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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques* by Victor Brombert. Princeton University Press, 1966. Pp. 301. \$7.50.

Flaubert, lately, has been the object of much attention in France, diverse in kind. Sartre, it is a matter of common knowledge, is writing a book on Flaubert, parts of which have been published; the new novelists, more particularly Nathalie Sarraute, have claimed him as a precursor; the so-called "new critics," Professors Poulet, Richard and Rousset have scrutinized his work thematically, in its imagery and structure. In the tradition of the literary historian Jean Bruneau has studied his early unpublished works, and Geneviève Bollème "the lesson" to be derived from a careful reading of his *Correspondance*. One of the major sources of investigation and new critical points of view has indeed been the thirteen volume *Correspondance*, the last four volumes of which were published in 1956 after a twenty-year interval. Another rich mine has been the increasing availability of hitherto unpublished notes, drafts and early works, challenging many critical clichés.

But something else seems to be in question, the radical re-orientation of contemporary French critical opinion regarding Flaubert, as marked as is the case with Racine. In a sense Racine and Flaubert are the two writers who have become the touchstones proving the limitations of old critical appraisals, the need and validity of the new, although the re-appraisals of Flaubert have not generated the heated controversies that have arisen around Racine. It is essentially because both writers had an acute awareness of literary creation as a conscious art and manipulation of language and, to use Flaubert's words, had chosen to remain like God in His creation, invisible in their works, that they have proved so challenging. For whatever the direction of the investigation, what the recent criticism in France seeks to establish and define is the presence of the writer as immanent in the stylistic texture of his writing: topic, imagery, theme, structure, the whole verbal surface of the work, are the key to the ultimate significance of the work for both reader and writer.

As Professor Frohock lately remarked, "each new development in literature imposes an obligation on criticism to review the study of older literature in the light of this newest revelation of what literature can contain."<sup>1</sup> The "new novel" has turned critical attention toward the technical problems of novel-writing and the relation between the choices the writer makes and his point of view, Sartre would say his "situation." It is not surprising then that Mr. Brombert should discern in Flaubert's writing, through a study of creative processes and techniques, the "tragic motifs" of our contemporary writers. It is within this framework of renewal that Victor Brombert's study of Flaubert is set. But it should not be forgotten, as Mr. Brombert points out, that before the clichés that made of Flaubert the proponent of anesthetic of quasi-clinical realism and impersonality became current, contemporaries such as Baudelaire had seen the work in a quite different light. Perhaps the first study in depth that prepared

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Frohock, *Style and Temper, Studies in French Fiction, 1925-1960*. Harvard University Press, 1967.

the terrain for studies of "theme and techniques" such as Mr. Brombert's was D. L. Demorest's seminal study of imagery and symbol in Flaubert's work.<sup>2</sup> The very diversity of critical points of view that since then have evolved, the new materials available make the kind of approach Mr. Brombert undertook—both a synthesis and a "mise au point"—particularly useful. The thematic analysis, though it rests on a study of techniques also draws on other sources—cultural trends, biography, and, of course, the *Correspondance*.

The book, as Mr. Brombert tells us, "grew out of a series of Christian Gauss seminars" given at Princeton. It consists therefore, after a brilliant initial analysis of Flaubert's literary temperament, essentially in a succession of eight separate studies centered each on one specific work studied chronologically. There are, in the pattern adopted, certain disadvantages: some repetition is almost inevitable. But more important, the analysis in each case centers on a single theme proposed as the generative theme of the work: *Madame Bovary*: The Tragedy of Dreams; *Salammô*: The Epic of Immobility; *L'Éducation Sentimentale*: Profanation and the Permanence of Dreams, etc. Of necessity, these could be challenged and others proposed in their stead, based on an equally careful selection and linguistic analysis of other passages. This would not in any sense invalidate Mr. Brombert's work. For what he has wanted to establish is, rather, the presence of Flaubert himself, the "subconscious, symbolic auto-biography" that underlies the novels, the personal obsessions, the tragic intellectual awareness, the fundamental distrust of language, yet the eminently "poetic" transformation of experience through that language.

The figure of Flaubert then dominates the book, although along the way we get many insights into the novels themselves. Each chapter concentrates on one psychological paradox, and its "dialectic" as apparent in Flaubert's personality and work. In the "Epilogue," these are drawn together in an overall portrait of the man seen essentially as "a splendid crepuscular figure," a late Romantic standing "at the threshold of modern literature, as a direct link between Romanticism and our own visions of reality." What is more interesting than the rather expected conclusion is the manner in which it is reached, the criteria brought forward, the vigor of the analysis. Any psychological reconstruction of the creative personality such as Sartre favors is a matter for debate, speculative in nature, beyond objective control, at best plausible, and, in the eyes of the reviewer at least, of dubious value. The attempt to define a literary temperament is more fertile, less open to subjective distortions. Mr. Brombert's understanding of Flaubert is characteristically generous, humanly imaginative and his book is rich in insights. One would wish, however, that the predominantly oral quality of the style had been rather more stringently edited out. There are passages in the book when the reader's attention is diverted by certain oral mannerisms: a proliferation of "very"s, of "this is" sometimes half a dozen to a single page—and other such stylistic gallicisms. But the over-all development is vivid, sparkling and convincingly brings to light a Flaubert many have sensed beneath the limited bourgeois "hermit of Croisset," the painstaking artisan of letters still all too often described.

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<sup>2</sup> D. L. Demorest. *L'Expression figurée et symbolique dans l'oeuvre de Gustave Flaubert*. Paris, 1931.

*The Portraits of Alexander Pope* by William Kurtz Wimsatt. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965. Pp. xxxiii + 391, illustrated. \$20.00.

In the Augustan period writers, painters, sculptors, architects, landscape gardeners, and mere gentlemen were all very conscious of each other, and each profited from what the other could contribute. As trade expanded at home and on the seas and economic conditions improved, houses were being built or re-built and estates laid out all over the country, and an influx of artists from the Continent arrived to assist with the transformation. Literature like the mansions of the great abundantly entertained the world with pictures—portraits of pretty ladies, great generals, and comical country types, vistas of rivers with woods hanging over the water, of remote blue hills or ancient college buildings, delicate conventionalized pastoral scenes or the wild storms of winter, the fire of London, Timon's pompous villa, the battle of Blenheim, the romantic savannas of America, a country churchyard at the end of day. Just as pictures on walls and ceilings and Hogarth's engraved prints told stories, so the new poems and novels could praise the gardens and mansions of a patron and refer the reader to Hogarth for help in visualizing characters and episodes. For Addison as for Johnson, "imagination" in a poet was the power to make one *see*. In reading eighteenth-century literature one may, if one likes, limit oneself to the strictly literary pleasures of diction, metrics, imagery, allusion, tensions of thought and feeling, and other technical contrivances. But how much more is added if one tries to see what Pope and Addison, Thomson and Fielding, Collins and Gray, Smollett and Boswell saw and wanted us to see. Professor Wimsatt's sumptuous volume, *The Portraits of Alexander Pope*, though not ostensibly intended to help us do precisely this, offers a delightful set of avenues to follow if one wishes to lose oneself in Augustan England.

Alexander Pope was the subject of more portraits probably than anyone else in this period—drawings, paintings, busts, medals, engravings—and in this beautifully produced volume the Yale Press illustrates about 200 of them, of which some 45 have never before been reproduced. Here we can see Pope rosy and bright at the age of seven, Pope in his fifties gaunt and strained, Pope in *deshabille* without hair or cap, Pope hooded like Chaucer, Pope exquisite in wig and ruffles for Lord Burlington, Pope in profile with hump, Pope asleep with mouth open, Pope on the edge of a large chair playing cards. It is a marvelous and fascinating record. The most compelling depictions are perhaps the whole series of oils and delicate drawings by Jonathan Richardson the elder along with the marble and terra cotta busts by Roubiliac revealing from all angles the sensitive, meaningful, sometimes haggard face of the poet.

The vast quantity of material is organized under the heading of the eleven principal portraitists—Jervas, Kneller, Richardson, Dahl, Rysbrack, William Kent, Lady Burlington, Roubiliac, Dassier, William Hoare, Van Loo, and the unidentified artist of the childhood painting. (Perhaps I should add to the list of artists Mr. Wimsatt himself, who was so sensibly bold as to add a nose of clay to the Rysbrack bust in the Stowe grounds before photographing it.) Then guided by a good visual memory Mr. Wimsatt has catalogued further according to about 70 original representations, distinguishing some 22 variants of one of Hoare's lost oils, 20 of the Van Loo (made familiar in mezzotint and engraving), and dozens from the Roubiliacs.

In addition to the catalogue Mr. Wimsatt's exact scholarship supplies important information about the occasions and dates of many of the originals, a history so far as possible of each, and any contemporary criticism. Because Pope, an amateur artist and landscape designer, maintained intimate friendly relationships with several of these artists, the biographies of the portraits become a piecemeal and very valuable supplement to any biography of the poet now in print. Jervas, Kneller, and especially Richardson and his son were a part of Pope's intellectual and literary and social existence; one must know them to know him well. Though William Hoare meant less to him, he belonged to Ralph Allen's circle in Bath where Pope was always welcome and seems to have been the only artist to have handed down to us a frank sketch of the poet's wretched body in full length. Mr. Wimsatt's sections on Richardson and Hoare add substantially to the value of the volume not only because they assemble material not easily available elsewhere but also because they show how pleasantly the interests and lives of writers, painters, and other gentlemen commingled in the Augustan period.

This rich volume ends appropriately in a fourteen-page index.

BENJAMIN BOYCE

*Validity in Interpretation*, by E. D. Hirsch. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967. Pp. xiv + 287. \$6.50.

This book will supply its readers with a theory of interpretation for verbal texts, and a set of scales to weigh versions. Although its aim is to be general, Professor Hirsch is a teacher of English, his own interests are obviously those of the scholar, and most of his examples are taken from poetry. A logician, whatever his bias, would have written a totally different book, particularly since Hirsch's understanding of formal logic is inadequate for his task. He has nevertheless read widely, and taken a good deal from the philosophers, especially Edmund Husserl, whose ideas at least have the advantage of being current. Professor Hirsch is an artful dodger; his walk is one-legged; and his strategy seems to be to over-emphasize each foot equally as he comes to it. I'd advise the reader not to pick nits too soon, for in the end the author gives their due to most sides, and his book forms a respectably solid square. *Validity in Interpretation* should become an important work. The burgeoning lit., crit., and language industries need it. Indeed, although the details of his argument are often wild, his general account is so sober and balanced, it should be to the critical community like a stone thrown among quarreling dogs. But those details . . . Example: Hirsch noticed that his students got the wrong handle on "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," and consequently came up with an incorrect interpretation. He writes (my italics): "This experience strongly suggested to me that an interpreter's preliminary generic conception of a text is *constitutive of everything* that he subsequently understands, and that this remains the case unless and until that generic conception is altered." (74) Single instances do not suggest such confident Universals to reasonable men. Professor Hirsch does not believe it anyhow. It's only the heat of the moment makes him warm.

I knew a man once like this book. He was mad by the hour but sane and serene by the day.

According to Hirsch, interpretation should be guided by the social principle of linguistic genres on the one hand, and the individual principle of authorial will on the other. *Our* aim as readers should be to discover what the author of a text meant, and *his* aim, as a writer, should be to communicate through his choice of these shared linguistic types or modes. Genres are determined by purposes, and there are general genres (the genre of poetry is one), and intrinsic genres, the narrower type that determines the boundaries of the utterance as a whole. Genres constitute a dismayingly heterogeneous group: odes, sonnets, commands, prayers, epics, and so on. Loose collections of traits define them, and they control our expectations as we read. Here is Hirsch concluding that the Freudian interpretation of *Hamlet* is invalid: "It does not correspond to the author's meaning; it is an implication that cannot be subsumed under the type of meaning that Shakespeare . . . willed. It is irrelevant that the play permits such an interpretation." (123) Genres may be shared types, but they must be willed by the author. It's on intention that Hirsch's stress falls most heavily, and he devotes the first part of his book to turning back the threat of the intentional fallacy and exposing clichés concerning the changing significance of a text, the author's lack of knowledge about his own meanings and intentions, and so on. Hirsch particularly wishes to deny what he calls "semantic autonomy" (although he allows a lot of it later when he discusses genres). Here he makes many shrewd and telling points. But "semantic autonomy" (in which we treat the text independently of the author and the author's will) is not a fact. It reflects an opinion about the genre of poetry and what the purposes of poetry *ought* to be. Again and again Hirsch makes it very plain that he has his own cliché. "The purpose of any utterance is, of course, to communicate meaning." (99) Poets write poems. They must want to say something. Let's be decent enough to try to find out what it is.

An emphasis on will, in language or ethics, is nearly always humane. It is a courtesy to an author not to be read by the letter, and the law's blows are softened in the same way. It is also a kindness to readers if writers consider them and their problems as they compose, just as it is pleasanter to live among people who don't require you always to take their word for the deed, and pave their streets with something more durable than intentions. Alas. It is a hard world. The runner who collapses ten yards from the tape meant to finish. He did not intend to do what he did. He did not sacrifice months in painful training so he could furrow his nose with cinders. Still, he gets no prize, and can't have won. In poetry, I think, only performance counts, and that is because poetry is not simple or ordinary utterances, any more than the miler's movements are ordinary running. Poetry is construction and creation, not transmission. Poems, in Professor Hirsch's terminology, have less meaning than significance. According to his own view, this genre change would alter our entire theory of interpretation. We might, for example, still reject the Freudian *Hamlet*, but now it would be because to give him an unconscious would be to treat him as a human, when all of us know he is only a created fiction on a stage.

WILLIAM H. GASS

*Purdue University*

*Ford Madox Ford and the "Transatlantic Review"* by Bernard J. Poli. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967. Pp. x + 179. \$5.50.

Browse at random in virtually any little mag published nearly anywhere at almost any time from the late nineties until the Second War, and you'll find names grand enough and works imposing enough to have conferred lifelong honor and riches—in any other sphere than literature—on the manager daring or willful enough to have served as sponsor. Until about five years ago scarcely anyone recalled who these sponsors were: their names remained alive, were either blessed or accursed, mainly in the minds of those whom they'd printed or turned away. Unless they themselves had made literary reputations, this was all the honor they had. Their magazines too, outside of a footnote, other than rank conferred and value ascribed in the useful but dated Hoffman, Allen and Ulrich book, or page of mention in the biography of a famous figure—their magazines, for all the fury these had formerly provoked, signified nothing. But if by chance you picked up a copy at bookstall or stack, you were astounded to discover an artifact of the most stirring kind, portentous for its roster of names, invaluable for its display of those false or antic starts, those ways taken or forsaken during that amazing half-century.

Within the last few years, however, the subject itself has become a leading sub-speciality of literary history. Disregard has been supplanted by the closest attention and the highest regard. Those back issues are now hot numbers—so highly treasured that a reprint series offers full files of virtually all titles. The little mag movement has been treated in an extended essay by Reed Whittemore who also organized a symposium on the matter at the Library of Congress. A similar symposium was held last summer (1966) in Salzburg. And of course there has been a string of studies of the most famous magazines—*The Dial*, *The Freeman*, *Hound & Horn*, *Masses*, *Smart Set*, *Twice A Year*—none of which succeeds in doing really well the two main tasks implicit in the composition of this kind of book. The work must present an account of the origins, aims and accomplishment of the magazine, an account whose accuracy cannot be faultless because records are sparse, memories are false, eyewitness testimony is prejudiced. Simultaneously, the work must catch and render the spirit of the thing. To accomplish these ends, the writer must master the historian's skills, fuse these with the biographer's, then bring to bear all the resourcefulness of literary theory and practical criticism as, exploiting the arts of narration, he recounts a story in which he is himself invisible, a sheerest presence.

Bernard Poli, unfortunately, has failed to avoid and has managed to compound most of the errors, lapses, mishaps of his predecessors. His failure is the more unfortunate in that his subject, Ford's management of the *Transatlantic Review* in Paris during 1924, is a set-piece of inquiry so tidy and cogent that Mr. Poli's book might have served as a model in the genre. For the *Transatlantic Review* exhibits, undisguised, all those tendencies which bring a little mag into being—particularly that vision, that romantic illusion which conceives of literary art as the highest accomplishment of mind, of mankind, of civilization itself. It exhibits, too, Ford's version of that impulse which sustains all such magazines, the utopist dream of perfect community. However freakish an "experimental" mag may be, however implausible or flimsy its credo, however erratic or short-lived its run, it comes into being in order to broadcast its version of the prin-

circle of communion and to fashion a band of communicants who will celebrate, in a fortnightly or monthly or quarterly ritual of paper and print, the creative life in art. Each issue rehearses apocalypse. And each number must affirm, without strain or sham, the illusion of work seen at just one remove from its own instant of origin, must offer the live object itself. It is an illusion which no cold book, not even the legendary one, *Ulysses*, which came to life in a little mag, can rival. When this illusion is lost the little mag is dead.

The *Transatlantic Review* had life of this kind truly—it was all the life it had. For it was created and run by a master illusionist, Ford, who in half-bumbling, half-canny disregard of French law, set up a non-existent French company; who may or may not have put up half the money (John Quinn, the American collector, Joyce's patron, was the other party though to what degree is unclear); who welcomed at mid-year as silent partner a man hustled up by Hemingway and improbably named Krebs Friend. (Although Mr. Poli does not suspect leg-pull I wonder if he has not missed a point: Krebs was Hemingway's name for a character in *In Our Time*. And since Mr. Friend and his consort seem to be in certain key matters indistinguishable from Ernest Walsh and Alice Moorhead who founded *This Quarter* at about the same time, I think Mr. Poli might have found this a profitable line of inquiry.)

Along with sleight of hand at economy and law, Ford improvised a dozen causes and generated a variety of communities which he hoped his review would foster. Like everyone else in the game, Ford's first cause was causelessness: his review would adhere to no credo, etc., but would print the best work available by those brilliant unknowns who would otherwise—and so on. Having deferred, according to convention, to the best literary manners of the day, Ford addressed a statement of program to A. E. Coppard, whom he anointed patron saint of his new paper. Coppard preferred money. Why Coppard? Poli says only that Ford admired Coppard's art. Improvising another illusion, Ford addressed similar letters to Hardy, Wells, Conrad, to whom he explained that the magazine would serve as a bridge of generations, theirs of the pre-war with that of the younger writers of post-war Europe, pioneers in the Republic of Letters, those Anglo-American exiles who had chosen France as their second country and thereby turned the fact of exile into a creed of art. In the heyday of expatriation, therefore, Ford hit on the idea most certain to sanction the delights of the café. And although his letters turned up no serious support, his review did manage to print all the interesting characters around the Rotonde and the Dôme—Robert McAlmon, Mina Loy, Mary Butts.

But the review itself came to virtually nothing, as Mr. Poli in the end is compelled to say. Having specialized in the life of the café, it transferred to print the work of a group whose personal temper and private history were vastly more exciting than its verse and fiction, a group whose genius was talk. The *Transatlantic Review* was exactly what *The Dial* was not, a clique paper. Mr. Poli remarks, in final appraisal, that it seems to have published an astonishing number of writers who had come from the American Midwest. This fact is scarcely astonishing: in Paris at mid-decade chances are that most of the Americans of the Rotonde were from the Midwest.

Concerning Mr. Poli's book itself very little can be said. There's no reason to assume that he hasn't consulted and accounted for much material relating to Ford and the review; indeed, he seems to have consulted almost nothing

else. Hard as it is to bring off this kind of study, he is among the least knowledgeable of historians, the most selective of biographers and most maladroit of critics ("By telling their stories from a child's point of view, Hemingway and Dos Passos, though they, in the form of escapism, dream nostalgically about the past, introduce the theme of innocence and initiation, a pattern of experience that is typical of many American heroes and implies the ulterior emergence of new values"). I shall say nothing about Mr. Poli's prose because his mother tongue is French.

Because this handsomely designed book fleshes out a period of Ford's life hitherto skeletal, it is of minor value to specialist students of that shrewd, silly and marvelous man whose career does in fact bridge generations. Inadvertently, too, Mr. Poli has added to our information less on Ford's ways and work than on Hemingway's way of mercilessly exploiting anyone who might help to advance his own career. In 1924 he worked on Ford both in his own behalf and, strikingly, Gertrude Stein's. *Ford Madox Ford and the "Transatlantic Review"* thus adds more stuff on Hemingway than it is pleasing to know.

WILLIAM WASSERSTROM

*Syracuse University*

*Experiments in Life: George Eliot's Quest for Values* by Bernard J. Paris.

Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. ix + 250. \$9:50.

George Eliot courageously encountered with deliberate thought two of the three subjects Victorian society in general and ladies in particular were not supposed to approach; she publicly examined moral philosophy and religion, and the third taboo, sex, she also subdued with consummate grace. Along with other intellectuals and artists of her time, she reacted to the victory of science over tradition, dogma, and superstition with intellectual vigor and moral confidence. The death of God (contemporary deicides seem not to know that they were scooped more than a century ago nor to have read anything published before 1930) became for George Eliot the source of her creative life. This phenomenon Mr. Paris examines in his book. In his Preface, he writes: "My study of her intellectual development and of the ways in which she employed her novels in her quest for values in a Godless universe will, I hope, contribute to a more complete appreciation of her achievement." Mr. Paris need have no fears for his hopes; he has indeed eloquently and thoroughly accomplished his objective, and he has led us to a better understanding of her thought and art.

The book falls into almost equal parts, the first five of which trace the movement of George Eliot's experience with reality from the theological, to the metaphysical, and finally to the positivistic. In Chapter VI, Paris argues forcefully that George Eliot hoped that through her novels, which she thought of as "experiments in life," she would find truths for humanity to replace the values that science had apparently destroyed. The next five chapters deal explicitly with the novels, to which Paris applies his thesis; the final chapter is a compact, brilliant synthesis of the whole study in relation to "George Eliot's quest for values in a universe without God."

The early chapters in which George Eliot's spiritual and intellectual background are presented rest on her own comments about her changing beliefs as they are shown in her letters to friends. Yet it becomes clear that even when she eventually arrived at her mature position as a "secular humanist," she nevertheless found many of the values embodied in Christianity important and still significant in human life. As a positivist, she could accept without rancor or hystericism the historical validity of Christianity, or of any of the world's supernatural religions, as one of the necessary levels in society's rise through the Comtean triple stages to positivism. Mr. Paris's discussion here ought to be required reading for all high school teachers who assign one or another of George Eliot's novels to their classes and who insist that they are expositions of Christian doctrine. Indeed, the excerpts chosen from the works of Comte, Hennell, Lewes, Feuerbach, and Strauss to show the influences on and the parallels to George Eliot's thinking are invaluable to the student of nineteenth century literature and history, and they should lead him back to the original texts, whose impact was critical on the Victorian mind.

In the midst of all this scholastic excellence, I feel nevertheless that I must raise a few points of dissent. Mr. Paris says summarily and positively that: "If she had remained a Christian she would never have become a novelist; if she had never been a Christian her art would not have been so strongly moralistic" (p. 10). Although the secondary statement seems less debatable but still problematic considering the quality of her mind and her concern with society, the primary declaration seems, at least to me, wholly arbitrary; it ignores completely any modern concepts of the springs of art, and does not take into account the psychology of George Eliot herself. With such powerful forces as her sensuousness, her spiritual and intellectual questing, and her sexuality fermenting within her, she seems almost the archetype of the creative personality. And she had, in addition to all these qualities which Paris marks out, "Ambition, a desire insatiable for the esteem of my fellow creatures. This seems the great stumbling block in my path Zionward," (Letter to her aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans, Paris, p. 251). In her time, the great outlet for such urgent drives in a woman was primarily through literature, and I think that regardless of her early theological background, she would have achieved significant creation in some mode.

At the end of Chapter II, it is said that "George Eliot's belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics is an important aspect of her conception of the nature of things" (p. 51), and Chapter III further explicates this attitude, relying on quotations from her letters and on such works as *Romola*. Yet nowhere in the text do I find any reference to Lamarck. Although Darwin had negated the older Lamarckian theory, it still persisted in the thinking of many intellectuals who had accepted Darwinism. Even George Gissing, himself a positivist for a short time and an admirer of Eliot, accepted Darwin's thesis but still believed that such an abstraction as a sense of gentility was passed on genetically from one generation to another.

Empiricists such as Gissing and Eliot, along with others, obviously selected what they needed from the new thought, but why they went back to Lamarck as an authority poses interesting questions. But in another way, both Eliot and Gissing looked forward towards a later science, psychology. Surely George Eliot's belief in Jewish "inherited racial characteristics" prefigures the later

hypotheses found in Freud and others that man does have a racial societal inheritance lurking in the subconscious.

Finally, on p. 91, the following sentence appears: "The religion of the ancient Greeks and the Catholic worship of images and relics of saints, martyrs, and the Virgin Mary can become meaningful for us if we see them as expressions of basic human feelings." Since this line appears between two quotations from Hennell, I presume that it is a paraphrase. However, the verb "worship" is, from the standpoint of Roman Catholic theology, incorrect whether it belongs to Hennell or Paris. Worship is reserved for God alone, and the precise word in terms of the saints, martyrs, and the Virgin should be venerate; and images are not worshipped but are aids to worship. The difference in the lay mind is frequently misty and the descent into idolatry is not unknown, but the distinction should be made in such a work as this.

The proposition in Chapter VI in which Paris argues his conviction that George Eliot used her novels as "experiments in life" for the moral purpose of finding enduring human truths is vividly convincing; it is the heart of his study and it is perceptive and thorough in showing how George Eliot exerted her creative gifts as an artist in service to man; the artist, she believed, was the "mediator between man and the harsh, non-moral conditions of his life." To understand her fiction, as Paris says, we must know the principles comprising her view of life and its meaning. (I should point out that in Chapter VI, p. 124, there is a misprint of 1815, for what should probably be 1855, but it is an obvious slip and not important.)

The succeeding chapters examine some of the novels in terms of the triadic moral development of the characters, the individual and society, and the nature of personal relationships. The last chapter, entitled "The Reconciliation of Realism and Moralism," summarizes her philosophy succinctly, which is epitomized by the line "Life is justified by love." We can see not only the moral stance she took in her novels and her life, but also its affect on her art. Hereafter no critic can maintain that George Eliot's major interest, outside of her esthetic, was imbedded elsewhere than in the world of men; she addressed herself to reality in her life and novels with masculine courage and noble charity; her art was meant to serve life and to confirm the goodness of existence.

This study has a good index and intelligent documentation, although I could wish, for the reader's ease, that the footnotes had been made available at the bottom of the page; they are not excessive in number, and when they appear there is a reason for them. In general, Mr. Paris has offered us a model of sound scholarship; the writing is clear and firm, the organization rational and lucid, and the entire performance a fine contribution to Eliot scholarship.

ARTHUR C. YOUNG

*Russell Sage College*

*The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne: A History of the Plain and Eloquent Styles* by Douglas L. Peterson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967. Pp. vii + 391. \$8.50.

A few decades ago, Renaissance literature seemed strangely contemporary. The advocates of a new kind of poetry were searching for a tradition, and they saw

in the Renaissance, as in their own time, a clash between dead conventions and revolutionary vigor.

Following Ivor Winters, Professor Peterson argues that there are two Renaissance styles: the aureate, which is conventional, courtly, vacuous, and ornamental; and the plain, which is anti-conventional, anti-courtly, significant, and unrheterical. For Professor Peterson, it is the plain style which is most English, and most valuable.

According to Professor Peterson, the plain style is a conscious attack upon aulicism; and yet it employs aulic techniques. To distinguish between the two styles, therefore, Professor Peterson relies on the criterion of meaningfulness: he seeks "to draw the line between verbal elaborations which are play and those which are inseparable from the meaning" (p. 234), to measure quantities of poetic content. Such a criterion is neither stylistic nor trustworthy.

His proof that plain poems are English is also suspicious. The medieval rhetorical traditions to which he appeals are international; and many of the "native" Renaissance poems he cites are translations. Professor Peterson argues truly that a poetical translation must express the translator. But he does not consider the originals at all, and is therefore in no position to determine which aspects of the translations are native.

It is chiefly on rhetorical and social grounds that Professor Peterson defends Winters' categories. But his rhetorical arguments are unconvincing, for he never clearly defines the plain style. Sometimes, as in pp. 66-73, he considers that the use of rhetorical topoi establishes the presence of the aureate style; sometimes he calls poems plain on the ground of diction, though the topoi are present (as in pp. 152-163); and often, ignoring both topoi and aureate diction, he asserts that a lyric is plain whenever it is thoughtful. These ambiguities reflect Professor Peterson's response to what he considers the growing use of aureate techniques in plain poetry. Yet they vitiate his thesis, his argument that the plain style is an attack upon aureate rhetoric and those who like it. If the plain style is by definition anti-aureate, it ought to be distinctly un-aureate.

The social evidence Professor Peterson offers is no clearer. The authors of the poetry he considers anti-courtly are often great courtiers; and the issues they face are those faced by Petrarch, Ficino, and other favorites of courtiers. In what sense then is their poetry anti-courtly? Professor Peterson presents no evidence that is really social, no facts about the class of each author and of his readers. And the arguments he does offer—that lewd literature was often attacked, for example—hardly seem relevant.

Much of his argument depends on Professor Peterson's notion of Petrarchism. According to him, if a poem is Petrarchan it is aureate and vacuous; if it is anti-Petrarchan it is plain and thoughtful. Unfortunately, Professor Peterson is not well acquainted with Petrarchism. The theme of Sidney's "Leave me, O Love," the mirror conceit of Spenser's "Leave lady in your glasse," the emotional drama of Greville's Sonnet 2, and the Platonism of Greville and Chapman—traditionally Petrarchan as these are—seem to him anti-Petrarchan. So, in Wyatt's sonnets, do moral intensity, psychological acuteness, and a dramatic concern with the divided will—though these are central to the Petrarchan lyrics which Wyatt translates. In short, by "Petrarchan," as by "courtly," Professor Peterson means only "having nothing significant to say"; and since he is sensitive

to the significance of almost every poem he treats, his categories become vacuous.

The weakness of *The English Lyric*, then, is its thesis; and Professor Peterson sacrifices everything to it. To strengthen his argument, he misreads many lyrics—for example, on p. 136, Googe's "Of Money" (which is not about courts); on p. 89, Wyatt's "Myne owne John Poynz" (where it is lying, not eloquence, which is attacked by the ironic misapplication of the honorific "eloquence"); and, on pp. 188-189, Sidney's "Queene *Vertue's* court" (where Sidney explicitly declares that his lady's beauty acts "without touch," and Professor Peterson argues that it is tactual). Indeed, Professor Peterson is willing to argue that Neoplatonism and attacks upon ribaldry spelled the end of Petrarchism and prepared the way for Donne (pp. 170-173), though he knows that the Petrarchists are Neoplatonic and Donne licentious.

The major weakness of *The English Lyric* is its historical pretences. Professor Peterson summarizes lyrics, judges their moral commitment, and concludes that they are either plain or aureate. His method does not warrant the use of deeply historical terms like "conventional," "courtly," "native," and "Petrarchan": the terms wanted here are "sincere" and "insincere."

*The English Lyric* will, I know, receive favorable reviews, for Professor Peterson is a sensitive and informed reader of Renaissance poetry. He has much that is interesting to say about the didactic lyric and the use of rhetorical topoi in apparently artless poems. In this polemical review I have not attempted to do justice to his merits, or to those of his book. I have confined myself to a study of his method and his premises. Indirectly, I have meant to weaken the widespread belief that good Renaissance poetry is always an attack upon lesser achievements, that it is nothing but another kind of literary criticism.

DONALD L. GUSS

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*Il teatro nord-americano* by Sergio Perosa. Milano: Vallardi, 1966. Pp. 158.  
L. 2,500.

Discrimination is the chief virtue of this new history of American drama. A discrimination—let us disperse ambiguities at once—between drama and theatre in general, between American drama and simply drama in America, and, finally, between good and bad drama.

These distinctions are both necessary and very difficult in the present case. They are necessary because one is surveying a large number of works only a part of which, the most recent, has been aesthetically evaluated; and difficult because of a recurrent dichotomy of values that one encounters in dealing with American drama: artistic values versus box-office values, and the opinion of some critics and playwrights versus that of the majority of critics and playwrights.

Mr. Perosa finds the bibliographical material now available on this subject by no means scanty, yet "somewhat chaotic and acritical" (especially with regard to the 19th century) and therefore sets out to stress those aspects of the tradition which are aesthetically more significant or more typically American.

Such a study will not, perhaps, disclose the existence of unsuspected treasures, but it will at least supply us with an explanation for their absence at some historical periods and it will help us describe them, when they do appear, in their main thematic and stylistic components.

A major question arising in one's mind in studying American theatre is why important periods of American history should find little or no reflection in the drama of their days. What about the Civil War, only touched upon by some four or five melodramas; and the dramatic events of the 1890's—a major agricultural crisis, the fantastic growth of capitalism, the conquest of the last frontier, the problems of immigration, child labor, alcoholism, women's rights? Why did they not arouse any interest, let alone commitment, as similar issues did in the 1930's?

The answer is partly literary and partly historical. For one thing, in the 1890's, some hundred years from its birth, American drama was not yet mature. Sure enough, both poetry and the novel already constituted viable traditions by that time. These, however, at their very birth, could draw upon some kind of verse and prose-writing which, non-professional as it may have been, had nevertheless attained remarkable literary accomplishments (one has just to think of the Puritan journals and tracts, of the elegy, or of 18th century satire). Drama had no such antecedents. There is no need to be reminded here of the Puritan attitude towards the theatre—as late as 1761 *Othello* had to be smuggled in as *A Series of Moral Dialogues in Five Parts*.

Some sort of theatre was soon to be in demand—the Puritan age was over, standards of living were getting higher, and cities larger—but the demand was, to be sure, for entertainment, rather than for refinement and culture.

Popular English plays and their imitations were shown; French and German plays adapted; Gothic novels dramatized; and historical tragedies invented by the dozen. Any "history" would do: *The Gladiator*, *Brutus*, *Camillus*, *Manfredi*, *The Ancient Briton*, *Ugolino*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *Foscari*, *The Bride of Genoa*, *Bianca Visconti*, *Orlando*, *The Broker of Bogota*. Domestic themes would also be treated, provided they presented a spectacular or exotic side: such was the case with the 'Algerine theme' and with the legend of Pocahontas.

With the introduction of melodrama, in the middle of the 19th century, dramatic standards were by no means improved. Melodrama further sacrificed historical and psychological truth for the sake of the *coup de théâtre* and the sensational plot: railroad disasters, scalplings, earthquakes, fire, explosions were all brought on to the stage. The aim was to provide thrills, suspense, and happy endings. The rest could take care of itself.

"Its aesthetic importance was but slight" is Mr. Perosa's comment upon melodrama, "but its historical importance tremendous. . . . The melodramatic manner pervaded both tragedy and comedy and it reflected the taste of an unsettled society, fond of adventure and excitement, but emotionally and culturally naive in spite of the fact that the matrix of its taste was still essentially European."

Realism, considered both in its final and complete realization of the 1930's and in its sparse previous manifestations is, for Mr. Perosa, the most significant achievement of American drama in any period.

In referring to the continuity of realism—of both treatment and subject-matter—the term "trend" is perhaps more appropriate than that of "tradition." If, in fact, style and motifs which were to be epitomized in this century had appeared

before, their previous occurrences had hardly struck any deep roots. In most cases their *raison d'être* is to be found in contemporary European influences rather than in a conscious concern for native themes.

The stage Yankee, for instance, introduced for the first time by Royall Tyler in *The Contrast*, 1787, as an American equivalent of the "cunny Yorkshire lad" needed the model of a cockney hero, Solomon Gundy (sic), to be revived and raised above the level of a *cliché* (by Hackett, in *The Times*, 1829). Yet this character was the only realistic element of numberless sentimental and local color comedies, his dramatic potential being fully developed in a full-sized, tragic version only in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

The "crook play" of the middle 19th century (an expansion of that life-in-the-city play which included the extremely popular "Bowery B'hoj" cycle) itself ultimately stemmed from W. T. Moncrieff's *Life in London*, the day and night adventures of two characters from the underworld. The literary standards of this genre were low enough to arouse the indignation of Poe and Whitman, but literary sanction came—with the due shifts in emphasis—towards the end of the century, with the "populist drama" of Boucicault and Daly and, above all, with the works of Edward Harrigan.

With Harrigan, however, whom W. D. Howells called "the American Goldoni" ("not without exaggeration," as Mr. Perosa comments), the scene was no longer set in the underworld. What he mainly portrayed was the life of Irish, German, and Italian immigrants in New York, their chaotic neighborhoods, their struggle for a place in the sun, their frustrations. His models, and stylistic models at that—Scribe's and Sardou's *pièces bien faites*, Thomas W. Robertson's "drawing-room comedies"—inspired him with a higher concern for structure and for lifelike situations and dialogues.

His themes were the same as those upon which the best realistic productions of the 1930's were based: the individual and collective problems of the middle classes, to which Clifford Odets, Elmer Rice, John Howard Lawson were to give the ideological slant that the moment demanded. Mr. Perosa refers to Brecht and Silone as the authors who provided the encouragement for this species of *engagé* drama, but he also specifies that the commitment of American playwrights was to protest against the *status quo*, rather than to a political party.

In his treatment of dramatic realism, Mr. Perosa does not confine himself to the social variety. Indeed he pays a good deal of attention to psychological realism, in its connection with social comedy and its subsequent dependence on contemporary foreign models. Psychological realism could be considered an aspect of the semi-melodramatic works of Bronson C. Howard—a minor aspect, it will be noticed, but one that only required the advent of Ibsen to gain *élan*. The heroines of James A. Herne exhibit indeed more than one Ibsenian trait, although one cannot help recognizing that their entire personalities, their emotional maturity and independence of judgment, remind us even more closely of the heroines of Henry James.

Foreign influences could also undoubtedly be cited in accounting for the maturer phase of psychological drama, when, during the late 1920's, it assimilated psycho-analytical overtones. Freudian and Jungian insights continued to permeate most of the works written for the stage since Susan Glaspell, Sidney Howard and Eugene O'Neill. Their influence does not even need discussion in connection with Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, William Inge, and Edward

Albee. Freudianism, at least, became such an integral part of the American frame of mind that art could not ignore or minimize it without being "unrealistic," and even the traditional distinction between approach and subject-matter is no longer helpful in describing the impact.

Mr. Perosa's "comparative" literary background serves him well both in focusing on the individuality of American drama and in tracing its descent. His study throws new light on the subtle, in fact quite complex process of acquisition and self-recognition by which American drama achieved distinctly national characteristics. Close definitions and follow-throughs of each genre are beyond the intended scope of *Il teatro nord-americano*, since this is meant mainly as a historical survey. Nevertheless whosoever may undertake an analytical study of this partially neglected field will find in Perosa's *Teatro* numerous relevant references and stimulating insights.

ALESSANDRA CONTENTI

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*The Turn of the Novel* by Alan Friedman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966. Pp. xviii + 212. \$6.50.

At the beginning of an unfavorable review, the critic shakes hands with his author, mutters a greeting, and then suddenly is all over him, his gigantic arms whaling away at the poor devil. . . .

I feel guilty in advance.

The *shape* of Mr. Friedman's book is that he begins with his thesis (the Introduction and the first two chapters—through page 37); continues with examples to which are attached some critical readings (through p. 178); and arrives at a conclusion (chapter 7).

The thesis is that "the novel" has been developed and transformed "during the first part of the twentieth century"; that there has been a "gradual historical shift from a closed form to an open form" (xi)—and "endlessness has become an end." (xiii).

Mr. Friedman's analysis of "the novel" yields him the concept of the "stream of conscience," which is (xvii) "the structural flow of moral outcomes": in a modern novel the stream as it were flows along past the end of the book.

I will not continue with this paraphrase.

First, the argument is not so clear as a paraphrase would make it appear to be, and I wish to assign credit only where it is due.

Second, the defects in the argument belong to *my* thesis, and I wish to pass that way only once: in conducting his argument, Mr. Friedman is a clumsy trickster.

The argument is frequently begun, never quite completed; a good beginning is this: (p. 11) "If the fundamental unit of language is the word, and the fundamental unit of discursive prose is the assertion, it seems reasonable to suggest that the fundamental unit of fiction is the event," and this notion (which is borrowed), while interesting, is a controversial notion; it is a rather delicate premise for such a weighty argument. The figure having to do with the word "unit" derives from the physical sciences—the figure gives a certain stateliness to Mr. Friedman's text, but is not very helpful to his argument. "Unit?" As

in BTU's or calories? Pshaw. In general, Mr. Friedman does not endeavor to support his premise; instead, he accepts it. A little lower on the same page, he says, "If we can agree that the event is the fundamental unit of fiction, then we should agree to go further and say that the stream of events is the fundamental form of fiction." (Taking our arm rather firmly).

Of course we have not agreed to this proposition, for a novel is just a piece of writing, after all. Its author uses words, not events; the author is a man like any other.

There is a sickly, minute presence of logic here: one is asked to *imagine* the "unit" becoming a "stream," which will be readily identifiable as "the fundamental form of fiction."

Mr. Friedman continues (p. 12), "The fundamental unit of fiction, 'one' event, might perhaps at this point be formally defined as the dynamic confrontation of two pressures, self and world, which issues in any clear outcome"—and at this moment I was reminded of an example—Mr. Updike's centaur, who without breaking stride was able to deposit a pile (or heap, was it?) of—ah—dung, that marvelous beast! Little psychic accidents of this sort occur rather frequently as one reads Mr. Friedman's book, for he does not exert a very steady control of the reader's attention.

On page 13, Mr. Friedman says urbanely, "We have already suggested that, with respect to structure, the fundamental form of fiction is the stream of events. With respect to meaning, it seems reasonable to suggest that the fundamental form of the novel is its stream of conscience." We read on, and two pages later, we encounter as the first sentence of the next chapter (the second), this: "The flux of experience—a process both inward and outward—is the novel's underlying form."

I wish to notice the progress of the controversial notion as it becomes gradually accepted as "true" by the author, who evidently anticipates a reader who does not remember very well from page to page. Mr. Friedman's procedure here is a form of bullying, for the reader cannot deny the author his "logic" by disapproving it. The reader must go on; he must take his beating. A kindly author will hesitate when he is saying something that may not be "true" or "correct"—and cautious authors might also do this. Mr. Friedman rashly carries on. He behaves creatively; he imagines logical connections which, like fairies and goblins, are not really there—surely they're not!

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Mr. Friedman's principal logical instrument is metaphor; he speaks of "containment" and "expansion," of the "closed form" and the "open form"; and he makes some interesting blunders as he goes along.

On page 57 (talking about Hardy): "Tess's experience expands in a single direction: disintegration. And in keeping with that paradox, the disintegration begins from somewhere near 'zero,' close to the bottom, and continues downhill from there."

"And her progress along those external values which the world supplies for measurement is downward—economically, socially, morally—until she is finally incarcerated and excuted: from near-zero to zero."

One can see that, from one paragraph to the next, he can remember something of what he has said.

On page 98: "The other safeguard (wherever it controls the narrative) is his [Conrad's] peculiar sense of the central experience, an over-all architecture which keeps the *progression d'effet* from finally becoming or resembling a mere skyrocketing of intensity."

I object that it might be easier for the *progression d'effet* to become this than to resemble it.

Beginning on the bottom of page 18: "Now marriage is an expansion of a sort. It is so in the experience of the bride and groom . . ."

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Of course, there is something in Mr. Friedman's argument: it would take a wittier man than he to write so many pages without *any* merit.

In addition, he says a few good things about his texts, and especially about Lawrence.

I think that his trouble is with his form: he must have a book—an extended essay; and he has not got the makings of a book. He has a few notes and a hypothesis that he cannot justify—a page or two in his notebook. . . .

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Mr. Friedman confuses "literature" and "life," and this will trouble him especially in his dealings with "literature." There has been for him that welter of "inspiration," "perceptions," "thoughts," the nightmare ambience of a seminar which normally subsides, after a time; but in this instance, a book has been created out of it—a compact little affair produced by the Oxford University Press, and one wonders, going away from it, what the devil Oxford University has to do with it. Are we to understand that the dons must share in the guilt? I recommend that the Press consider a new name for its American operation, along with a device to indicate the editorial policies—something that could be stamped into the covers of the books, like the Borzoi hound of Alfred Knopf, and how about a centaur? Then a chap would know right away what he was getting into.

EDWARD LOOMIS

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*The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth Century Poetry* by Stanley Stewart. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966. Pp. 226. \$7.50.

Stanley Stewart's very substantial contribution to our understanding, not only of Marvell's "The Garden," but of both poetry and prose from the Middle Ages on, is his comprehensive collection of interpretations of the *Song of Songs* and of strikingly consistent associations with such images as the garden wall, the shade of the Tree, the Bridegroom and the Bride. The original project—to read "The Garden" after the model of Rosamund Tuve's *Reading of George Herbert* by studying the pertinent literature, paintings, illustrations of its "relevant context," by gathering the accumulation of associations blooming from the Christian fertilization of the Garden of the *Song of Songs*—has previously been suggested,

but never pursued with this wealth of detail and attention to specific image clusters related to the *hortus conclusus*. The book presents abundant quotation and illustration to support the contention that seventeenth century meditative and religious poetry, especially "The Garden," cannot be "properly" construed unless the images are given the traditional values Mr. Stewart assigns to them. Thus he arrives at the conclusion that

"The Garden" is not a poem about sexual aberration or sexual frustration or sexual ambivalence—it is not a poem about twentieth century guilt either—but rather one in which erotic imagery functions to suggest the innocent fulfillments of the spiritual life.

A book which has set out "to identify and describe the relevant context" of a poem or body of poetry, and has amassed in such quantity and detail the elements of that context, need probably not be as defensive as this one is, particularly in its Introduction and Conclusion. The possibility that Mr. Stewart will be suspected of a "conscious intention of denigrating any work of art" seems at this point in time rather more remote than he envisions it, and he goes to unnecessary extremes in the description and defence of his method (the study of a poem or poetry in "a literary, rather than a poetic context"—a description which to some may seem either a contradiction in terms or a less precise way of saying "in a historical and theological context"). Mr. Stewart's real defence must be his abundant selection of evidence, both visual and verbal.

This evidence produces two results other than those overtly intended. At times, Mr. Stewart appears to have considerable difficulty in moving from one example to another within the groupings ingeniously governed by one or another of the images he is examining. Such difficulty is apparent, for instance, in the discussion of the Temple as it relates to the Garden, or in the section ("I am Blacke but Comely") which relates the Bride of the *Song of Songs* to the images of Shade and of the Tree, or in the section "'Wholesome Hours'" in the chapter on Time, where the subject of the chapter becomes lost in comment on meditation in the Garden. When such disjointedness calls attention to itself, as it does whenever Mr. Stewart relies heavily on some of his favorite expressions ("To look at it another way . . .," "Put another way . . .," "Again . . .," "We are reminded . . .") one should, however, probably remember the non-logic of the very nature of image clusters, the "poetic context" indeed. Furthermore, individual passages of poetry and prose, and especially the well-chosen and well-reproduced examples from the visual arts, are lucidly, often sensitively interpreted. The second result of Mr. Stewart's abundant array of evidence is that, as the admirable index (the book lacks a bibliography) shows, the range of illustration from St. Augustine into the seventeenth century may serve many purposes. A student of Spenser, of the Van Eycks, of Eliot, even of Keats is reminded of contexts and associations that prove illuminating, for the ground of the *hortus conclusus* is accessible to centuries of writers and artists.

Both these results leave the impression that *The Enclosed Garden* is perhaps less satisfactory as a book, developed and unfolding, than it is as a collection of relevant details. And the final chapter, the climactic interpretation of Marvell's "The Garden," designed to give unity to the whole, turns out to be somewhat disappointing—not because Mr. Stewart fails, in the end, as he does not fail, convincingly to provide a fresh reading of the poem, but because a number of

contexts other than that of the enclosed garden are given only casual, if enthusiastic, acknowledgment. Thus there is an exaggeration of Miss Wallerstein's insistence on the narrowing and limiting of the possible range of associations with Marvell's images. Several "relevant contexts" that "converge" are named, but the reverberations of that convergence are not explored. However, certainly by the time Mr. Stewart has spread before us all the evidence to the contrary, even the most perverse and guilt-stricken twentieth century mind can hardly find it "strange" that, in the light of the Christian interpretation of the *Song of Songs*, "eroticism and innocence go hand in hand" in "The Garden." Indeed, several twentieth-century minds find no strangeness in the combination of eroticism and innocence in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, in a completely different context. So perhaps the strangeness Mr. Stewart is dispelling arises from an assumed theological or religio-moral point of view as much as it does from one which is Freudian, Existentialist or Empsonian. Though the book may not silence Mr. Stewart's sinful "ad hoc impressionist" critics—who would wish utterly to silence an Empson?—it is to the author's credit that he has reminded us of the responses in the Scriptures, in art and in poetry to "two lovers ecstatically" enjoying "each other in a lovely perfumed garden, sheltered from the storm of time by an indestructible wall, and by the plentiful shade of a fruit-bearing tree. . . ."

E. A. NEWCOMB

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*The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* by Steven Marcus. New York: Basic Books, 1966. Pp. xv + 292. \$5.95.

*The Other Victorians* is the first full-length study to attempt to document the complexity of Victorian attitudes toward sexuality; and this Professor Marcus does by passing from the official Victorian fantasies on the subject, with their rhetoric of moral earnestness, to the tabooed underworld of Victorian pornography, which unconsciously parodies, and at the same time reveals, something of the character of "respectable" Victorian society. Without reducing the totality of the historical situation—that is, without treating all aspects of life other than the sexual as epiphenomenal—Marcus in effect suggests that the Victorians were obsessed by sexual fantasies generally, and especially by those they tried hardest to repress. If the fact of this obsession does not now surprise us, possibly it is because we are aware of the extent to which society discloses its preoccupations, and its tendencies if not its nature, in what it defines itself against, or considers "other."

Marcus introduces his book as "a series of related *studies* in the sexual culture—more precisely, perhaps, the sexual sub-culture—of Victorian England"—which already qualifies his subtitle, in this case significantly. For he does not emphatically pursue a single thesis, and usually offers belletristic appreciations of passages from the works he selects, rather than a rigorously structured argument which would subsume the literary evidence in favor of it. The result is that

his many insights are given away; and if this will insure "the publication . . . of other studies, by other hands, which will amend, correct, enlarge, and go beyond such findings as I have been able to make," it may allow the skeptical reader to reject these findings as unconvincing or inconclusive.

Yet appropriate generalizations are to be found here, along with some of the evidence to sustain them, much of that evidence having been discovered by Marcus in the archives of the Institute for Sex Research at Bloomington. His opening chapter is devoted to a discussion of William Acton, a physician who wrote a humane treatise on prostitution and, concurrently, a book called *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive System*, which perpetuates most of the Victorian myths and encourages all of the Victorian anxieties concerning sex. From this latter work ("Acton's best-known and most popular"), Marcus excerpts this passage containing Doctor Acton's views on the place of sexuality in marriage: "It is a delusion under which many a previously incontinent man suffers, to suppose that in newly-married life he will be required to treat his wife as he used to treat his mistresses. It is not so in the case of any modest English woman. He need not fear that his wife will require the excitement, or in any respect imitate the ways of a courtesan." This brief statement, which implies Acton's acceptance of the sexual needs of prostitutes while denying outright the existence of those same needs in "any modest English woman," locates in essence the attitude towards sexuality of the Victorian Establishment. The dichotomy in that attitude arises from the view that sexuality has a class basis, that the sexual relation is one of exploiter to exploited. The high incidence of prostitution ("figures ranging anywhere from 6,000 to 80,000 and above are offered" in 1869 for the number of prostitutes in London alone) reveals not only the extent to which sexual desires must have been gratified outside marriage but also the tendency of sexual relations to assume the form of other capitalistic enterprises exploiting human resources and eliciting the same reaction of humanitarian moral outrage while being a necessary part of the *status quo*.

The source literature Marcus cites continually uses the forms, and sometimes the metaphors, of capitalistic exploitation in depicting the sexual act as male aggression; and this is particularly patent in *My Secret Life*, an eleven-volume sexual memoir by an unidentified English gentleman. The unknown author tirelessly describes his dealings with servants, peasants, and other women of relatively low social station; and these dealings are almost exclusively exchanges of semen and money for various services. Occasionally this gentleman momentarily pauses to consider that his partner in these transactions may have inner feelings of her own. But generally he regards these women simply as objects, and his recitations of his obsessive desire for coitus assume something of the mechanical repetitiousness of pornography (which appropriately is the subject of Marcus' concluding three chapters).

Marcus does explicitly distinguish such a dehumanizing attitude towards sexuality, which objectifies human beings, from an emerging humanizing attitude which endows them with inwardness as subjects (thus he refers to Dickens and Trollope to illustrate this latter approach, though one misses allusions to Hardy—particularly apt with regard to the passage from *My Secret Life* detailing the rape of a young girl who had been working in the fields). Throughout *The Other Victorians*, however, one regrets the absence of an extended logical argument which would further explore and substantiate such observations as:

"Money in *My Secret Life* is what money is in the nineteenth-century novel or in *Das Kapital*. It is the universal commodity that has the power of converting all other things into commodities." Perhaps it is his disinclination to assimilate a wider range of literary evidence and historical particulars which leads Marcus to end a book advertised as "studies . . . of the sexual sub-culture of *Victorian England*" with an a-historical essay on "Pornotopia." That *The Other Victorians* should be indispensable despite these objections attests to the originality of Marcus' subject and his assiduity in singling out some of the appropriate materials for its study.

ROBERT M. PHILMUS

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