**Book Reviews**


Kerényi's *Prometheus* is a welcome addition to a distinguished series of books which deals with various, broad aspects of the history of culture. *Prometheus* is numbered as Volume I in a new group of studies devoted to "archetypal images in Greek religion." Volume III, Kerényi's *Asklepios*, also translated by Manheim, had already appeared, in 1959.

The order of publication is a fortunate one because *Asklepios* serves as a good introduction to *Prometheus*; in *Asklepios* the general thesis of the group is much more readily applicable and therefore more convincingly plausible than in *Prometheus*. The thesis that Asklepios is the "archetypal image of the physician's existence," which is a fairly concrete and definable category, is much easier to substantiate than the thesis that Prometheus is the "archetypal image of human existence," which is, to say the least, difficult to define even if limited to human existence as experienced in ancient Greek culture, and Kerényi clearly implies no such limitation, for he says that Greek existence "is in a way related to our existence since it is built upon the same foundations."

Kerényi's general approach to mythology may prove to be as important for what he rejects as for what he proposes. Though he occasionally uses material that reminds one of the allegorical methods that dominated the nineteenth century, he ignores, as do most scholars today, the idea that mythology is to be adequately understood as a set of ritual symbolifications of the natural world, the sun, moon, stars, etc. As for the historical approach, which is still followed in much current work in mythology, he flatly rejects it because it is "rooted in the tacit principle that what is not attested does not exist and comes into existence only with the first mention—although it is almost always a matter of accident when this first mention occurs."

He is therefore not concerned with the much discussed question of origins, of which he says: "Ingenious as they may be, hypotheses concerning origins—most of them are the products of indemonstrable theories devised by modern men—can only lead us away from the field of serious scientific endeavor." By the same token he is not much concerned, as some excellent scholars still are, with theories of the dispersion of myths. As for parallels, he recognizes their value, as is implied by his own use of such materials upon occasion, but he says: "To find parallels is child's play compared to the task of bringing out the full meaning of the texts."

The full meaning of the texts, as well as an adequate understanding of mythology in general, is to be found by the application of the principle that a "living" mythology functions in a given culture as a means by which man may comprehend and express his reactions to experience, not as a mere symbolism or allegory, but as essential reality. Thus mythology is as real in its cultural function as
theology, philosophy, poetry, or science. It is a way of perceiving and expressing what is taken to be the reality of experience. Kerényi's view of mythology, as he himself recognizes, is essentially that of Malinowski, whose point of view is reflected in the following paragraph:

I maintain that there exists a special class of stories, regarded as sacred, embodied in ritual, morals, and social organization, and which form an integral and active part in primitive culture. These stories live not by idle interest, not as fictitious or even as true narratives; but are to the natives a statement of a primeval, greater, and more relevant reality, by which the present life, fates, and activities of mankind are determined, the knowledge of which supplies man with the motive for ritual and moral actions, as well as with indications as to how to perform them.

The implications of this approach and the reasons underlying the adoption of such a principle would take us far beyond the limits of a book review. It is necessary, however, to point out Kerényi's caveats on his use of the terms "existence" and "archetypal." "In these works of mine," he says, "existence is not used as it is in existentialist philosophy, but in its simplest and most direct sense." In view of his having co-authored with C. G. Jung Essays on a Science of Mythology (Bollingen Series, 1950) and Jung's well known use of the concept of archetypes, he expressly states: "It [his Asklepios, and by implication his other works] is not an attempt to apply the methods of Jungian psychology."

His language, and indeed his theory, is more akin to the Platonic tradition. He has borrowed the word "archetypal" from the English Platonists, who, he says, "used 'archetypal' for the transcendent prototypes of the realities of human existence. And wherever mythology is still alive and functioning, the same relationship prevails between mythological beings and these realities."

Kerényi can scarcely be written off, however, as a mere Platonist. It is true that his language and the general form of his presentation has much in common with Plato. There is a strongly poetic tinge, which is due to deliberate design, not to the poetic nature of his main sources. For example, the conclusion of Prometheus consists of a quotation from Goethe on the "Limits of Humanity," rather than a clear, abstract summary of the actual findings of the book.

Further, the thesis is treated like a theme rather than a thesis, in that various aspects of it are illustrated and elaborated in different ways rather than demonstrated by straightforward, inductive steps. On the other hand, unlike Plato, Kerényi has a healthy respect for facts and is exceedingly cautious in his acceptance of evidence. He resolutely refuses, for example, to go in for grand reconstructions of Aeschylus à la Welecker; "to draw inferences from the 'structure of the trilogy'" he says "... is pure mental gymnastics."

Thus, though he is very cautious in his acceptance of evidence, his manner of presenting the assembled facts relies for its effect to a considerable extent upon the reader's subjective response rather than his critical or analytical acumen. One finishes the book feeling that he has read something very scholarly, intriguing, even delightful, but wondering just precisely how in the world the author really arrived at the conclusion he evidently intends to convey.

If one attempts to answer this question by synthesizing the book with actual quotations from it, he finds only such materials as the following:

The darkness of Prometheus signifies precisely the deficiency of one who
needs fire in order to achieve a more perfect form of being. In obtaining this higher form of being for man, Prometheus shows himself to be man's double, an eternal image of man's basically imperfect form of being. Aischylos evokes this eternal image as the god Prometheus, benefactor of mankind, and in his eternalized form of being—which represents a timeless potentiality quite independent of its fulfillment—he emphasizes the basic traits of the human mode of existence.

Or:

By following in the traces of the ancient mythologizing mind, a modern can form a living picture of a mythological figure, even so strange a one as Ithax, herald of the Titans, one of the Kabeiroi—also named Prometheus after his most prominent trait—and, finally, the dark moon filled like a cup with humanity. For the ancient cosmos, determined by two poles—man and his environment, interwoven to form a ‘world’—still exists. It is the world of men, taking the form of mythological figures compounded of vision, dream, and poetry.

Even in context, writing of this sort leaves the reader feeling that he may have learned, or at least experienced, something of perhaps profound significance, but also that he cannot objectivize it in his own terms without risking undue distortion. In brief, like Plato, Kerényi offers the reader something in which there is more of a symbolic or aesthetic satisfaction than of an objective, intellectual enlightenment.

The body of the book begins with the question, Who is Goethe's Prometheus? The answer, which is arrived at by a fairly convincing analysis of the evidence, is as follows:

Goethe's Prometheus is no God, no Titan, no man, but the immortal prototype of man as the original rebel and affirmer of his fate: the original inhabitant of the earth, seen as an antigod, as Lord of the Earth. In this connection he seems more Gnostic than Greek, but he surely is in no way related to the childlike Gnosis of Goethe when he was still younger. He belongs rather to the more recent history of ideas and anticipates the Nietzschean or Existentialist view of man.

The rest of the book deals with a vast amount of detailed literary and archeological evidence, but mainly with Hesiod and Aeschylus. But the treatment of them is necessarily much more involved and less satisfactory because neither Hesiod nor Aeschylus comments directly, as Goethe does, on what Prometheus meant to him or how the concept grew in his mind. The material bearing on Hesiod and Aeschylus and the myth in general is fully discussed; it is presented as above explained, reiterating the thesis that Prometheus is the “archetypal image of human existence.”

Kerényi's work appears to be a curious blend of modern, scientific scholarship and traditional, Platonic idealism. To me these things seem very far apart. One of the chief contributions of science consists in its proper limitation of that deceptive word, the verb “to be,” which has bedeviled the thinking of the Western world for centuries. Strictly speaking, science does not deal with the question “What is?” but rather with the question “What goes on?” The formula H₂O does not tell us what water is, as an absolute; it denotes the chemical process by which water forms and thus relates it to various other chemical processes. In
brief, science analyzes and describes relative process or function and leaves absolute essence to philosophers, theologians, et al. 

Kerényi tries to have things both ways at once. He goes along, in theory, with Malinowski, who, quite scientifically, conceives of mythology in terms of its functions in its cultural setting. But Kerényi leaves the distinct impression that he is trying to get beyond function to essence—not merely the essence of Prometheus as conceived by Hesiod or Aeschylus, but a sort of absolute essence. He thus arrives at something quasi-mythical that cannot be demonstrated by reasonably objective methods, however careful and cautious the establishment of the facts in the case.

However, it must be admitted that Kerényi, like Plato, has a subtle charm and vigor that may intrigue the reader's imagination, pique his interest, enrich his concepts, and command his respect, even if he does realize, when he has finished reading, that he has been led by the nose.

Prometheus, like the other volumes of the Bollingen Series, is handsomely bound, beautifully and carefully printed. It contains 18 fine plates, a long "List of Works Cited," and an excellent index.

Manheim's translation is a readable piece of English prose with few, if any, of the apparent inconsistencies that tend to crop out in translations.

Thomas Cutt

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In the opening essay, W. F. Oakeshott sets down for the first time some picturesque details of his discovery of the Winchester MS. of Malory in 1934. The six remaining essays may mark the conclusion of the study of certain Malory problems raised by this discovery and by the publication in 1947 of Eugene Vinaver's edition based upon the MS. If so, the volume will be a worthy conclusion.

Essays by C. S. Lewis, by Vinaver in reply to him, and by D. S. Brewer, take up again the question of the "unity" of Malory's work. Not surprisingly, none of the authors has added much evidence, or even new lines of reasoning, to the extended argument already in print. The three essays are highly valuable, however, for the lucidity of their discussion and the thoughtfulness with which they re-examine both the facts and the critical principles by which they must be judged. The result, when it is not a meeting of minds, is what the editor suggests may be called a *discordia concors*. For in the three essays taken together, there has been a significant limitation and definition of the points of difference.

Brewer, for example, understands the phrase in the colophon, "the hool book of kyng Arthur and of his noble knyghtes of the Rounde Table," to suggest a closer connection than does Vinaver, to whom "hool book" is not a title, only a description of "the entire collection, or series, of romances." Yet Brewer concedes that he does not find "structural unity of a kind we expect from a modern novel, or that we find in an ancient epic," and some of the stories have "a high degree of autonomy." But the separation is never complete. Brewer's
view, as he says, is therefore a modification of Vinaver's eight-romance interpretation, rather than a contradiction of it. The word "unity," he thinks, had better be replaced by "cohesion"—and this term was suggested to him by Vinaver privately.

The principal elements of cohesion which strike him are: (1) the appearance in tale after tale of the same half dozen major figures, along with other aristocrats associated with Arthur's court; (2) references to events before and after, the comments of a sort of historian who wishes to place an occurrence in relation to other well known stories; (3) links at the beginnings and endings of the tales which make it necessary to read them in the order in which they now stand, with a cumulative effect; (4) a sequence of time, clear at the beginning and end though somewhat carelessly handled in the middle, so that the tales present an account of the rise, glory, and fall of Arthur's kingdom. In the way of structural cohesion, this is very nearly as much, in my opinion, as can reasonably be claimed. There seems to be a good case, however, that the timing of the start of the Tristram story is more realistic than Brewer believes.

Whether this much cohesion is enough to constitute unity seems to become, more and more clearly, a subjective question. As Lewis suggests, "The choice we try to force upon Malory is really a choice for us. It is our imagination, not his, that makes the work one or eight or fifty." Now in Vinaver's opinion, the sort of linkages to which Brewer and others attach weight are of interest "to Ph.D. candidates who laboriously dig them out and exhibit them as precious finds," but not "to people who read Malory as he was meant to be read, that is to say for pleasure." Yet surely, different readers will get different sorts of pleasure—as determined in part by the editorial and critical matter, perhaps pointing out the linkages, with which the text is presented to them.

Moreover, all three writers agree that Malory's narrative has literary values which he did not intentionally create, especially in points which he translated from his sources (though Lewis doubts that he could so often have accomplished the exact opposite of what he intended as Vinaver believes). And the values taken over from the sources include elements of cohesion, since these romances developed out of the same general Arthurian tradition, and sometimes were imitations, anticipations, or sequels of each other. Again, therefore, it appears that a reader might reasonably enjoy the cohesive reminiscences and cross-references which derive from the sources, plus others which were original to Malory but have at times the look of accidents. And to do this, he need not adopt the view which has been advanced by some critics but which is very hard to reconcile with a number of insoluble contradictions between tales: that all the connections exist as the result of a meticulous design by Malory.

P. E. Tucker, in his thorough study of "Chivalry in the Morte," does not argue the issue of cohesiveness, but he assumes that Malory's work is a whole, and parallels a brief statement of Brewer's in his contention that Malory's conception of knighthood is an element which "binds the whole together." Specifically, he points out that Malory expands from his sources a picture of knighthood as a matter of prowess, aristocracy, and most original to his version, a gentlemanly code of honor. To this view he is able to accommodate the Queste by the process (already well annotated by other writers, including Lewis in this volume) of giving less stress to its ideal of otherworldly religion and more to a standard of
“knyghtly dedys and vertuous lyvyng”—a standard which even Lancelot does not entirely live up to.

But from the beginning, Tucker argues, Malory shows dislike for the way his sources connect knighthood with courtly love. The “Tale of Sir Lancelot” not only passes over episodes in the source which involve his love for the Queen, but adds a speech in which he will not admit loving her, and denounces the taking of paramours. In this, and in similar later speeches by Perceval and Persides, what Malory is particularly objecting to is the love which is an artificial cult, and involves mere pleasure-taking. For “natural” sexual love, coming from the heart, he had more sympathy. Through the central portion of his work, derived from the Tristan, Malory played down the element of courtly love, and in a few episodes brought out the “natural” quality of a love story. Then in his version of the Queste and his last two tales, he discovered that he could stress the love of Lancelot and Guenevere because he could treat it, even though sympathetically, as a fault, a tragically destructive violation of the code of knighthood loyalty as seen in the earliest tales.

In this broad outline, Tucker's interpretation is persuasive, but certain passages in Malory imply a greater idealization of love than he is willing to concede. The opening of the “Tale of Sir Lancelot” includes a reference to his love for Guenevere inspiring him to “many dedys of armys”—and it is hard to agree that Malory was simply showing “carelessness” in thus reproducing the conception of his sources, when all of this introductory passage is original. In the Tristan part of the story, there remain a good many unabashed or even admiring references to love affairs. And near the end of the whole work, there is the famous passage on May glorifying “the olde love . . . in kynge Arthurs dayes.” This passage, Tucker believes, condemns the love of Lancelot and the Queen as unvirtuous because it does not put God first, and the great merit which it credits to the old love, for example in its praise for Guenevere as a true lover, is loyalty. But there must also be considered the admiring statement in the same passage that the lovers of old could go seven years without lust, as modern lovers cannot. Granted that, as Tucker argues, Malory cannot have believed here that the old love was platonic, he may still have believed that it was relatively platonic, that knights not only served for years before having their desire, but did not have it often afterwards. Instead, they were “at other maner of Disportis” in many meetings with their ladies, and their love was, for this reason, superior to that for paramours.

Divorced from any concern with coherence between tales—and thus gaining concentration while it loses some perspective—is F. Whitehead's brief, penetrating esthetic analysis of Malory's last two tales in comparison with their source, the Mort Artu. Treating this romance as a unit in isolation from the rest of the Vulgate Cycle, Whitehead concludes that the concern with the Guenevere story at its beginning is an artistic “difficulty” which, happily, fades into the background when the primary movers of the plot become Gawain and then Modred. A fortiori, the insertion of an interview between Lancelot and Guenevere after Arthur's death, in the version of MS. Palatinus Latinus 1967 and the Stanzaic Morte Arthur, was injudicious. And worst of all, thinks Whitehead, are Malory's additions to the interview and to the subsequent narrative: details of Lancelot's “profane” affections and regrets which obscure the simple issues of chivalry, loyalty, and piety that should be central to this narrative considered separately.
The final essay, by Sally Shaw, carries well beyond previous studies the analysis of editorial changes by Caxton: possibly the alteration of the more northwesterly and authentic word forms of Winchester toward the London standard; more certainly, heavier punctuation, regularization of syntax, replacement of words (dialectal, archaic, French, or contrary to Caxton's personal taste), insertion of paired synonyms, and in general, change of style in the direction of greater formality and greater clarity. Also attributable to Caxton are skillful compression of the story of the Roman war and skillful division of Books and chapters (with some unfortunate exceptions) so as to make them usually of equal length and importance, and to keep the narrative moving from one to the next. The general conclusion—paralleled in a few pages of the Lewis essay—is that Caxton's text, including the rubrics, is entitled to stand as a literary work without re-editing. The liberties which it takes with Malory are justifiable, and it is in some respects superior to him.

A concluding bibliographical note by R. T. Davies lists some two dozen Malory studies, 1953-60, to supplement Vinaver's bibliographies.

ROBERT H. WILSON

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Though a good deal has been written about music in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, most of it has been either limited to research on specific details or gravely distorted by projecting backwards the attitudes and assumptions of Elizabethan song, largely because they are so much better known. Mr. Stevens' study, first published in England in 1961, is really the first thorough investigation of this special field, and it well deserves the additional distribution that will be achieved by this American edition.

The records of the period between 1480 and 1530 provide a considerable body of data, the most important being the actual songs in Henry VIII's MS, the Fayrfax MS, and Ritson's MS—all of which are in the British Museum. But a study of the sort undertaken by Mr. Stevens presents very special problems because the records contain almost no comment or interpretation. They are rich in isolated facts, but are silent on the matters of general interest. Mr. Stevens has studied the songs carefully, but he has not stopped with mere musical and literary analyses, though these alone would be a valuable contribution to knowledge. He soon found that the "expressive" assumptions about lyrics, music, and their union in song which have been taken for granted (with minor shifts of emphasis) from the high Elizabethan period to the present were obviously not the assumptions of the poets and composers of the early Tudor court. This discovery naturally led to the formulation of new questions. What were their assumptions? Who sang these songs? To whom? When? Where? If the songs were not designed to express personal emotions, what were they for?

Most of the book is devoted to piecing together innumerable scattered bits of information from a wide variety of sources—song books, letters, court records,
household accounts, romances, plays—in an attempt to answer these questions. One of the first things that became obvious was that the court of Henry VIII makes a good deal more sense if it is viewed as the twilight of the Middle Ages than if it is considered as the dawn of the Renaissance. Once the court song of this period is freed of the misunderstandings arising from the artistic practices of the Elizabethan art song, it emerges as a previously unrecognized minor literary genre. The discovery, definition, and explanation of this genre is the critical task of Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court.

This task calls for great learning, but it also demands the even rarer qualities of judgment and tact. Fortunately, Mr. Stevens, who is a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in English, meets all these requirements. He is forced to subordinate literary and musical criticism to a more general investigation when it becomes evident that the court song of the period was—in the true meaning of an overworked phrase—a social art. It was a part of the "game of courtly love"—not the devastating tragic passion of a Troilus, a Tristan, or a Paolo Malatesta, but the elegant, witty, stylized public gallantry of a fun-loving and lavish court. The songs were not written as self-sufficient aesthetic objects, but as an essential minor element in an elaborate social life. It is as mistaken to view them as art songs as it would be to consider the beer-and-singing of a modern group around a campfire as a concert. Songs—mostly love songs—belong in the same category as dances, mummmings, disguisings, and hunts. How far and how often the obligatory public gallantry may have served to cover a real private attachment are questions which are lightly touched and discreetly left open.

Only occasionally does Mr. Stevens oversimplify. "The extensive 'use' of Chaucer and the Chaucerian apocrypha in fifteenth-century writing proves only how useful Chaucer was, not how widely spread the enjoyment of literature had become" (p. 206). Surely it proves both. Later writers used Chaucer because he was useful, but they could not have used him without knowing him well, and they must have known him because they enjoyed him. The only alternative would be the unlikely assumption that they doggedly struggled through Chaucer "researching" for bits to quote. Again, the emphasis on the "applied art" of the Middle Ages (following Huizinga and Robbins, p. 235) probably has to be overstated in order to mark a valid historical distinction, but it seems philosophically unsatisfactory. After all, why are "devotional poems written to stir up the wills of faithful people" (like those of Richard Rolle or Thomas of Hales) of a more "eminently practical nature" than narrative poems written to stir up the blood of adventurous people (like those of Scott and Macaulay), or reflective poems written to stir up the imaginations of thoughtful people (like those of Gray and Wordsworth)? The question seems to be not whether an art is useful, but how; and the valid distinction lies between art used for what it can itself offer and art used for some purpose outside itself.

But anyone capable of reading this book at all can make such reservations as these for himself. He will finish it with a great deal that he could not have gotten for himself, including, along with innumerable well-marshalled facts, complete editions of the texts of the three song-books, an invaluable index of the songs of the early Tudor period, and a good Bibliography and Index. More important, he will have a real grasp not only of the court songs of the period, but of the way of life, the customs, and the values without which, as Mr. Stevens
conclusively shows, these songs could not have been written and cannot be properly understood.

Thus Mr. Stevens' study turns out to be an excellent account of social life and values in the early Tudor court as well as the music and poetry there. In these days of reckless publishers' blurbs it is a rare pleasure to find a book that actually delivers more than it promises.

University of Georgia

CALVIN S. BROWN


Superseding more indolent critics who extract conclusions from a handful of selections, Millicent Bell traces through the entire Hawthorne canon axioms which she relates sensitively to his life and his art. Hawthorne, as she points out, in dramatizing the pathos of loneliness was less self-portraitist than a "critic of social individualism," and "even his studies of artists are, ultimately, but examples of his convictions concerning sin and redemption, tragedy and happiness." Unfortunately, Mrs. Bell's modernity puts her out of sympathy with Hawthorne's idealism.

Not realizing that marriage is his symbol of an integrated personality, and overlooking his post-marital fecundity, she imputes to Hawthorne the view that wedlock is preferable to art even though it saps men of their genius. She blurs the distinction between his artists and his villains and evinces the modern wife's scorn of bachelors when she charges his artists with sacrificing love and heaven for demonic insight. She doubts, for example, that Coverdale could prefer the angelic Priscilla to Zenobia and argues from the "subconscious" level of one story that Owen Warland is identified "not with the heart . . . but with the head," forgetting a third choice—that he personifies imagination. In celebrating the joys of matrimony she misses the analogy to Lamb's "Dream Children" in "The Village Uncle." But her gravest oversight is the omission of Hester, Pearl, and other gifted heroines from Hawthorne's gallery of defective aesthetes.

So original a reading can be excused its occasional lapses. Yet it seems unfair to berate Hawthorne's tortured artists while overlooking the selfish materialism that warps his darker villains. Although she accuses his artists of "morbid self-absorption" and indifference to "humane considerations," Hawthorne held that the "legitimate paths" of art "soften and sweeten" the lives of its adherents, who produce "the better truth etherealized out of the prosaic truth of Nature" and reveal "the delicate evolution of spiritual, through material beauty." They "find a purer truth than the world can impart," whereas "cold unimaginative sagacity" blinds us to "the pure, ideal life" which finds in art "the airy track to heaven." Hawthorne's claim that "deep intuitive" love makes a mother wiser "than the wisest sage could be" corrects Mrs. Bell's conclusion that "all who possess this keenest perceptive power are deficient in feeling." Asserting that "there is but half a life,—the meeker and earthlier half" for men who lack imagination, Hawthorne scorned not aestheticism but the Evil Eye, which cultivates latent evil in another soul. Defining a "master Genius" as one whose
"great Heart" warms a "grand intellect" and praising writers with "heart" who avoid "too exclusive use of fancy and intellect," Hawthorne, like Coleridge and Emerson, valued the inspired artist as exemplar of the whole man.

In underscoring the frailty of his artists and obscuring their spiritualizing power, Mrs. Bell disregards Hawthorne's favorite warning—addressed to his Brands, Browns, and Chillingworths—that a balanced imagination brings out the best in what it observes. Perhaps some of her false emphases could have been avoided by consulting such recent works as the essays in *Romanticism: Points of View*, ed. Gleckner and Enscoe, or my unpublished thesis, "Hawthorne on the Imagination" (University of Wisconsin, 1960). Although she overstates her case, considering Hawthorne's artists too Byronic, she reveals deficiencies often overlooked in these idealized figures. In its breadth, depth, and general balance *Hawthorne's View of the Artist* offers a sturdy foundation for subsequent research. A. N. Kaul's *The American Vision* already provides a corrective chapter, pointing out that what is damning "is not physical isolation but spiritual coldness, while art is based upon human sympathies." Hawthorne's Oberon, in his last words, could hardly agree more emphatically.

RICHARDCOANDA

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Three studies of the work of one novelist in less than a year is almost too much, especially when so little has been published before. Even if one grants Ford Madox Ford the stature of a major figure (I do not), it would still have been better for the books to come out at, say, two year intervals, and thereby complement rather than duplicate one another. But for better or worse, the books are out, all general studies, introductions to Ford's large output as a novelist. Being first, Richard Cassell (whose book is not being reviewed here) can most easily be justified for aiming "to clear the field for those who wish to pursue particular problems more thoroughly or to place Ford more exactly among his contemporaries" (*Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels*, p. xi). Like John Meixner and Paul Wiley, Cassell looks at Ford's collaboration with Conrad, his impressionism, and his early novels, before devoting long chapters to analyses of *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. Like Wiley also, he finds the novels immediately preceding and succeeding the tetralogy worth discussing. Meixner does not, and gives only ten pages to them.

Meixner is in fact by far the most critical of the three. All admit the weakness of Ford's minor works, but where the other two often take the flaws for granted, Meixner devotes a section in his consideration of each novel to its defects. Appropriate enough in the early chapters, this method takes the reader by surprise in the middle of Meixner's appraisal of *Parade's End*.

The true achievement of his Tietjens creations is the first volume, *Some Do Not*. The succeeding books will not last. Where *Some Do Not*
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is a magnificent and rich work of the novelist's imagination in almost all aspects—characterization, narrative suspense, authoritative atmosphere, and emotional impact—the rest are thin productions which peter out the vein. (p. 221)

No doubt the expansiveness that is a part of Parade's End carries certain defects with it, perhaps large ones. Nevertheless, it is hard to be sympathetic with Meixner's approach. His substance is solid and his book as a whole is good enough. But he appears to belong to that group of professionalized critics who take their roles very seriously. I am not objecting merely to his constant use of the word "Fordian," nor to several other stylistic irritants. The book is, over-all, quite readable by virtue of the clarity Meixner determined to impose on his analysis. My objection is precisely to the imposed quality of many of his judgments and insights. It is almost as if his concept of the persona of the critic required him to take a new stance, to combat incorrect views (though he does not attack particular critics).

Feeling, for instance, that readers should meet his favorite Ford novel, The Good Soldier, "on the very highest terms," Meixner is compelled to add that this is "a confrontation which even yet has not been made." He insists that that novel must be seen not merely as a fine and moving work of art, but as having a "visceral intensity" (p. 151), as being a tragedy with Edward Ashburnham its tragic hero (Wiley rightly combats such a view). Yet Meixner's insistence on clarity forces him to attempt to define tragedy, and the chapter ends with the following qualification (or undercutting, I would say) of the applicability of the term to The Good Soldier: the personal strength of the three English characters in the novel

... gives them their grandeur and makes them worthy of such tragedy as Ford sees that the twentieth century enables.

But in the end, of course, futility is the context in which they move. Theirs is not the resolution finally of great tragedy, which in its heroism confirms the optimistic view of man's ability to transcend himself spiritually. Instead, for Edward and Nancy, it is the resolution of withdrawal, by suicide and insanity, from a world which is too horrible. Souls of a certain greatness have suffered greatly, but hopelessly and to no larger purpose—their values, lacking sanction, sentimental. This is the tragic absurdity (or absurd tragedy) of human life in a world bereft of meaning.... (p. 189)

Perhaps another way of phrasing what it is that bothers me about Meixner's approach is to say that honesty, a strong will, intelligence, and ingenuity cannot quite take the place of taste and sensibility. Not that Meixner is devoid of the latter two, but his solemn pronouncement of the obvious is occasionally embarrassing ("Only a reader of the novel can understand..."), as is his handling in Parade's End of the importance of "characters that live." Similarly, I'm sure I am not alone in querying the concept of criticism implicit in the following question: "Which of Ford's two finest novels [The Good Soldier or Some Do Not] we must ask finally, is the greater?" (He concludes, I should add, that both can take their place "in that rather small group of actively read and returned to novels in English" [p. 275, my italics]).

Wiley's book is in many ways exactly the opposite of Meixner's. Where the
latter is clear and clipped, Wiley writes in a loose, long-sentenced, in places almost diffuse style. In general, however, the style indicates that Wiley has much to say and feels relaxed about his subject, two qualities that help to make his the more interesting of the two books. Less insistent than Meixner on technique, Wiley sees the center of Ford's contribution as an interest in the human “affair,” an interest to which he believes Ford subordinated his use of mere techniques. Throughout, Wiley brings in background as it affects psychology. His second chapter, on Ford in relation to his Victorian origins, I found very enlightening. But though Wiley uses the milieu approach, he does not limit himself to it. He also comes up with a new analysis of the Tietjens' tetralogy, showing the importance of certain images that both link up the books and symbolize the conflicting values. And in his next to last chapter, he takes the late novels seriously, accepts what he calls their “mythological landscape,” and discovers an important thematic complexity in Ford's use of the doppelganger motif. *Novelist of Three Worlds* is a valuable book both for the literate reader and the specialist.

Another virtue might have accrued had these books not appeared so close together. The most glaring omission in all three is biographical correlation. With a writer whose life and writings were as irregular as Ford's, the critic must bring the two together. Granted that Douglas Goldring's biography, *Trained for Genius*, has misstatements and leaves much ground uncovered, the fact remains that quite a bit of the necessary information is available from Ford's own writing and Violet Hunt's (neither to be taken literally), not to mention Stella Bowen's wonderful book on her relation with Ford after World War I (*Drawn from Life*). Richard Cassell comes closer than the other two to using this material, and I would say that his attempt is one of the reasons why his analysis of *The Good Soldier* is the best of the three.

But the approach of Meixner and Cassell is familiar enough, to me at least, so that I am most grateful to Wiley for demonstrating that other approaches are not only possible but productive.

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Critics who come to literature with fixed ethical and epistemological doctrines, and who assess this or that literary document for its conformance to or divergence from such doctrines, are making essentially philosophical rather than literary judgments. And Dr. Bloom makes it clear in his preface that this is precisely what he means to do; finding that “formalistically preoccupied criticism... has hardened into triviality and jargon,” he invokes the examples of Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Yvor Winters, and Dr. Leavis to support his view that “in one of its crucial aspects, literature... is morality touched with emotion.” While Dr. Bloom nowhere in his work espouses a particular kind of orthodoxy, he puts strong emphasis on the religious aspect of *Except the Lord*; he repeatedly disapproves of Cary's “indeterminateness” or refusal, as Dr. Bloom sees it, to present the reader with a clear and firm resolution to moral issues.
He invokes the classical formula of pleasure and instruction as the primary aim of literature, but it is obvious that pleasure in itself is suspect: he says of A House of Children that the "retrospective idyll, even when it is perfect, amounts to little more than a superior form of play." The Malvolian stylistic sneer of this judgment is duplicated in other statements. He refers to the "customary objections" to relativism, as if they were universally accepted, and in another context, to "unabashed relativism," as if it were a cause for shame. In handling the point-of-view narration of Except the Lord, he maintains that Chester Nimmo's narrative "purports" to be a sober account of his childhood; "purport" throws an unnecessary suspicion on the account which mounts in succeeding pages. The fact that Chester treats his early career rather than the later years is seen as "shameless evasion" on the part of the narrator and the author; largely because the later career contradicts Chester's earlier religious views, Dr. Bloom assumes there is something shifty about Chester's choice of childhood days. Elsewhere, the author comes in for the same treatment when Dr. Bloom calls Cary's conception of the whole trilogy a "devious game."

These stylistic sneers are important because they indicate the central weakness of this study. Dr. Bloom shows a thorough command of Cary's novels, and he approaches them with high intelligence and sensitivity; his style is clear and eloquent, with resources of diction that are admirable. But given all these qualities, the study suffers from Dr. Bloom's refusal to allow Joyce Cary to be himself and to express what that self dictates. Although he indicates, in the final chapter, that he has read Henry James's strictures in "The Art of Fiction" against those critics who will not give the author his rights to his own données, yet it is precisely this fault in Dr. Bloom which prevents him from accepting what he clearly understands to be Cary's intent and his achievement.

In his opening chapter, Dr. Bloom surveys Cary's leading political and aesthetic ideas; he then proceeds, in the second chapter, to a survey of the fiction under the customary divisions of the African novels, the novels of childhood, the group Andrew Wright calls the "chronicle" novels, and finally the first trilogy, with a footnote devoted to the posthumous work, The Captive and the Free. The remaining three chapters treat, in turn, the individual volumes of the second trilogy. The reason for this detailed attention to Prisoner of Grace, Except the Lord, and Not Honour More is given very summary treatment in the preface—they are called his "culminating novelistic achievement, in scope, import, and technique"; one senses that an even more compelling reason is that "in them we can discern most clearly the consequences for Cary's fiction of his indeterminate vision."

In the opening chapter, Dr. Bloom shows a clear and thorough grasp of Cary's leading ideas; and in the final chapter, he even goes so far as to assert that the subjectivist doctrine of "private worlds" is "philosophically defensible." The ease with which this understanding comes is a tribute to Cary's uncommon willingness as a novelist to discuss his ideas and his purposes. But despite the lucidity with which Dr. Bloom details these ideas—without openly objecting to them on a purely philosophical basis—he repeatedly calls Cary to judgment for carrying out these ideas in his novels, finally concluding that "by writing with an unyielding relativistic, ultimately indeterminate, objectivity... Cary becomes guilty of a kind of novelistic dereliction of duty." Thus he reads the riot act to the author, even though Dr. Bloom himself earlier quoted a letter from Joyce
Cary to Andrew Wright in which the author maintains “it was not my job to state a thesis in a novel, my business was to show individual minds in action and the kind of world they produce and the political and aesthetic and moral problems of such a world.” One might almost suspect Dr. Bloom, were it not for the clear intelligence with which his book is presented, of the undergraduate naiveté of the student who complains to his dean that whenever he asks a question, the professor replies with another question rather than an answer.

A more plausible explanation is that “indeterminateness” takes on the quality of an idée fixe in Dr. Bloom’s mind; all of Cary’s works are approached with the a priori assumption that they will show a certain degree of indeterminateness, and those works are vindicated which can be demonstrated to show the lowest content of indeterminateness. Most of the African novels are unsuccessful at least in part because they occur in an “indeterminate country,” and the chronicle and childhood novels show varying degrees of indeterminateness in space and time. Curiously enough, Mister Johnson comes off as the best of the African novels because it “is considerably less indeterminate than its predecessors”; Dr. Bloom dismisses Andrew Wright’s very plausible analogy between Rudbeck and Captain Vere in order to emphasize the determinateness of the fleeting comradesly love between the executioner and his victim.

Castle Corner, The Moonlight, and A Fearful Joy receive better treatment because Dr. Bloom administers to other critics of these volumes the same judgment that I, ironically, have been making in his regard: “To admire Cary is, to some degree at least, to consent to what he is doing in these books,” and on the basis of his interpretation that historical change, rather than an individual person, is the central concern of the novels, Dr. Bloom finds that Cary has succeeded more than he is given credit for.

With the first trilogy, Herself Surprised, To Be A Pilgrim, and The Horse’s Mouth, Cary has “devised an indeterminate form by means of which he can explore an indeterminate world.” Dr. Bloom’s survey of this trilogy is detailed and illuminating, with rich insights into the characters and a complex view of their dilemmas. However, he closes with the same criticism that he later makes of the second trilogy; because each of the private worlds is so brilliantly evoked, and because the style of the evocation is so peculiar to each of the narrators, the trilogy as a whole gives no determinable, overarching view of reality.

His analysis of the second trilogy, in the final three chapters, is simply a more detailed application of this same idea. In Prisoner of Grace, he traces Nina Nimmo Latter’s progressive perplexities over the shoddy moral standards that characterize political life, and her application of these standards to domestic relations. At the end of this analysis, however, Dr. Bloom says: “Knowing what we do of Cary’s characteristic reluctance to judge, of his extraordinary moral liberality, we may suppose that his own reading of Prisoner of Grace would differ somewhat from the preceding one.” He then sketches out, in one paragraph, what he supposes to be the author’s intention. We all recognize that authors are not always their own best critics, and that they sometimes do not entirely realize what they were accomplishing in this or that volume. But it nevertheless seems a puzzling procedure for a critic to present a thirty-one page, carefully analytical view of the system of values extracted from a novel, and then to devote a paragraph to what he confidently assumes to be a totally different set of values which are the ones the author intended to convey. The
astonishing sentence that opens the following paragraph confirms the situation:

“One of the most remarkable things about Prisoner of Grace as a novel is that, in itself, it offers no very good reasons for not being read from this more generous standpoint.” Apparently the qualification for being able to make the second, more generous, reading that the author would approve is that “one would need to be remarkably close to Cary’s irresolute habit of mind to accept Nina’s position, at the book’s close, as either necessary, inevitable, or commendable.” This admission that the critic cannot put himself into sympathy with the habits of mind of the author seems to me a rather formidable reason for not spending this amount of effort to make the study. It brings us back to the Malvolian tone of some of the passages, because the real question that should have been addressed to Malvolio was not whether he thought he could abolish cakes and ale, but whether he would ever be able to find happiness in a society where there were no cakes and ale to draw forth his deliciously sour responses.

Except the Lord, the second volume of the trilogy, receives a similar treatment. Here the interpretation tends heavily toward an exaltation of family life, simple, rural pieties, and religious conversion. But again Dr. Bloom indicates toward the end of the analysis that this is not precisely the book that Joyce Cary wrote. And in treating the third volume, Not Honour More, Dr. Bloom is drawn toward Jim Latter’s simple and outraged soldierly morality much more easily than most critics, although he closes his account with a good discussion of other possible readings of Jim’s character.

At the end of his book, Dr. Bloom’s argument is most succinctly stated in one sentence: “The novel need not exist at all if its version of reality is no more conclusive and meaningful that [sic] reality itself.” The key words are “conclusive” and “meaningful.” If the author does not conclude, legislate, and spell out definitively his view of morality, if he does not superimpose an absolute transcendant meaning on the experience he represents, then he is not performing a worthwhile function. Joyce Cary, in Dr. Bloom’s view, makes his most egregious “novelistic dereliction of duty” in the brilliant skill of assuming a different point of view for each of the three volumes of the trilogy. And Dr. Bloom has already alluded to the “moral undependability in a first-person narrator.” Here we are drawn back to Plato’s Malvolian objections to poets in his commonwealth, that if they assume the characters of other persons, they are lying. But then the world has been rather fascinated by Homer’s lies.

Dr. Bloom’s book is beautifully printed, and readers will be most grateful for the old-fashioned luxury of footnotes that are actually at the foot of the page. This study does not supercede Andrew Wright’s volume as an introduction to Cary, since his book still provides the fullest treatment of biography, style, and repeated themes in Cary; and it briefly surveys the poetry, short stories, and drama—none of which appear in Dr. Bloom’s study. Dr. Bloom’s is a highly intelligent, well written, carefully researched book, with an excellent bibliography, but the author’s moral theories of literature keep getting in the way of a clear view of what Joyce Cary is all about.

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