. To obscure both failings, he peppers his prose with language like "dazzling," "bustling," "jaunty," "bizarre," etc.

The fuzziness is unfortunate because when Leibowitz gets to the matters of diction, imagery, and poetic forms the book occasions mildly perceptive and graceful statements (as there are in Crane's own writing and in keeping with what E. M. Forster once called "pseudo-scholarship"). Yet, before one condemn him too harshly for these faults—which, alas, obtain to Lewis and to Crane criticism in general, I should like to suggest to any would-be investor that the

real problem in Hart Crane criticism is not the poetry which can be catalogued and defined, but either vividness (an inability to come to clear conclusions about the "message" of Crane) or ambiguity (an attempt to disguise a vividly-realized "message" in order to make it more palatable to an audience predisposed to reject it), and that before any new investments are made in the stock, the investor look first carefully into his willingness to plumb these matters.

JEROME MAZZARO

State University of New York at Buffalo

Two Concepts of Allegory: A Study of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" and the Logic of Allegorical Expression by A. D. Nuttall. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967. Pp. xiv + 175. $7.00.

Allegory means what it has always meant, Nuttall assures us at the end of his second chapter: "It seems better, on the whole, to define allegory, modestly and loosely, as a described set of things in narrative sequence standing for a different set of things in temporal or paratemporal sequences; in short, a complex narrative metaphor. Having said so much, we can allow with equanimity that allegory is the instrument *par excellence* of the metaphysician, that de Lorris is no less an allegorist in the moments of mysteriously intimate realism than he is anywhere else, and that what the world has always called allegories are, after all, allegories" (p. 48).

Agreeing with the traditional view that allegory "says one thing and means another," Nuttall is neither concerned with a general theory, as Northrop Frye, nor with structural analysis of allegorical elements in order to investigate, as does Angus Fletcher, the "essence of the mode." His major point is that allegory and metaphysics are in practice closely allied; and he therefore takes issue with C. S. Lewis for making a division between allegory and sacramentalism, and with Erich Auerbach for being "too rigid in his definition of the practical scope of *figura*" (p. 26). Arguing against the critical practice of setting allegory in opposition to transcendentalism, Nuttall maintains that "allegory was, in fact, a very frequent medium for the expression of transcendentalist metaphysics" (p. 152).

The first chapter briefly reviews a few examples of allegoristic *Tempest* criticism of the last century to show an affinity between allegory and metaphysics; such a connection, Nuttall implies, gives him license to attack C. S. Lewis and Erich Auerbach for separating the two. But it is disconcerting to be asked to put great faith in the logic of a methodology that aims at critical guilt by association. Even if Nuttall is right in showing in Chapter One that Edward R. Russell's proposal (1876) that Prospero is akin to God is "too bold to be plausible" (p. 9), and that the selections from allegoristic criticism are silly, must it necessarily follow in Chapter Two that C. S. Lewis and Erich Auerbach are equally culpable?

To support the view that allegory is a metaphysical expression in which image and concept blend to present multiple meanings and metaphysical associations,

Nuttall traces in his third chapter–"The Psychological Basis"–the confusion of concept and image, and postulates the existence of what he calls "non-specific imagery" that appropriately describes mental phenomena. His explanation follows: "This chapter, as its heading indicates, was designed to supply a psychological basis for the mysterious thing-quality (the 'instantially viewed universal') which emerged from Chapters I and II. I have argued that this entity can enjoy a logically spurious existence as long as confusion of concept and image prevails. Grant me this confusion and I can provide in the 'non-specified image' something which can be thought of as general and at the same time envisaged as a mysterious individual; in Plato or in allegory, Pride itself is proud: in Price's psychology, the mental image Yellow is itself yellow" (pp. 71-72).

It is clear from these quotations that the style of the book does not help to clarify positions which are themselves unclear. To talk about abstractions without getting tangled in complexities is often an impossibility, but language need not resemble parody that will someday find its place in an *Allegory Perplex*. The phrasing in Nuttall's third chapter, "The Psychological Basis," is a fine example of its kind. "I shall," he writes, "be arguing in this chapter for a connexion between the concretely instantialized, self-predicable universal and mental imagery, not because a mental image can ever *be* a universal, but because they are easily confused" (p. 50). (One guesses that the author anticipated a confused reader, for he offers the following footnote as illumination: "Any universal which is regarded as an instance of itself will count as 'self-predicable.' Thus, if we suppose that pride is something which is itself, very, very proud, we make pride itself an instance of pride, and by the same token we predicate pride of pride.") And his next paragraph continues in the same way: "The concept in question is marked by a quality of spurious sensuousness, a density as of material objects, which directs our attention to the imagination."

It becomes clear in the last chapter, which discusses *The Tempest*, that Nuttall's arguments are meant to justify the intuitive critic who is unable or unwilling to demonstrate conclusions but believes, nevertheless, that they are essentially true. This reviewer is led to assume that Nuttall would readily assent to the dictum, "I feel; therefore, it is." He seems to presume that because he reasons in a particular way, Shakespeare must have reasoned in the same way. His summary of *The Tempest*, he writes, "was of course selective. It may be as well to proclaim here the principle of selection involved. I was concerned to show Shakespeare's preoccupation, throughout the play, with the more nearly subliminal aspects of perception. It is as if Shakespeare himself became concerned, as I was in the third and fourth chapters of this book, to retreat into the preconceptual area of the mind. The chapters and the play have, in a sense, very similar subject-matter" (p. 157).

By what process does Nuttall put himself in touch with "the preconceptual area of the mind"? Instead of Jung's racial unconscious, we find that a cultural unconscious is the key to most things. In the fourth chapter, titled "The Use of the Imagination in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," he argues that the formal way of Elizabethan poetry reflects a formal manner of imagining reality. Because imagination was schooled in Ignatian spiritual exercises and in "the art of memory," it gave to artists and the public a common fund of images and symbols. "All the spurious-seeming properties of 'density,' instantiality, spatial characteristics, and so on, we have laid at the door of the imagination. . . .

When we suggest that the spectators in Ludlow Castle in 1634 seemed to see the form of Alice Egerton brightening into the Form of Chastity itself, we suggest that this curious excited configuration was made possible by the availability of a shared mental world of instantialized universals; and that this world was, once more, the work of the usurping imagination" (p. 106).

Nuttall feels that his own subliminal feelings are valid for the art and literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because he feels himself attuned to the imagination of the times. *The Tempest*, he argues, deals subliminally with what its audience feels, and since he is attuned to what an audience would feel, it follows that he is attuned to what the play is all about. Just as Pride itself is proud, the experience of characters within Shakespeare's play is the same as that produced in the audience by the play. We are asked to believe that *The Tempest* is "for much of its length, *about* people configurating, imagining without actualizing, and so on. . . . in *The Tempest* the prominence given to the ambiguous lower reaches of our conceptual and perceptual apparatus infects all ontological dogmatism with uncertainty. Shakespeare repeatedly restricts his characters to the primitive stages of perception in their apprehension of the island and its denizens. In this way he builds up a sense of a shimmering multiplicity of levels, which, together with the gratuitous operations of the supernatural, produce in the audience a state of primitive apprehension similar to that in which the characters find themselves" (p. 157).

Many readers will not share Nuttall's feelings about *The Tempest*. They will question his intuition that "It is overwhelmingly probable that Shakespeare's love for Mr. W. H. was at least partially sexual" (p. 127), and that "Shakespeare may well have found himself in the uncomfortable position which frequently assails homosexuals or quasi-homosexuals, forced to oscillate between manly affection and erotic ungovernable passion" (p. 127). They will resent a criticism which presents little detailed analysis but simply recounts a man's tastes and views as though they were self-validating. While we may be happy to accept the intuitions of artists and writers, the professional critic owes his reader a little more than assertion. When Nuttall says, "There must, I feel, be a connexion, though I am not able to expound it, between Moore's attribution of unanalysability to 'good' and Shakespeare's 'deification' of love" (p. 132), many readers will question the validity of such a feeling in literary analysis. They will question the value of private musings whose public exposure serves no purpose, as when Nuttall writes: "Whether there is a real connexion between the ideas of Shakespeare, Keats and Anselm, I do not know. I have an intuition that there is, but I cannot pretend to elucidate it satisfactorily" (p. 134).

"Is *The Tempest* allegorical?" Nuttall asks at the end of his work. "If I have done my work properly," he replies, "the question should have shrunk in importance. The principal subject of this book has been to show that allegorical poetry is more curiously and intimately related to life than was allowed by the petrifying formula of C. S. Lewis" (p. 119). In terms of this book the question may have become irrelevant rather than less important, for having been led up a mountain of preliminaries to view *The Tempest*, we find that we stand on a molehill. In the end, our view has to be supplied for us because our guide has not given us sufficient information and analysis to see things for ourselves, and Nuttall concedes: "I am willing to give a few arbitrary rulings" (p. 159). The last of these is that "the suggestiveness of *The Tempest* is metaphysical

in tendency, and the indeterminate *concepts* adumbrated do have the logical oddity which we have followed through from the first chapter. Love *is* conceived as a supernatural force, and any number of protestations of metaphor and apologetic inverted commas cannot do away with the fact that a sort of deification, and therefore *a fortiori* reification has taken place" (p. 160). My intuition tells me that no matter what flaw there may be in C. S. Lewis' theory of allegory, his study of medieval tradition in *The Allegory of Love* brings us closer to the literary experience than Nuttall's intuitions.

WILLIAM ROSEN

The University of Connecticut

Civil Disobedience and Moral Law in Nineteenth-Century American Philosophy by Edward H. Madden. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968. Pp. 214. $7.50.

Historians and philosophers both are obliged to ascertain what if any connections there are between general philosophical positions and attitudes toward social reform, and this is the task assumed by Professor Edward Madden in his study of a group of American thinkers often neglected by philosophers (who think their philosophical writings relatively derivative and inconsequential) and historians of ideas (who find their writings too technical). His findings call for a reinterpretation of the academic tradition in American thought.

Misleading though it probably is to speak of an "academic tradition" in American philosophy, I do so in order to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Madden's title disguises the somewhat diffuse character of his book while obscuring one of its most interesting features. "Civil disobedience" is an issue only in the first two thirds of the study, when the anti-slavery movement and abolitionism presented problems for Protestant educators and transcendentalists alike. In the last section on Chauncey Wright and Charles Eliot Norton, Darwinism is a comparable center of attention. Throughout the book, utilitarianism in a variety of versions is the theory which complicates issues in ethical and social thought for minds as diverse as Francis Wayland, James B. Thayer, and Charles Eliot Norton. The strength of Mr. Madden's study lies in his careful attention to the interactions among all these philosophical and social positions and to the reforming activities engaged in by the philosophers. Their activities constitute "parables for our own times," Madden insists, and enable him to underscore at times the wisdom of moderate reform within the conservative tradition that he discusses from time to time, notably in his final chapter.

That final chapter is entitled "The Conservative Tradition" and while the chapter is confined to the single case of Charles Eliot Norton, it brings to the fore the question of the essential conservatism of the group whom Madden discusses and the question of what nexus of ideas, attitudes, or affiliations binds the group together. He nowhere suggests that they constitute one or more "schools" in philosophy. Indeed he takes pains to elucidate the considerable range of opinion and activity among them, from Wayland's Christian theism to Norton's

later scepticism and utilitarianism, and to differentiate between the ethical positions of thinkers who share the same intellectual origins or combat the same antagonists. A pronounced interest in historical transitions is displayed when Madden traces the decline of reformist zeal at Oberlin after the Civil War, or when he insists on the basic changes or reversals in social ethics experienced by George William Curtis in the 1850's and by Norton under the impact of Chauncey Wright. "Tradition" seems the apt term for what Madden is examining, but his critical apparatus does not enable him to define one or to account fully enough for the interaction of ideas and social reform within the traditions he describes.

He begins by delineating the "Academic Orthodoxy" or "new orthodoxy" which dominated the newer colleges, notably Oberlin, that were founded as the "liberal thrust of Protestant Christianity" (responsive eventually to the "intuitionist" theories that became ascendent among continental philosophers, Unitarians, and transcendentalists) challenged the older common-sense Scottish philosophy and the strict Calvinists entrenched in such bastions as Princeton. Much of the first and best half of Mr. Madden's book is devoted to the ethical positions and anti-slavery activities of the Oberlin presidents. The differentiations he makes between the ethical stands taken by Asa Mahan, Charles Finney, and James Fairchild are placed in the context of Oberlin history, national politics in the pre-Civil-War decades, and such concrete events as the flight of fugitive slaves and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. What Madden means by Oberlin's "middle-ground" reformist tradition, founded on "deliberate dedication" rather than "playfulness or enthusiasm," is made clear; its decline when the relatively cautious Fairchild replaces Mahan as President is understandable within the context of firm but clearly moderate, "militant" but "solid," anti-slavery reform that characterized the Oberlin community.

Yet there is an unanswered question that becomes more troublesome when Madden moves out of the institutional context provided by the Oberlin community. What connection is there between the structure of a philosopher's ethical position and his attitude toward reform, when the utilitarian theory that was the basis of social reform for Bentham and Mill was joined in Fairchild's case to a distinctly conservative social ethic? One may conclude, as Madden does in his fifth chapter, that "there is little or no connection between concepts of moral law and commitments on specific moral issues." He must then perforce seek the coherence of authors' careers in the dynamics of social and historical process, which may include their theories but cannot be expected to be governed by those theories. Some such necessity apparently leads Madden to raise historical questions more often in the later sections of his book, but his historical method is not adequate to the task he sets for himself.

For instance, his chapter on transcendentalism (the second important current in nineteenth-century moral philosophy) makes the familiar distinctions between Emerson's scepticism about social reform, Thoreau's more radical "anarchism," and Theodore Parker's militant abolitionism, in the context of the basic tenets of their transcendentalism. But his discussion is not full enough to take account of the impact on Emerson and Thoreau of the same John Brown raid and other historical incidents of the 1850's whose importance he recognized in discussing the Oberlin group. He insists that a "commitment to civil disobedience follows directly from the transcendental notion of the Higher Law," and declares tenta-

tively that "Some philosophies, perhaps, carry stronger motivations to action than others," yet he notes that even such activist "philosophies, like any others, can be accepted and yet remain inoperative . . . in a person's life." In George William Curtis Mr. Madden can rightly find a transcendentalist in whom the ethical imperatives of his position, enforced by the sentiments of his wife's family, were strong enough to give firm sanction to moderate anti-slavery activities (non-violent, passively evading the Fugitive Slave law but refusing to defy it outright, sharply differentiating his own strategy of "piecemeal" reform from the militancy of Wendell Phillips). But Mr. Madden has no way of explaining why in Curtis the imperatives of transcendentalism were operative by so much and no more.

It does not clarify the issue or solve the question of Curtis's role in history to invoke the "conflict school" of historians (Charles Beard, Turner, and Parrington) who mistakenly emphasize political ideologies and discount the reality of the moral issues which Curtis and Madden find to be generative in history, or the "consensus school" of more recent historians (including Boorstin) whose "anti-intellectualism" (as Madden unfairly brands it) discounts moral systems and conflict almost entirely. For such historical generalizations (whatever their validity in the writings of the historians themselves) are not brought analytically to bear on the details of Curtis's life or the development of his moral and social philosophy in their actual historical context.

Likewise Mr. Madden's careful differentiation between Norton's early "Burkean" views and the social criticism founded on his later agnosticism and utilitarianism, illuminating and important though his findings are, is marred by his attempt to dismiss the significance of Norton's gentility and to remove him from the conservative tradition where Clinton Rossiter has rightly placed him. The study of American conservatism can profit from the distinctions and necessary qualifications which Mr. Madden's study of Chauncey Wright and Norton brings to light. But the complexities of that conservative tradition—the constraining pressure of economic and academic realities on ideas and philosophical systems—and the place within it of a liberally inclined but almost immobilized man of letters—call for a method more genuinely historical than the philosophical analysis that Mr. Madden provides.

LAURENCE B. HOLLAND

Princeton University

The Novels of Anthony Powell by Robert K. Morris. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968. Pp. xi + 252. $2.95.

Just in the nick of time Robert K. Morris' book, *The Novels of Anthony Powell*, has appeared. Looking on as Nick Jenkins, the narrator, and his companions perform the rather intricate patterns in *A Dance to the Music of Time*, readers have come to the point at which they must ask: "Now where does that disastrous party take place? The one at which Nick meets Sunny Farebrother for the first time. Is it *A Question of Upbringing? A Buyer's Market?* With more than two hundred characters—as Morris numbers them—who drop in and out of the individual novels and serve as items of conversation in still others,

keeping track of the social milieu which informs a particular novel and the events occurring within it becomes more difficult than charting the steady course of Mrs. Proudie of Barsetshire. The very fact that the reader cannot precisely recall says something about Powell's enormous skill in creating his world and characters. The novels, taken together, become a social fabric with no revealing seams or patches. If Morris does nothing else in this study, he sets us all straight again.

The fact is, however, he does a good deal more. Frequently eclipsed by the later series, the earlier novels of the pre-war period are judiciously re-evaluated. Morris calls attention to Powell's devastating and ironic eye as he probes the imbroglio of the twenties and thirties. Comparing him favorably with Waugh and Huxley as a social satirist, Morris does not seem to sufficiently emphasize the great difference in tone and attitude of Powell when compared with his contemporaries. The vitriolic cynicism of Huxley's calvinistic vision is not really to be found in any of Powell's early work: even *Agents and Patients* (1936) and *Afternoon Men* (1931) which are, perhaps, the most astringent of all. A different tone, to the contrary, prevails. The irony of life itself and the peculiar, erratic sense of humor which must be a singular attribute of the Creator, produces a compassionate note in Powell like that of a Jane Austen writing in a more mordant time and place.

One is reminded of a scene in *Afternoon Men* in which Fotheringham, totally drunk and almost totally unappealing as a personality, launches a paean in praise of friendship before the benumbed and captive, Atwater. Unable to "connect" (as Forster calls it in *Howards End*) with those about him, except in the most superficial and enervating way, he proclaims that "when love has come to mean the most boring form of lust, when power means the most useless pots of money, when fame means the vulgarist sort of publicity," *etc., etc.*, and then, concludes that

> 'it is then, and only then, that we shall realise fully, that we shall realise in its entirety, that we shall in short come to know with any degree of accuracy —What was I saying? I seem to have lost the thread.'
>
> 'Friendship'
>
> 'That was it, of course. I'm sorry. That we shall realise what friendship means to each one of us and all of us, and how it was that, and that only, that made it all worth while.'
>
> 'Made what worth while?'

Morris, using the excerpt, deletes that awful pause and the subsequent rejoinder of his listener which so clearly enunciates, despite the general hilarity of the scene, the underlying and pervasive pathos. Behind the public school glibness of his torturous delivery, lies a sensitivity and an almost frantic yearning for something which will give meaning to life. That is of the best of Powell's artistry.

From the early books, Morris does note the emergence of a melodic line of themes and dramatic tensions which come to an orchestrated perfection under the mature hand of Powell in the later sequence. One such theme, he maintains, is the perpetual struggle between men whose dominant prehension of the order of things is sensual and imaginative in opposition to those who are dominated by a concentrated will and, sometimes, obsessively dominating ideas. This chronic

dualism of human society found throughout history, Morris feels, is particularly agonizing in the twentieth century. The man of imagination or the sensualist finds little room, one suspects, in a period energized by "isms," and spawning material splendors and squalors with indifferent fury.

Still another theme is that of power: its leverage, its use, and its justifications. Tentatively explored in *Agents and Patients* particularly (Are there agents and patients 'etherized upon a table'?—just as there are murderers and murderees, as Huxley would say?), the later novels expand this exploration as Nick Jenkins tries to define power and find a proper balance in a decaying social order.

In the chapter which links his analysis of the earlier works with those of *A Dance to the Music of Time*, Morris considers in some detail the use of the central image of the sequence. Developed through contrast, he pointedly illustrates that Powell's use of the time image differs significantly from the time fragmentation produced by the stream-of-consciousness technique of Joyce and Faulkner; nor is it similar to Proust's "Bergsonian mysticism" which supports an implicit *a priori* that claims "past actions are sustained in the present and the present is interpretable only in terms of the past." Character is seen, as Morris interprets Proust, as being permanently fixated on the past with little hope of escape even under the excruciating pressures of experience.

Powell's use of time is classical, he asserts, which "enables him to focus on the essential aim of the novels sequence: to play changing sensibilities against the continuum of human history." The plot, one might add, has a beginning, a middle, and an end; although the characters, acting out their own hesitant choreography may be quite unaware of the ultimate pattern of their lives, either as goal or achievement. But what of the larger and grander dance of humanity which we call history? Powell seems to be making an oblique move toward a consideration of that theme in *The Kindly Ones*.

Although it is dangerous to speculate on the uncompleted series, as Morris recognizes, he does think that no *eschaton* will neatly embrace the completed work: rather the finale will be more in the nature of a coda in which the notes, having come to a momentary rest, will reverberate with overtones anticipating other harmonies, other dissonances. There is really no end to the music of time.

MAUREEN W. MILLS

Central Michigan University