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In Restoration and Eighteenth-Century studies, the Newer Criticism of the 1960's, with its distaste for exegesis of individual texts and historical reconstruction and its delight in synthesis and immediate relevance, has so far touched only Swift and Pope, whose absurdist and apocalyptical visions have been all too easily accommodated to the taste of the moment. Dryden and Johnson still await their rescue from the formalism, historicism, and neo-conservatism (or non-commitment) that enabled the literary Cold-Warriors of the last two decades to recover the Neoclassicists from the disfavor and neglect of the Nineteenth Century and After. Because of the lag that once existed between the academy and the avant-garde, it took scholars almost thirty years to catch up with T. E. Hulme and his followers, though somewhat less time to accept and establish the orthodoxy of the Fugitives and Agrarians. One factor which helped close those gaps, surely, was the retreat from radical and even liberal commitment after the Second World War (the period of Conservatism Revisited, The God that Failed, and The End of Ideology), a relationship that must some day be studied in depth. Although we may now scorn the political timidity of the 1940's and 50's, we academics can still acknowledge, from our narrower (broader?) perspective, the beneficent effects of disengagement, especially in the study of Renaissance and Augustan literature.

As his publisher rightly claims on the dust jacket of Dryden's Poetry, Professor Miner, whose "aim is to place Dryden firmly in his own, the seventeenth century, and to bring him into view by our century through critical interpretation" (p. xv), "enlarges on traditional treatments." If those "traditional treatments" have been based, essentially, on the willingness to take Dryden's ideas seriously and on their own grounds and to read his verse closely, most traditionalists would agree that their approach was inaugurated nearly a half-century (!) ago by Mark Van Doren's The Poetry of John Dryden and popularized by its reviewer, T. S. Eliot. One could argue, however, that it was begun more quietly by A. W. Verrall's Lectures on Dryden (1914; reprinted in 1963), which now seems less dated than Van Doren's work and remains one of the finest studies we possess. In any case, except for Louis Bredvold's The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden in 1934 (which has just this year been effectively replaced by Philip Harth's Contexts of Dryden's Thought) and for the important bibliographical and biographical works of Macdonald, Osborn, and others, it was not until the mid-1940's (when Van Doren's book was re-issued as John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry) that the annual bibliography in PQ began to record scores of articles devoted to the analysis of Dryden's thought, literary theory, and poetic mode—including, eventually, Miner's own valuable essays, "Dryden and the Issue of Human Progress" and "Some Characteristics of Dryden's Use of Metaphor." In the 1960's, following publication of the first volume of the California Works (of which Miner is an Associate Editor) and Kinsley's edition of the Poems,
full-length critical studies, consolidating, amplifying, and extending the treatments of the 1940's and 50's, appeared: Bernard Schilling's *Dryden and the Conservative Myth* (1961), Arthur Hoffman's *John Dryden's Imagery* (1962), and Alan Roper's *Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms* (1965).

Completed in 1964 and published in 1967, *Dryden's Poetry*, with its roots in the critical assumptions and methods of the post-war years, now addresses an audience rather different from the one it originally envisaged (insofar as younger scholars and graduate students are concerned):

Part One of the book is ... concerned with "Public and Private Experience," the literary and human assumptions that necessarily determine our regard of the poems. This point of departure is the more necessary because present-day conceptions of poetry are largely determined by quite different assumptions as to the poet's privacy, revulsion if not alienation from society, and recourse to a lonely integrity. Such assumptions would have made little sense to Dryden, who is not a Wastelander, a Romantic, or a Metaphysical poet. Most of his poetry is radically public and engaged, which is to say that it is personal in commitment rather than private in exploration.

(pp. xiii-xiv)

But the times they are a' changing; those "present-day conceptions" disappeared, or were profoundly disturbed, while Miner's manuscript was being prepared for publication. Poetry that is "radically public and engaged" certainly requires no apology in the later 1960's, while we are reading Lowell, Merwin, Bly, Goodman, and other poets whose revulsion proceeds from public involvement. At this moment, no doubt, a graduate student somewhere is hoping that General Hershey will allow him to complete a thesis arguing that Dryden is *Our Contemporary*—as pop as Pope, as sick as Swift. And if that thesis eventually appears in print, its anticipated audience will have probably reverted to aloof disengagement. The pendulum's arc gets shorter and shorter, the scholarly presses slower and slower.

Should the reader of this notice suspect that I am about to launch a new-leftish assault on *Dryden's Poetry*, more suited to the *New York Review of Books* than to an academic journal, I must make it clear that my sympathies are with Miner, that I largely accept the principles and the techniques of his "traditional treatment." But although I feel no conscious desire to close the generation-gap, to be more hip than the students nurtured by McLuhan and Sontag, Brown and Goodman, Ginsberg and Dylan, I must admit that this book has prompted troubled reflections upon our common aims and methods. Have we indeed exhausted the possibilities of exegesis and historicism? Are we beginning to repeat ourselves, to write about it and about it until all men doubt it? Should we swing (or rock) with the times?

Miner's Table of Contents quickly corrects the impression given by his title, which may have been deliberately intended to suggest a comparison with Van Doren's pioneering study. If only as a relief from donnish pretentiousness, and cuteness, one welcomes the straightforward simplicity of *Dryden's Poetry*. But that graceful clarity is misleading in its sense of inclusiveness. Van Doren's title was a fair one, since he managed to say at least a word about almost every work in the canon, offering, in effect, an anthology of selections with a running commentary (a valid technique for a preliminary and, as it turned out, a seminal study). But almost seven-tenths of Miner's book, which runs more than fifty
pages longer than Van Doren's, is devoted to the close reading of six texts (with occasional references to other works): Annu Mirabilis, All for Love, MacFlecknoe, Abolom and Achitophel, The Hind and the Panther, and Eleonora. The last two chapters treat the lyric poems and the Fables. Of the works examined in detail, only Annu Mirabilis and Eleonora have not been frequently and intensively discussed (not the least of the many excellences of Roper's Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms is the fruitful attention he pays to the less belabored items in the canon).

Dryden's Poetry, then, is not a wide-ranging exploration of Dryden's poetic career or the fundamental aspects of his style, except insofar as particular readings lead to generalizations touching basic concerns and strategies; it is a collection of readings which sometimes do illuminate each other, but which, by and large, exist in detachable isolation. There are connectives, such as repeated (but rather vague) references to Dryden's Christian humanism, or emphasis upon the use of controlling metaphors. Even so, almost any chapter could be removed without disturbing the book as a whole, or other chapters could have been included without altering the total effect. (This is not to suggest that Miner has followed the procedure all too common now in scholarly publication—only a few portions of the essays have appeared earlier in the journals.) However, we cannot argue with Miner's book simply because it offers neither a full survey (Van Doren) nor a carefully structured and unified thesis (Schilling). A group of essays on Dryden can certainly be selective and loosely organized (Verrall), in which case each chapter must stand or fall on its individual merits. Granting Miner his rights of selection and treatment, we are free to pick and choose from the collection offered us.

One of Miner's freshest and most important contributions is to be found in the first half of his long essay on The Hind and the Panther, where he uncovers and analyzes valuable sources for the beast imagery of Dryden's fable. Physically and critically, this section is indeed the center of his book. (The second part of the chapter, on "Faith," has already been superseded by Harth's study of the religious backgrounds.) In the very best tradition of "source-study," Miner's examination of the typologies of "sacred zoography" enlarges our understanding of Dryden's meaning and mode. It is only to be regretted that Miner did not carry further his remarks on the relevance of biblical exegesis to Dryden's fable, particularly as that tradition might inform an aspect of the poem at which Miner only briefly glances: "... we accept without surprise the fact that animals in the fable—the Panther and the Hind—should tell fables of their own. (Dryden of course makes sure that we move down the scale of nature to birds.)" (p. 152). The self-conscious allegory of The Hind and the Panther, and especially that cunning presentation of allegory-within-allegory, could owe something to Catholic approaches to exegesis, and could be contrasted, perhaps, with the discursive mode of the Anglican Religio Laici. But what Miner does do in this essay, he does superbly.

My other favorite portion of the book is the brilliant (and, in this case, all too brief) chapter on the Fables, in which Miner succeeds in demonstrating that the tales are linked, in the manner of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Like the discussion of animal imagery in The Hind and the Panther, this analysis should prove to be a seminal study, leading to further discoveries and refinements.

Of considerable value, too, if not altogether convincing in its procedure and
argument, is the explication of *Annus Mirabilis*. Miner's approach here is characteristic of his other readings. He allows that the poem may lack unity of action, but insists that “it possesses unity of poetic language and effect” (p. 9). He examines several passages in detail, in order to show how important elements “echo and re-echo” throughout the work. But in arguing that “the historical provides the center upon which his poetry turns” (p. 9), and that Dryden “is the first really important English poet to bring contemporary history into poetry” (p. 34), he curiously dismisses *Paradise Lost* as only “incidentally historical” (p. 9), and fails to consider (if only to discount) other possible contenders for priority. As for the intellectual substance of the poem, we are assured that “Dryden's point of view is that of the main orthodoxy of Christian humanism from patristic, medieval, and earlier Renaissance times” (p. 29). We are given, then, close readings of selected passages and broad generalizations about Dryden, poetry, and intellectual history. While agreeing that Miner has helped him read parts of *Annus Mirabilis*, the reader might still not be prepared to accept all the claims for the poem's centrality and coherence.

In *Dryden's Poetry* as a whole, as in its first chapter, the reader will often be illuminated, but just as often disturbed by the proximity and the intermittent flashes of its author. And in some chapters, notably those given to *MacFlecknoe*, *All for Love*, and *Absalom and Achitophel*, he will find little that is fresh or provocative (except for some passages on *Absalom* which are here reprinted).

The treatment of *MacFlecknoe*, for instance, insists upon the theatrical conception of the piece: “The stage may be said provisionally to furnish the poem with a general, unifying metaphor; it deals with what is acted but not real” (pp. 78-79). It would appear from this introduction that Miner is going to do for *MacFlecknoe* what Aubrey Williams did for its offspring, *The Dunciad*, but what follows are some scattered observations about the coronation ceremony ironically depicted in the poem (like all actions, to be sure, a dramatic one) and the unsurprising assertion (since this is a poem about a dramatist) that there is “constant reference to earlier and contemporary dramatists” (p. 80). Miner then proceeds to show how the language and action of the poem bespeak Dryden's adherence to proper values in religion, art, and monarchy. There is little to quarrel with in this reading (which is also one of the briefest and liveliest chapters in the book), but not very much that is now to be learned from it.

In the old-new critical fashion, Miner reads *All for Love* almost entirely in terms of its imagistic coherence as a means of perceiving its central conflict between private and public values. Plot, and especially Character, receive little significant attention. Quite rightly, perhaps, he barely mentions Shakespeare—rightly, since most of us have tired of that undergraduate set-piece in *Comparison & Contrast*. But surely some contrast can be helpful, particularly with respect to Miner's division between the public and private concerns of the play. Whereas Shakespeare's world offers genuine alternatives, as imaged by Rome and Egypt, in Dryden's the choice seems to have shrunken almost entirely to the private domain. It is significant, surely, that Octavius disappears from Dryden's play, where he is replaced by Octavia; that Cleopatra, Dryden's docorous queen, find a very close—at times even indistinguishable—competitor in the Roman matron; and that all the guilt of Shakespeare's Cleopatra is borne by Dryden's sexless (that is, incapable of private experience) Alexas. Adherence to the unities cannot by itself explain Dryden's success in shutting out the world at large. It is strange
that Dryden's play should be so much less political than Shakespeare's, that it should never attempt to offer power and engagement as an alternate to erotic privatism. Perhaps the answer to this seeming paradox might lie in the immediate context of Dryden's play (but here, as elsewhere, Miner, though dedicated to historicism, discusses the work in isolation). In the prevailing pattern of his essays, the detailed comments on style and (above all) imagery are followed by a free-swinging conclusion, when Miner asks himself, "What has been finally affirmed?" (p. 66; his note explains that the question "was put to me by my students in a seminar at Osaka University"). But must every tragedy be affirmative? If so, is Miner's solution—that the affirmation exists in the play's Romantic Liebestod—a meaningful one? Since Miner very neatly reveals the discrepancy between the Preface and the Play, he might also have considered the possible inconsistency between the Play and its (full) Title.

My comments on Miner's work have not been intended to comfort those who, on general principles, will object to his determination to identify and pursue the controlling metaphors of Dryden's poetry in order to demonstrate the integrity of individual texts, to his attempt to place Dryden in his own century, or to his use of sources and analogues. On the contrary, I have been troubled chiefly by his own failure to maintain and validate those principles and techniques. For example, although he asserts that "... we cannot read as if we were Dryden's contemporaries, and at our distance in time we are less involved in the events themselves than in their poetic expression, especially in the workings of the metaphor, difficult as they are to describe" (p. 110), he elsewhere decides that the lyric poems "do not raise important issues in important ways" (p. 286), and finally concludes that "his achievement is a highly varied and dignified expression of Christian humanism" (p. 323). He even tries, rather desperately, to provide topical relevance: "As always with Dryden, the principles [of "To his Honour'd Kinsman"] are royalist and conservative. They are perhaps obsolescent. They are also dignified, reasonable, and, mutatis mutandis, sufficiently alive to describe the working constitution of the government of the United States" (p. 323). And in the early pages of the book, the touchstone of "deeply felt life" is held against some poems (pp. 4, 10, and 12). It would appear that Miner himself is not altogether comfortable with the formalism and historicism upon which his "traditional treatments" depend.

If I have seemed harsh on this carefully written and gorgeously produced volume (the illustrations and binding are superb, and I noticed only one typographical error, on page five), it is because those of us still committed to critical exegesis based upon historical contexts are now clearly on the defensive. We have been told that most texts have been read to death, that "symbol manipulation" is out, and that we must move beyond mere explication to larger and more exciting syntheses. But what Maynard Mack wrote about Pope studies some years ago (in a review of Earl R. Wasserman's Pope's Epistle to Bathurst, MLN, LXXVI [December 1961]) may still be relevant to many authors, including Dryden:

The recovery of Pope's poetry that is taking place in this century seems to be following, like the recovery of Donne's, a more or less predictable pattern. At first, a considerable period of exploration and general definition, in which the chief subject of attention is the distinctive mode of the work, meaning by mode both the imaginative content it summons up
and the techniques it commands in doing so. . . . What in all probability we look forward to now is a period of closer scrutiny of individual poems as wholes—exercises of explication and historical reconstruction. . . . For the oncoming generation, *hoc opus, hic labor est*—and *labor* it may prove indeed, since it requires the recapturing of Pope's best work poem by poem, and possibly even passage by passage. . . .

Miner has demonstrated the truth of that proposition in certain sections of *Dryden's Poetry*, but, unfortunately, the whole is not greater than those parts.

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Every teaching scholar is a member of two institutions, his university and his profession. Because the two are not coterminous, scholars must publish in order to communicate with their professional colleagues. If the two institutions were physically identical, if the profession were no larger than any one university, much of the present scholarly publication in literature would not be necessary. A scholar with an idea to share could invite his colleagues to lunch, or call a meeting, or send an essay by campus mail. Physical publication—printing and binding—might then be reserved for works valuable enough to be preserved in the library. When scholarly publication must both preserve important documents of knowledge and provide an academic forum, however, articles of the most tentative and limited kind become physically indistinguishable from works which are the culmination of years of study. Lovejoy's "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm" and the latest reading of "The Road Not Taken" sit side by side on the library shelf.

The spurious equality which print confers on all academic utterance causes some college administrators to regard all publication as equally valuable, pound for pound. Conversely, it persuades some students that, pound for pound, all such writing is equally valueless. Nor is the confusion restricted to readers (or non-readers); both writers and publishers often seem to have forgotten who their proper audience is and what scholarly publication is for. When prestige and promotion are the issue, writers understandably consider "books" more important than "articles"; and when scholarly publication becomes a business (however unprofitable), university presses understandably start looking for marketable books. What began in academic Eden as scholarly conversation has got itself mixed up in the fallen world with commerce and status.

James Miller's *Quests Surd and Absurd* seems to have sprung directly out of just such confusion. To begin with, more than half of the material contained in this volume already appears on the shelves of our libraries, in bound volumes of *PMLA, The South Atlantic Quarterly* and similar publications. Which is not to say that essays should not be collected and reprinted, especially if they offer something together that they do not offer separately, or if some newly added material alters them substantially by creating a new context for them, or if the
author is such an influential thinker that we are likely to want to read his ideas on several otherwise unrelated subjects. Since James Miller, like most of us, has not yet attained enough scholarly eminence to create a demand for a collection of his articles, we must look to the essays themselves for reasons why they should appear together.

Those reasons are not immediately apparent. Because the essays "were written over a period of years, under a variety of circumstances," they do not "support the weight of a thundering thesis," as the Preface puts it; nor do they provide "a key to American literature . . . especially in the simplified form of a single image (The Garden) or character (Adam or Eve) or relationship (white and dark males)" (p. vii). Apparently Miller is not satisfied to have avoided the danger of "oversimplifying" his own book, he must imply that Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, R. W. B. Lewis and Leslie Fiedler have been less fortunate with theirs.

In place of a thesis, Miller gives us a theme—"the theme of the quest," which allows the individual essays "to follow their own by-paths into their own labyrinths of complexity" (p. ix), as the author explains it. Although it is not easy to identify the particular "quest" in each essay, it is not entirely impossible, either. The essay on Salinger describes Holden's quest for a world of love; the three essays on Whitman discuss the poet's quest for identity, spirit and mystical union; "Emily Dickinson's Bright Orthography" describes the quest of scholars to find the real Emily Dickinson in the poems and out; and "Poe's 'Ulalume' Resurrected" charts Miller's quest for a reason to take that poem seriously. The problem, of course, is that by the time the "quest theme" has been interpreted loosely enough to cover all these matters, it has lost its already limited unifying potential.

If the republished essays in this volume derive little mutual benefit from their shared theme, they get equally little assistance from the new material in the book. The introductory essay on "The American Novel" discovers in Post-war fiction four "distinctive and significant" elements: nightmare settings, alienated heroes, quests for identity and sick comedy. It is difficult to imagine that Miller could consider these observations a "discovery," but since he does not mention the work of Ihab Hassan, Jonathan Baumbach and others who have written extensively on modern American fiction, the ideas may be new to him. The rest of the new material—essays on Faulkner, Edith Wharton and Willa Cather (whom he calls "Wharton" and "Cather"), Whitman, and Hawthorne and Melville—might have made moderately interesting articles in critical journals, but they do not turn this volume into a book, in any but the physical sense.

One might feel less inclined to quarrel with the book for its lack of coherence if the essays included did not actually weaken each other by their contiguity. In the Preface Miller offers his "loosely related" essays with the insistence that no "key" to American literature exists, but in the essay on Edith Wharton and Willa Cather he asserts that "the basic American mythic drama is the conflict of East and West, the collision of Civilization and Frontier. In this myth Europe functions as symbol of the lost past, of a cultural Garden from which the American has been excluded by his eating the Apple of the Innocent West" (p. 91). In an essay on the religious attitudes of Hawthorne and Melville, he remarks, "... it would be closer to the truth of their fiction to call them psychological rather than religious writers" (p. 208); but in the next essay he
ascribes to Hawthorne the feeling that "To tamper with the soul of a fellow creature is to interfere with, perhaps desecrate, that which above all is God's province" (p. 225) and identifies Ahab's sin as an attempt "to take over God's role in the universe" (p. 228).

Because it is so difficult to find a persuasive reason why these essays should have been reprinted together, one is impelled to look for a reason why they should have been reprinted at all, particularly without enough revision to bring them abreast of current scholarship. In his essay on the "theme" of male friendship in Melville's life and art, Miller mentions Leslie Fiedler's "recent essay on American culture entitled "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey" (1948) and proceeds to outline its argument. A survey of books about Emily Dickinson (whom he calls "Emily") ends with Charles Anderson's Stairway of Surprise (1960) and calls for more penetrating studies of the poet. It is as if the author meant to give us a nostalgic reminder of what the world was like before Fiedler finished Love and Death in the American Novel and Clark Griffith wrote The Long Shadow. Similarly, although it is perhaps understandable that Miller's 1958 essay comparing "Song of Myself" and "Four Quartets" as mystical poems might have overlooked Donald Davie's rather convincing suggestion, offered in 1956, that "The Dry Salvages" is in fact a parody of Whitman, it is less understandable that Davie's essay should remain unknown to Miller nine years later, especially since it is readily available to students in the "Twentieth Century Views" collection of criticism on Eliot.

Because these essays, paradoxically, contribute less to scholarship in their present form than they did when they first appeared, the motive behind republication must be sought, not in the brighter realms of disinterested scholarship, but in the murky byways of status and trade. The University of Chicago Press obviously thought there was a "market" for this book, and James Miller apparently considered it a proper addition to his bibliography. What that market might be is a puzzle; it is difficult to imagine an audience that needs to be told that Lie Down in Darkness resembles The Sound and the Fury, and yet is ready for this challenging intelligence about "Little Gidding": "The poet who began with 'I' concludes with 'we.' There is the tacit assumption that each man may—or must—travel for himself 'the way' and create out of his transfigured self the opportunity of 'discovery' which in reality is an essential knowledge of the known" (p. 124).

One's motives for publishing are never pure, God knows, but we should at least remind ourselves of the original aims of scholarly publication every time we feel the urge to drop another volume in an ominously swelling sea of print.

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In a foreword to the recent second edition of his The Philosophy of Literary Form, Kenneth Burke remarked with a quiet petulance that, "There is a quite
understandable hankering after works that, if reduced to a slogan, are in effect saying, 'Down with politics, up with apocalypse.' Ingenious writers such as Norman O. Brown in one groove and Marshall McLuhan in another are in their different ways feeding this appetite." Burke hit on two of the essential names; while waiting (if we were) for a Symbolic of Motives to complete Burke's system, (William H. Rueckert argued in his book on Burke in 1963 that it was already complete), we were confronted with such syncretic and "resolving" statements as Life Against Death and Understanding Media, not to mention Northrop Frye's stunning Anatomy of Criticism. Where has the Burke of Hyman's Armed Vision gone? Burke, it seems, must encompass McLuhan, Frye, and Brown if his system is to be truly systematic. Has time passed him by? Is he really a minor if interesting figure of the Thirties to whom apocalypse (and it throbs in every dissertation these days) is a repellent notion because he seeks solutions in time and not eternity? I don't believe that Kenneth Burke is yet a merely historical figure even though Freudian bread and Marxist marmalade no longer make our main critical meals.

We should realize that Life Against Death was followed by the dubious card-shuffling of Love's Body, Understanding Media by the Happening of The Medium is the Massage, the Anatomy by a series of pedagogic reductions of itself. These "systems" have not been strengthened; in fact they have revealed (we should be glad) their essential groping anarchies and uncertain freedoms. Likewise Burke. We should stop looking for fugal consistencies in his work, although more than the others he hankers after orders and completions. Some may even find them there; but is that why we value him? I think the only "systems" in the literary study of our time have come from beyond literature, in those unspoken dogmas—religious, social, political—from which the critic was operating the better to pursue his "autotelic" endeavor: In Wellek-Warren's helpful but limited Theory of Literature, in Wellek's scolding histories, in the Brooks-Wimsatt survey of critical theories and practices. These have been system-built, but not the visionary books, and not truly the work of Kenneth Burke whose movement from a theory of symbolic action to "dramatism" is a creative method, not a system.

The collection under examination here is Burke's first book-length appearance since the rather puzzling and difficult The Rhetoric of Religion (1961). It will neither allay suspicions nor confirm doubts, but neither is it a merely random gathering. It reaches toward definitive statements in "Five Summarizing Essays," remarkably lucid, even risky defenses of his position: 1. Definition of Man 2. Poetics in Particular, Language in General 3. Terministic Screens 4. Mind, Body, and the Unconscious and finally, and a bit irrelevantly, 5. Coriolanus—and the Delights of Faction. Burke sums up his definition of man in an odd gnomic would-be poem splendidly illustrative of the later mantic critic he has become:

Man is
the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal
inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)
separated from his natural condition by instruments of his
own making
goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order
and rotten with perfection.
It should be apparent, I think, that Burke, like the poet-prophet of the Romantic period, has always sought an ultimate language, sliding, reverberant, pure in itself but capable of endless extension even as it sometimes moves to the autodidactic. He is no poet however—despite his collection of poems. His lifelong impulse in criticism has been to put back into the poem precisely what the poet, qua poet, would leave out, giving much of Burke’s prose the look of a gigantic failed epic poem. The bursts into song at the end of some of these essays show a mind stretching toward poetry; the essays themselves, to use his own term, dance an attitude around language, using everything they can that the wordy tabernacle swing open to show us just what our “symbolicity” is. The famous early dictum that the critic may use anything he needs is the source of Burke’s troubles with the formalists, and, I think, bedevils him too when he seems to hang on his own terminology. But if the poem is an act of communion as the critical text is an act of communication, (an old distinction of Tate’s), then Burke never ceases to try the largest communication he can possibly make.

An essay, “Formalist Criticism: Its Principles and Limits,” concludes this volume with a clear defense of his position against (quietly) Cleanth Brooks on the one hand and (angrily) René Wellek on the other. But his apparent failure to come to terms with Frye is puzzling. A 1958 review of the Anatomy (not included here) was appreciative, if remote, but his remark in an essay published in 1960 seems to me to call exactly for the Anatomy itself: “The attempt to codify principles . . . would be a notable step forward, but one for which I find slight reason to have hopes, literary criticism being the haphazard pursuit it now generally is and is expected to be.” Perhaps “codify” is the questionable word here, but only Frye and Burke have attempted in our time a major clearing of the critical ground without setting up or secretly adhering to dogmas of taste and judgment because only they have looked beyond narrow and worried value-systems. Frye’s “polemical introduction” is Burkian in its purpose and courage; like Burke, too, he runs the scales of his terminology easily (more easily, I think), not building frigid masses of meaning but shaping a non-dogmatic perspective on “the whole body of literature.” Burke’s temper tends to the neo-religious as Frye’s does not, but both writers, as they widen the congruous and make relevant the unlikely, demonstrate and deepen the wonder of literature itself. One wishes that part of what has been called Burkology would include the study of William Blake and his discursive fulfilment in Northrop Frye.

That Burke can do sensitive explication and detailed and fructifying analyses is demonstrated in this collection by essays on Kubla Khan and on “The Vegetable Radicalism of Theodore Roethke.” Of course, Coleridge has always been a major and controversial means for Burke’s speculations; the many-motived poet about whom we know so much (though no good biography exists) is almost too perfect for Burkological analysis. Yet Kubla Khan serves better in some ways than The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in unlocking the creative process and exhibiting the Burkian triad of fall, rebirth, and redemption, that dialectic at the center of man’s symbolic action. As for Roethke, no one, to my knowledge, has come closer to the complex motives and textures of his poetry; what Roethke “reduced” for poetic effect, Burke restores for critical speculation. Let the system go; criticism of this order is rare enough.

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The quirk of fate that permits two important books on the same subject to appear in the same year would have amused the writers of picaresque novels, all of them connoisseurs of the quirky, disinclined to puzzle over questions of cause. If each of these two books is limited and partial, it is the almost inescapable result of their having undertaken to deal with a category so complete with methodological perils as picaresque. Yet whatever their limitations, despite their differences from each other, and despite their rigor and discipline, it is one of the considerable virtues of both books that they convey a genuine pleasure in the random, chancey, insecure, and vitally exuberant world of picaresque fiction, qualities that make that fiction more congenial to our own imaginations than to any other of the past century.

As for the methodological perils, the two books, with their aversions, cautions, and antipathies taken together, provide a rather complete view of why picaresque has been so slippery a category. It is far from satisfactory to name a sub-genre of fiction according to the nature of its main character, especially when the word that describes such a character is translated variously and imperfectly into English. Accordingly, both Parker and Miller wrestle with the concept of picaro and with the word itself; indeed it is in the process of rejecting those unsatisfactory English equivalents such as "rogue" that Parker presents the pivotal concept of his book, the "delinquency" which he sees as best expressing the sense of picaro in English and as best expressing the typical action of picaresque fiction. It is far from satisfactory for the one formal epithet "episodic" to have characterized the structure of picaresque fiction for so long. And accordingly, both writers resist formal simplifications. No one who has read the subtle and sensitive interpretation of La vida del buscon by Parker will be satisfied with that single word "episodic" again. And no one who had read the analyses by Miller of the various structural devices of picaresque form will believe that all such novels are formally alike. The cluster of causes adduced by past historians of picaresque—those easy generalizations about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish society, for example, and such mystical conceptions as "the Spanish character"—are sifted through and intelligently revised by Parker and acknowledged by Miller only to be dismissed. Finally, the problem of determining the basic, paradigmatic body of works that picaresque ought to embrace is the object of Miller's study; and implicit in his treatment is the assumption that this most basic of methodological problems, the reality and identity of the genre, has not been satisfactorily faced before, and indeed he is right. In the case of Parker, different as his method is, one notes the same exasperation at having, after all these years, to perform the basic work of the critic who would use generic terms at all, to tell what works a generic category refers to and how those works are united within that category.

Parker's method is to establish the thematic center of picaresque fiction, namely "delinquency," to relate picaresque novels to each other within those cultural
periods in which they flourished, and to discover, in a broadly eclectic way, what delinquency means when given dramatic amplitude in each work. It is a method which demands the ability to move easily through the literatures of Spain, Germany, England, and France of two centuries, a versatility that Parker performs knowingly and gracefully. The problems occur with the category of delinquency. It becomes the single defining characteristic of the genre: Lazarillo de Tormes is not really picaresque because Lazaro is not sufficiently delinquent; Guzmán de Alfarache, although a formal maverick, is the paradigm picaresque novel because of its exploration of delinquency; Bunyan's Life and Death of Mr. Badman is picaresque because Mr. Badman is, in certain ways, a classic delinquent. In the course of his analyses, Parker provides consistent insights into style and structure, psychological values and formal techniques; implicitly he shows that the coherence of picaresque fiction as its own kind of genre lies in a dozen different characteristics, not simply in the life style of the central character. Yet he does not make explicit and systematic this sense of just how rich and complicated the essential nature of the genre really is.

Miller does make the nature of the genre explicit and systematic. He assembles a canon of paradigm works, different, incidentally, from Parker's. Miller does not doubt, for example, that Lazarillo is a picaresque novel. He then describes the novels according to a number of formal categories: plot, rhythm, fortune, internal instability of character, point of view, style, ending. The novels submit unevenly to this kind of formal comparison. The sections on rhythm and fortune are illuminating and precise; the section on style must depend too heavily on an impressionistic vocabulary consisting of such words as "jagged"; and of those places at which Miller's formal concerns oblige him to deal in some depth with the intersection of work and culture, his discussion is least persuasive, in dealing, for example, with the religious aspects of Guzmán, a subject on which Parker is thorough, sensitive, and persuasive. What has happened, then, is that the two books not only supplement each other, they correct each other, Miller's book providing the rigorous attention to generic identity that the category of picaresque so badly needs and that Parker's book does not provide, Parker's book providing the cultural and historical depth as well as the interpretive canniness that Miller's book lacks.

It is enough, certainly, for these two books to have superseded the work of Chandler, now sixty years old, to have rendered superfluous much of the scholarship on picaresque between Chandler's and the present, to have revived the importance of picaresque fiction, and to have provided a conceptual clarity for its critical treatment which it has not had before. Still, picaresque is one of those genres, like Gothic fiction, that force us to reflect on their scope. All right, one concedes to Parker; it is disastrously imprecise to call Candide and Don Quixote picaresque, not to mention countless more recent novels that have something to do with tricks and travel. It is important to define one's terms; and in any very strict application of the term, picaresque fiction died in the last half of the eighteenth century. Still, more than a few readers will pick up Parker's book hoping to find some insight into the legacy of picaresque for fiction ever since. Miller does address himself to the question, deciding that Ellison's Invisible Man comes closest, among recent novels, to classic picaresque form. But no reader is likely to be satisfied with the two pages which Miller gives to the subject. Some day we will have a book as respectful of the limits and the integrity of
the great tradition of picaresque fiction as these, but also audacious enough to connect that tradition with the work, say, of Bellow and Grass, without distortion and oversimplification. It should be an exciting book.

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One of the curious facts of the current literary scene is the sudden interest in satire since the mid-1950's. As with most critical phenomena, the motives for such an interest are often as complex as the form itself. Most studies of satire are responses in a number of different ways to the psychological attractiveness of a mode that has retained its ritualistic, incantatory quality from its vatic origins to the present. Many of these studies are also related to the persistent attempts of critics to comprehend the uniqueness of neoclassical art, particularly in terms of the subtle aesthetic and socio-psychological pressures that were peculiar to Augustan satire. Or many of the more recent books on satire may very well be a response to the fact that in satire we have the only "genre" that has thus far defied definition; for defining satire has, in effect, become—even in the wake of Northrop Frye—the last legitimate frontier of generic criticism. Whatever other motives may lie behind Ronald Paulson's latest book, it seems clear that with the publication of *The Fictions of Satire*, even that last frontier appears ready to dissolve, for Paulson has not only provided new insights into the peculiar manner in which satire functions, but has come up with the best definition so far of what satire is.

The achievement of this book is attributable in no small measure to Paulson's ability to function within the broadest possible contexts. He approaches satire from the perspective of an empirical critic whose conclusions stem from a first-hand knowledge of satiric writing from Horace to Evelyn Waugh. His point of departure is the dominant, unforgettable image of violence (ultimately evil) at the center of almost every satire, and which, together with related images or scenes, becomes the particular vehicle or fiction through which the attack is conveyed. Of the many such images-scenes-fictions, there are several which Paulson finds indigenous to satire as a genre and from which, he claims, most subsequent satire derives: the obtuse outsider vs. the aware insider (the Horatian mode), the knave vs. the fool or innocent (the Juvenalian mode), and the speaker's relationship to fools, knaves, and the reader. In Horace, the speaker is at the center of the satire and is an Everyman whose moral presence is intended to make the reader feel complicity in the evil. In Juvenal, the speaker is simply a point of view, an ideal; he has no contact with fools or knaves and speaks only to an elite few; the reader is made to feel repugnance at the evil.

These relationships with the speaker are really the most crucial of the indigenous fictions that Paulson isolates, for from them stem the basic distinctions which help define the genre: satire can be rhetorical (Horatian) or representational (Juvenalian), admonitory and subjective (Horatian) or presentational and objective (Juvenalian), or centrifetal in movement (from the surrounding evil
to the protagonist speaker—the Horatian mode) as opposed to centrifugal (outward toward the evil—the Juvenalian mode). In Lucian, Petronius, Apuleius, and the picaresque writers, Paulson discovers variations of these fictions, and focuses on those out of which the great satires of Dryden and Swift ultimately evolved—Lucian’s opposition to evil of the real (rather than the good, as in Juvenal); Petronius’ reversal of the Horatian exposure of the fool by showing the fool to be a real, suffering human being; Apuleius’ uniting of the centripetal and centrifugal movements; and the picaresque author’s conversion of the Juvenalian fool-knave relationship into the servant-master relationship.

However illuminating this attempt to impress generic coherence upon the traditional mixed bowl of fruit, what strikes one as the most original of Paulson’s insights is his conception of the satirist as an integral function of the assault upon evil. What frees Paulson to explore the satirist’s role is his unspoken assumption that the critic can more easily discuss the range of satiric speakers only after he has liberated himself from the unfortunately prevalent view that there can be only two satirists—the actual author and a narrator-persona. Paulson then proceeds to place the satiric protagonist along a relatively broad spectrum, from hero to fool or knave, with the morally ambiguous satirist falling somewhere in the middle. In doing this, Paulson has revealed the limitations of persona-oriented approaches to satire, for the five satiric protagonists on his spectrum can function either as ironic masks or as fully-realized characters, depending upon the author’s intent and the particular fiction employed.

Of more controversial interest, however, is Paulson’s insistence that the Augustan satirists turned to the Aeneid and Paradise Lost specifically for a protagonist most emblematic of the evil they were responding to. These epics not only helped shape the “very nearly epic” form of Augustan satire, but provided a stock figure (Turnus or Satan) whose purpose was to subvert the hero; and it was this process of subversion that defined in turn a shift in emphasis in Augustan satire from satiric protagonist to antagonist—a shift from a satiric fiction dominated by the ambiguous but ultimately good Panurge to a fiction dominated by the ambiguous but ultimately satanic Achitophel. So strong is the influence of Paradise Lost in this respect that Paulson sees the subject of Augustan satire as “almost always religious,” even when ostensibly about other matters.

This last point, it seems to me, weakens what is otherwise a convincing attempt to define the uniqueness of much neoclassical satire. To be sure, much of the effect of Augustan poetry depends on its allusiveness; there is no doubt too that allusions constantly modify meaning in Augustan poetry. But to insist that allusions to Paradise Lost define the religious subject matter of Augustan satire is to equate in some absolute way the functions of vehicle and tenor. He is quite correct, for example, in seeing Achitophel as a satanic antagonist who was inspired in part by Milton’s Satan, and who embodied the essential evil in Absalom and Achitophel. But the Miltonic echoes and Dryden’s use of a biblical allegory are ultimately subordinate to the specifically political function of the satire. The religious substance of Absalom and Achitophel is valid simply as a rhetorical ploy, which succeeds only insofar as it advances a political end. And Achitophel fails not because of the religious or epic necessities of the fiction, but because of the political—because he embodies the political discord of a rebel pitted against the political harmony of a Davidic king.

With Swift, Paulson focuses on the most radical of the modifications of the
earlier satiric fictions—the disappearance of the satirist and the emergence of the obtuse protagonist as the dominant element in the fiction, a protagonist unique to Tory satire in his isolation from his satirist-creator. He is what Paulson has imaginatively labeled a "middleman"—a moral and intellectual peddler of other people's ideas. Although this concept of an isolated middleman helps in some ways to focus the satire of the tracts and *A Tale of a Tub*, its real value lies in its applicability to the enigmatic Gulliver, a figure derived partly from Lucian's *Nigrinus*, partly from the picaresque, and partly from the villain of the tracts. The result is a character who comes close to the hero of Paulson's spectrum, or if not a hero at least a kind of Everyman. "He is much more normative than Swift's earlier villains, and this has been brought about by the shifting of emphasis from the wickedness of Gulliver's imitation of his masters to the consequences of his imitation: imprisonment, insecurity, betrayal, and even madness." The point to be made, of course, is not so much that Paulson's conception of Gulliver moves the *Travels* away from comedy and toward tragedy, or away from pure satiric attack and toward an attempt to define man's nature (Pope's *Essay on Man*, after all, also deals with figurative imprisonment, insecurity, and betrayal as a consequence of action), but that the complexity of satire as a genre is defined as much by the multiple functions of a character such as Gulliver as it is by the subtle manipulation of rhetorical techniques. If Ronald Paulson has not solved all of the problems that still plague us about Swift, he has at least forced us—like his Swiftian hero—to reconsider what happens in Swift—and satire generally—from a number of challenging new perspectives.

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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 from distribution, and only corrected copies have been circulated.

The Editor