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Book Reviews

Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable by Ronald Paulson. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982. Pp. xii + plates. + 274. \$18.95.

This book provides an intellectually systematic interpretation of Turner and Constable which should encourage profitable dispute about how best to evaluate their accomplishments. Paulson claims Reynolds and Hogarth to be founders of "English landscape painting as a literary-conceptual form" (p. 21), and though he says nothing about Reynolds he argues forcefully for Hogarth's role, above all through his series *Times of Day*. Paulson makes brief but unfailingly cogent remarks on several painters, including Gaspar, Canaletto, Morland, Gainsborough, and Wilson, and on several pertinent topics, such as the relation of pastoral and georgic. He makes good use of pioneering works by John Barrell and Jay Appleton, developing, for instance, the latter's illuminating suggestion of geological similarities between Constable's two favored locales, Hampstead Heath and the Stour Valley.

Both Paulson's preliminary survey and his detailed analyses of Turner and Constable are structured by his Freudian concept of art, defined thus:

the work of art must be taken as the totality of the symptomatic scene in which desire, meaning, and dream come together

[My] model is based on the Freudian assumptions that primary process thinking . . . tends to be pictorial rather than verbal and is governed by the pleasure principle . . . Secondary-process thinking . . . obeys the laws of verbal grammar and logic and is governed by a reality principle. (p. 168)

The equivalent of "dream" in art for Paulson is

the painting as primary process—Turner's original marks on canvas . . . before the painting has suffered or benefitted from the secondary-revision of the artist on the canvas, off the canvas, and in his critics' interpretations

The painting is (unlike the dream) concretely present, and yet there is much that is only recoverable in the dream-work that follows upon, and helps to create, the image itself.

The last phrase, "the image itself," I take to refer to the painting we see as distinct from the "original marks on the canvas."

The painting is a case in which a seemingly subordinate supplement—a revision or a remark in a letter—may introduce considerations that are implicit or repressed in the image itself . . . We can nevertheless get some fix upon the image . . . by examining Constable's (or Turner's) symbolizations, their own verbal interpretations of their landscape paintings. (p. 169)

Whatever one's doubts about the validity of Paulson's model—I suspect that literary critics but not art historians will accept his equating of a "revision" of the painting on the canvas with "a remark in a letter"—his clear ar-

tication of his method makes possible an intellectual level of disagreement too seldom permitted by recent studies of the graphic arts. By so plainly defining his method of approach, for example, Paulson renders useful, that is, debatable, rather than merely arbitrary, his strong preference for Constable as an artist whose triumphs are "more dearly won" than are Turner's.

Turner, for Paulson, provides "an extreme case of the incompatibility of visual and verbal structure" (p. 63). For instance:

The intersection of different moments in time is an essential meaning of the Turner historical landscape. But it is often specified in literary rather than visual ways Even when the allusion itself is graphic, the image conveys its meaning through literary rather than graphic form. (p. 72)

The key to understanding Turner is the sun. Instead of placing the observer in a shaded foreground, as does Claude, Turner

confronts his viewer with the sun, giving him total prospect but depriving him of any refuge whatever in the foreground or middle distance . . . leaving him naked and without a place to stand (p. 89)

From this excellent reading (making good use of Appleton's prospect-refuge paradigm) derives Paulson's less persuasive interpretation of the Turnerian vortex, which

originates in a pun . . . Turner, my name; a maker or an artist; a constructor of vortices in particular, a revolutionary; He who revolves the earth . . . with revolutionary *and* God we are at the heart of the vortex. (p. 100)

Paulson argues that one can establish in Turner's art "a verbal impetus before as well as after the graphic image has been made," and this second verbalizing is an attempt "to recapture an original meaning, obscured by the graphic image" (p. 100). In Turner's paintings, therefore, one finds

an attempt to absorb the natural object in the subject, to make it a symbol for his own state of mind; but at the same time he acknowledges the existence of the gap within a failed language. (p. 101)

Turning to Constable, Paulson distinguishes "between an art that *represents* revolution . . . and an art that is itself, in terms of artistic tradition . . . revolutionary," citing Turner and Blake as mere representers and Wordsworth and Constable as true revolutionaries. Odd as this description may be of Blake and Turner, it breaks Paulson free from many clichés that have crippled commentaries on Constable. He notes that Constable depicts not "landscape" but "farming, milling, canal-transport, and various kinds of labor" (p. 118), and that the "spaciousness" of the "six-footers" entails "focusing in a monumentally simple shape on a single aspect of the landscape experience" (p. 120). Constable reverses what Jay Appleton has called prospect-refuge symbolism by "making the foreground and the woods turbulent and threatening, and the distant clearing a peaceful refuge" (p. 125).

This pattern to Paulson is the essence of the Constable landscape, dark foreground with sun-lit meadow in the middle distance. Finally, making use of Lacan, Paulson defines the major question about Constable's paintings of the 1830s as whether or not they show that the acquisition of the symbolic order of language is in fact a precondition for a mastery of the imaginary, the visual.

All this is splendidly stimulating criticism, and to Paulson's fine definition of "Constable's ideological revolution" in painting as consisting in a desire to suppress both "the imitation of landscapes painted by earlier artists" and "the telling of a story, the allegorizing or otherwise tarting up of the landscape" (p. 108) I have only a small objection. Paulson quotes Constable's analysis of a landscape by Ruisdael portraying an approaching storm that concludes with the remark that Ruisdael "'has here told a story' of the weather" (p. 110). On the next page Paulson says that in Constable's remark "on Ruisdael 'telling a story' there is an implicit metaphor of narrative." How could Constable have been more explicit? I cite this triviality because it points toward my difficulty with Paulson's subsequent analysis of Constable's lecture on the origin of landscape painting, which concludes that "Constable cannot get out of his head the idea that pictures and poems are the same thing" (p. 135). This seems to me untrue. Nor can I accept Paulson's interpretation of Constable's suggestion about the origin of landscape painting in religious art.

The cross must be fixed in the ground, there must be a sky, the shades of night must envelop the garden (the scene of the agony), and a more awful darkness the Crucifixion; while rocks and trees naturally made a part of the accompaniments of the sepulchre. Here, then, however rude and imperfect, we are to look for the origin of landscape. (p. 134)

The opening words, which I have italicized, seem to me quintessential Constable, but Paulson, ignoring the painter's concern with origin, argues that

Constable has simply *removed* the history from a history painting . . . 'landscape' is history painting with the history . . . removed. The history is not, as Turner would have it, added in a corner to legitimate the landscape. The landscape is arranged and activated *as if* there were heroic figures contesting within it. (p. 134)

For me, this misreads Constable, and even contradicts Paulson's claim for Constable's "revolutionary" qualities as impressive because not mere negations. In fact, Constable's observations on the origin of landscape art are congruent with Wordsworth's views, who certainly didn't regard landscape as diminished history.

Like many recent literary critics treating painting, Paulson approaches Romantic art by depending heavily on Burke's concept of sublimity, for Burke's psychologism and proto-structuralist habit of thinking in terms of abstract binary oppositions make him attractive to Freudian systematizers who can't get it out of their heads that poems and paintings are the same things, symptoms of private psychic pressures. But Romanticism arises in opposition to Burkean mechanistic systematizing. The development of both

watercolor painting and the cult of the picturesque at the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, are crucial to the socio-historical context in which Romantic art takes shape. To ignore that context—however fuzzy, contradictory, and inept both theoreticians and practitioners of an emergent Counter-Enlightenment—is to lose the possibility of accurately defining Turner's and Constable's unique contributions to the history of English art.

Arguably, moreover, rigorous identification of primary process with the visual and secondary process with verbal symbolization by oversimplifying the processes of revision distorts what it aims to display, the *internal history* of each work of art. Paulson is cursory on the painters' actual reworkings, saying little, for a surprising instance, about the relation of Constable's polished "six-footers" to the many different kinds of "sketches" that preceded, accompanied, and even followed "finished" canvases. Paulson's lack of interest in the specifically painterly history of particular canvases is startling because his Freudian-Lacanian scheme makes the visual "primary." Perhaps the paradox arises from Paulson's distaste for "imagination," a word he scarcely uses except in the form of "imaginary," meaning what needs control by the "symbolic." But for Romantic painting, as for Romantic poetry, "imagination" is much more than imaginary, being the power of unifying invention and execution into vital recreation. Imagination accounts for what might be called the dialogic dimension of Constable's and Turner's art—how it enables a viewer's response to it to *change*. These Romantic pictures ordinarily do not look the same from different distances, and they are constructed so that a viewer's response to them develops over a period of time. Herein, I believe, lies the significant innovation of these Romantic artists, not, as Paulson would have it, in their shifting relations between verbal and visual components. Yet even if I am correct on this point, like all other students of Romantic art I am indebted to Paulson for radically raising the level of critical discussion about England's greatest landscape artists. No scholar can do more than that.

Columbia University

Karl Kroeber

Milton and the Science of the Saints by Georgia B. Christopher. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp xii + 264. \$22.50.

Georgia B. Christopher's *Milton and the Science of the Saints* departs from much the same point as John Knott's *The Sword of the Spirit*—that is from the Reformers' intense feeling for the power of "the Word" in all its senses. Knott traced out the history of the Puritans' changing response to this "literary theology," as Christopher calls it. Christopher shows the ways in which Milton kept the truth of Luther and Calvin so pure of old, despite the intervening century and a half of development. That is, she moves back and forth between Luther and Calvin on the one hand, and Milton on the other. Like Knott's book, Christopher's shows, to this biased reader, that the most revealing approach to Milton is still through reformed theology and religious writing.

The Reformation would probably have been impossible without the printing press. Christopher reminds us again how vivid particularly Luther's experiences with Scripture had been for him; similarly, he handled the relationships between Old and New Testament history by talking about a "Church of the Word" which had existed since creation. Like Luther, Calvin also thought that the believer must have such an intense experience with "the Word." A nice reading of the youthful Milton's "Nativity Ode" shows how the emphasis upon song there manifests the Protestant "sacrament" of "hearing the word." While the Church of England, in all its doctrinal diversity and inner contentiousness, held that "the Church" was defined by the administration of sacraments and preaching of the word, for exponents of this particular feeling for "the Word," the second component edged out the first, almost completely, in importance.

Christopher uses this sense of "the Word" to examine *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regain'd*, and *Samson Agonistes*. The first she calls a "masque a cléf," finding the doctrinal content latent, available to the initiate yet "masqued" by the pagan and semi-classical trappings. Christopher tellingly notes that A.S.P. Woodhouse, who expounded the fissured Puritan view of the mutually exclusive realms of nature and grace, yet read *Comus* as a blending or harmonization of those realms. "Much depends upon one's starting point when approaching the masque" (32), and Christopher starts with the reformer's opposition between "love" and "faith" to show that a latent, reformed reading of the masque is possible.

Christopher has many fine things to say about *Paradise Lost*. Among these are her feeling that Satan is deranged, unable to understand God's words. God speaks no human or reasonable language (while Satan uses "reason" only); he reveals his promise, the Son, progressively through the poem as a *Christus Victor*. "Progressive" may be a misleading term, however, for Christopher shrewdly notes that for the Puritans, "the notion that history sweeps qualitatively on from shadowy types toward the Truth of the Incarnation is held in balance with the notion that all times are equal before the word of God" (136), and Milton's epic about Old Testament Christians "allowed him to moot the controversy over predestination" (139). Eve, in sinning, adds to the word of God, and Christopher vigorously denies that she helped "cause" the regenerative movement in Adam in Book X. Her insistence on "verbal" behavior suggests that Milton's prime dramatization of Eve's inferiority lies in the immense "talk" Adam engages in, both with himself and with angels—though when the narrator sympathetically passes silently over Eve's first speech of reconciliation in Book X, I have always thought he showed how nasty the fallen Adam still is at that point. Throughout, Christopher strikingly insists on the reformed view that "faith" is superior to "love."

Because hers is a study of hermeneutics, let me turn (too quickly) from Christopher's readings to a central and delightful paradox at the heart of this reformed treatise: it simultaneously proposes, quite truculently at times, a "reading" of Milton and admits the possibility of multiple readings. Christopher beats up critics, myself included, yet she also carefully and repeatedly builds in the possibility for "any epiphany" which may occur to a reader (93). This follows from the reformed view that Christian experience

with the word of God is various. The Father's speeches are "bald authoritative or didactic statement," and the "emptiness or illogic" of them opens the possibility of these various "epiphanies." Faith centrally involves the understanding that "the Word" is always potentially metonymic and metaphorical, and to the faithful, "discovery of figuration became a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence." "It was Calvin's genius to track the motions of the Spirit along the precise but 'viewless' paths of metonymy and metaphor, because words themselves bear no outward mark of alteration when they are discovered to be figurative" (127). Christopher's approach is similarly "precise" yet "viewless."

That is, the paradox at the heart of this book is an intentional miming of reformation hermeneutic. The "paths of metonymy and metaphor" being invisible and their operation a mystery, Christopher can record her "epiphanies" and yet argue that others are possible. The reader works out in fear and trembling his own "salvation" for himself. The more, the merrier. And this approach leads Christopher quite naturally to the astonishing statement that "anyone reading *Paradise Lost* will fall into Satan's pattern of response, unless he deliberately takes a position that resists the workings of ordinary language with its mundane field of reference" (94). When Milton calls God "King," he yokes "violently negative and positive associations," while the faithful reader will subtract "the dark passions attendant upon political monarchy" and will read "the title 'King' as a telling *a fortiori* statement of divine power." Of course, Christopher would probably agree that it is impossible systematically to read in this way; "system" is a rational stance applicable only to the "sphere of nature." Connotations and contexts tinge our response to words, resist them how we may. Indeed, the process of "making sense of the speaker"—our immediate response to an utterance, David Bleich has reminded us—wilts, for if the "speaker" in question is not relying on "the workings of ordinary language," then he is risking incomprehensibility. Milton, Christopher repeatedly suggests, was dramatizing something "precise"; he also "permits" us to find our own metaphors and metonymies. These sparkle with his "viewless" meaning, though it is pointless to worry about that meaning since we must rather exercise our faith.

I am not a man of faith, and I think it is possible to see some of what Christopher does in *Paradise Lost* through the "workings of ordinary language." For instance, I think the Father's statements of doctrine in Book III seem bald, when we encounter them, precisely because they lack the reiteration and dramatization and illumination and amplification which the episodes which follow provide. But Christopher's analysis of the Reformers' reading of classical epic, and its place in Milton's vision, is just one of many fine insights which derive from her approach directly. Another is the way in which, like Milton's God, she "permits all," for Christopher's mimetic study of hermeneutics rightly embraces the multiplicity of the ways we interpret.

Christopher's study, many fine details of which I am here passing over, leads to the reflection that the printing press helped break down various communities. The most obvious is that between speaker and hearer. Luther had a central epiphany while contemplating the word "righteousness" alone, just as Adam, in book x, recalls "the Word," in Christopher's view, in

isolation. Of course, there was no community, for reformers, between "ordinary language" and "the Word," or between "nature" and "grace." Further, the Reformers developed a reading of epic very much at odds with that of the humanists. Finally, Samson develops through homeopathic exposure to his "negative identity" rather than through exchange of views. We seem, in these days of deconstruction, to focus on a dire view of human language and community. In a similar vein, Christopher finally and briefly suggests that "the course of Milton's canon is itself confessional because it increasingly acknowledges the extent to which the evil voice is enmeshed with self." Milton, she suggests, added "the monumental sense of failure and guilt" to Samson from his own experience. In *Samson*, "Milton seems to be composing himself for death" in part by "purging" a "mixed self." "Not until moments before the hero's departure for the Philistine theater is the Satanic voice of rage and despair stilled—completely stilled for the first time in Milton's poetry." It is quite a powerful conception of a life which subordinated love to faith and intent to community.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Boyd Berry

Henry Vaughan: The Unfolding Vision by Jonathan F. S. Post. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. xxii + 244. \$22.50.

In a fine, close reading of Henry Vaughan's poems, Jonathan Post has found continuities, has reconsidered Vaughan's "conversion," has explicated Vaughan's relationship to Herbert, and has shown a good deal of hidden virtue to Vaughan's work throughout. Post likes the somewhat unloveable Vaughan, or rather likes the voice in the poems, and to begin with, this is a book we should all keep handy for those moments when we are preparing to teach Vaughan. Post can show us many fine things about these poems.

Post's approach is, I suppose, old fashioned, almost militantly non-deconstructed, and new critical. For example, Post treats Vaughan's "conversion" as a purely literary affair. That makes good sense, since the evidence we have is purely literary as well. Aside from the record we have of his many litigations and a few letters, we have very little. Secondly, Post writes about "Vaughan"—which is a good deal simpler and more attractive than writing about "the narrator" or some "text." But from the outset Post makes it clear that it is the literary voice of Vaughan he hears about which he writes. The vision which unfolds is a verbal and literary vision.

Post suggests that Vaughan contained his passions through literary activity. One form this took was in a search for "masters"—of the Cavalier mode at first, then Herbert, and ultimately God (Post pinpoints the last acutely). At the same time, Vaughan's Juvenalian impulse testifies to certain feelings of superiority; the "phlegm" of contentiousness had to be spit out, the clamors of the world, themselves also Vaughan's clamors, subdued. Vaughan was, to put it crudely, submissive and bossy. Post, by listening to the "voices" in his poems, illumines the mixture while making individual "voices" and poems more intelligible through differentiation.

The *Poems* (1646) show the work of a young and self-conscious poet of the "precieuse" and translator of Juvenal who "closes his first volume by questioning the very stability" of court poetry (24). His "disenchanted muse" is more visible in *Olor Iscanus*, whose contrasting moods and modes figure the continual violation of innocence—both in people and in the art of poetry itself. Indeed, poems in *Olor* serve to undercut the cavalier notion of friendship and to show the collapse of secular poetry. There Vaughan hopes at moments for a transmigration of wit from poets in the past, but is ultimately stuck or stranded in his turbulent present. What followed was not quite a transmigration of Herbert's wit, though the first pay-off—which Post brings out with fine precision—was a formal tightening and shaping more reminiscent of Herbert than I had realized. Vaughan was confirmed into the church militant—into militant anti-Puritanism and into a vision of himself as the "'lively Figure' of a converted poet." Post shows that *Silex* Part II surpasses Part I, while one of the most impressive analyses is of the contrasting sounds of peace and violence in his poems. "The Word" was, for Protestants, to be heard, but it seemed increasingly difficult "against a larger backdrop of chaos and noise" in which Vaughan, particularly in his satiric moods, himself at times participated. "When Vaughan exhorts himself to 'Spit out their phlegm,'" he remodelled "Herbert's command for England to 'Spit out thy flegme'" to show his recognition of his "all-too-human impulse to indulge too fervently in the language of overkill" (184-5). "The Night" catches again Vaughan's sense of living in a late and dusky age of poetry. *Thalia Rediviva* is a subdued acknowledgement that the crisis has past, the world has not been destroyed, and life must trudge on.

Throughout, Post shows Vaughan's continuing sense of being a poet—a poet who joins the court, who sees the devastation of the wars about him, who finds a solution to the dimness of the future of poetry through a conversion to dramatize religion, who out-lived the wars and the religious lyric. In doing so, he suggests a preoccupation with paternal authority (to risk redundancy) which may be obscured by the aggressive "language of overkill."

There are limits to this new critical venture, needless to say, two of which struck this reader. Post adopts Vaughan's anti-Puritanism, carelessly lumping together "Puritan reformers and mechanic preachers" (135) or the "Puritans and the lunatic fringe" (136). The Welsh Saints were a wild lot and Vaughan no doubt had difficulty, which a critic might avoid, sorting among his enemies; Post slips a bit farther, as when he speaks of "the difference between violence and peace, the imposter and the true saint" (133), when there was violence and imposture on all sides. Again, it might well be argued that Vaughan did not, actually, win the "victory" and fully "spit out the phlegm" which Post's ordering of chapters and poems suggests. Indeed, Vaughan may well have died an angry old man. Other readers may find other problems deriving from the method. However, Post seems acute to suggest that, in writing *Silex* (and compensating for his political situation), Vaughan may have encountered himself among his enemies. If we knew the dates of individual poems in *Silex*, we could be more certain about the victory, but the battle or holy war being fought there Post has ably shown. Finally, it is a pleasure, in this dim age, to read in excellent prose, a

sympathetic account of a poet whom the critic appears to like.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Boyd Berry

Dickens and the Short Story by Deborah A. Thomas. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982. Pp. xii + 196. \$18.00.

Surprising though it may seem, this is the first full-length study of Dickens' short stories, and it is characterized by the same thoroughness as Thomas' previous research on this subject. Two appendices—one identifying the contributors to the special Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*, and another providing a chronology of the short stories—increase the value of this significant study.

Thomas deals only with the stories which she, like Dickens himself, distinguishes from the sketches. Her main general points are that Dickens' stories aspire to the character of oral narration and that the fundamental emphasis is upon the liberating power of fancy. Dickens' early fascination with the uncanny tale proceeds from his belief that these tales offer a departure from everyday experience. *Master Humphrey's Clock* was a miscalculated expression of this impulse toward escape, whereas *A Christmas Carol* was its triumph. The various Christmas stories manifest the theme of escape through fancy in many ways. *The Cricket on the Hearth* consciously fosters a childish milieu, whereas *The Haunted Man* plays with the theme of reading and storybooks in a sophisticated manner.

Thomas' examination of the special Christmas numbers of the magazines he edited is particularly interesting. Restating Dickens' conviction that short stories are especially appropriate for fanciful release, Thomas demonstrates his conviction that the Christmas season was especially suited to such imaginative indulgence. Her exposition of Dickens' methods of assembling contributions for the special numbers reveals as much about Dickens' character as it does about his attitudes toward his craft. For example, Dickens could also make fun of his own ritual; *Somebody's Luggage* is a spoof of the problems inherent in the production of the Christmas numbers. Thomas gives particular attention to certain underrated stories. Thus she argues that "George Silverman's Explanation," is a subtler psychological study than most scholars assume, and that "The Boy at Mugby" is "a comic masterpiece."

Thomas has focussed attention on the coherence of Dickens' short stories through their common acknowledgment of the power of fancy, and illuminated their origins and methods. Since a study of the stories has long been a desideratum of Dickens studies, it is especially satisfying to find this first effort so successful.

Wayne State University

John R. Reed

Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800 by Jay Fliegelman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Pp. 328. \$24.95.

Ever since it emerged in the 1950s as a scholarly discipline in its own right, American Studies has been greeted with some suspicion by the academy. Troubled by its borrowed methodology, its claims to a narrowly exclusive subject matter (as exclusive as the problematic concept of "America" itself), historians and literary critics alike have tended to treat this hybrid form as a kind of upstart youth still in the process of legitimizing itself. With the recent growing interest in interdisciplinary research, however, American Studies has come of age to take a leading role in breaking down the confining boundaries that have compartmentalized traditional academic inquiry. Jay Fliegelman's new book, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800*, provides an example of American Studies at its best, an impressive combination of impeccable historical scholarship and sensitive rhetorical analysis. While the subtitle of the book might suggest yet another fashionable excursion into psychohistory, Fliegelman's work is instead a wide-ranging intellectual and cultural history of the second half of the eighteenth century which sets out to show how a major shift in the Anglo-American understanding of parent-child relations—a new emphasis on nurture rather than innate nature, benevolent example rather than fixed precept—in effect made possible the American Revolution against British patriarchal authority.

Building on the work of prominent social historians (Lawrence Stone and Philippe Ariès, most notably), Fliegelman begins by discussing the gradual transformation of the family in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a static hierarchical structure to a more voluntaristic and affectional set of relations which stressed parental responsibility to children as much as children's obedience to parental authority. Fliegelman quickly breaks new ground in this familiar territory by steering clear of a history-of-ideas approach to focus instead on the popular transmission of the new pedagogy, how the recently invented novel served as a kind of surrogate parent or didactic guide "preaching the new Lockean gospel" (36). A series of fascinating readings of increasingly complex "bestsellers" in America culminates with an extended analysis of *Clarissa* and *Robinson Crusoe*, the second of which Fliegelman reads as a Puritan quest narrative whereby the fallen prodigal son returns as the self-reliant Christian pilgrim who must sacrifice parental affection for the unmediated love of God. Fliegelman convincingly demonstrates that in the particularly American editions of these works, whether they be classic novels or simple moral tracts, responsible parental guidance is endorsed as the central means of exposing children to worldly knowledge as well as protecting them from its dangers.

Having established the novels of Defoe and Richardson as models of justifiable filial disobedience, Fliegelman next turns to America itself to examine the impact of the popularized Lockean pedagogy on the rhetoric of American politics, social relations, and theology. The reconsideration of the family allowed Americans like Tom Paine and Ben Franklin to view Britain as an irresponsible tyrannical patriarch who was unfairly trying to extract a debt

of gratitude which had already been invalidated by the parent country's unnatural neglect of its offspring's desire for self-assertion. The Lockean paradigm also paved the way for a new understanding of marriage as a vol-untaristic union, as well as a new understanding of God as a benevolent, nurturing father. Fliegelman is especially good at showing that, despite their differences, eighteenth-century Evangelicals and Rationalists in America both shared an "optimistic faith in a divinely designed program of human growth" (190) that was part of the larger cultural faith in the power of education.

In the third and final section of the book, Fliegelman considers the consequences of antipatriarchalism for the post-revolutionary American nation by examining the special kind of representative father George Washington became in the hands of popular iconographers like Parson Weems. Fliegelman then turns to the neutrality debates that dominated America's foreign policy in the 1790s. The lesson of the French Revolution, Fliegelman suggests, threatened to destroy the delicate balance between liberty and authority in the newly gained American paradise by unleashing the "dark side" of the Lockean ideology, the realization (expressed in Brockden Brown's novels) that seduction, flattery, and deception, operating under the guise of disinterested benevolence, could control vulnerable hearts and minds. Just as America lapses into paranoid isolationism by the end of the century, Fliegelman concludes, so too does the newly renaturalized nuclear family in America become an insular world in itself cut off from society at large, a walled-in edenic garden facing the nineteenth century with a mixture of hope and anxiety.

Such a condensation of *Prodigals and Pilgrims* does little justice to the wealth of both American and European cultural evidence which Fliegelman marshals to bring his argument to life. In the course of his study, he analyzes with great subtlety dozens of sentimental novels, hymns, etchings, political cartoons, poems, and chapbooks, not to mention contemporary debates on paper money, inoculation, suicide, and daylight savings. Popular works which traditional historians and literary critics have neglected or dismissed, strange obscure works like Francois Fénelon's *Telemachus* (1699), Gessner's *The Death of Abel* (1758), and the *Panther Narrative* (1787), suddenly take on new significance in the light of the shift in family relations that the book so lucidly and comprehensively describes. Fliegelman is particularly adept at making startling connections between seemingly disparate details, moving brilliantly in a single paragraph, for instance, from education to landscape gardening to mesmerism, or showing the hidden relation between changes made in *The New England Primer* and the invention of the self-propelled steamboat. These are not simply ingenious analogies on Fliegelman's part, but signs of the overarching preoccupation of the age which Fliegelman synthesizes under the concept of Lockean education.

Fliegelman's success lies in his ability to set up and then apply a compelling general paradigm that is flexible enough to illuminate a remarkable array of cultural materials without being vapid or meaningless. Yet it is the very strength of the book which also raises some questions. By the second chapter, the term "Lockean ideology" has become a kind of code phrase which reappears throughout his study with such force and frequency as to

render the argument inevitable. Eighteenth-century religious, political, and philosophical differences—Evangelical vs. Rationalist, Whig vs. Tory, moralist vs. empiricist—are subsumed under this pervasive adjective “Lockean,” as Fliegelman aims to uncover the common ideological ground or “unity of the American cause” (183) that permitted the Revolution to flourish. Although he admits in a footnote that his monolithic notion of Lockean cultural hegemony still allows for a “competing ideology” (288), he does not take into account those regional or class differences in the colonies which would have contributed to the production of counter values. It is only after the French Revolution, in fact, that Fliegelman recognizes the emergence of such differences (Federalist vs. Republican, mainly), a perspective which creates a somewhat too neat contrast between the unified optimism of the 1770s and the divisive self-interest of the 1790s.

Part of the problem, I think, stems from Fliegelman’s use of the term “ideology,” a notoriously troublesome word signifying the interaction between history and belief, reality and imagination, which he treats as a self-evident concept. Fliegelman’s project is primarily descriptive rather than analytic; because he exhibits less interest in the psychological or social motives underlying a given set of beliefs than in the various forms of expression embodying that ideology, Fliegelman chooses not to emphasize the anxieties attending the revolutionary demystification of the notion of authority. While he is certainly right to interpret the sentimental novel as a form of pedagogy, he sometimes overlooks the complex rhetorical strategies by which a Sterne or a Richardson anxiously disclose, conceal, or even subvert their own didactic intentions. Early on Fliegelman points to the “paranoid strain” in the Lockean model of education, its tendency to destabilize the relation “between words and the things for which the words stand” (16), but he might have strengthened his important insight connecting the rise of the novel with the new faith in education had he shown how these authors’ reservations about their own manipulative craft get worked into the form of the fiction itself. (Richardson’s diffident posing as a mere “editor” of letters, his uneasy abdication of authorial responsibility, immediately comes to mind) To assume that characters are “spokesmen” for authors, and authors “spokesmen” for philosophical points of view, as Fliegelman does on occasion despite the obvious sophistication of his analyses, runs the risk of reducing the fiction to clear ideological statement, a conclusion based on the premise that text and context can perfectly reflect one another. About this question of mediation, as well as all similar methodological issues, Fliegelman remains silent, aside from an introductory footnote which briefly mentions Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault.

But such theoretical concerns may be better left for the book’s readers to ponder. Fliegelman himself identifies his work as a “case study”; it is precisely because he does not stop *in medias res* to worry about his methods that he can pursue his argument with such admirable clarity and energy, blending history and literature into a persuasive whole. Quite simply, Fliegelman’s book dwarfs all recent attempts to arrive at a similar synthesis of this period in American history. The wonderfully compelling case he makes for a major revision in our understanding of eighteenth-century American sen-

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sibility, along with the many acute readings he offers in specific support, should make *Prodigals and Pilgrims* of great importance for literary critics and historians alike.

The Johns Hopkins University

Jonathan Auerbach

Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After by Annette Lavers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982. Pp. 300. \$25.00.

The nicest thing about this book is that you do not need an accelerated course in epistemology (the theory which relates concepts to new intellectual paradigms) to appreciate the pluralistic aspect of Roland Barthes's writing. Although it is a sort of "l'homme et l'oeuvre" book which Barthes always opposed, Lavers' text provides a good introduction to this critic in that it combines biography and literary, social and cultural history. Inasmuch as her apparent purpose is to show Roland Barthes at "the confluence of all disciplines which would rank as sciences of symbolic activities: linguistics, psychoanalysis, modern historical methods, anthropology, Sartrean ontology and Marxist studies of social formation" (p. 6), she has added a selected bibliography which bears witness to Barthes's contributions in the field of semiotics and structuralism (although his endeavor was quintessentially a poetic one) and to the writing fervor of his admirers. A useful appendix, defining, briefly, those semiological terms which remain a source of frustration to the resistant critic who would rather forget the formidably complex codes of academic scholarship which has brought them to pass, reflects the informative content and the excellent organization of Lavers's book.

A synthetic study of this type, however, will necessarily entail omissions and hazards. And Lavers' book is no exception. For example, the six-page discussion of the sophisticated theories of Durkheim, Comte, Althusser, Foucault, Lacan, Piaget, Lévi-Strauss and many others, is simply not enough to help the reader locate Roland Barthes on the ideological grid of his contemporaries. (Even Sturrock's *Structuralism and Since* [Oxford University Press, 1979] could have easily been expanded into a 500-page volume.) Thus, if the reader is a non-specialist, he may very well succumb under an avalanche of details and will inevitably fail to see just how Barthes's ideas relate to the doctrines of those discussed, even when Lavers indicates which books should be read in conjunction with which intellectual development. In this respect, therefore, the book defeats its own introductory purpose, for the earnest reader whose hope was to set foot on a new epistemological shore will be carried away by turbulent ideological cross-currents.

To be sure, tracing the evolution of Barthes's ideas when he moved swiftly on the intellectual landscape so that his assertions were always no more than provisional (hence his claim to an amateurish status: "I have never been anything but an amateur," Barthes said in an interview in 1975) can be an enervating experience for those who still believe in writing a "definitive" synthesis which can capture the "essence" of this movement. But

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Barthes's iconoclastic brilliance was one of his most intriguing attributes. And he was at his very best when it came to test the untested and to challenge the unchallenged, whether it be in the cultural stereotypes he superbly uncovered in *Mythologies* or in the presupposed givens which underpin our reading of texts as in the *Pleasure of the Text*. Thus Lavers' superficial discussion of Roland Barthes's experiments with form, her frequent omissions of significant themes can perhaps explain a certain feeling of boredom (a sort of *ennui* with which Barthes was thoroughly familiar) one experiences upon reading her book.

Many readers will undoubtedly commend Lavers for having eliminated most of the jargon which characterizes modern-day criticism. (Jargonese is defined by reticent critics as that type of language used by alien intellectuals whose headquarters are across campus and whose intrusion into our traditional humanistic areas is considered of breach of privacy to be sanctioned by the highest contempt.) But her introduction to the problematics of writing would have been more inspiring had she approached her discussion of Roland Barthes as, perhaps, Sartre had approached his study of Flaubert, i.e. from his native wound—something which eventually turns the subject into a writing. She could then have communicated to her readers that *anguish* of form which Barthes experienced when confronted with ideological choices and which is manifested in his multifaceted writing. Indeed, as far back as *Degree Zero*, Barthes began to distinguish between two essential notions: *écriture* (writing) as opposed to literature. As Lavers implies (but, unfortunately, fails to develop), Barthes believed that every form has a value and that writing could, therefore, promote a Sartrean type of bad faith by perpetrating a form of social power and hierarchy. This is why Barthes's writings have always reflected an anguish (the "How to say it?") but, also, a delirium (the "desire to write").

Indeed, in addition to his uncovering of the *Doxa* (that great bourgeois myth which turns the subject into a social castrato), one of Barthes's most significant contributions to contemporary thinking is to have revealed the presence of a desiring subject beyond Lacan's vagaries of a subject caught on a signifying chain and, therefore, beyond the scientific explication of psychoanalysis. In the *Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes had suggested that writing should pass through the body and in *A Lover's Discourse*, he shows us a subject (a lover) caught in the dramatic exposition of figures of affectivity. Thus, by playing out the drama of a materialist subject, Roland Barthes admits to the emotive aspect of all signs beyond the doctrinal auspices of semiology and invites us to redefine the critical enterprise along the lines of the fragile human body.

Roland Barthes has had many detractors in the past. Back in 1964, Raymond Picard entered into a long argument with Barthes over the relative merits of his approach to Racine's work (cf. R. Picard's *Nouvelle Critique ou Nouvelle Imposture?*). Today still, some critics, in blithe ignorance of the turmoil which has shaken the critical scene since the days of Lansonian literary history, continue to doubt the value of his large, mutating body of writing.

But when, at the end of this century, all the intellectual notables will have emerged, Roland Barthes is the one whose work is most likely to endure. And by virtue of the retroactive completeness of his work he will find himself—as he did after the Picard/Barthes dispute—with the probability factor standing firmly on his side.

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