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# Book Reviews

Criticism Editors

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*The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism: Ethics and Imagery from Swift to Burke*, by Paul Fussell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. Pp. xvi + 314. 55*s*.

Students of eighteenth-century England's literature and thought are familiar with a group of words and phrases often used to suggest various aspects of the period. *Humanism* is usually not in the group, although interest in man and the nature of man in that century is universally recognized. Now that Professor Paul Fussell in *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism* has fully embodied humanism and its imagery, one may expect *humanism* to take its rightful place among the terms used to describe the eighteenth century.

The preface clarifies several points. In this study of six writers—Pope, Swift, Johnson, Reynolds, Gibbon, and Burke, whose writings cover the century from its first decade to its last—their similarities are emphasized; the differences have been sufficiently noted, and the reader is expected to have them in mind. If Gibbon seems out of place, his similarities to Swift and Burke show that he belongs with the group. Fussell's aim was to write a work of interpretation, suggestion, and recommendation rather than one of literary or historical scholarship. Two critical assumptions are stated: since the mind works by means of metaphor and symbol, imagery is in literature the "live constituent" of "shaped imagination"; habitual recourse to certain image-systems seems to shape or strongly predispose the mind in certain directions, even when other directions would be equally possible and meaningful. *Augustan* is expanded from its usual meaning of the age of Pope and Swift "to suggest the 'orthodox' ethical and rhetorical tradition wherever found in the eighteenth century."

The book consists of two complementary and closely interrelated essays, each containing six chapters. Part I, "The Humanist Conception of Man," is ideological: "What is 'Humanism,'" "The Human Attributes," "The Uniformity of Human Nature," "The Depravity of Man," "The Redemptive Will," "The Paradox of Man." This first part is the solid ethical foundation. The crucial first chapter effectively analyzes and illustrates humanism as it was viewed in the eighteenth century and as it is treated in this book. Part II, "The Realization of Humanism: Images and Motifs," is almost twice as long as Part I. The chapters are: "Moral Warfare: Strategy and Tactics," "The City of Life and the City of Literature," "'The Wardrobe of a Moral Imagination,'" "'The Vermin of Nature': Hierarchy and Moral Contempt," "The Open—and Ironic—Road," "Elegiac Action." A useful nine-page index is provided.

The compact headings suggest diversity within unity, and this view is accurate. Only a complete reading, however, can reveal the extent to which the unified emphasis is carried. Part I can of course stand alone as a discussion of ideas, but its implications are expanded and made specific in Part II. The full import of Part II can be realized only against the background of Part I. This organic structure is one of the strong points of the book.

Another is the suggestiveness and diversity of reference, allusion, and quotation. As the center of the book, Johnson is quoted much more frequently than any of the other five major authors. Among these, differences in emphasis are attributable to the bulk of their writing and the degree of its centrality to the humanist tradition. Writers from ancient Greece and Rome and others from all periods, including the twentieth century, are frequently quoted or mentioned. Many eighteenth-century writers are used for illustration, comparison, and contrast; some of them can be related to the humanist tradition, but both Fielding and Horace Walpole, who are not among the humanists, are used for illustration. Equally suggestive, even when not developed, is the contrast between the "aristocratic orthodoxy" of the line of Hooker, Milton, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, and T. S. Eliot, and the "progressivist heterodoxy" of the line of Bacon, Defoe, Benjamin Franklin, Darwin, and John Dewey. Such allusions simultaneously broaden and deepen the discussion. At the beginning of Part II an observation serves the same purpose. Fussell thinks that "a critic with a turn for satire could spend a happy lifetime exposing" the many "vulgar errors" that are abroad about eighteenth-century literature. One of the most objectionable, because it inhibits careful reading, is "the assumption that this literature somehow operates more 'discursively' than most. That is, that it cosily domesticates itself within the world of 'prose,' largely cut off from the 'imaginative' and 'creative' world of metaphor and symbol." Finding such a view unacceptable, Fussell concludes: "One cannot choose to use language symbolically or non-symbolically: the only question is whether one is going to use symbolic conventions well or ill."

Mature scholarship, fresh insights, and a pleasant and easy style are effectively combined in a synthesis-interpretation of eighteenth-century thought and literature. No one should be surprised if this excellent book suggests related or parallel studies in the eighteenth century or other periods.

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*Romantic Poets and the Epic Tradition*, by Brian Wilkie. Madison and Milwaukee: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965. Pp. xii + 276. $6.50.

Although there have been numerous critical monographs and articles on individual "long" poems in the Romantic Period (perhaps the most notable of which in recent years are George Ridenour's *The Style of "Don Juan"* and Herbert Lindenberger's *On Wordsworth's "Prelude"*), it was not until 1960 with the publication of Karl Kroeber's *Romantic Narrative Art* that the directions for serious discussion of the *idea* of the long poem in the period were laid out. Unfortunately, however, Kroeber did not pursue very far or altogether satisfactorily the patterns and various strains of Romantic narrative poetry, and consequently his book is alternately suggestive and unilluminating. Professor Wilkie's book is, in a sense, neither suggestive nor unilluminating: its ultimate value is not so much in what it has to say about the "epic tradition" (and the particular relationship between certain long poems in the Romantic period and

that tradition) as it is in his analyses of the long poems themselves–Landor's *Gebir* (which we all too often forget was published in the same year as the *Lyrical Ballads*), Southey's *Joan of Arc*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*, Keats' *Hyperion*, and Byron's *Don Juan*.

This "ultimate value," which is not quite consonant with the promise of the title of the book, is a direct result of the uncomfortable vagueness and uncertainty of Wilkie's aims as he states them in his preface: (1) "That the epic tradition was alive in the English Romantic age and has *some* bearing on the meaning of several important long poems of that age" (p. vii–my emphasis); (2) "my main purpose is–neither to prove nor to disprove this generalization or any other, but rather to discuss individual poems in which the epic intention is central. I wish to treat these poems for their own sakes . . ." (p. vii). Wilkie seems to be saying, disconcertingly, that his book has a thesis, yet it really doesn't, and that it doesn't make much difference one way or the other. He goes on to say in the Preface, for example, that he will "make some general points about the epic and literary history" but that these "are far less important than to determine what the particular poems are doing and saying" (p. vii). Finally, he admits on the one hand that to some extent "this book can be read as a collection of essays" but that they are all "finally unified" by virtue of his discussing the poems "in the light of the epic tradition" (p. viii). This tentativeness and uncertainty are accentuated by the repetitiousness of observation and argument in the first chapter, "The Paradox of the Epic."

What Wilkie says in that chapter about the "epic tradition" itself provides a further difficulty, for by his insistence on the term "tradition" rather than "genre" to describe the main stream of epic (a distinction which he argues cogently and convincingly), he himself has made it almost impossible to see the individual poems he treats as closely and meaningfully relatable to each other by virtue of their being "epics" in this sense. If attempts to "define" the epic are doomed to failure (because all of the most generally accepted epics do not conform equally to the definition), to begin with "accepted" examples in which certain "traits or devices," as Wilkie calls them (p. 9), may be discerned and thus identified as characteristic is a notably unhelpful procedure in the determination, as Wilkie promises us, of the "meaning" of certain long poems in the Romantic period. Thus while we can be persuaded by the argument that the literary epic properly should be thought of as a tradition (which Vergil launched through his synthesis in the *Aeneid* of Homer's techniques in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*)–or perhaps even as a *Gestalt*, I am not persuaded that Wilkie's use of that tradition or *Gestalt* improves or fortifies his own reading of Landor, Southey, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Byron's long poems, or that it substantially modifies a sensitive reading achieved without reference to epic at all.

And some of Wilkie's readings are sensitive indeed, as if he himself were more at home with poetic texts than with concepts. For example, "man seen through the long vistas which lead to numinous mystery or the dim recesses of time," which he announces at one point (p. 27) as distinctive and peculiar to the epic, is simply not–nor is it equally inherent in the poems Wilkie chooses to discuss.

The chapter on Southey and Landor, which opens the book proper, is disappointing (it gives, I think, all too short shrift to *Gebir* in favor of *Joan of Arc*, *Thalaba*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and *Madoc*), possibly because it is the only chapter which relies heavily upon Wilkie's thesis about the epic and the tradi-

tion's being "alive" in the Romantic period. It is essentially a chapter on the Romantic anti-epic, or, as Wilkie calls *Joan* and *Gebir*, the "non-comic mock-epic" (p. 57), the main emphasis in which is upon Southey's and Landor's flat repudiation of the past in favor of a strident revolutionariness. Much of the Wordsworth chapter rehearses what is already known and thought about *The Prelude*; and it is also hampered by the fact that a new element is rather suddenly added to the earlier-listed "essentials" of the epic—"an epic pattern," which Wilkie defines unhelpfully as "progress toward a goal" (p. 77). This phrase Wilkie modulates in a more helpful way a few pages later into "epic mission and ordeal," the critical promise of which, I think, dissolves as we see Wilkie's analysis depending finally upon analogies to patterned "charismatic experiences" in the Bible, Dante, Spenser, and Milton. Further, in his attempt to establish the presence in *The Prelude* of the "traits and devices" characteristic of the epic tradition, Wilkie is led into the critical insecurity of phrases like "a kind of," "Wordsworth may have been trying to suggest," "Wordsworth's equivalent of," and so on.

The chapter on Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* is an important one, if for no other reason than Wilkie's bravery in essaying a full analysis of this too-neglected poem. If the section begins lamely (with a list of "aspects of the poem . . . reminiscent of earlier epics"), and a too-strenuous attempt to show that Milton and Spenser are pervasive and decisive influences on the poem, it closes with an excellent analysis of the various tensions, and kinds of tension, which inform the poem. In the Keats chapter, Wilkie all but surrenders his thesis by establishing the considerably less-than-crucial significance of the epic tradition in the understanding of *Hyperion*. His major contribution in this largely derivative analysis is his dubious claim that "In fact Keats is drawing on the Miltonic *theme* [Wilkie's emphasis], the theme of lost innocence" (in addition, of course, to his stylistic and structural debt to *Paradise Lost*); but out of this assertion emerges a notably vigorous conclusion to Wilkie's analysis of Keats' poem.

The book closes with a strong chapter on Byron, the main value of which lies in Wilkie's emphasis on *Don Juan* as an "epic of negation." Byron quite deliberately adopted elements, patterns, "traits and devices" of the epic to attack as specious the very orthodoxies and systems out of which, or in concert with which, the epic developed and sustained itself. By means of such a strategy the poet can maintain, paradoxically but for him meaningfully and sanely, a consistent "tolerant, unembittered unbelief . . . in spite of a serious need for a sense of meaning and direction in life" (p. 223).

Despite the roadblocks, then, which Wilkie places in his own critical way, the book is worth reading for its analyses of the several poems, and because it is an advance, however uncertain methodologically, over Karl Kroeber's sally into the world of the Romantic long poem.

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*Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound": A Critical Reading*, by Earl R. Wasserman. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965. Pp. 222. $5.50.

The first thirty pages of this important book pull together the author's previous arguments, especially in *The Sublimer Language*, 1959, concerning Shelley's epistemology. The rest of the book applies to *Prometheus Unbound* the conclusions and methods of the earlier studies. We must summarize in turn: Although Shelley never altered his belief in Necessity, the inevitable succession of cause and effect, he passed rapidly from materialism through a pantheistic dualism to the "monistic subjective idealism" of belief in "the absolute, unmediated identity of the human perceiving mind and its perceptions." The world as we know it is "an assemblage of thoughts" (p. 24). Convinced that mind can create nothing, Shelley denied the existence of a creative mind either within or beyond our world. In phrases like "speech created thought" (*PU* II.iv.72), *created* means "shaped" (p. 20). To imagine is to combine, to organize (p. 55). Since the One Mind cannot create, there must be some extra-mental actuating causality. Declaring that Shelley never brought together in one treatise or one poem his repertory of absolutes, Wasserman distinguishes them sharply—"the One Mind, the one actuating cause, and the one shaping force" (p. 30).

Apply these absolutes to the poem: "The essential subject . . . is the One Mind; the extra-mental actuating power is the source of its events; and the drama is the history of the One Mind's evolution into perfection" (p. 31). Prometheus is the One Mind (p. 34, qualified on p. 195). Jupiter is tyranny, "the distorted reflection of Prometheus" (p. 47). Demogorgon, occupying the realm of potentiality, is the actuating Power whose law of Necessity operates in our world of being and perception (p. 129). Earth, a constituent of the One Mind, speaks throughout Act I in the language of erroneous mankind, "which postulates the illusory distinction between earth and mind" (p. 52), in consequence of the disorder that resulted when the One Mind yielded its powers to "the anthropomorphic God made in the image of Prometheus" (p. 38).

To describe Demogorgon as the ultimate Power and to see Prometheus as the One Mind encompassing all that man perceives as reality is effectively to banish Platonic reality and indeed all forms of neoplatonism from the poem. Demogorgon has no master. On a graph, however, his power would appear vertically limitless but horizontally limited, in that other kinds of power do not derive from Demogorgon. He is assigned, not to a trinity of three-in-one, but to a troika of three disjunct equals. Up through Demogorgon, this latest allegorical alignment of roles is an essentially consistent development from the negative premises of C. E. Pulos' book of 1954, *The Deep Truth*.

At the next step, the argument reaches a thinner bridge. As in almost all previous interpretations, Asia remains Love. The customary distinction, derived from Plato, between the earthly Aphrodite and the heavenly Urania is again denied, as it was in Professor Wasserman's identification of the Urania of *Adonais* as "the spirit of organic life" (*The Subtler Language*, p. 352). The structure of the poem "embodies the interdependence of the One Mind and life-giving Love" (p. 74). Love is the ideal state of the One Mind. Only when Prometheus recalled his curse could Asia start toward the realm of ultimate Power, but Asia alone can act as intermediary between being and potentiality (p. 133). Demogorgon, awakened by Asia, withdraws Jupiter from reality into potentiality,

whence Jupiter may return upon any future disorder in the One Mind. The ultimate source and compelling energy of perfection "is not brought onto the stage as a dramatic character or as part of the action" (p. 57). How does the strict distinction of uncreative mental being from the ultimate Power that releases the law of Necessity enable Shelley to account for the peculiarly potent status of Love? Wasserman's answer, as I interpret him, is even simpler than the Platonic explanations he replaces: "it is not evident that he [Shelley] ever considered the question" (p. 30). Certainly we are no better off for learning that Love "obviously has affiliations, beyond the realm of being, with the primal Power" (p. 176). What affiliations?

Elsewhere in the book, also, the word *obviously* carries the burden of persuasion, but the methods of arguing are of no importance at all if the exegesis serves better than competing interpretations for our understanding of the drama. The book is no less valuable where the blurrings in its argument are separable from Shelley's blurrings.

If we get little help with Thetis, the problematic multiplicity or identity of several caves and several *putti* associated with the Earth, or the passage on Zoroaster (I. 191-209), Wasserman compensates by help with Act III, sc. ii (Ocean and Apollo on Atlantis), the "unseasonable seasons," Panthea's dreams, and the Spirit of the Earth, who is said to speak for Earth in the perfected world of Act IV but "obviously performs . . . the role of Eros, or Cupid" (pp. 72 f.). The kind of eternity involved in the funeral procession bearing "Time to his tomb in eternity" (IV. 14), which troubled Milton Wilson, is explained as the third of three kinds of eternity present in the poem. It is the replacement of hastening time in erring human minds by "the temporal approximation of timelessness," the "boundlessness of mental duration" when the encompassing One Mind approaches perfection (pp. 211 f.).

The allegorical personages act out a myth, described as one combining a conflation of earlier myths and the ironic inversion of specific literary *loci* of those myths. The conflation (like some of the ironic inversion) has been remarked on by others; Wasserman concentrates on ironic reversals of Aeschylus, Virgil (Eclogue VI and *Aeneid* VI), Boccaccio on Demogorgon, miscellaneous conveyors of classical mythology, the Christ story, and well-worn prophetical passages of the Bible. Much of this is the world of Virgil's scholiasts and Lemprière's *Bibliotheca Classica*, laid before us in a laudable effort to deny the privacy of Shelley's symbols. The details are both interesting in themselves (that is, usable for other interpretations) and made integral to the present exegesis, so that even the parallels already available in L. J. Zillman's variorum edition gain by a new twist of subtlety as well as by segregation from conflicting suggestions.

Restoring to the Renaissance the metaphor of exhalations from the breathing earth, Wasserman sometimes ignores and sometimes rejects the applicability of refinements by scientists of Shelley's day closely studied by Carl Grabo, P. H. Butter, and others. He praises and utilizes, as one must, G. M. Matthews' article, "A Volcano's Voice in Shelley."

The reader's familiarity with aspects of the poem other than the ironical is assumed throughout. In contrast with other studies of Shelley's myth-making, the procedure is historical, in that all the parallels called upon could have been available to Shelley. It is textual not only in its close reading but also in its appeals to the manuscripts for modification of previous readings. But the author's

great strength lies far from the copying of manuscripts. This book, like *The Finer Tone* and *The Subtler Language*, displays a mind of sharp distinctions and compelling force. In the next few years it will be read, admired, and quoted by students who will not read, admire, or quote Shelley's poem with equal avidity.

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*Mark Twain, Ecrivain de l'Ouest: Regionalisme et humour*, by Bernard Poli. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965. Pp. viii + 505. F34.

Mark Twain has been lucky in his first modern full-scale introduction to the French academic public. He has found a commonsensical, shrewd cultural historian and critic in Bernard Poli, who has presented this most representative of American writers to his French countrymen with sympathy and understanding. So level-headed is this view of Twain, so judicious is the synthesis of Twain's work and all that has been written about it, that this book, written for Frenchmen, could serve usefully for Americans as well as a comprehensive survey of Mark Twain in his major and typical mode.

I say in Twain's "major and typical mode" because a working hypothesis pervades M. Poli's book, indicated by the sub-title: "Regionalism and Humor." It is M. Poli's hypothesis, and I believe the correct one, that Mark Twain must continue to be seen as a regionalist—a writer who found his matter in closely-observed contemporary provincial circumstance—and as an American humorist—a writer who found his sole productive mode in making us aware of the gap between false appearances and hard but significant reality. To put it this baldly is to oversimplify an extremely complex argument. When to the simple hypothesis, however, is added a sophisticated awareness of all the shades and complexities of regional realism as "matter," and of humor as "method," one arrives with M. Poli at a firm restatement of an old, and I believe just, view of Mark Twain, fortified by the assimilated insights of the last thirty years of scholarly and critical reevaluations which have emphasized the inconsistencies, the darkness, and the pessimism that are parts of our most famous comic writer. Twain, as M. Poli sees him, was not "un héro tragique ou un sombre penseur" but a middle-brow artist whose strength lay in his embodiment of the typically American nineteenth century creative tensions between pragmatism and idealism, between faith in progress and a nostalgia for simplicity and youth. M. Poli demonstrates how these tensions, when contained in Twain's regionalism and comedy, made significant and impressive national art, none the less impressive because of its frankly low and middle-brow perspective. When Twain broke with this matter and method, he made works interesting principally to the modern alienated critic.

It is on Twain's typicality, then, it is on the representativeness of the writer and his works, that M. Poli dwells, and this emphasis dictated the form that, for a French audience, the book must take. As the author avers, "The biography and the works of Mark Twain must be, before everything else, for the French

reader, an occasion to discover the America of the last century." The first considerable portion is therefore given over to a thorough analysis, based both on original texts and on recent scholarship, of the culture and the humor of the South West and the Far West, but not ignoring the East. The largest part of the book is a mingling of biography and critical discussion of Mark Twain's writings through *Huckleberry Finn*. Biography and criticism must be so mingled, M. Poli makes us aware, because the successive masks that Mark Twain wore—the images he constructed of himself—became indispensable parts of his technique of humor. First there was the mask of Sam Clemens, gauche frontier raconteur, then Mark Twain, the writer of the West, but speaking from the moral perspective of the "genteel tradition," and finally "Mr. Mark Twain," self-conscious philosopher and man of affairs.

Where this analysis differs from most of its predecessors is in its refusal to see Twain as a victim of this mixture of personalities. Rather, M. Poli sees him as reaching his height when the central personality, "Mark Twain," controlled without submerging both the primitive "Sam Clemens," and the pretentious commentator on human fallibility, "Mr. Mark Twain." The problem, M. Poli tells us, "is not . . . to know which is the 'true' Mark Twain, but to determine how, out of these complex relations, were born a certain number of remarkable literary works." M. Poli, therefore, does not see a tragedy emerging from this melange of paradoxical personalities and beliefs; rather he sees the mixture as the essence of Mark Twain's representativeness for American culture. The genteel tradition, for example, emerges not as the spoiling of Mark Twain's genius, but as the source of his most deeply felt moral convictions and social standards. In their opposition to Puritanism, their enlightened middle-class republicanism, Nook Farm and Cambridge were a part of Mark Twain, and, in their interaction with the myths of the primitive West, were precisely that which helped to make *Huckleberry Finn* the work that it is.

The final section of M. Poli's book is concerned with a discussion of selected major problems: Twain's narrative skill, his thought, his humor, and his language and style. On each subject he has much to say which is sensible and which builds upon previous commentators. Through these topical discussions runs the same theme that informed the chronological section: the centrality of Mark Twain to the paradoxical beliefs of nineteenth century America. Twain embodied his culture in his dislike of systematic *a priori* thought, a distaste which Daniel Boorstin has defined as the typical American attitude towards experience. But within this overall distrust emerge certain emphases. Twain was conscious of a moral order; his humor was fundamentally the healing humor of satire; his great triumph of language was the creation of a style which owed as much to Howells and Olivia Clemens as to Tom Blankenship.

It is impossible to suggest all the many felicities of interpretation and argument with which the book is filled. An example of M. Poli's awareness is his shrewd aside on the similarity between Twain's narrative technique, a "pop art" of the nineteenth century, and the "pop art" of the comic strip. An example of his sophisticated handling of a difficult aesthetic point is his use of Bergson, up to a certain point, to describe Mark Twain's humor, and then his disagreement with Bergson's suggestion that the function of humor is to point out the difference between reality and appearance in order to disgust us with reality. For M. Poli, this definition is incomplete and inexact when applied to American humor. On

the contrary, Mark Twain "sought above all to make us aware of the absurdity of these dreams or appearances by which we allow ourselves to be seduced, and to lead us to an awareness of a reality, doubtless imperfect, but which we must accept such as it is."

There are some infelicities as well, and when the book is translated for an American audience, these might perhaps be amended. The background material is perhaps too full for an American public. M. Poli's tendency to use the rhetorical question as the principal device of transition becomes irritating. But these are minor blemishes on a balanced interpretation of our most typically national writer, whose typicality becomes more apparent when seen from the perspective of a different culture.

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*Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of his Philosophy of Art*, by Robert Louis Jackson. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966. Pp. xiii + 274. $6.00.

In *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of His Philosophy of Art*, Robert Louis Jackson observes that "Form and humanity for Dostoevsky are interchangeable concepts" (p. 125), and in so doing summarizes both the major strength and the major weakness of his study of the Russian novelist. The strength of Mr. Jackson's work is that the observation is apt, and he proves its aptness, explains it, and expatiates upon it until the reader is almost ready to believe—as Dostoevsky did—that form is everything Good: it is Christ, it is the ideal, it is perfect physical beauty, the moral life, truth, and genuine artistry. Lack of form, conversely, is evil. The weakness is that Mr. Jackson apparently never realizes that when *form* is used in such a broad sense, it is no longer an aesthetic concept but rather an ethical or metaphysical concept, depending upon the context at the moment.

Dostoevsky wrote that "Beauty is immanent in everything healthy, that is, to that which is most alive, and is a necessary need of the human organism. It is harmony; in it lies the guarantee of tranquility; it embodies the ideals of man and of mankind" (quoted from "Mr. ——bov and the Question of Art" in Jackson, p. 42). What kind of a practical aesthetic can a working novelist derive from such a basis? To begin with, one would need a fairly specific idea—an image perhaps—embodying the ideals of man and mankind. Dostoevsky found such an ideal in Christ and in the icon of the Madonna, "a literal image of beauty toward which man turns in reverence and longing" (p. 48).

Such an ideal is, of course, more than an abstraction, especially for the novelist who is also a devout Orthodox Catholic. For Dostoevsky, Christ and the Madonna were actual incarnations of the perfection of human life. Thus their lives offered him not only a set of ideals or qualities to imitate, but an actual pattern of life for the blessed characters to draw close to and for the damned to deviate from. He was given, as it were, a set of relationships between the ideal characters and those less than ideal that was infinitely variable, dynamic (in that the wills of the imperfect figures must clash with those of the Madonna

and Christ figures), and yet constantly centered on the same theme, the perfection of human life.

The central problem in writing from such an ideal is, in Mr. Jackson's words, "the problem of type," of creating variants of the ideal and deviations from it that are both idealized and realistic. "The form of the novel," according to Dostoevsky, "is created precisely by the need for poetic idealization (typicalization) of the complexity of life" (p. 95). Unless the characters are types, they are irrelevant to the ideal. Yet the typical must be thoroughly grounded in reality, lest it have no relevance to man's very real moral life. The problem of the novelist is to create the typical so that it "evokes a powerful sense of reality, of concrete, even local, actuality" (p. 101). This problem of joining the typical and the individual in art is, of course, an ancient one; and neither Dostoevsky's nor Jackson's theorizing adds anything to its solution.

The difficulty is that Dostoevsky was a practical novelist and an intuitive and therefore highly unsystematic thinker; unlike a James or a Flaubert, who were almost too eager to theorize, Dostoevsky was generally unwilling to explore that area between his great vision and his great novels. In other words, Dostoevsky, with his superb imagination, could see, for example, the relation between Christ as the ideal, his typical figures, and his finished works; and such was his ability as a novelist that in the novels the reader can recapture at least a part of the original vision. But Dostoevsky was unable to explain, in the manner of James, the details of how the vision was transformed into the work. This inability of Dostoevsky is, of course, not the fault of Mr. Jackson; but it is unfortunately true that Mr. Jackson does not recognize the inability and so does not read Dostoevsky's criticism analytically. To return to the quotation that opened this review ("Form and humanity for Dostoevsky are interchangeable concepts") the identity of "form" and "humanity" is basically a confusion; it is one of those splendid oversimplifications that a great genius can make productive but that lesser imaginations dare not accept lest they lose sight of necessary distinctions. For all of Mr. Jackson's quotations of Dostoevsky and his explanations of the quotations, there is a difference between an ideal or well-formed life and a well-formed work of art, and to fail to see that difference is to fail to see a major critical problem.

As a study of the aesthetics of the novel or even as a study of Dostoevsky's theory of the form of the novel, the book is a disappointment; as a study of the ideas that informed Dostoevsky's work, the ethical vision from which he wrote and his constancy in re-creating that ethical vision, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form* is a major contribution to Dostoevsky studies.

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*ReJoyce, by Anthony Burgess.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1965. Pp. 272. $5.00.

*Joyce-Again's Wake: An Analysis of "Finnegans Wake,"* by Bernard Benstock. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1965. Pp. xxiv + 312. $5.95.

In the continuing exploration of James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* is occupying an ever larger place, and the 1960's are becoming the *Wake* era of Joyce scholarship. Studies in depth are now possible for the first time, thanks to a valuable series of indexes and concordances. Joyce had masterminded the issuance of the *Exagmination* essays published in 1929, ten years before the complete work appeared, but he did no more than project another volume of four essays for 1930. Harry Levin in 1941 placed the work firmly in the evolution of Joyce's career, and his perceptive insights into theme and technique were supplemented by William York Tindall and Hugh Kenner in the next decade, but detailed study of necessity awaited the tools of scholarship now available.

Basic is Clive Hart's imposing concordance and what Joyce might have termed a "concodance," that is, supplementary indexes of syllabifications and of overtones, increasing the extent of his list about half. (For the record, there are 60,810 different "typographical units"–words, fragments, symbols and numbers–in the 217,937 unit length of the *Wake*; comparable figures for *Ulysses* are a vocabulary of 29,899 in a text of 260,430). But the words still need definition (about 30% are Joycean coinages); their derivations and connotations need to be related to characters, motifs, and themes in the *Wake* itself. Mr. Hart has supplied an index of verbal themes in his *Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake"* (1962); he is also an editor of the fascinating *Newslitter*, now in its fifth year. Literary allusions have been studied in James S. Atherton's *The Books at the Wake* (1959). Adeline Glasheen has issued two censuses of characters (1956 and 1963), and Matthew J. C. Hodgart and Mabel P. Worthington, in their *Song in the Works of James Joyce* (1956), list about 2500 snatches from popular ballads, songs, and nursery rhymes.

Confronted with such a battery of miscellanea, a creative reader might become overwhelmed. All the more remarkable, then, is the discernment shown by Bernard Benstock in *Joyce–Again's Wake: An Analysis of "Finnegans Wake."* Having a full command of the vast literature on Joyce, he is able nevertheless to examine the *Wake* with fresh insights, exorcise several ghosts, and contribute sensitive interpretations, including the best account to date of the poetics of Joyce's prose. He begins with a survey of some errors and confusions in previous commentaries, but in pointing out the fallacy of synopsis, or that of invented chapter headings, as well as erroneous naming of characters, he avoids the critic's occupational disease of *Schadenfreude*. Instead of gloating over the ignorance of the learned, he concludes modestly that the *Wake* "as an enigma may well go unsolved." Equal tact is shown in refuting the common views that for Joyce the clock had stopped in 1904. An ingenious metaphor, the hourglass, is suggested, with 1904 proving the focal point "at which past became present for Joyce and flowed into the future." More difficult to summarize but equally convincing is the denial of Joyce's presumed orthodoxy. Benstock demonstrates that Catholicism provided Joyce with materials for parody and blasphemy and

for satiric attacks upon the Church's struggle for power and for the control of men's minds.

The most rewarding chapter, "Comic Seriousness and Poetic Prose," presents an imaginative appreciation of Joyce's verbal music. The "airy plumeflights" of the *Wake* could easily be grounded by a cataloguing commentator, and Joyce's inexhaustible verve become a listing of puns, repetitions, multilingual words, echoes, alliterative and other poetic devices. Benstock quotes and demonstrates Gillet's report of Joyce's linguistic intention: "He told me about the language he had adopted in order to give his vocabulary the elasticity of sleep, to multiply the meaning of words, to permit the play of light and colour, and make of the sentence a rainbow in which each tiny drop is itself a many-hued prism." Comedy and poetry join hands, with tragedy and scatology barely hidden. The prose dances on in all its variety, the dominant tone being that of the rich humor and melody of Dublin speech, "one long gossipy tale told at a hurried pace in a hushed tone behind the back of one's hand." Benstock's exegesis never loses sight of the author's "joyicity."

For the rest, *Joyce-Again's Wake* traces mock-epic features, and echoes of the author's biography, only touching in passing upon the familiar Bruno and Vico keys.

A chapter on the mock-epic features is followed by an inquiry into Joyce's final attitude toward human life and human history. Only by suggestion and indirection might one see in the *Wake* an implication of hope, "But it seems fairly certain that the bugaboo of Joyce's morbid cynicism has been laid to rest for good" and, as for the future, "the scope and wit and warmth of Joyce's view of the world he knew and lived in and fought in will survive the morbidity and cynicism of his times, which fallaciously saw in James Joyce an image of itself."

That the reading of the *Wake* is just beginning is indicated by an appended reading of the Prankquean episode. The exegesis is followed by an interlinear trot, with as many as half a dozen echoes listed for a single word. "Histher," for example, combines sister, hiss, hysteria, history, Hester and Esther (and through them, Jonathan Swift).

In *ReJoyce* the English popular novelist Anthony Burgess does not attempt to go far beneath the hitherto explored surfaces of the canon. His purpose leads to extended plot summaries which seem unnecessary, especially in the early work. One may doubt the advisability of paraphrasing each of the *Dubliners* stories, especially when this precludes all comment on the varieties of style, the wide range of ironies, and the incipient use of motif and symbol. Later summaries are more extensive, as might be expected. There is a problem, of course, in writing a handbook on an author so complex and so widely studied as Joyce. Selection is necessary and the author's opening chapters, touching upon his own early contacts with Joyce's writings, and describing the familiar Irish Catholic Dublin background, have a freshness which makes one lament that Mr. Burgess does not more often lay aside his texts to comment upon them.

As a professional writer Burgess has a healthy respect for Joyce's technical mastery, but so absorbed is he in the details of plot outline that he seldom expresses his own opinion or obtains a new insight. Concerning ourselves with his discussion of the *Wake*, we may note that he admits that he has limited his exposition to what seems to be going on, ignoring the metaphysics personified

in the characters, and the historical personages. His brief last chapter touches upon a defence of Joyce's obscurity, comments upon the aural quality of the work, observes its low visual quality, its numerical logic, its inaction, and its domestic subject. An adequate survey this, though the academically minded (and was not Joyce himself academic?) may regret the author's anxiety for those who have been "scared off by the professors." Were Mr. Burgress to consult the professors, he might have been advised at least to provide an index, and then, perhaps, to give the reader a bit more information about circumstances of publication, even, if it be not too academic, to remark on the accumulation of Joyceana in English and American libraries which is now being so carefully and rewardingly edited. The lack of an index is especially noticeable in regard to the *Wake*.

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*Scandinavian Elements of "Finnegans Wake,"* by Dounia Bunis Chrisiani. Evanston: Northeastern University Press. Pp. 259. $7.50.

The first part of Mrs. Christiani's book consists of eight scrappy chapters, mostly given over to describing the use she supposes Joyce to have made in *Finnegans Wake* of a few Norse myths, of a few bits of Scandinavian-Irish history, of a few Scandinavian writers–Ibsen, Bjornson, Kierkegaard, Oehlenschlager, Andersen, Jacobsen, Strindberg. These subjects are of great interest to readers of *Finnegans Wake*. It is, therefore, disappointing to find that Mrs. Christiani's discussions are inadequate, her prose slack, her tone cross, her animadversions scattered wholesale at unnamed adversaries.

The second, and most respectable part of the book is a "Glossary," which lists and explains a good many Danish, and a scattering of Norwegian and Swedish words, found by Mrs. Christiani in *Finnegans Wake*. Taking (as I must) Mrs. Christiani's Danish on faith, I am greatly impressed by many of her readings, which are sensible, plausible and alert. Out of a hoard of good things, I specially treasure: 4.7 Killykillkilly; 13.13 Fiery Farrelly and Miry Mitchell; 155.25 lucciolys; 239.13 gifting in mennage; 310.24 a lur of Nur; 360.23 Bulbul; 570.4 It will give picketurns on the tummlipplads.

The Glossary fills me with envy and admiration, but also with discontent, because it contains just about enough new material to make one good article. Mrs. Christiani did herself and her readers no service by swelling a good article into a book that has no reason to exist.

The third part of the book is sheer padding. It is made up of word-lists of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish "in the Wake." Finnish is not attempted.

The word-lists are lists of words, giving no page-references to *Finnegans Wake* or to the Glossary. I know the Norwegian list to be sadly wanting, and the Danish list omits scores of words that are discussed in Mrs. Christiani's own Glossary, *e.g.* 33.4 *Folkeforfatter*, popular author (repeated, but not noted by Mrs. Christiani, in *Finnegans Wake*, 57.4, 316.32-33–Mrs. Christiani is weak at repeats); 82.11 *Ham*, him; 282.5 *Begyndelse*, beginning; 284.36 *Kone*, wife; 375.25 *Skaerer*, slicer, cutter; 613.24 *Paent*, nice, pretty; 620.16 *Bredder*, shores.

In her first and funniest chapter, Mrs. Christiani tries to show that Joyce had a poor command of Danish and Norwegian and that he ". . . regarded the two languages as one . . ." [Christiani, 7]. In the teeth of Joyce's statements to the contrary [Christiani, 5-6], Mrs. Christiani decided that the one language is Danish.

Myself, I should be charmed to learn that Joyce pretended to be more of a linguist than he was. It is very human to pretend to more knowledge than one, in fact, possesses, and Joyce—man and writer—lacks the warm touch. His virtues and his vices are chilly.

With the best will in the world, I cannot, however, feel that Mrs. Christiani tells us anything, one way or another, about Joyce's command of Danish and Norwegian. She tried to discuss the question with some of the educated Danes who had told Mr. Ellmann that Joyce spoke good Danish [*James Joyce*, 704-709] but they were not available [Christiani, 7-8]. And she quotes with disapproval the wild and pedestrian translation into Ibsen's form of Norwegian which Joyce made of a poem by James Stephens [Christiani, 5-7].

I hold that Joyce's bad translation of a poem proves nothing about his competence in Danish and Norwegian. Joyce was an embarrassingly bad poet in English, or rather he was no poet at all. When he lisped in numbers—comic numbers or sentimental numbers—he became a silly silly man. I do not, however fail to admire "The Sisters" or "Eumaeus" because Joyce wrote:

> Frail the white rose and frail are
> Her hands that gave
> Whose soul is sere and paler
> Than time's wan wave.

Mrs. Christiani was plain unlucky when she decided that Joyce regarded Danish and Norwegian as one language—Danish. For, just when *Scandinavian Elements of Finnegans Wake* must have been going through the press, Messrs. Bjorn Tysdahl and Clive Hart were publishing their "Norwegian Captions" [*A Wake Newsletter*, New Series, I, 5, 6, II, 1, 2, 3, 4], a list of Norwegian words which appear in certain parts of *Finnegans Wake*.

Taking on faith the Norwegian of Messrs. Tysdahl and Hart, it seems clear that Joyce knew well the difference between Danish and Norwegian and that he put a vast number of Norwegian words and phrases into *Finnegans Wake*. Most of these Norwegian words, including a quotation from Ibsen [*Finnegans Wake*, 141.24-25] were missed by Mrs. Christiani, who, in the opinion of Mr. Hart [expressed in a letter to me], simply does not hear Norwegian in *Finnegans Wake*. The work of Mrs. Christiani and Messrs. Tysdahl and Hart makes us begin to realize how many and how integral to the plot of *Finnegans Wake* these Scandinavian elements are. There are good reasons why it should be so. Joyce loved Ibsen, a Norwegian; the juvenile lead of *Ulysses* thinks he is a Danish prince, and Dublin was fathered by Danes.

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*Nine Basic Arts*, by Paul Weiss. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961. Pp. 238. $2.25.

In his *Nine Basic Arts* Paul Weiss presents the various arts not merely as distinct from each other, but as distinct in a radical, essential way. This book seems made to order for practitioners of the arts, who so often are hostile to the idea that distinctions among the arts are secondary to their fundamental unity.

The *Nine Basic Arts* is said to be a companion volume to the earlier *The World of Art*, but, in my opinion, it has been written in opposition to that book. Weiss's earlier position was that all the arts have a single significance, that every work of art has a mythological base, expressing the meaning of "a beginning, a turning point, or a terminus"; and which of these three "mythic prospects" the work presents is unrelated to its artistic medium. There is nothing particularly novel in this earlier position, and like so many aesthetics it is subject to the criticism that it slights the separateness of the arts in favor of their basic unity. In the *Nine Basic Arts* Weiss is bent upon overcoming that criticism, even to the point of abandoning his earlier position.

His new position, moreover, is distinctly novel. It is not formalistic; that is, he does not find the essence of each art to be its medium, its words or paint or notes or bodily gestures. Such formalism invariably fails to achieve a firm distinction among the arts, for surely the arts are not merely their media; they must have some deeper significance. Every formalistic effort to keep the arts separate provokes a search for a meaning behind the forms, a significance distinct from any medium; and since the significance seems distinct from the media, the next, almost inevitable step is to show that, in their significance, the arts are fundamentally at one.

Nor does Weiss try to show, as Susanne Langer does, that each artistic medium, because of its nature as a medium, points to a distinctive kind of nonformal significance and thus, as a semblance, represents its own special aspect of reality. Such efforts have not choked off the mind's tendency to unify. If the significance of a poem is non-verbal, however one may define that significance, it seems next to impossible to show that the same kind of significance is not, and cannot be, represented by a painting or a statue.

Weiss's innovation, the idea which gives importance to the *Nine Basic Arts*, is that the form of each art is, in fact, its significance; the form, that is, does not represent something significant, but rather is significant, in its distinctive way. Architecture, according to Weiss, is the art of bounding space; what it reveals, its significance, is the nature of bounded space. Poetry is the creating of time; its significance is the meaning and texture of time. Music is "the art of creating a structured audible becoming" and what it reveals are the "dynamics of existence," or, in one word, becoming. In each of these three cases, and in six others, Weiss affirms that the form is its significance. Thus, this light play on words: "MacLeish has said, 'A poem should not mean but be.' How could it 'not mean?' Because a poem is, it means. That is what it means for a poem to be."

An immediate identity, then, is posited between medium (the form of a distinct art, in contrast to the form of any single work of art, for which Weiss shows no interest) and meaning. As a result, the usual weakness in efforts to present the arts as distinct, as significant, and as significant in a distinctive way, is avoided: that is, there is nothing arbitrary in the relationship between a medium and its distinctive significance. For, to repeat, the medium is its significance.

Such a striking achievement as this entails, however, certain difficulties. To avoid arbitrariness in the relation between medium and meaning, one may be forced to define both medium and meaning in an arbitrary manner. Is architecture essentially the art of bounding space, poetry the art of creating time, and music the art of creating a becoming? I cannot imagine an architect, a poet, or a composer giving an affirmative answer, even after a sympathetic effort to understand Weiss's elaborate definitions of space, time, and becoming. And do these arts, in turn, signify space, time, and becoming? I can only say that such "meanings" have little to do with my appreciation of these arts. Thus, personally, I must say that the price of Weiss's achievement is too high. The arbitrariness in the relation between medium and meaning has been avoided; the price is a conception of art which is a philosophical limbo, a desert uninhabitable by either artist or appreciator. Artistic making has more to do with individualized material, with these words and these rhythms, and far less to do with an abstraction like "existential" time. Artistic meaning has more to do with people, with their feelings about themselves and each other and their relations, and much less to do with naturalistic concepts like space, time, and becoming.

For me, then, the *Nine Basic Arts* is serious evidence to the effect that the arts are not essentially distinct. Professor Weiss's central idea is novel and ingenious; if it cannot convince us, what can? Thus, even for one who is opposed to the central idea of the book, a serious study of it is rewarding. Its unattractive style, as a consequence, should be tolerated. Phrases like "over against" recur beyond belief. In sentence after sentence, the style hammers away with authoritarian finality. Bizarre or commonplace commands rain down upon the poor artist's head. For example, he is told that "if the community is to be *properly* dealt with, factories will contrast with their environments, since they are designed to bring about limited ends which will not be pursued outside the confines of the factory." Furthermore, he is told that if he is building a saloon or a funeral parlor, he should not give them the facade of a cathedral, a school, or a bank. With a serious idea, however, an author has a right to his whims and crotchets. The *Nine Basic Arts* is not an attractive book, but it contributes to the slow development of American aesthetics.

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