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Book Reviews

Erratum

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the Spring, 1968, issue of Criticism, Professor Michael Porte reviewed Eric Rothstein's Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967). Professor Porte received a copy of Restoration Tragedy in which pages 158 and 159 contained typographical flaws, and he mentioned this fact in his review, The University of Wisconsin Press reports that this error was discovered, all flawed copies were withheld fromdistribution, and only corrected copies have been circulated.

The Editor

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Book Reviews

Mark Twain as Critic by Sydney J. Krause. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967. Pp. xi + 308. $7.50.

The continued efforts of a few scholars like Yvor Winters and Robert Langbaum have persuaded us to see modern poetics as a logical extension of Romanticism, and not to take the "anti-romantic" protestations of Eliot, Pound and T. E. Hulme at face value. But we have not yet fully realized, perhaps, that the "anti-romanticism" of Mark Twain and the whole American Realist movement constitutes an analogous body of Romantic doctrine. Such a discovery should come as no surprise. After all, Pound and Eliot did not arrive in Europe innocent of American learning. On the contrary, as Winters and F. O. Matthiessen have shown, they worked out of an American Romantic tradition which reaches back through Henry James to Hawthorne and Emerson, and back to Poe by way of the French Symbolists. They used the materials they borrowed from Donne, Li Po and the rest exactly as American writers have generally used such material—as Emerson used Coleridge and Norris used Zola—to advance their own native ideological and aesthetic programs.

In *The Poetry of Experience* Robert Langbaum explains the Romantic movement in literature as a reaction against the dangerous implications of the Enlightenment faith in a fixed body of rational belief, and as an attempt to re-establish objectivity on the firmer ground of immediate personal experience. Since valid objectivity was the ultimate goal of the movement, the second wave of Romanticism—which we loosely call Symbolism—sought to efface all personal elements of thought and feeling from poetry and to present experience itself, stripped of the explicit ideas and emotions it engenders. The "sincere" autobiographical poetry of "The Prelude" gave way to the ironic autobiography of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* and, finally, to the objectivity of the *Cantos*. Still, neither Langbaum's, nor Matthiessen's, nor Winters' account of modern poetics provides a place in Romantic tradition for Mark Twain. The American Realists, we have let ourselves believe, are the only non-Romantics in the entire nineteenth century.

To my knowledge, Sydney Krause's *Mark Twain as Critic* is the first book to present Clemens' critical theories in a way which might help us fix his position on a line stretching from the Romantic subjectivism of Emerson to the Romantic objectivism of Eliot. As Krause elucidates Clemens' critical standards and methods, some startling similarities come to mind—between Pound's attacks on the subjective, sentimental moralizing of Tennyson and Clemens' attacks on Scott's fantasies, Cooper's inattention to facts, and Goldsmith's sentimental moralizing; between Pound's theory of the ideogram and Clemens' praise for Howells' ability to "concretize abstractions"; between Eliot's idea of how the poet uses his tradition and Clemens' desire to revivify the past by confronting it with the present. Equally important, when Krause points out Clemens' demand that things be called by their right name, we hear clear echoes, not only of the Imagists, but of Thoreau as well, and even of attacks by Jonathan Edwards on

Cotton Mather's misuse of language. What has so often appeared in Clemens' work as a break with the Romantic past may well appear to Krause's readers as a further development of American Romanticism leading ultimately to Pound.

Nor do such implications in *Mark Twain as Critic* arise from its details alone. Its main argument is especially suggestive regarding Clemens' place in the American Romantic movement, for it links him with both the early "sincere" Romantics and the later ironists. In the first section of the book Krause discusses Clemens' favorite early critical pose, the "muggins," who "acts as a sort of decoy, a fellow who makes obvious *faux pas* that prompt unwary readers to pounce on him, only to have their own foolishness revealed to them." In the second, Krause explains that as subjects arose to which the muggins could not do justice, Clemens adopted the pose of a "grumbler," who articulated the rage which the muggins only implied. (One immediately recognizes in these two *personae* the characters of Huck Finn and Colonel Sherburn.) The final section treats Clemens' appreciative criticism, the only work in which Clemens did not assume some sort of fictive pose. But even here his utterances are "masked" whenever they treat such controversial subjects as Zola's *La Terre,* in that they were not intended for publication.

Both the muggins and the grumbler attack their victims and parody their own critical positions at the same time, thereby leaving Clemens—who seldom had enough confidence in his adverse judgments to deliver them straight—a way out in case his judgment should prove wrong. This strategy of equivocation places Clemens somewhere between Emerson, who invests every public utterance with his whole self-reliant being, and the Pound of the *Cantos,* who has so blurred the lines connecting himself to his creation that we often look in vain for conventional keys to the author's convictions. It seems that Clemens wanted to be a "representative man" but could only be a shape-shifter. If, in his self-conscious role as a Realist, Clemens helped to carry the doctrine of Experience from the early subjective Romantics to the later objectivists, as a shape-shifter, he may have helped to develop the doctrine of Insincerity, which later writers like Eliot used to efface themselves from their works. Unfortunately, Clemens' uncertain position as a transitional writer prevented him from enjoying the doctrinal assurance of either a Thoreau or an Eliot.

While the strength of Krause's study stems from its capacity for suggesting such ideas as these to the reader, its weakness resides in the author's failure, too often, to develop similar ideas himself. In fact, his scrupulous attention to detail leads him at several points in the book to emphasize the object Clemens criticized instead of the mind of Clemens the critic. In a chapter on Bret Harte, for example, we become involved in the "accuracy" of Clemens' assessment of Harte's stories and lose sight of the critic's motives—which are, I believe, the proper subject of the book. On occasion, a full account of the object is necessary: Clemens' disdain for Scott and his fascination with Zola cannot be understood apart from Scott's Southern *vogue* and Zola's American reception. But Mr. Krause seems not to have distinguished carefully between those occasions which require such information and those in which too much discussion of the work Clemens is criticizing deflects our attention from Clemens himself. Whether such details are simply dispensable (as in the *précis* of certain Victorian melodramas which Clemens spoofed) or downright annoying (as in the synopsis of *The Vicar of Wakefield*), the time spent on them is stolen from the develop-

ment of a theme. Moreover, this tendency to favor object over subject occasionally leads the author to attribute to Clemens' topic problems which Clemens himself placed there. For example, when dealing with *Life on the Mississippi*, Mr. Krause reads Clemens' account of the conflict between pastoralism and progressivism in the postbellum South as evidence of Southern "schizophrenia," rather than as evidence of Clemens' own dual allegiance to these two irreconcilable ideals. At points like this, *Mark Twain as Critic* becomes something more properly titled *Mark Twain's Criticism*—a far less engaging and important subject.

Despite this distracting misplacement of emphasis, however, *Mark Twain as Critic* will prove a rich source of information and inspiration to American scholars. As a study of Clemens' reading alone the book is invaluable, and the final chapters, on his reactions to Zola and Wilbrandt, are both instructive and genuinely poignant. Anyone wishing to bridge the always hazardous gap between Clemens' ideas and his fiction will want to look at the discussion of his attitude toward boys and girls in the Goldsmith chapter. When applied to *The Gilded Age, Huckleberry Finn* and *Joan of Arc*, the ideas outlined there seem to me fascinating. Any number of valuable studies may be expected to arise out of similar suggestions scattered throughout the book. Like Walter Blair's *Mark Twain and Huck Finn, Mark Twain as Critic* lays a foundation on which further Twain criticism may confidently be erected.

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Pater's Portraits: Mythic Patterns in the Fiction of Walter Pater by Gerald C. Monsman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967. Pp. xvi + 225. $8.00.

> ". . . to condense the impressions of natural things into human form; to retain the mystical sense of water, or wind, or light, in the moulding of eye and brow; to arrest it, or rather perhaps, to set it free, there, as human expression."
>
> (*Greek Studies*, 32-33)

The appearance of the first full length critical study of Pater since Ruth Child's *The Aesthetic of Walter Pater* indicates a refreshing change in the criticism of Victorian literature. No longer can *fin de siècle* figures remain disguised from critical attention in the cloak of "decadence" or "aestheticism" without demanding a retailoring of those outmoded literary fashions. Rumors of impending editions of Pater's collected works, biographies of Wilde, and studies of William Morris complete with color reproductions of his wallpaper designs would all seem to verify the existence of a demimonde of "other Victorians," too long the occasion of whispers rather than the subjects of serious literary criticism.

Monsman does not speak in whispers; his is a sophisticated attempt to find a myth shared both by the critical judgments and the various personages that make

up Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*. Like Matthew Arnold, who sought an "assiette" between the alternating cycles of Hebraism and Hellenism, Monsman sees a Pater for whom the creation of art is inextricably bound up with the perfecting of balance between a centripetal classicism and centrifugal romanticism. This spatial configuration of Pater's aesthetic moments is then translated into a broader theory of cultural rebirth involving the familiar figures of Apollo and Dionysus. As art gives the ideal its necessary concrete expression, so Pater's dialectic is incarnated into human personality. Monsman sees this mythic pattern as most explicitly related to a theory of art in the famous Conclusion to *The Renaissance* where the summer and winter phases of Dionysus in the initial two paragraphs, corresponds to his existence in the realm of, successively, the "physical life" and the "inward life." Art, as the product of a phenomenalizing intelligence, is initially as concrete as the world of the summer Dionysus, but its form forever mirrors the eternal world of the ideal. This tension can be resolved only by a unique type of nineteenth century "hero," a Dionysian priest of Apollo whose function is the awakening of art in a barren world.

Applying his categories to the specific stories, Monsman sees each portrait as the embodiment of a sacrificial act which brings renewed life to the environmental companions of this Dionysian hero: Florian Deleal saves a pet bird, Sebastian rescues a child, Hippolytus preserves his sacred purity, and even Marius dies in a penitential pose. The dying hero, as the supreme expression of humanity, becomes an agent for initiation into the dawning light of Apollo that is the Renaissance. The image of the mother, which plays such a large part in the development of Pater's heroes, is easily accommodated within the framework of the *Magna Mater*. The same holds true for the infamous celibacy of so many of the subjects of Pater's portraiture.

Monsman's theory explains many of those more puzzling features of Pater's aesthetic. Through his mythic structure, the relationship between sacramental death and the creation of art is explained by something other than the so-called "aesthetic Christianity" that was the legacy of T. S. Eliot. Perhaps more importantly, the transfer of power from Dionysus to Apollo aids in accounting for Pater's interest in the transitional phases of civilization's advance and wane.

Ultimately, however, one feels that *Pater's Portraits* is less than it could have been and that Monsman's method is partially to blame. It is almost as if the author does not recognize the implications of his own statements such as that in Chapter I when Nietzsche's use of the myth is contrasted with that of Pater: ". . . for he [Pater] introduces him [the hero] as a protagonist not merely in an ideological pattern but in a truly mythic pattern." By reducing mythopoeia to its spatial dimension, Monsman in effect denies that myths occupy time as well. With such a restriction, the self-conscious elements of Pater's art that depend so heavily upon parody, and hence upon ideology, are excluded. The way in which the hermaphroditic characters in *Pater's Portraits* become the reflections of an even more hermaphroditic dialectic as Dionysus merges into Apollo remains unexplored as does its corollary, the growth of the "double" as a genuine historical figure. It is, after all, a unique way of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole. This relationship between *Zeitgeist* and role could have provided a context for examining the way in which a more traditional nineteenth century hero is transformed into a "culture hero" in the modern sense, surrendering his life for the growth of art. By examining Pater's fiction as all of a "world,"

Monsman must restrict any development in a poetic—a serious condition upon a literary figure who bridges Victorian and *fin de siècle*. Paradoxically, unless one regards the spatial dimension of a myth as a function of its temporal manifestation, mythic patterns lack their full depth.

Surely, after Levi-Strauss, the hazards of such metaphoric application of mythic patterns is self-evident. Rather than a grid of categories, perhaps myth may, after all, be more usefully examined as phonemic. Unless the underlying system giving rise to the general pattern is understood, the particular aspects of the myth are vulnerable to misappropriation. Only such an emblematic application of myth guards against reducing Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* to an uncomfortably small frame.

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Transcendentalism and Its Legacy edited by Myron Simon and Thornton H. Parsons. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966. P. ix + 228. $6.95.

It is a pleasure to be able to review this book dedicated to Austin Warren and in most respects fully worthy of him and of its subject. When the essays do not completely represent him at his best, it is because their range is a bit narrower, for while all of them imply some evaluation and exemplify the kind of literary analysis in a cultural context of which Warren was a master, only a few adopt approaches which are new, though Warren himself had a remarkably open mind and did not limit his students to those avenues which he himself approved. Most of the essays are by mature scholars, friends and students, whose work here is on the whole typical of their usual standards.

Kenneth Burke's "I, Eye, Ay—Emerson's Early Essay 'Nature': Thoughts on the Machinery of Transcendence," while it is intense, terse, brilliant and allusive, still seems to engage with Emerson a bit reluctantly and to turn at the end to Joyce's "The Dead" with a sense of relief. Of course Burke's apparatus of catharsis and victemage dialectic (Emerson's in part is Compensation), and pontificating or bridge-building, here achieved through Transcendence in the Discipline section of "Nature," is bound to cast some light on Emerson, but to pulverize him as well. So this seems to be middle-bracket Burke, for the Machinery of Transcendance is rather more his own than Emerson's.

The essay "Conservative and Mediatory Emphases in Emerson's Thought" is typical of Harry Hayden Clark's work, from which I, like so many other of his students, have learned and still can learn. It is careful, balanced, and temperate—fairly close to the essential Emerson. Clark presents a defense in terms of a series of categories arranged in his own ascending order, loading his essay with key quotations and balancing extremes of position with skill. Overpowering the young Emerson's radicalism with his later more conservative positions is a danger of which Clark is himself aware and which he almost succeeds in avoiding. If he tames Emerson a bit, he gives the evidence on both sides in his encyclopedic development of Emerson as thinker.

Emerson Marks presents new material in his "Victor Cousin and Emerson,"

the most thorough analysis of its subject and one of the most valuable essays—packed, allusive, and complex. Seeing what Emerson's background was and what he himself added, through separating the times from the man, one can assess his position more accurately. Concretely, Marks presents Cousin as a doctrinaire, myopic, optimistic rationalist, less religious than Emerson thought, but from whom Emerson learned what he knew of Hegel and Fichte. Emerson in *Representative Men* is closer to Cousin than he is to Carlyle, for Cousin's *représentent* embodies the ideas and interests of his age; but Emerson goes beyond him too in his view that an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man. In aesthetic theory both accepted a neo-Platonic view which denigrates the arts and fails to see the full significance of the symbol. But Emerson with his greater style and closer understanding of Coleridge achieved a lasting position which his teacher could not maintain.

Far the newest and most scientific technique is employed by Albert Gilman and Roger Brown in "Personality and Style in Concord," a study of Emerson and Thoreau. To thirty-two pairs of passages, carefully matched so they have similar content which does not then bias the choice of words, they apply the Sign Test and probability theory so as to reach a series of conclusions. Thoreau, they discover, is more aggressive, uses more first person, more negatives, and more first person *and* negative expressions in one sentence, and more contrasting conjunctions. Emerson uses more abstract nouns (as opposed to concrete words) than Thoreau, more indirect constructions and fewer sensory and motor words. While Thoreau was more combative and the more uncompromising idealist, Emerson's experience and understanding are more comprehensive and his mind more synthetic. Though my original response to this essay was negative, I conclude that it is a useful application of a laborious technique, some of its virtue lying, however, in a willingness to go beyond the initial attempt at scientific objectivity by including some needed evaluative judgments.

Glauco Cambon's "Emily Dickinson and the Crisis of Self-Reliance" is post-new criticism in mode. By analyzing imagery and content in the fashion of Clark Griffith, Cambon points out that the effects of Dickinson's self-reliance—a heritage from Transcendentalism—lead her to the insecurity of nothingness, which lies somewhere between terror and bliss. When reason breaks, she feels that all is provisional, chaotic, without hope or "Spar." And though she does invariably recover, she can get only a pragmatic and temporary escape from "Costumeless Consciousness." This is an excellent essay.

Sherman Paul's paper "The Identities of John Jay Chapman," here reprinted in honor of Warren, shows his characteristic virtues—his power to get to the center of his subject, his intensity, his freighted and difficultly compacted style. Paul sees Chapman as an ambivalent figure who never quite became the crucial link between Emerson and the twentieth century.

One of the best essays is "Santayana as a Critic of Transcendentalism" by Joe Lee Davis, who writes incisively and elegantly of Santayana's uneasy debt and ambiguous relationship to Emerson. Always unwilling to "work up" an author, Santayana rarely remained the cool expositor within the frame of reference of the work or system under discussion. As a philosopher he preferred to criticize in the light of his own theories, with the result that he labeled American Transcendentalism as "genteel," that is, as too moralistic and too unwilling to take into account the imperatives of the flesh.

Davis in his analysis points out elements of development in Santayana and considers the question whether he can be called a phenomenologist. The conclusion is that on the whole he can since he takes up Emerson's views in the light of his own, but that he failed, because of his own residual Transcendentalism, to speculate on the cultural situations that Transcendentalism in its many varieties and through its many spokesmen tried to adjust to, or contend with.

The intricacy of Davis's elegant style and the complexity of his lucid mind make this exciting. Davis's range of knowledge is wide, his analysis is deep, while he makes clear why the literary mind so often prefers existentialism—with its richness, allusiveness, and concreteness—to analytical philosophy with its abstractions and scientific detachment.

"Irving Babbitt, Paul More, and Transcendentalism" is a masterful performance by René Wellek—graceful and kindly. In it Babbitt and More are held up as figures whose values were developed in the nineteenth century. Babbitt, though close to a French-type classicism, remained an American, and though he disapproved of Emerson's optimism, was still more influenced by him than was More, who was nevertheless closer to Emerson's symbolic view. Wellek not only shows a light touch in his treatment, but closes charmingly with the realization that bare judgments produce a flattening out of their objects, that "Critics—like poems—cannot be paraphrased."

Frederic J. Carpenter's "Eugene O'Neill, the Orient, and American Transcendentalism," a slender performance in two parts, emphasizes that O'Neill found in the Orient the intuitive, as opposed to the intellectual, apprehension of values which is the basis of his drama.

The book closes with a thumbnail sketch by Herbert W. Schneider of "American Transcendentalism's Escape from Phenomenology"—characteristically terse and dependent upon quotation, but impressive and convincing. Despite Santayana's feeling of the paucity of American culture, American philosophy, says Schneider, escaped phenomenology and got directly to an existentialism which is a sort of banality of the behavioral sciences. Since the opportunities offered by the frontier were successfully used, the dualism of nature and culture was perfectly bearable, and pragmatism was the result. In the United States the change from idealism to scepticism is thought of as the change from Transcendentalism through pragmatism to realism, and not as a crisis of culture. So Santayana characteristically withdrew from America as he developed his phenomenology, while American philosophy was still based upon man's involvement in things and not on a spectator theory of knowledge.

ALEXANDER C. KERN

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Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change by Eric Rothstein. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967. Pp. xii + 194. $6.50.

REVIEW: Short Form

When Eric Rothstein discusses Otway for ten pages he reveals the kind of book he was capable of writing, a suggestive critical approach to several good Restoration tragedies. Unfortunately, the critical approach to individual works is second-

ary to his intent to trace the development of the genre. Thus he informs us that at the start of the Restoration the companies freely used materials from Fletcher and developed heroic drama. When rhyme became unpopular, playwrights turned to a more natural diction in blank verse, and the best of Restoration tragedy resulted: Dryden's *Don Sebastian* and Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*. He lists among the second-bests: *The Orphan* by Otway, *All For Love* and *Cleomenes* by Dryden, and *The Mourning Bride* by Congreve.

Review: Long Form

Criticism of historical works should remind us of excellences fashionable playwrights have forgotten. Such criticism should document the collective unconscious unity of man's drive for awareness. If it is passionate, so much the better. Most of all, it should stimulate us to reread or revisit an old work by a new lamp.

Arthur Sherbo in his book on *Sentimental Comedy* proved that one can upgrade a standard critical study such as Bernbaum's. Indeed, Sherbo showed how one could write a good book on bad drama. Eric Rothstein, in his analogous undertaking with *Restoration Tragedy* does not score as well. He is the first to admit that the middle style of Restoration verse is flanked by rant and pathos. Although he observed that "directness, argumentative strength, moral generalization, and passionate appeal all characterize the style of pathetic tragedy at its best" he finds that achievement in only two plays, both widely admired. The basic fault with his book is his assumption that "the pathetic play should commit itself to more and more accurate imitation of life." What he does not seem to understand is that even pathetic drama must be separated from day-to-day experience because of how the playwright exaggerates what he selects and condenses from his private reality. Since language must be elevated in tragedy, the characters must seem to belong to what they are saying.

Unfortunately, Rothstein has selected as his mentor, Wittgenstein, who insists on seeing only concrete cases, ignoring the generic that is not only the basis of learning but also the prevailing tendency of the English language. Perhaps his preference for concrete cases causes him to forget what he writes. For example, at one point he cites a study of the French audience and advises French critics to learn more about French drama by studying English audiences. At another point, he contends that the repertory backlog of tragedies available invited borrowings since a play of Fletcher performed by a company was considered the property of the company. But despite these two instances, he tells us that he has not considered adaptations from French, Italian, Latin, Greek, or Spanish because of the space they would have required. (They also would have required a grasp of comparative literature and the history of ideas as well as a knowledge of languages. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that *déshabillé* is misspelled on page 106.) He says he has left out the various reworkings of Shakespeare but includes *All For Love* as one of the "second best, narrower but accomplished plays" of the period. Despite his judgment of the play's importance, he gives it criticism's last shift. He dismisses R. J. Kaufmann's article on *All For Love* as "gravely uninformed." It is his opinion that Restoration tragedies were synthetic, but because of the serious limitation in his method, he never proves that assertion. Only by examining adaptations carefully could he hope to prove it.

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In a remarkable lapse of scholarship, he ignores Arthur Nethercot's proof of how Edmund Waller and Abraham Cowley contributed to the writing of Buckingham's attack on heroic drama, *The Rehearsal*. He also ignores the collaboration of Thomas Sprat, Martin Clifford, and Samuel Butler. The fact that so many distinguished writers banded together to attack heroic drama should lead Rothstein to view the burlesque as a manifesto and not just a play to pass by. Yet he denies that *The Rehearsal* had any effect on the end of the vogue of heroic drama.

Rothstein's book does not lift from the slough of despond a forgotten masterpiece whose virtues have been muddied. It echoes George Saintsbury in stressing the superiority of *All For Love* and *Don Sebastian* among Dryden's tragedies. It concurs with Dr. Johnson's ranking of Otway with the finest of the natural tragic poets. Rothstein considers *Venice Preserv'd* and *Don Sebastian* superb tragedy; he lists among the second-bests: *The Orphan, All For Love, Cleomenes,* and *The Mourning Bride*. Far from sharing his enthusiasm for any of these works, he willingly passes over anything that has been "covered" by someone else. The flavor of Rothstein's book is second-hand, peevishly argumentative tracings of a genre, which he refuses to sum up or define. He compiles fact upon fact, revealing a truly sweeping grasp of the scholarship of the period, particularly in its most humdrum aspects. Previous writers about the Restoration have earned reputations as our most admired critics because they shared their love for cherished masterpieces in a dazzling and generous style. Rothstein purposely neglected good plays to dwell at length on John Wilson, Thomas Porter, Nevil Payne, and Sir Aston Cockain. Although Rothstein rarely achieves a readable style, he gives his reader ample summaries and organizes his material in three major parts: critical, historical, and genre. He has no illusions about his plan of treatment. In discussing the third part of the book, he writes: "I have been equally ruthless, coarsely chopping it into three sections, labeled 'Ethos,' 'Structure,' and 'Language,' more as a simple means of talking about the genre than as a necessary or natural way of dividing it. From these three discussions, we may emerge, I hope, with a fuller recognition of the ways in which tragedies operate."

Only a modest man can produce such a modest book. His conclusion is that Restoration tragedy at its best lives today in such films as *Gone With The Wind* and such operas as *Aida*. These works, he claims, employ the stock devices of Restroation tragedy. Without comparing Restoration tragedies to those of earlier periods, he has no right to make those claims. The insight he quotes from John Harold Wilson, that an innocent female was typically contrasted with an evil one because of the nature of the actresses in the repertory companies also ignores the early stage history of this convention. The subtitle, "Form and the Process of Change," refers to the influence of Fletcher in establishing the form, only to be revised because of the influence of the audience at the end of the sevententh century. On page 113, he writes: "To define a genre solely in terms deduced from effects upon an audience—and, as I have tried to show, that is what later Restoration tragedy did—produces works whose parts are clearly differentiated in action (to avoid boredom) but interchangeable in function." Yet in an earlier context on page 43, he wrote: "Scholars have traditionally held that this dramatic change reflected a change in composition, as well as the taste, of audiences. I think such a sociological explanation highly

improbable." He then argues at length what he is later to utilize when he finds it convenient to do so.

Too close to the surface of this book is an attempt to impress us. His treatment of Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* resembles that of a graduate student proving that he understands how to handle imagery. Once he successfully proves his skill he has no further use for the play. Although he confidently solves problems merely posed by Moody Prior in *The Language of Tragedy*, Rothstein stops midway in the analysis of *The Mourning Bride* to comment: "It would be tedious to harrow up all the further light and dark, life and death, and providential imagery in the play, or to expatiate on the analogies between the various sorts of physical and mental freedom or captivity brought about by Heaven, love, and kings. A more interesting procedure would be to examine one section of the play to observe the way in which images weave together." That may be more interesting to the reader, but does it help to recapture the experience of the total work on an audience? I'm afraid this book was more of a labor than the elegantly written earlier labors of love which Rothstein dismisses as "cant and impressionism that have crusted our subject." Why did he bother dealing with "our subject" if he has no feeling for it?

The University of Wisconsin Press, in printing the book, carelessly jumbled footnotes and text on pages 158 and 159. The result is an amusing comment on the book as a whole. The sense of the passage was to defend Congreve against the charge of ping pong imagery posed by Miss Sharon Saros, whoever she may be.

MICHAEL PORTE

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Kindred Spirits: Knickerbocker Writers and American Artists, 1807-1855 by James T. Callow. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Pp. xxii + 287. $7.50.

The fine arts lay fair claim, as the title of one of James T. Flexner's books suggests, to be the "first fruits of our wilderness." Apart from indigenous efforts, however, chiefly in portraiture, the seed was first nourished on foreign soil and the arrival of Benjamin West in Europe in 1763 marked the beginning of a long and distinguished association of American with British and European artists. Painters like West, insofar as they theorized about their work, did so in the current neo-classical terms and (particularly if they were Americans like Trumbull and Copley) would have subscribed to Reynolds's dictum that the finest subject for a painting would have been an historical one. Historical subjects fused both literary interest and pictorial effect. West's first commission from George III was prefaced by that august monarch reading the passage from Livy where Regulus departs from Rome. By seizing a significant moment in time the history painter could both warn and instruct. Lessing had seen the painter constrained by the moment of time at his disposal whereas the writer was freer to develop both plot and character through time conceived as linear progression. But the next generation of American painters, of whom Washington Allston was the most distinguished, encountered, mainly through the English romantic

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poets, a rather different set of principles about literature and painting. Allston's association with Coleridge, begun in Rome towards the end of 1805, made him one of the means by which these principles were transferred to America when he left England in 1819. In his lectures on art written in the 1830's (though not published until 1850) there appears an odd mixture of neo-classical high moral seriousness with its tendency to categorize different aspects of the artist's activity together with a Coleridgean desire for a universal harmony which comes through intuition and which makes external objects an image of the individual's unified sensibility.

Both the neo-classical theorists and the romantic organicists had insisted on the close association of literature and painting, the one often on the ideal to which both aspired, the other in terms of the psychology of creation and unity of effect. By the eighteen-twenties, however, there were clear signs that American literature was struggling to get under way, often conscious of the lead which had been given by painting. Bryant, for example, adapted Wordsworthian themes and techniques to the American landscape, and like Wordsworth's apostrophe to Haydon, wrote a sonnet to Thomas Cole which reminded him of his high calling but in specifically American terms. The association with English and European was to be maintained throughout the twenties and thirties. In America itself and especially in New York close friendships were maintained between painter and writer. Cole painted pictures from Cooper's novels, John Quido illustrated scenes from Irving's work and Durand painted his friends Bryant and Cole observing the beauties of nature in the famous picture of 1849 whose title James T. Callow takes for his book.

It is the relationships between these American writers and artists which Professor Callow sets out to examine and he does so with a thoroughness which will make his book one of standard reference for the area which it covers. He is not so much interested in the theoretical affinities between literature and painting, however, as to record in detail the friendships of writer and painter; who knew whom, when and where. First he briefly sketches the New York background as a centre of the arts with its Bread and Cheese and Sketch clubs, and as the scene where the National Academy of Design won out against the frigidly conservative American Academy of Fine Arts. Then Professor Callow examines not only the more famous painter-writer friendships like those of Irving with Allston, Leslie, Newton and Wilkie, of Verplank with the contenders for the Rotunda pictures, of James Fenimore Cooper with Samuel Morse, Greenough and Cole and of Bryant with numerous artists of his day, but also those of lesser known figures. Chief among these is John Rand (who created the first screw-top, collapsible tin tube) and whose life Professor Callow is able to document by hitherto unused manuscript letters in the New York Public Library. In the same chapters we are given Nathaniel Parker Willis's friendship with the famous Chester Harding, the darling of the English drawing rooms (and also the possible prototype of Bosh Blivins, a character in Willis's only novel, *Paul Fane*, 1857) as well as his continuing relationships with Henry and Horatio Greenough. It is also interesting to learn how James Kirke Paulding was consulted by Durand and Greenough for historical details in their work because his cousin John was "one of the principals in the famous capture of Major André." (p. 88) It is strange to see Prof. Callow perpetuating the myth that Allston "returned to America to waste away his life" on *Belshazzar's Feast* after E. P. Richardson's

careful qualification of the popular assumption in his book on Washington Allston. (p. 3) Again when he challenges Flexner (p. 43) over the argument that Leslie, Newton, and Allston carried "Irving away from American themes that produced his most vital work into rhapsodies to English gentility," Prof. Callow does not refute Flexner's contention merely to say that Irving was acquainted with things English before he came into contact with these men. It might also have been interesting when discussing Weir's dissatisfaction with his West Point appointment to note that Leslie spent a brief term there in 1833 only to return somewhat hastily to England after only a few months of raw and rural America.

On the basis of Frank Luther Mott's study of American periodicals, Professor Callow explores in more detail those journals which dealt with the fine arts between 1825 and 1855. Professor Callow liberally supplies us with the kinds of article (historical, biographical, anecdotal) in these magazines and in long footnotes gives us sample titles. The efficacy of the method may be doubted. From the titles we can only guess as to the nature of the articles themselves. Surely it would have been better to give a complete check list of the articles in an appendix and then to discuss the kinds of criticism written in the journals. Professor Callow demonstrates that he can use such material very effectively when, in the last chapter, he aptly quotes from the *New York Mirror*. (pp. 195-200)

Having thoroughly documented his period, Profesor Callow goes on to discuss three major styles of art; landscape, genre, and architecture. Considering first theories of nature, and landscape, the American debt to English and European romanticism is outlined and is adequate though necessarily oversimplified.

Professor Callow sees the interest in landscape coming to a conclusion in the joint productions by writers and artists in the landscape books, beginning with *The American Landscape* 1830 and ending with Bryant's *Picturesque America* 1872. They shared both techniques and interests. When discussing the panorama, for example, Professor Callow is right to emphasize its psychological effect, though he oddly confuses this with a desire for ownership. "Paintings such as Doughty's "On the Banks of the Susquehanna" and Cole's "Destruction," from "The Course of Empire," appeal psychologically to the onlooker, who is flattered at being allowed to command acres of land temporarily his own." (p. 146) This psychological appeal is surely more applicable to the effect he characterizes through Cowper's eighteenth-century spectator in *The Task* who "enjoys an enlarged vision of life." (p. 146) This "oceanic feeling" might have been more comprehensively related to the literature of the period, particularly in Cooper's fiction, and perhaps a reference to R. W. B. Lewis's characterization of Natty Bumppo as the "hero in *space* in two senses of the word. First, the hero seems to take his start outside time . . . and, second, his initial habitat is space as spaciousness, or the unbounded, the area of total possibility," would have clinched the argument. Although it is true to say that the Knickerbocker writers used the panoramic technique sparingly because of the difficulties of plot and character analysis peculiar to the novel form, Cooper's use of the technique in fact extends both character analysis and plot development. There is for example among many others the unforgettable image of Natty Bumppo as he first appears in the setting sun in *The Prairie*. It might also have been useful to show, while on the subject of similar techniques, how the neo-classical ideal of subordinating parts to the ideal whole combined with the equally valid ideal of scientific

accuracy. It might have been pointed out not only that, by paying special attention to landscapes of contrast could the artist "learn that his own life and the lives of his empires have been like nature, periods of blight and bloom," (p. 172) but that this was part of a universal interest in history which perhaps sought to place the responsibility for human affairs outside the romantic individual who was himself responsible in Emerson's words, for creating his own original relation to the universe.

Professor Callow's main fault in the book is that he has not worked out a theoretical basis for talking about painting and literature. A starting point could have been made from the neo-classical and organic metaphors used by the Knickerbocker artists themselves. To say that "all Quidor's adaptations of Irving's stories are interesting in themselves, proving that true genius impresses itself even on borrowed materials," (p. 188) is to ignore the fact that most artists "borrow," and that Quidor's real achievement was to make something new, having reformulated imaginatively the possibilities of his own medium. Different mediums convey different meanings. Cole's scene from *The Last of the Mohicans*, for example, is in many ways very different from Cooper's. Cole's figures give a sense of being much smaller than their counterparts in Cooper's novel. It is as Lessing would have said that Cole must use space to make his moral comments while Cooper can still make his characters stand out more against nature because the novelist's medium is one in which character is developed through time.

The last chapter of the book is one of the most interesting and Professor Callow shows us how the Knickerbocker artists and writers failed to save the early Dutch buildings of New York, how they were the city's architectural conscience and how they welcomed the Greek revival United States Branch Bank and the second Merchant's Exchange. They were less enthusiastic about Washington and Philadelphia. Very interesting too, are Cooper's changes of attitude on his return from Europe. The man who went admiring white lined red bricks returned with cosmopolitan contempt to condemn his erstwhile provincialism. From the classical ideal he turned to his friend Greenough's theories of functionalism as the correct architectural mode. Professor Callow shows, too, how Willis attacked the Capability Brown school of landscape gardening, though it is difficult to see how "personal, informal essays" match "personal, informal gardening." (p. 218)

For all one's reservations, Professor Callow has accomplished much that will be useful to those interested in this period of American Studies. His bibliography is exhaustive and his patient collection of sources and location of manuscripts will put many scholars in his debt.

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The Strategy of Truth, A Study of Sir Thomas Browne by Leonard Nathanson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967. Pp. ix + 241. $5.95.

An examination of the scholarly books about Sir Thomas Browne presents an interesting survey of critical approaches as well as the enrichment of our under-

standing of Browne as a significant literary figure. The appreciative essays of Coleridge and Lamb who saw Browne as a romantic observer of life and the possessor of an hydroptique thirst for knowledge not unlike their own were superseded by brief critical essays on his style. Gosse's life in 1905 was the only biography after Wilkins. It was in the late '40's and '50's that the influence of the history of ideas is evident in such studies as E. S. Merton's *Sir Thomas Browne, a Man of Science* (1949), W. P. Dunn's *The Religious Philosophy of Sir Thomas Browne* (1950), and J. S. Finch's *Sir Thomas Browne, Man of Science and Faith* (1950). The new criticism with its emphasis on textual criticism and the critical analysis of prose style stimulated by Croll and Williams influenced a number of articles on Browne's prose, such as those by Austin Warren (*Kenyon Review* 1951) and Frank Huntley (*J. H. Q.* 1953). Joan Bennett in *Sir Thomas Browne, a Man of Achievement in Literature* (1962) combined biography and criticism in an endeavour "to find out what he thought and what the style expresses." And the brilliant book by F. L. Huntley, *Sir Thomas Browne: A Biographical and Critical Study* (1962) utilized all of these approaches, biography, history of ideas, and careful criticism of style. Huntley examined Browne's ideas, life and times, epistemologies and basic metaphors "in a kind of intellectual and emotional reassessment of the meaning that Sir Thomas Browne may still have three hundred years after he lived and wrote." The recent revision of the Keynes' edition of Browne's works with its additional notes should stimulate even more studies on Sir Thomas Browne.

Mr. Nathanson's new book *The Strategy of Truth* springs, he says, from interests both broader and more special than any of the previous studies. He analyzes Browne's major works, *Religio Medici*, *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* in the light of literary history, the history of ideas, and modern critical theory. These are to be read as mimetic essays in which the specific themes and arguments of each work are "subsumed within an intellectual framework which generates their interplay and their resolution." (Preface viii)

In his opening chapter Mr. Nathanson considers Browne as a literary artist. Although we can profitably read Browne as an illustration of the seventeenth century, we can no longer see him as the quaint antiquarian who stumbled into art. He is a conscious artist using high, low, or middle style as the occasion demands and handling the ideas of his times with rich imagination. As he lays out his conception of Browne, Mr. Nathanson discusses the limitations and values of various critical approaches exemplified by the Chicago school of criticism, the New Critics, and by such critics as Rosamund Tuve and Louis Martz. He proceeds to utilize the best of all schools although he relies most heavily on the methods of the last two scholars.

"Since," as he says, "principles and traditions of artistic representation are aspects of history, one must at some fairly early point in an examination of a writer seek to view the formal qualities of his work within its intellectual and cultural context." (p. 10) Mr. Nathanson devotes the first seventy pages to tracing the Platonic background of seventeenth century thought and particularly the influence of Ficino's humanistic synthesis of faith and philosophy. In Browne he also finds the Timean strand of the Platonic tradition which combined with the revelation of the Bible shows that God is revealed to us through his servant nature. Browne's Platonism as shown in his major works must be examined against the Platonic triad of custom, nature, and ideas. For Browne as a Platonist

sought truth from three realms of experience, the works of man, the physical universe, "and the super-sensuous realm of intelligibles, comprehending both the Platonists' world of ideas and the domain of grace and revealed truth which . . . were fused in Christian thought." (p. 60)

In the second part of *The Strategy of Truth* Mr. Nathanson examines the genre, structure, and temper of the *Religio Medici,* the limits and value of custom, and the endeavors of science and religion. He then makes a similar approach to the *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus.* Thus a pattern is established. We must consider first the genre and then the significance of the Platonic triad in order to appreciate the close relationship between content and form. The *Religio Medici* is compared with the essays of Bacon and Montaigne and works of meditation. In Taylor's comments on meditation and contemplation, Nathanson finds a clue to his description of the *Religio* as a meditative essay, an intellectual experience. The famous *O altitudo* passage so often cited as illustrating Browne's mysticism can best be seen not as a mystical experience but as Browne's personal comprehension and conviction of God's revelation available to all through the teaching of the church. Browne is then compared to the metaphysical poets in the way he presents and sustains the contraries of human experience, its ambiguities and tensions. These characteristics appear not only in the *Religio* but also in the *Urn Burial.* If *the Garden of Cyrus* is less successful it seems to Mr. Nathanson to be due to its lack of tension and depth.

Considering the *Religio Medici* in the light of custom, Mr. Nathanson reviews the convictions of the Latitudinarians, the Cambridge Platonists, and finds Jeremy Taylor the best exponent of religious liberty within the Anglican church. Against this norm of custom we comprehend Browne's liberating rationality, skepticism about custom, and his striving for individual experience. Browne's examination of nature reveals a deep assurance about the unity of things; but Nathanson directs his attention to the points of friction between Browne's Christian orthodoxy and his empiricism in both the *Religio* and the *Vulgar Errors.* By this approach he arrives at his definition of the *Religio* as a mimetic essay. "The effect we must finally seek to experience is then not the system of thought Browne assumes and employs in the *Religio* but the action of thought he creates." (p. 176) In other words we do not read Browne as an historian of ideas but as a literary artist who delights us.

In his analysis of the *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* Mr. Nathanson takes issue with Mr. Huntley who sees them as companion pieces. The *Urn Burial* fraught with the uncertainties of human ignorance unmasks all human pretensions to immortality without God. The other insists that all knowledge of reality is to be found only in the mind of God as it is reflected in nature and art. "The urns are chaos, the quincunx design." (Huntley, p. 221) Nathanson, using the Platonic triad as the cutting edge for measuring Browne's achievements as a literary artist, sees the problem of knowledge focused in the *Urn Burial* on the realm of value. Brown uses custom, nature, and Idea to discover that Christian faith, the only assurance of immortality, is, therefore, the best guide to what is valuable in mortal life. The theme is not presented through explicit argument. "The actual process for discovering how futile human effort can be transcended operates as an action with the work and is experienced as such by the reader." (p. 189) Here again is the mimetic essay. But *The Garden of Cyrus* is a static presentation. It moves directly through the three levels of

experience and knowledge, artificial (human custom and arts), natural (natural phenomena), mystical (Idea, spirit, faith), to a predictable conclusion. (p. 206) It lacks the principle of tension and the excitement of discovery. The connecting link between the two works lies in their basic use of the Platonic concepts of Custom, Nature, and Idea as ascending planes of knowledge, as a way to truth. (p. 209) But the *Urn Burial* demands and repays the readers collaboration in a way *The Garden* does not.

The Strategy of Truth is a challenging book and a mine of interesting ideas. The critical approach is one which might well be applied to other seventeenth century writers. From time to time one comes on challenging critical statements which make one wish to argue larger critical points. The difficulty inherent in this approach is that of keeping the mind of the reader constantly on the main issue. In order to avoid over-simplification or systematizing, Mr. Nathanson has packed almost too much into each chapter. I have described this as a mine of ideas; the reader must dig not only through a great deal of valuable information but also through some prose that is heavy and pretentious. Sentences like the following give one pause:

> "Analogous to the oblique cognitions extractable from symbolic nature are the insights provided by the symbolic definitions not only of scripture but of somewhat dubious mystical works." (p. 167)

and

> "The universal truths Browne extracts from this data are expressed in the aphoristic manner of the curt Senecan style, with its tendency to reduce immediate observation and experience or accumulated learning to terse and memorable form, and also to make such induction extend the range of moral insight to other particulars only hinted at." (p. 186)

Such writing tends to distract rather than to inform and halts the argument rather than advances it.

The Strategy of Truth must be read slowly, thoughtfully, and in small doses. It rewards the reader with a clearer picture of Browne's mind as thoroughly immersed in the neo-Platonism of his day and yet always its individual self acting upon the world of human custom and experience, of nature, and of faith.

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French Novelists of Today by Henri Peyre. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Pp. 494. $10.00.

In his survey of French fiction from 1920 to 1965, Professor Peyre uses a free multiple approach relating each work with the author's life and philosophy, the historical moment, French literary tradition, the novel in western literature. He claims that the novel is no more dead than the bourgeoisie, whose sense of security it was alleged to express, but has extended its scope as the bourgeoisie absorbed other social classes; that the distinctive features of the French novel are still insistence on style as well as on values relating to life itself; that the

period considered is characterized by the disintegration of our idea of reality, of our idea of man, and of the classical notion of personality.

In the first chapter, three writers of *romans-fleuves*, Martin-du-Gard, Duhamel, Romains, are dispatched as having failed to satisfy a lingering yearning for epic literature. Romains, with a culture bridging science and mysticism as well as an arresting philosophy of his own, should have been the first writer of his age, but the apostle of Unanimism lacked the imagination required to bring to life the innumerable characters of his *Men of Good Will*, except in his volume on *Verdun*. Like Duhamel, he was more successful in his short novels. Let us add that his mysticism, in its *reductio ad absurdum* of our national world, tends to stop at mystification. Before turning to Proust, Peyre treats at some length the young prodigy writer Radiguet, as having given "the definitive portrayal of the adolescent in war-time . . . ."

If Proust succeeded where Romains failed, in spite of his all too obvious snobbery, and didacticism tending to justify unorthodox behavior, it was neither through his Bergsonism, nor his symbolism, nor his anticipated Freudianism, nor his theory on involuntary memory, but in his privilege as a great novelist to create "a variegated and haunting gallery of characters." In opposition to Proust, Gide is not a born novelist. Lacking an imagination, he has the virtue of "continuous development, through contradiction, sharp about-faces, and impious denials." Dismissing as matter for seminar study, the famed technique of *The Counterfeiters*: "a novel about a novelist trying to write a novel about a novelist trying to write a novel," Peyre notes that sincerity has its pitfalls. Writing implies a public, and Claudel, "whose theological virtues have been other than charity," may not have been far wrong in seeing in Gide: "a man fascinated by mirrors and trying out attitudes before himself and others."

A whole chapter is devoted to Mauriac, and the same basic Jansenism is found in all the novels of this regional writer of purely national repute. Peyre agrees with Sartre that Mauriac, like God, creates his characters only to take their liberty away from them, but maintains that his sense of tragedy and strict construction, of ethics and of poetry, makes of him nevertheless a great novelist. Giono, best known abroad through film adaptations such as *The Baker's Wife* and *Harvest*, also receives the honor of a full chapter. Peyre sees in this Provencal writer a minor Tolstoi, despite the fact that his hatred of war and worship of the *Erdgeist* led him to approve of some aspects of the "New Order," and to contribute to a collaborationist paper. On the other hand, and to our regret, the cosmopolitan and surrealist writers, Morand, Larbaud, Giraudoux, Cocteau, Breton, Aragon, are neglected as having sacrificed too much to the spirit of their age to survive it, at least as novelists.

One must admit that the socially-conscious literature of the Thirties generally ignored their innovations, although Saint-Exupéry may have been influenced by Giraudoux in his first novel, *Southern Mail*. Saint-Exupéry, a hero "whose significance transcends literature," was an engaged writer before the name existed, a moralist trying to conciliate past and present, thought and action, the individual and the group. He has a style of his own, in which the splendor of images is in contrast to the sobriety of the tone, a philosophy of action, in which that which unifies the world and unites men is praised. Acknowledging these claims to greatness, Peyre thinks he may leave the memory of a champion of true civilisation, rather than that of a great novelist. Meanwhile, it is comforting to note that he is, nonetheless, a best seller.

Bernanos, Céline, and Green are curiously grouped together as "Three controversial Writers"; Bernanos as a polemist obsessed by the presence of evil and of Satan, who can assume numerous forms, including those of Gide, Anatole France, or the Spanish clergy blessing Franco's machine-guns; Céline, as owing his *succès de scandale* to "a coterie of weaklings whose inveterate anemia attempts to conceal itself under uncritical acclaim of brutality." Professor Peyre only finds in Céline adolescent nostalgia for filth, cheap sentimentality, unsane anti-semitism, and complete lack of structure. He fails to appreciate the rhythm of the spoken speech which Céline claims to have introduced into the novel. This writer does, but no more so than the variations introduced by GI's into the repetition of a few four-letter words, and admits that the rare pearls to be found in Céline's murky torrent are hardly worth the diving. As to Julien Green, he is controversial because of the weird, sinister, and untrue atmosphere which this American-born writer has created in his descriptions of the French and American scenes alike. Yet, an internal necessity moves his characters, and *Moïra* is considered by Peyre as one of the finest novels of the century.

A chapter is granted to Malraux because he renewed, not the technique, but the very substance of the novel, as he realized, around 1930, that revolution, torture, and sadism were the real climate of this century. His elliptical and jerky style conformed to this vision. He is essentially a novelist, although his characters seek neither love, money, nor happiness, but an increased consciousness of life, even as they raise their arm to kill. He wants to create, not characters, but, like any artist, a coherent, particular world, and proof of his success is that we accept the tragic world of *La Condition Humaine*, mistranslated as *Man's Fate*.

The next chapter is on Sartre, "the most extraordinary intelligence of his generation." His lasting contribution is in "the psychological acuteness of his description of moods." His ethical value lies in his belief in total responsibility and in his delineation of all the self-delusions we use to reject it along with the burden of liberty. His technique, the symbolism and interior monologues of *Nausea* and *The Age of Reason*, for instance, is grounded in his philosophy, and he improves on Dos Passos' simultaneism in *The Reprieve* by relating it to that philosophy.

In a chapter on "Feminine Literature," parsimonious praise is granted to "antediluvian" Colette, Françoise Sagan, "of ridiculous fame," and some others. Towering above them all, Simone de Beauvoir joins piercing intuition to philosophical depth. Her tendency toward philosophical didacticism does not detract from her warmth and emotional appeal. In fact, if we may add, it does present distinct advantages to the student of existentialism.

The chapter on Camus presents this novelist as a guide and as a moralist rather than as a master of the genre, in spite of the purity of his style. His message was acceptance of the absurd, i.e. the persistence of man's rationality facing the world's irrationality. *The Fall*, however, registered the defeat of this ideal and the drowning of self-accusation in the feeling of universal guilt. Obviously, Peyre is of the opinion, shared by this writer, that the works of Camus have been somewhat overpraised.

The final chapter deals with the main trends since World War II. The impact of the American novel is given as a message of vitality, even more than brutality. It is exemplified by Claude Simon, and others, while the tradition of Rabelais is upheld by Christiane Rochefort, that of Stendhal by Roger

Vaillant, the historical novel by Zoë Oldenbourg, the fantastic tale by Louis Pauwells, André Dhotel, and Pieyre de Mandiargues. At a most convenient moment, to fill up the mid-century lull, the three musketeers of the "New Novel," Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, and Michel Butor, were heralded with dogmatic insolence by a group of "New" critics, and vigorously endorsed abroad by teachers of French in quest of novelty. The New Novelists had, states Peyre, "the courage to court not only difficulty but sheer boredom." Sarraute's novels were rightly defined by Sartre as the minute development of the commonplace. Robbe-Grillet's statement that "the true writer has nothing to say but has only a manner of saying" leaves Peyre, and this writer, as skeptical as the average French reader, who vaguely thinks of the "New Novel" as having nothing to say and saying it as boringly as possible. Butor, "the most cerebral and the most modest of the New Novelists," is the only writer comparable to Sartre, whose phenomenological approach is used in his novels as in most "New" novels.

As we near our own *fin de siècle*, Violette Leduc and J. M. G. Le Clésio are opening to us wider perspectives in opposite directions. Violette Leduc in realism, Le Clézio in what appears to this writer as a post-existentialist attempt at cosmic consciousness. His first two novels, states Peyre, won for him the clamorous praise which the self-advertised New Novel failed to win.

The bibliographies at the end of each chapter, a "Panorama of Present-day French Novelists" giving precise information about some hundred and forty writers, make of Professor Peyre's lively, witty, and courageous book an indispensable work for students of French and comparative literature. The reader will find in it, with all the objectivity required of substantial analyses of form and substance, frank personal evaluations, offered mostly by way of parenthetical remarks or various forms of reticence, but also, if need be, a firm stance against established reputations or prevailing fashions.

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