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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement in China* by Tsi-an Hsia. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1968. Pp. 266. \$7.95.

"If art teaches us anything," Stephen Spender wrote in *The God That Failed*, "it is that man is not entirely imprisoned within his society. From art, society may even learn to some extent to escape from its own prison."<sup>1</sup> This succinct confession of a lost faith in the Communist ideology, so typical of the position of many intellectuals in Europe and America during the thirties, might well have served as a foreword to *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement in China*, by Tsi-an Hsia, who, until his untimely death in 1965, was professor of Chinese literature at the University of California at Berkeley.

About a decade or so earlier than in the West (the New Culture, or May Fourth, Movement in China is traditionally dated to begin in 1917) many new writers in China came (like Arthur Koestler) from an impoverished bourgeois background to seriously reflect upon the relationship of art and society. Like their European or American counterparts, they felt tormented by social injustices; but to their tortured conscience was added a deep sense of national shame (due to the schemes of Western powers on China at the time of the Versailles Treaty and since); and they craved for liberating the individual from a moribund Confucian society and for building a Utopia—encouraged by their vision of a glorified Soviet Russia (which for some writers turned out to be an illusion) and by their new discovery of masters of European Realism like Ibsen and Tolstoi and Romantic poets like Shelley and Whitman. Nearly all of them chose to write in the vernacular language (*pai-hua*), and the flood of new literature produced both extremely good writers like Lu Hsün (Chou Shu-jen, 1881-1936)—true artists who (to quote Spender again) were not necessarily the best judges of political ideology, but who wrote "with profound insight into the feelings and experiences, the state of happiness and unhappiness of individuals"<sup>2</sup>—as well as inferior talents who allowed the Party to dictate what they should write and feel.

Comprising of six essays, this posthumous publication of papers and monographs by Professor Hsia stresses both the achievements and the failures of this group of writers: a master spirit like Lu Hsün as well as journeymen and fellow-travelers. Two of the six essays deal with Lu Hsün: "Lu Hsün and the Dissolution of the League of Leftist Writers" and "Aspects of the Power of Darkness in Lu Hsün." Supported by a wealth of documentation, the former essay relates in detail Lu Hsün's connections, both altruistic and practical, with the League of Leftist Writers and describes Lu Hsün's utter disillusionment, felt shortly

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Koestler, Richard Wright *et al.*, *The God That Failed*, ed. Richard Crossman (New York: Harper & Row, 1949, 1963), p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

before his death, with the vindictiveness and envy and lust for power among some of the Party writers. The latter essay analyzes with superb insight the possible sources of Lu Hsün's "troubled psyche" and the strands of traditionalism in his "occasional prose" (*san-wen*), an aspect of style often ignored by Chinese literary historians who admire only the writer's more realistic short stories.

Three other essays are devoted to lesser-known literary figures. "Ch'ü Ch'iu-po: Making and Destruction of a Tenderhearted Communist" traces the career and the writings of Ch'ü (1899-1935), a journalist who described Russian starvation of the early twenties in a lyrical vein ("History of the Heart in the Red Capital" being one of the titles) and who was more impressed by the smooth, shining floor and resplendent columns at the Kremlin than by the "large head" and the "determined voice" of Lenin. "The Phenomenon of Chiang Kuang-tz'u (1901-36) examines the poetic works and novels (none first-rate) of a self-acclaimed "Byron of China," a propagandist defamed and expelled by the Party in 1930 for his bourgeois background and romantic propensities, but rehabilitated and glorified since 1949 as a pioneer of revolutionary literature—partly, according to Professor Hsia's interpretation, as an attempt by Mao's followers to vindicate Mao and "to call attention to the petit-bourgeois nature of the preceding leadership of the Party" (p. 69). The third essay of this group, "Enigma of the Five Martyrs" describes the activities and the works of the five hack writers, including their relationship with some greater literary figures of the period, whose chief claim to Communist immortality lies in the fact that they were among the twenty-three Communists executed in Shanghai in 1931 by the Nationalist government.

Appropriately, this volume closes with "Twenty Years After the Yen-an Forum," a paper which Professor Hsia originally presented at a conference on Chinese communist literature held in England in 1962 and which was subsequently published in *The China Quarterly* (1963) and later included in Cyril Birch's *Chinese Communist Literature* (New York: Praeger, 1963). In this essay, Professor Hsia discusses Mao Tse-tung's dictum on art and literature, delivered at Yen-an in 1942, and examines the reasons behind the Party's attempt to discredit and turn the tide against satire, sentimentalism, and realism (which had been the hallmarks of the literature for more than two decades) in order to create a collective, depersonalized socialist literature for the mass.

Though written at different times (between 1963 and 1965) and as separate studies, these essays, appearing in one volume, will make particularly meaningful reading today on account of the wealth of background material which has direct bearing upon the purges of writers in Communist China during the mid-fifties, purges which victimized many of the same writers, such as Chou Yang and Ting Ling, who had schemed against true artists and writers to emerge as the Party's spokesmen not so long ago. Invaluable as it is as an aid to the study of modern Chinese literature, this book has the additional virtue, by relentlessly scrutinizing what is art and what is propanganda, of providing insight into a turbulent period of China's recent past and the struggles of intellectuals with Communist ideology. Such struggles cannot be said to have had no parallels or will not continue to have them in other national cultures.

IRVING LO

*Byron and the Dynamics of Metaphor* by W. Paul Elledge. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968. Pp. x + 155. \$5.00.

*Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development* by Jerome J. McGann. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968. Pp. xiv + 324. \$11.50.

The modern renaissance of Byron criticism continues apace with these two related studies, both concerned with the interrelationship of Byron the man and Byron the poet, and the effects of that fascinating, complex duality upon his poetic development, the structure and meaning of the major poems and plays, and the remarkable technical and moving achievements this most self-consciously casual poet was capable of. While Professor Elledge limits himself to the non-satirical works arranged into three major phases of Byron's total career—*Corsair*, *Lara*, *Parisina* (1813-15); *Prisoner of Chillon*, *Childe Harold III*, *Manfred* (1816-17); *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *Cain* (1820-21)—Professor McGann ranges more widely: *Hours of Idleness*; an elaborate study of (or, really series of essays on) *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, comprising over 100 pages; four of the tales (*Giaour*, *Prisoner of Chillon*, *Mazeppa*, *The Island*); five of the plays (*Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, *Sardanapalus*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*); and *Beppo* and *Don Juan* (the latter surprisingly briefly, although comments on it are scattered throughout the book). If it is true, as a journal editor wrote to Professor Elledge, that in writing of Byron "it is now a cliché to . . . [say] that we must turn from irrelevancies like biography to the poetry itself," I prefer to have more such clichés. Professor Elledge does not avoid the cliché, and by concentrating on major paradoxes in Byron's thought and the metaphorical evidences of those paradoxes in the poetry, he studiously tries to avoid the "irrelevancies" of biography. On the other hand, Professor McGann quite deliberately takes on the whole issue, lifting biographical "irrelevancy" in Byron to a critically sophisticated mode of poetic analysis. In this he is, I think, remarkably (and on occasion brilliantly) successful.

Although both books share important conclusions about the nature, efficacy, and final success of Byron's handling of metaphor, their fundamental differences make it manifestly unfair to compare them head-on. Professor Elledge has chosen a small world with which to deal, and he handles that job with reasonable competence and good sense, without startling originality or critical surprise (in the first two sections of his book), but with remarkable keenness in his fine, enlightening section on Byron's plays. Professor McGann, in effect, takes all of Byron for his province, and draws that vexing, varied, inconsistent, and far-flung chaos into a coherent and harmonious poetic world. If the structure of *Fiery Dust* more clearly reflects the chaos, it is McGann's triumph that the book as a whole largely succeeds beyond its parts. It is not an easy book to read, for despite its basic chronological order, it interrupts itself (sometimes annoyingly) by moving back and forth rapidly across the Byronic landscape, by the insertion of elaborate textual studies of the manuscripts and sequential revisions, by shifting from thematic to imagistic to mythical to stylistic approaches to the poetry, and by the inexplicable omission of comments on, particularly, *Parisina* and *Manfred* (the former of which, McGann assures us without evidence, is by far the best of the tales). McGann himself obviously recognized this melange aspect of his work for he calls the book "a collection of essays" (vii) with a "variety of

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approaches" (viii). The disclaimer is insufficient, however, for it is not, finally, a collection of essays either: it is more a book with some essays interspersed here and there, seemingly at random, with other sub-essays relegated to appendices.

Even so, while it is not easy to read as one reads a conventional critical-scholarly study, it does read well if one can put aside his own particular critical crotchets and submit to its insistent forward thrust—Byron's development of vehicles suitable to handle, artistically and movingly, his expression of himself, what McGann calls variously, the "Egoistic imperatives" of the poetry (viii), the "mythologizing" of his own person (16) or the realization of "an image of himself in the artifice of his own making" (21), the lending of "poetic coherence and verisimilitude to the psychological drama" of his own nature (110). Byron's typical poetry thus becomes that in which "he becomes caught in his own act of storytelling, and we in turn become involved in his act of self-expression" (148)—not, perhaps, an extraordinarily original conclusion (like Rutherford and a host of others he concludes, for example, that *Beppo* and *Don Juan* are the "delicate, human, and culminate triumphs of his genius"—273), but a thesis fascinatingly fleshed out by McGann's many-pronged approach.

All those prongs, I must say finally, also lead McGann into certain central difficulties. For example, his analysis of the early poems (including the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*) produces an uneasy oscillation among claims that they are the "first mythologized account of his own person" (18), that the "personality" offered there [is] a true and authentic self-portrait" (22), that the portrait is also somehow "a kind of portrait of the hero as a young man" (23) or the "poet in the process of becoming" (49). This dilemma is partly (and ingeniously) explained away by McGann's conclusion that Byron knows

nothing about himself beyond the stanza [of *Childe Harold*] he is immediately writing (the moment he is immediately living). . . . Though the poet *in* the poem is presented to us as the artist *of* the poem, he in fact shows no signs of artistic objectivity. He has to acquire consciousness and self-knowledge in the course of the poem; only Byron the artist, who is refined out of poetic existence, possesses such objectivity, and his consciousness is built into the poem's structure, not into the narrator's character. (55)

Later in his analysis of *Childe Harold* McGann pursues this idea further into a curious kind of critical circle, by seeing Harold as Byron's "alter ego," created "in order that he may be able to objectify certain aspects of himself without immediate self-incrimination" (76). Harold is also called an "object self" (74), an "anti-self" (165), and an "objective correlative" of the poet's mind. Thus, seemingly, the poet creates Harold to objectify himself but somehow refuses to acknowledge this self for fear of "public judgment" (77). Lack of acknowledgement seems to me to preclude objectification; and if an alter ego is created, this presupposes intent and careful planning presumably based on the very self-knowledge the poem is to provide the poet in his act of becoming. Similar difficulties or confusions occur in his account of points of view in *The Giaour*. Other problems include the following: with major emphasis on Byron's gradual creation of the myth of self, McGann's treatment of the tales is almost exclusively thematic rather than interpretive of their relationship to that myth and its development.

Indeed the transitional passage from the *Childe Harold* section to that on the tales says nothing about why "Byron's mind turned away from the autobiographical form" at all (141). Also, the largely thematic and imagistic treatments of the tales and plays do not adequately bridge the gap from *Childe Harold* to *Don Juan* and the ultimately "equilibrated" nature of the latter's narrator—though it must also be said that attempts to focus on the need for self-knowledge in the characters of the tales and plays keep the book's basic purpose at least sporadically before us.

Finally, let me say that despite these certain irritations I admire the book considerably, and not the least for some splendid isolated passages that punctuate its totality: on the coherence of Byron's canon as distinct from that of individual poems (66), on the need for distinguishing Harold from the narrator (67 ff.), on the "triumph" of the poet in *Childe Harold* (89 ff.), on the "Byronic hero" (222-225), on Byron's "ideal" character and his humanness (236), and on the relationship between man and God in Byron (261).

As I suggested above, Professor Elledge's image study proceeds more nearly in a straight line—from establishment (8) of the four "metaphorical vehicles for illustrating the paradoxical composition of human nature" (fire and clay, light and darkness, organical growth and mechanical stasis, counterpart or Doppelgänger) to the conclusion that these "preferred imagistic motifs" are largely responsible for the "emotional and intellectual tension" of Byron's poetry, from the "cautious, exploratory" use of the antipodes in the tales to the "configurative skill" of the later works, particularly the plays (151). Such a single-faceted approach has its advantages, of course: it is clean, pointed, tight. And it can lead, as it does here, to the kind of solid critical analyses we find of *Parisina* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*, as well as the provocative treatments of the plays. But it can also create blinders and strain—for example, in the handling of the early tales, the virtual ignoring of the relevance of narrator and point of view to the image patterns, the confused discussion of characters in *Childe Harold III* (in which distinctions among narrator, poet, and Harold are made whenever they are helpful, despite our being instructed that they are "interchangeable" [54n]), and the seeming indecision as to whether the themes and plots are "framed" by the "refined and subtle imagistic construct," or the antipodal image patterns and their metaphysical bases framed by the plot and narrative structure.

Such problems, however, are largely dimmed in Elledge's analyses of the plays (the *Marino Faliero* section is particularly impressive), and if for no other reason the book will remain extremely useful for them. His claim for the plays is finally a grand and ringing one, perhaps not so grandiloquent as G. Wilson Knight's, but grand nevertheless. If the plays themselves are not always quite up to that claim, they are clearly better than most of us allow. In any case, there are few of us who cannot stand some shaking of critical complacency. Any book that does that is worth doing.

ROBERT F. GLECKNER

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*The Pillar of the World: Antony and Cleopatra in Shakespeare's Development* by Julian Markels. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968. Pp. 191. \$6.00.

*Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery* by Robert H. West. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968. Pp. viii + 205. \$6.50.

It's interesting to watch how commentators on Shakespeare attempt to maneuver their work into the ocean of Shakespeareana. In a "Bibliographical Note," Professor Markels reminds us that "Anybody who writes about Shakespeare must experience a variety of embarrassments. . . . I cannot be sure where my own thinking begins and that which I have absorbed from others leaves off" (181). With this sufficient apology the author happily forgoes the tedious business of tracing the roots of his interpretation of Shakespeare's ideological development, a development he finds culminating in Antony's self-assertive triumph over the politics of Roman order. Markel's determination to remain aloof from scholarly debates is suggested in a brief "Appendix" addressed implicitly to unimaginative scholars who might question the chronology of the plays he uses to illustrate Shakespeare's development. He declares: "within each artist's development there are anticipations, digressions, 'sports' and stagnations, which no matter where they occur in the chronology, do not alter our proven awareness of the particular character and direction of the artistic development at hand" (179). The argument may not be convincing and his interpretations of individual plays are, at times, no less breezily assertive, but the result is a readable and provocative discussion of the evolution of Shakespeare's art and attitudes. The view is uncorrupted by attempts to psychoanalyze the playwright or to wrestle his biography into a serviceable shape; the focus remains clearly on the plays. Professor West's study, on the other hand, sinks under the burden of the modern scholarship and criticism he hopes to discredit. His subject is the impenetrable mystery of Shakespeare's supernature. He rather safely concludes that the plays do not clearly prove either the absolute faith in the providential order that Shakespeare's Christianizing critics see behind the great tragedies or the "outer blankness" discovered by Jan Kott. But West's commentaries on the commentators are far more elaborate than his instructions on how to "read the tragedies as they are," or how to follow the clearly evident "track that the text lays down for all."

In *The Pillar of the World*, Markels provides repeated summaries of his developing thesis.

In the English plays the order of society was problematic, but the doctrine of order was not; in *Julius Caesar*, the doctrine itself becomes problematic, and Hamlet inherits the problem. At this point, necessarily, Shakespeare's center of attention shifts from political order to cosmic order, to the metaphysical sanctions for a temporal doctrine that has come into question (96). . . . Hamlet's revulsion from life, in its philosophic bent if not in its tone of nausea, anticipates Lear's final wish to be released from the uses of the world and to look down from his comfortably walled prison upon the human comedy as a spy from God (97). . . . Antony takes the next step, and without protection risks his equally human frailty amidst the uses of the world, where he tries to

make good his mistakes from moment to moment by becoming continuously responsible for his own nature. In this process Antony goes beyond contrition to magnanimity. . . . Antony . . . is to follow the moral process by which one outgrows the politics of order (123-124).

For Markels, Antony's heroic self-assertion begins to emerge with his acceptance of Octavius' dare to battle at sea. The tactic is not a reflection of the love-sick Antony's loss of judgment. It reveals a concern for more than merely preserving his place in the world. It is a magnificently gratuitous acceptance of a personal challenge as well as a noble reciprocation of Octavius' readiness to battle by land. Roman honor is enlarged to magnanimity. Antony's retreat with Cleopatra is primarily a measure of his grand refusal to possess less than love and honor simultaneously. "His public aspirations, because he has purified them of mundane desires, are meaningless when they do not include his affections; and if he cannot have both, he will not have either" (131). By the time of his noble death "He has earned the right to emerge on a plane of existence where 'souls do couch on flowers'" (139). Antony's achievement instructs Cleopatra and enables her to share in his apotheosis. Their transformations are reflected in their language—the broken rhythms of their earlier insecurity give way to the grandly "orchestrated" poetry within which they realize not their functions in a "foreordained heavenly order," but self-created grandeur. Antony "bequeathes to Cleopatra, a joyous exuberance, which transfigures death itself. His world has forced him to find himself; in rising to his occasion and becoming the generous author of himself, he nurtures and transcends his world" (170).

Readers may worry that no attempt is made to suggest the relationship of the whole Shakespeare canon to this view of its development or puzzle over the particular enthusiasm of the author for lovers who "create those rare and perfect circumstances when suicide can make a man immortal" (176). But the argument is no less suggestive for its incompleteness or for the author's individualistic enthusiasms. More problematical are some of Markels' unearned assumptions about the plays he does discuss. He too easily asserts his commitment to such debatable notions as the unity of design and purpose in the *Henriad* or the triumphant spiritual redemption of *King Lear*. Even his more carefully defended reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* never sufficiently accounts for the abundant evidence that Antony botches his war and even his suicide and exhibits a pathetic lack of self-control at precisely those moments when Markels insists he is the master of his soul. Markels' study invites comparison with a richer and more comprehensive analysis of the process of self-glorification in the play by Matthew N. Proser (*The Heroic Image in Five Shakespearean Tragedies*). Proser concludes, contrary to Markels, that it is Cleopatra who invents the grandeur of both Antony and herself. She does so even in the wake of her almost pathetically comic management of Antony's death scene. Antony is "heaved" up into the tomb to die in the arms of women rather than soldiers after having tried to "cash in" rhetorically on his own sad demise. The contrast between the views of Proser and Markels at least reminds us of elements in the treatment of Antony's progress that Markels ignores in pressing his thesis.

Because of the skeletal nature of much of Markels' argument, his study remains more suggestive than instructive. But the argument is worthy of attention and deserves a fuller development.

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Professor West's comments on Shakespeare's "outer mystery" are less stimulating. On such issues as whether King Hamlet's ghost is a demon or comes from a Christian or Pagan purgatory or whether or not the witches in *Macbeth* represent a clearly defined anti-providential force in nature he brings to bear the expertise he first displayed in *The Invisible World: A Study of Pneumatology in Elizabethan Drama* (1939). Three of his chapter headings reveal his special focus: "King Hamlet's Ambiguous Ghost," "Night's Black Agents in *Macbeth*," "Ceremonial Magic in *The Tempest*." But West stretches to make his limited focus serve to account for the ambiguity of Shakespeare's metaphysics.

West's general conclusions seem sane and right. The four great tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*—and *The Tempest* demonstrate a paradoxical view of man's place in the cosmos. It is risky to label Shakespeare's views as either pessimistic or optimistic, Christian or existential. But West devotes a good deal less attention to dramatic renderings of metaphysical meaning in the texts than the critics he takes to task for superficial or forced readings of them. He marshals much learning. The index to his relatively slim volume is encyclopedic but reflects chiefly his penchant for chatty and frequently gratuitous learned allusions, analogies and bulky summaries of the mistaken notions of such as Battenhouse, Danby, Heilman, Knight, Kott, Siegal, Speaight and Spivack. In a twenty-seven page chapter on "The Christianness of *Othello* and *King Lear*," for instance, West confidently assures us that Othello "affirms no transcendent heaven," and that "no one can suppose that the ruin in *King Lear* and the response of the characters to it illustrates Christian comfort" (179). But the bulk of the chapter is devoted to discrediting John Danby and Jan Kott; digressions on the possibility of Christian tragedy as viewed by I. A. Richards, George Orwell, Karl Jaspers, C. S. Lewis and Clifford Leech; asides on Marlowe and Milton, Racine and Corneille; and comments on Santayana and the Greeks on religious inspiration in great tragedy. Perhaps four or five pages altogether explore the metaphysical or theological implications of the dramatic progressions in the two plays.

West's insistence on the mystery of Shakespeare's "outerness" is rarely reinforced by careful analyses of the substance of the dramas. He claims that there is as much "specifically pneumatological evidence" in *Hamlet* (though it is unspecified) to "support the theory that the Ghost is actually a devil" as there is to support Sister Miriam Joseph's conviction that it is "a saved soul temporarily suffering the fires of purgatory" (60-61). The mystery of the Ghost's origin and hence the mystery of outerness in the play "is some indication of Shakespeare's treatment of outerness in general" (68). Yet it seems to me that the character of the Ghost is as significant in this regard as the mystery of its origin. The character is rich—tortured, proud, vengeful and a master of a rhetoric specifically fitted to cultivate rage and despair in the morally supersensitive Hamlet. West credits the Ghost with "vitality" but gives no account of the quality of that vitality or its effect on Hamlet. The author's Coleridgean observation that Shakespeare does not account for Iago's fondness for "basic depravity" is, similarly, unaccompanied by any new consideration of the character and hence yields little excitement. Several pages are devoted to Prospero's calling Ariel a "malignant thing." The phrase prompts speculation on the relationship of Shakespeare's Ariel to the Ariels of Isaiah and the Cabalistic treatises and to the rather scholastic question: "Has Ariel a body?" (89). From all this, West predictably concludes

that we cannot be sure whether Ariel is or is not malignant. He doesn't consider that in the dramatic context Prospero's accusation seems to be only a momentary petulance at the impishness of his spirit servant. Such a non-scholarly dismissal of potential layers of significance might be considered irresponsible. On the other hand, West is elsewhere perturbed by the super-subtlety of Paul Siegal's seeing in Othello's cry, "Whip me ye devils," a damnably despairing plea to be "transported to Hell at once." Here West blithely declares that the line, like so many in Shakespeare, is more "metaphor than metaphysics" and reflects only a "frenzy of regret" (124-125). The logic by which West treats some terms literally and others metaphorically is puzzling.

The most substantially developed critical argumentation springing from West's thesis occurs in the chapter on "Sex, Death and Pessimism in *Lear*." Noting that sex and death, generation and decay are linked themes in *Lear*, West concludes:

Whatever the lowliness of human generation, Cordelia and Edgar live as good and noble children, and Lear and Gloucester die as redeemed parents. . . . Lear's death is natural, and, at the same time, like all death, it is beyond nature. It is a great mystery that we may observe in part with awe and reverence. Love, the play indicates, may be a kind of miracle, so that sex, along with the rest of life and death itself, is transmutable from slime to majesty (163-164).

West's final judgments are less than astonishing. Since Shakespeare withdraws from absolute views of the supernatural, he withdraws from absolute moral judgments and hence cultivates a tolerance for flawed humanity. "The tolerance in the tragedies shows most prominently and importantly in the protagonists, whom we value in spite of the flaws in their virtue and even in spite of the abuses of their misdeeds" (180). West's discovery about the nature of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists has, I believe, been anticipated.

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JUDD B. ARNOLD

*Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony* by Glenn W. Hatfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968. Pp. xi + 224. \$7.50.

*Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* by Robert Alter. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968. Pp. xi + 211. \$5.95.

Every new book on Joyce, or Lawrence, or Beckett, carries its own justification. We have been reading the writer partially, such books implicitly claim, those writers being sufficiently dense and complicated to sustain the claim. Fielding, on the other hand, we think we know. And the necessity for new studies of him is never obvious. Less than a decade ago the book-length critical studies of that most English of authors included a genial and impressionistic study by a Frenchman, a published dissertation by an Indian in England, a couple of German dissertations on Fielding *als* this and that, and no significant book-length study by an Anglo-American critic. That gap has been filled within the

last few years with some sustained and sensitive criticism. But the problem which Fielding presents, and which the absence for so long of good criticism of him illustrates, is scarcely diminished by the emergence, at last, of some good criticism, the problem being the fact that Fielding is a writer whom most readers have always found enormously entertaining, wise, and awesomely skillful, but whose excellences seem accessible and whose creative mind seems unproblematic.

Glenn W. Hatfield's *Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony* justifies itself by arguing that the verbal techniques of Fielding grow out of certain convictions about the nature and abuse of language that we can scarcely know by an unaided reading of the fiction. The depth and complexity of these attitudes one can recover from Fielding's non-fictional works, from the linguistic attitudes of Fielding's contemporaries as they provide a perspective on Fielding's own convictions, and from a systematic reading of the fiction, attending both to its explicit linguistic judgments and to the implicit attitudes that lie beneath Fielding's irony. There is not much doubt, I think, that Hatfield succeeds—doubly, not only in showing what he purports to show but in demonstrating the justifiability of his study; we don't, in fact, know Fielding as well as we thought we did and one's reading of him is shallower without Hatfield's particular angle of vision. What Hatfield discovers is a wide-ranging despair by Fielding at the corruption of language, its hollow, formulaic use in polite society, for example, its opportunistic use in the service of party, its obscurantism in the hands of theological hacks, the manifold instances in which the vitality and the classic meaning of a word are dissipated as the word becomes empty cant. Such distrust of language, centering on the disparity between the "true" senses of words and their debased, corrupt senses, accounts, to a rather large extent, for a number of verbal mannerisms in Fielding's fiction, such as the use of an elegant phrase, followed by "in plain English," followed by a plainer rendering of the same idea. But Fielding's attitudes toward language also go rather far toward accounting for his tendency to deploy his fiction thematically around certain key words such as "good nature," "honor," and especially "prudence." And it is toward understanding the interaction of linguistic attitudes and fictional meaning that Hatfield's study ultimately directs itself.

Fielding's dramatic technique, the "artificial" narration, the shifting styles are all "conscious and deliberate attempts to approximate in his fiction the conditions of truth in a hypocritical and nominalistic world where it is 'the actions of men,' as opposed to 'their own words' or to 'what others say' of them, that are 'the justest interpreters of their thoughts and the truest standards by which we may judge them.'" And thus there is no aspect of Fielding's art that does not take on a somewhat different look when seen through the argument of Hatfield, for it is true of every novel but especially true of Fielding's that his novels are books "about words." For that reason, Hatfield's choice of a title is unfortunate, suggesting, as it does, another treatment of one aspect of Fielding's rhetorical strategy. Far more than that, Hatfield's study is original in its province, judicious in its scholarship, thoughtful and precise in its judgments of the fiction, and broadly suggestive—a necessary book.

Robert Alter's *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* is much more deliberate than Hatfield's study about establishing its reason for being. Alter begins with a chapter "On the Critical Dismissal of Fielding," the chief dismissers being Dr. Johnson, Dr. Leavis, and Frank Kermode. That Frank Kermode should be

imperceptive on Fielding seems to me a matter of no great surprise and no great consequence. The influence of Leavis has always been a mystery to a fair number of Americans—the absence in much of his criticism of demonstration, those long block quotes followed by a summary judgment, his clumsiness of style, his incredible self-importance. Neither Kermode nor Leavis, I think, has done much damage to Fielding's reputation, and, although it is always useful to argue with Dr. Johnson, Alter's study is worth what it is not because of the wrongness of Fielding's assailants but because of the argument that Alter mounts. The premise upon which that argument rests is clearly stated at the end of the first chapter: "All three of Fielding's novels, but most clearly *Tom Jones*, were written to be read ideally in the way we have been reading the so-called art novel since the time of Conrad and James." If that sentence meant merely that Alter were to take seriously Fielding's claims as a craftsman, attending to the unity of his fiction, relating texture to structure, then how could one object? Isn't that what anybody with a critical interest in Fielding does with him in this century? Much more than that, however, Alter means his sentence as an introduction to a "reading" of Fielding, not much different from the readings of James and Conrad which fill the quarterlies, explicatory, structural, and basically a-historical.

Alter writes with grace, intelligence, charm, even a kind of gentle deference. (On two pages, I count "I suspect," "I think," "or perhaps, we begin to wonder," "might be," "possibly.") Yet behind this utter agreeableness of mind and facility of manner is what can only be called a kind of arrogance. What Fielding thought was funny we do not always find funny; one area of scholarship has given itself to the recovery of eighteenth-century comic modes; yet Alter neglects such scholarship altogether. What Fielding thought good and bad we do not necessarily find good and bad; another area of scholarship has given itself to the recovery of the nuances of the latitudinarian ethic upon which Fielding based his own moral ideas; yet this scholarship is of no interest to Alter. Any number of events in Fielding's novels have been treated by historical scholarship as vehicles for a substantial charge of "ideas," the Gypsy episode in *Tom Jones* for example, with its play upon primitivism and history, despotism and egalitarianism, spontaneity and calculation, the good life and the bad. Yet for Alter such events are structural elements or dramatic vignettes and the scholarship which has taken them seriously is of little interest to him. And so on. The new critic, some years ago, to those unsympathetic with his hubris, used to be known as a "naked-text boy," from the phrase attributed to him in caricature, "Just give me the naked text." It does seem late in the day for that kind of method to have gone to work on Fielding. But it has. And Alter's book is the result.

Alter's last chapter most clearly justifies his title. It is an urbane, informal discussion of the relation between Fielding's kind of novel and other kinds. But it is the analytic chapters that make up the center of the book. Alter is clever and intelligent. And anyone who cares about Fielding's novels is likely to learn from him. His reason for the existence of his book is, in its way, as cogent as Hatfield's: there *is* more going on in Fielding's novels than has been fully understood, more power of organization, more wit, more artistic control. It is a pity that an analytic talent so instructive should base itself upon so wilfully independent and so shallow an understanding of the eighteenth century.

*Melville's Thematics of Form: The Great Art of Telling the Truth* by Edgar A. Dryden. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968. Pp. xiv + 226. \$6.95.

Sub-titled *The Great Art of Telling the Truth*, this book has as its purpose "to describe the internal morphology" of Melville's fictional world in terms of Melville's "search for a form which will allow him safely to explore and reveal a destructive and maddening Truth"—that truth being that life is a masquerade and that "the human and natural worlds are lies." Such a "focus," Dryden observes, is "necessarily restrictive," one of an "unlimited number of critical perspectives." Its claim to legitimacy, however, is that it incorporates a theory of fiction deduced from Melville himself, specifically, from "Hawthorne and his Mosses": a theory which argues (according to Dryden) that fictional technique, and particularly point of view, are closely allied to the author's metaphysics; which presumes the sharp separation of art from life, except that "materials from one are used in the construction of the other"; and which views fiction as subjective, impressionistic—the unique creation of a unique fictional creator "who in his role of fictive author seeks to approach the truth indirectly by viewing it through the experiences of created characters in a fictional world." Melville's fiction Dryden views as its author's personal therapeutic; writing is his means of preserving his sanity in a human and natural "world of lies"—a white world of meaninglessness in which the awareness that life is a masquerade leads inevitably to the madness of Pip unless the author imposes the buffer of a fictional narrative personality between himself and the terrible truth. Relying upon close textual analysis, Dryden argues that Melville wrote through surrogate narrators to exorcise this private metaphysical demon.

Such a critical perspective is indeed "restrictive"; whether "necessarily" so is, to this reviewer, debatable. Why, for instance, Melville's alleged theory of fiction, so inextricably connected with his psychic health, should not be illuminated by relevant biographical fact, is an open question. An eclectic approach to literature is often unwieldy, it is true, but it is not without its rewards. Dryden's single-minded approach to Melville's works yields a sharp and disciplined study. Yet the method has its drawbacks; and the chief fault I find with this often genuinely illuminating book is a fault of its method; it is not informed by a broad and comprehensive vision. It is a severely one-dimensional study of a multi-faceted author, and this despite Dryden's own observation (p. 40) that Melville is the sort of author for whom "the meaning of a thing is the form of its coexistence with other things; it is the light which everything else casts over it."

Having said this, let me predict that the acceptability of Dryden's book to the individual reader will depend upon the reader's theory of fiction and critical stance. It will not be warmly welcomed by those who accept Wayne Booth's thesis in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* that art is a social enterprise which suffers as it becomes preoccupied with the private psychic turbulences of its creator. It will not interest those readers who value Emerson's judgment that every scripture should be read in the light of the times that produced it, nor by the neo-Aristotelians who emphasize historical perspective. Nor will it have a large interest for the "Humanists," whose critical focus is upon moral and philosophical values, even though Dryden argues that the novel is a metaphysical rather than a purely "descriptive or rhetorical form." And lay readers, it goes without saying, have never been interested in critical vivisections of aesthetic works. Dryden's focus

upon technique, his close textual analysis of Melville's aesthetic symbolism, and his view of fiction as a unique mode of apprehending reality will appeal most of all to the critical descendants of Ransom, Brooks, and Tate; and the appeal is likely to be strong.

Dryden takes up Melville's works of fiction *seriatim*, in the order in which they were written, scrutinizing the attempts of the successive fictive narrators through the creation of fiction to glimpse the elusive white doe of truth, while avoiding the perils of looking at her. Tommo of *Typee* is of course the first; but as he "fictionalizes his earlier experience in an attempt to define its truth" what he discovers turns out to be hardly as elusive as the frightened deer the reader has been led to expect. What he learns (according to Dryden, following Milton Stern) any Maud Bodkin myth critic could have predicted: he has moved through an archetypal death and rebirth, and uncovered in himself a "universal trait of savagery" present both in the primitive world of *Typee* and the civilized world to which he returns. Unpleasant as this glimpse of the white doe may be, it is hardly the sort that drives men to madness (these days, at least), whether or not they are protected by imaginative re-creation of their experiences; and neither Tommo nor his creator, despite Tommo's "profoundest melancholy," seems to be in much danger. It is only my private conjecture that Dryden sensed as much, and it is this that explains his passing over *Omoo*.

Taji of *Mardi*, another author surrogate, put fiction to the same purposes for which Tommo had used it, though in this instance to discover the truth of his dreams without incurring the perils of contemplating meaninglessness. He had less success. The long, convoluted peregrination from fact to fiction of the "artist as dreamer" yields the unsettling truth that the internal world of dreams is as deceptive as the external "world of lies." The literary quest of Taji gains no "golden haven"; and Dryden sees prefigured in *Mardi* the irony of Melville's late fiction in which the theory of the saving grace of fiction backfires and the artist himself becomes a "confidence man, a dealer in double meanings." *Redburn* Dryden views as a stasis in Melville's development of his fictional theory, a conscious abdication of the pursuit of the implications of *Mardi* dictated by financial need. Not completely so, however. Wellingborough Redburn, by creating "a fictive account" of the experiences of his Liverpool voyage, escaped the fate of Jackson, who was driven mad by his confrontation with the evil of the real "world of lies." *White Jacket*, however, "the most deceptive of the early novels," returns to the theme of the dangers of looking at the "world of lies" to those who "refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes." Ostensibly a novel stressing "the educational value of experience," as well as an allegory of "the Christian journey homeward toward God," the argument of the narrator by constantly doubling back on itself "ends by destroying the validity of both the social and religious quests." The narrator's quest for meaning through art is the central quest of the book, Dryden argues: by "self-consciously translating a social and religious fiction into a literary one. [*White Jacket*] reveals its illusory nature and at the same time avoids the dangers implicit in that revelation."

Dryden's analysis has reached *Moby Dick*, the crucible of any critical interpretation of Melville's works. Given his thesis that "point of view is at once a literary technique and a metaphysical principle," Dryden must of course focus on Ishmael. His analysis of *Moby Dick* is close and sure; the book seems to come to his

thesis rather than the thesis to the book. Ishmael's role is seen as essentially that of "teller" rather than actor. His identity is purely verbal; significantly he only *calls* himself Ishmael. He grasps the saving truth that what seems to be an immanent ordering of the world is in fact an inadequate construct of man's mind. It is only, Dryden argues, because Ishmael "seeks the 'ungraspable phantom of life' in the mirror of art rather than in nature, choosing the role of teller rather than actor, [that] he avoids the fatal plunge of Narcissus." The world of the Pequod is a literary world, and Ishmael's fiction the colored glass through which he contemplates the white world of experience. He is able to render the white whale harmless to himself only through assimilating it into his literary consciousness. And he is by the same means able to escape being blinded by whiteness, a mortal "threat to consciousness" because it forces the mind "to surrender its creative powers" and deprives the soul of the "fictional objects which protect it from its own blankness." Ishmael is not lost, because he avoids Ahab's mistake of attempting "to make the white world his own," unprotected from its horrors by any fictive construct of his imagination.

*Pierre* provides a unique test of Dryden's thesis, because the "familiar Melvilleian author-hero is conspicuously absent" from the book; but Dryden meets the problem by interpreting *Pierre* as a character lacking the sharpness of Ishmael's vision who is too enmeshed in the world of inscrutable experience with its meaningless social and religious forms to be able to create a saving fictive buffer against its horrors. *Pierre* is trapped into *acting* in his own drama, unlike Ishmael who extricated himself by playing the role of "teller." This book adds a new dimension therefore to Melville's explorations of the relationship of the writer to the "world of lies." *Pierre* becomes in the Melville canon, in Dryden's view, "a sneering condemnation of a counterfeit world and a horrifying assertion of the writer's necessary tie to it." The shock the book communicates to the reader Dryden views as deriving from Melville's growing feeling that the fictive surrogate may not after all be a live option for the writer recoiling from an absurd world in which social forms are invincible. *Pierre* consequently ends on a note of "unresolved despair."

In *Israel Potter*, which Dryden brackets with *Pierre* as dramatizing the failure of the actor-hero, Melville "resolves" the crisis of *Pierre* by dodging it, by using the subterfuge of employing an editor, unwilling to expose himself to the dangers of fictive creation, to present the biography of another. Though the book "reduces all of man's activities to the level of role playing," Dryden observes, "the narrator is never drawn into the masquerade." It is in *The Confidence Man* that Melville returns again to face squarely the impasse of *Pierre*, only to have his faith in the protective role of fiction completely shattered. For this book presents a world in which "the real and fictitious are indistinguishable and interchangeable," in which fiction becomes as unreal and meaningless as experience. The book is fiction about fiction; it argues solipsistically, according to Dryden, that the creative imagination is not creative at all, but a product of the great white emptiness of existing forms and values, themselves fiction. The artist too is a confidence man; writing is a masquerade; and every search for truth only a road to nihilism. Understandably, Dryden suggests, Melville thereupon lapsed into silence, his career as a writer of fiction having demonstrated to him the futility of writing fiction at all. He had uncovered a blankness within himself which matched the blankness of the world outside.

Notwithstanding this discovery, however, Melville returned once more to the genre of fiction, thirty years later, with *Billy Budd*. After his brief examination of "Benito Cereno," in which "a masquerade which is ontologically subversive" is played out on the deck of the San Dominick, Dryden turns to this final novel, focussing upon Captain Vere and his dedication to the preservation of an ordered world. Predictably, Dryden does not view *Billy Budd* as a "testament of acceptance." The narrator of the story, in Dryden's view, becomes critic as well as narrator of his own work, testing his fiction (as the narrator of "Benito Cereno" had done) against factual source materials included in the story's sequels. These factual additions, Dryden concludes, "are shown to be as unreal as the fictional world they burden. Indeed, the juxtaposition of the fictional and factual realms results in the destruction of the authenticity of each and leaves the reader face to face with a positive emptiness, an oppressive and threatening blankness." Finally convinced of the "secret absurdity" of fiction's search for "Vital Truth," Dryden concludes, Melville was again left with "silence as his only alternative."

The book is a lucid argument for Melville's utter defeat as a fictional artist. But it raises questions as well. If *The Confidence Man* forecloses the possibility for Melville of the author's safely facing truth through fiction, would Melville dispute Dryden's judgment that Ishmael as "teller" achieved "a victory of art over life?" Why would Melville, with nothing to gain (and no need for money), have gone back to fiction in *Billy Budd*? Did Melville himself believe in the "truth" Dryden believes he had arrived at? In the thirty years following *The Confidence Man* Melville did not lapse into silence: though turning away from fiction, he wrote a considerable body of poetry. The metaphysics of a writer does not change with his shift of genre. Why did Melville write *Clarel*? Did Melville discover that poetry offered an insulation from the white meaninglessness of the world that fiction did not? If the medium is the message—specifically, to use Dryden's words, if "point of view is at once a literary technique and a metaphysical principle"—is Melville's medium his whole message? Perhaps critics and reviewers (like Dryden's Melville) write actually to exorcise their own private demons, and in their elucidations of the *Moby Dicks* of literature, end up by X-raying their own severed legs.

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*Shaw the Dramatist* by Louis Crompton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969. Pp. vii + 261. \$7.95.

*Bernard Shaw and the Art of Destroying Ideals* by Charles A. Carpenter. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. Pp. ix + 262. \$6.50.

His peculiar lucidity and explicitness make it difficult to write a really bad book about Bernard Shaw—bad, that is, in the sense of wrong-headed; from vacuity no criticism is safe. It is easy enough to produce a critical bloomer on Blake or Browning or Hopkins, just as it is quite conceivable to probe immensely



one of their poems. Neither extreme is so obviously available to the critic of Shaw. Happily, both Mr. Crompton and Mr. Carpenter contribute competently to the proliferating library of Shaw studies, even if we are likely to remain unstartled by sustained, incisive brilliance.

The new or formalist criticism has successfully populated humanistic studies with seasoned, habitual close readers; now we concede the frequent advantage of seeing a work in relation to its author and his canon, while retaining the benefits of fine textual analyses. In the instance of Bernard Shaw, the virtues of an eclectic, "revisionist" purview seem particularly clear. Despite the length of his public career and the breadth of his output, there is an uncanny unity to Shaw's "life and works"; the novelist, the art, music, and drama critic, the young and the established playwright, the Fabian essayist, the puritanical philanderer, the Creative Evolutionist, the public persona G. B. S., the anti-vivisectionist, vegetarian, and anti-vaccinationist, the militant socialist behind Andrew Undershaft, and the Great-War pacifist are but varying manifestations of the same surprisingly consistent individual. Almost inevitably, a partial study of Shaw will substantially relate that aspect to the mainstream of his works; Ohmann's book on his style, Nethercot's on his "portrait gallery," Fromm's study of his dramatic criticism, Abbott's of his relations with Christianity, and even Boxill's recent *Shaw and the Doctors* are but a few such examples. Because his attitude toward medicine, his response to the theater of the nineties, his religion, and his political views are all part of the same didactic, vitalist (and meliorist) outlook, the separate studies unavoidably begin to overlap. In fact, it soon becomes tempting imaginatively to reshape the entirety of Shavian criticism. This intertwining of subjects encourages the speculation that—were we not already deluged with commentaries—Shaw could advantageously be treated in one compendious volume, exploring and relating all of the distinct facets of his work, his use of paradox and irony as well as the already-mentioned attitudes and ventures. Then there could be the critiques of the individual plays. But this is all very wistful—if tempting—and still leaves us with the real, amorphous world of Shaw criticism. We are beyond the point where so inclusive a treatment is at all probable, future investigations remain doomed to a certain amount of duplication, and impressive exegeses are dismayingly scarce.

To a certain extent, Crompton's and Carpenter's books travel similar ground. Although neither is primarily interested in explicating the plays, both become largely involved with analyses; both, in fact, include commentaries on *Arms and the Man*, *Candida*, *The Devil's Disciple*, and *Caesar and Cleopatra*. They even coincide at occasional junctures; each talks of Shaw's conception(s) of the fool, the Madonna-like associations of *Candida*, and the pre-eminence of the will, with reason reduced to an implementing rationalization; (Carpenter, especially, shows the centrality of will to Shaw's irrationalist, anti-materialistic philosophy). Both critics emphasize the naturalness or realism of the plays; this point is fundamental to Mr. Carpenter's argument that Shaw replaces the "ideal" stage hero with a more humanized figure who follows his natural inclinations. But despite these overlappings, the aims of the two books are quite distinguishable.

*Shaw the Dramatist* is designed as "a general introduction to Shavian drama," focusing on twelve of the most successful and known of the plays. Mr. Crompton claims greater interest in comprehensiveness than originality, and abjures modern formalist criticism in favor of the "moral realism" of Sidney, Johnson, and

Ruskin—or at least so he prepares us. He posits no specific thesis or argument (the book might well be considered a collection of essays); and although I am not persuaded to call this a weakness, it surely necessitates finding the book's strengths elsewhere. Probably—and I do not offer this facetiously—the best place to start looking is in the notes. Considerable research has gone into the study, and—what is far more impressive than the mere scholarly laborings—it yields dividends. Manuscript variants and source material from collections of the University of Texas, the University of Buffalo, and the New York Public libraries and the British Museum illuminate a number of the plays. Crompton demonstrates the research and accuracy behind many seemingly capricious Shavian choices: the Bulgarian setting of *Arms and the Man*, the character of Don Juan (based on Shaw's knowledge of the abundant past and current literature), and the trial and conception of Saint Joan. He intelligently separates the two traditions or views of Caesar, and shows why Shaw preferred Mommsen's less known "anti-aristocratic and anticonstitutional point of view" (61), appending extensive selections from Shaw's notes on *The History of Rome* (231-4). Mr. Crompton is frequently able to identify individuals or sources behind specific plays—without divorcing the identifications from critical relevance or utility; Kinglake's *Invasions of the Crimea* and Zola's *Débâcle*, Cunninghame Graham and Sidney Webb were all melded into *Arms and the Man*; behind *Candida* and *The Devil's Disciple* he finds Yeats' *Land of Heart's Desire* and Buchanan's *The Devil's Case*, respectively.

Many of the points made in passing are useful and well taken: the importance of laughter and comedy to Shaw's critical didacticism, the distinctions in meaning he sees in the five violent deaths in *Caesar and Cleopatra* and in the three types of love in *Man and Superman*. The discussion of *Pygmalion* is reasonably good, indicating the play's concern with manners, and that its central theme "is the contrast between the Promethean passion for improving the race and the ordinary desire for the comforts and consolations of the domestic hearth" (148). The most successful of the essays is that dealing with *Saint Joan*. Judiciously drawing upon the historical sources as Shaw used them, Mr. Crompton soundly and confidently demonstrates the high dramatic quality of the play, its extensive religious implications, and the complex, vivid character of its saintly protagonist. He finds Shaw's depiction of Joan as uncompromising as it is of her judges—for all their "best intentions"—and of us by implication—for all of our well-meaning.

There remain, however, places where the reader feels that for all his industry, the author stops short of what we would ideally want. I was delighted at the suggestive examination of the Violet/Hector sequence in *Man and Superman*, only to be disappointed that it did not go further with some of the promising details: Violet's demands and the way in which she secures them, the house, and the impotence of the manly moral-ness of Hector as just another discrediting of ideals. After having searched the literature and teased us with the pertinent question—Why did Shaw use a figure, Juan, that he would only have to turn upside down?—Mr. Crompton's extra-literary, biographical speculation that Shaw used the name because that was what his Fabian friends called him is a sorry letdown. He probes the Christ-Dionysos opposition of *Major Barbara*, the implication of the Bacchic cults, and the contrasting interests Cusins and Barbara have in the Army. Unfortunately, we are left with little understanding of Barbara's Christ-like function and her capitulation as such; nor does he indicate

the usefulness of seeing this function in the larger context of Shaw's criticism of Victorian Christianity, or even observe how appealing the comparative vitality of a Nietzschean Dionysos must have looked to Shaw. If, as his discussion implies, it is still necessary to show that *Major Barbara* is not an "unresolved paradox," surely Mr. Crompton could then have mentioned how the use of paradox is linked to the play's artistry and unity. He finds *Heartbreak House* among Shaw's best works; "If it has not the intellectual brilliance of *Man and Superman* and *Major Barbara* or the heroic élan of *Saint Joan*, it is unsurpassed in the Shavian canon for the subtlety of its art, its depth of poetic feeling, and the fascination of its symbolism" (168). Lamentably, this just appraisal of the most critically inviting of all Shaw plays concludes rather than introduces a chapter, a chapter which emerges rather as an opportunity missed. There remain specific judgmental quibbles, such as the too facile equating of "Juan-Shaw" (100), calling *The Bacchae* the most "unedifying" and "enigmatic" of all Greek tragedies (114), and the excessive plot retelling of *Back to Methuselah* (which, incidentally, is only unconvincingly included in this volume of most successful plays); but these are undeniably minor.

Mr. Carpenter's is a simpler book to discuss and perhaps a more satisfying one: very possibly because those are properties of convincingly prosecuted arguments. He is obviously engrossed by the "astonishingly ubiquitous G. B. S." of the late Victorian era, who produced "ten substantial plays" (through *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*) before he completed this distinct period in his evolution as a dramatic artist "and began to settle down" (5). The author intends to discuss the "common characteristics and tendencies" of these early plays. Each of the plays considered—all of which are contemporary with *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*—"is marked by its consistent adherence to the aim of destroying ideals" (7). Sometimes the target is a quality deemed heroic, a theatrical form, or an institution, but the basic strategy is the same; a specious ideal is stripped and discredited.

Mr. Carpenter divides these dramas into three types: propaganda plays (the Unpleasant volume), critical comedies (the Pleasant plays), and the humanizations of heroic types of drama (*Three Plays for Puritans* and *The Man of Destiny*). Each presents a shift in emphasis of Shaw's debunking technique. "The propaganda plays . . . attack economic and sociological ideals, especially ones that derive from capitalism." The siege expands to less specifically establishmentarian illusions in the critical comedies, which "feature an onslaught on moral and romantic ideals." Finally, the "humanizations" assault "the heroic and theatrical illusions about human motivation that were propagated by the melodramatic plays of the time" (211-2). The satire on soldierly heroism in *Arms and the Man* is obvious, but Carpenter goes much further, showing its relationship to the contemporary comedies, the rest of Shaw's early plays, and the author's preference for following one's natural will. *Candida*, like *Doll's House*, explodes the Victorian idealization of the family, an ideal embodied in Morell. Whereas many may be attracted by "Gentleman Johnny" and all will respond to the satire on Mrs. Dudgeon and the spirit and integrity of Dick, Carpenter shows the extent to which *The Devil's Disciple* also thoroughly ridicules the ideal of gentility.

The longest section of the book, which deals with *The Three Plays for Puritans* and how they are all deliberate humanizations of heroic types, is the most substantial. Its discussion of the Shavian hero is perceptive and original. For many

reasons that Mr. Carpenter offers, Caesar was for Shaw the perfect or total, but decidedly human hero. The wide spectrum of characters, the references to anterior events, the distinguishable killings, the treatment of Cleopatra, Caesar's egalitarianism, and his paradoxical statements all reinforce Carpenter's view. Lady Cicely, a feminine counterpart to Caesar, operates in a diminished arena, but the same merciful humanity and spirit she exhibits establish her as Caesar's ethical twin. Although both the Crompton and Carpenter books talk of Shaw's concept of heroism, particularly with the case of Caesar in mind, they can profitably be contrasted in their methods and results. Carpenter's discussion is perhaps sharper and more searching, readier to speculate and draw connections; Crompton is more conscious of the existing materials and sources and of how Shaw used them, Carpenter of some of the implications.

Throughout Mr. Carpenter's study there is a sense of the early Shaw developing, of his struggles and relationship with the theater of his day. His responses to the theater changed, at times even revealing his willingness to compromise with the "marketplace." (*You Never Can Tell* and *The Man of Destiny* were explicitly tailored for the star-oriented actor-manager system of the West End.) All of the plays betray an awareness of the current dramatic fashions. Some specifically depart from familiar modes. The *Three Plays for Puritans* are all basically melodramas; they are melodramas, however, that satirize their own form and some of its favorite, conventionally idealized subjects. Much, in fact, of "early Shavian drama is permeative rather than drastically innovative . . . Shaw chose to permeate established forms because of his overriding ambition to destroy ideals" (215-6).

In 1897 Shaw turned from writing plays geared to the West End theaters to plays for publication, resulting in attractive and readable volumes with their overtly undramatic prefaces and stage directions. People talk, with justice, of the generic mixtures in these plays, of how Shaw strains to appropriate some of the advantages of the novel and essay forms; but Mr. Carpenter provides another perspective, suggesting that the constricting stage practices almost forced the crusading, rigorous playwright to seek publication. That Shaw's plays are advertisedly discursive should not beguile us into thinking he overlooked the greater potency of the dramatic image or impression than the discussed idea in accomplishing his ethical ends. There were, however, clearly limits beyond which further artistic compromise necessitated looking elsewhere—at least until the theater was reclaimed. But then that particular reclamation project moves us into another "facet" of Shaw, one amply treated by such critics as Meisel and Fromm.

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*The Passages of Thought: Psychological Representation in the American Novel 1870-1900* by Gordon O. Taylor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. Pp. 172. \$5.00.

Gordon Taylor's *The Passages of Thought* has both the excellences and deficiencies that can result from a tightly controlled exposition of an equally stringently limited topic. At first glance the topic, "psychological representation in the American novel 1870-1900," does not sound limited, but when one finds that in this book the topic is limited to the direct demonstration of mind, and thus to only those passages in which the nature and workings of the mind are the immediate subject, then the problem becomes much simpler. And it follows that the exposition would be schematized into a series of quoted passages, each followed by its explication, which means that the merit of this book depends on its insights and careful analyses rather than on its colorful impressions and striking phrases.

Yet one is not really sure where this book is going to take him because Mr. Taylor's schema controls only his method, not his conclusions. They are developed from the evidence at hand, thus making Mr. Taylor's inquiry unlike such a comparable study as Frederick Hoffman's *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* where the commitment to a psychological theory is evident. But even if Mr. Taylor does approach his subject with a willingness to let it lead him where it will, the destination of the journey is at least in part already familiar to us. We know before we begin reading this book that, for example, a moral obsessiveness characterizes many of these novels, particularly those of James and Howells, and we know too that Crane, Norris and Dreiser emphasize both sex and environment as controlling influences in the lives of their characters. These characteristics have been observed by other means; here we have only additional corroboration.

But this is not to belittle Mr. Taylor's study, because it is valuable for several reasons. First, he has found a convenient, valid means of investigating a subject much on the minds of these novelists, a subject they experimented with and attempted to make meaningful in their fiction. Second, the passages containing these attempts to present the mind at work are often significant, climactic passages in their respective novels, and thus bear directly on the significance of those novels. And third, the analyses of these passages provide insights into the attributes of the five authors considered. It is interesting, for example, to see how James's fascination with both moral and aesthetic values emerged already in *Roderick Hudson* and persisted through to *The Ambassadors* where Lambert Strether had to come to terms with the same seemingly incongruous mixture that Roderick struggled with. And, to turn to a point less significant, one is amused to see how each time Howells wishes to present a character in a mental crisis the same schizophrenic-like response (see pp. 92; 104) surfaced in his mind. His understanding of man in crisis may be quite correct, but to see him so taken with it each time it occurs to him leaves us uneasy about our own captivity to certain obsessive ideas.

One of the values of a study like *The Passages of Thought* is that any repetitiousness either of idea or of presentation by the authors considered is thrust into an exposed prominence it might otherwise have escaped. So it is with Howells and his concept of "that strange separation of the intellectual activity

from the suffering of the soul," and so it is too with the persistent imagery of light that is used by these authors to signify the occurrence of an idea in the mind of a character. If one did not know better, he could conclude that these novelists, like the Elizabethans before them, were all working from the same handbook of rhetorical devices.

Of greater value is Mr. Taylor's demonstration that the efforts of these novelists to present life-like characters that develop and grow is intrinsically related to their effort to present the mind as a changing, adaptive organism. The progression from the character as static and unchanging and the mind as the repository of those static attributes to a character and a mind more clearly responsive to and reflective of what we know are the multiple divergent forces at work both within and without us is a development of significance. It is of value too that we again be made so pointedly aware that, whether it is Mrs. Stowe and her Biblical moral suasion or Norris and his Darwinism, the author's sense of how the mind works becomes the basis not just of characterization but of the fictive action too.

This book then does provide valuable answers to questions we may have. It stimulates as well questions for which it does not provide answers, primarily because these questions are not recognized to be within the scope of the book. But the reader still wonders why the manifestation of mind should be limited to only those moments when that mind is holding a silent colloquy with itself. Could not the mind be analyzed as well when it is manifested in the character's dialogue or action? Perhaps we would come to the same conclusions about the phenomena of psychological representation as Mr. Taylor has, but the evidence would be fuller. Another question: Is not the subject of inquiry here closely bound up with that problem which haunted James and his fellow novelists, the proper relationship of the author to his creation? If one is trying to represent the mind and at the same time preserve a realistic objectivity, which for these authors meant preserving a third person relationship with their characters, can he then enter into and explore something so private and inaccessible as the mind of that other creature, his character? James helps bridge the gap with his concept of point of view, but then he undermines it by insisting on using his other device, the proximate observer. If James did not satisfactorily solve the problem, could those less sensitive to it accomplish more? And could this inability to break out of the inhibiting control of third person narrative be a reason for the comparative scarcity of the kind of passage Mr. Taylor finds useful? In a sense, could it not be said that these novelists were relearning under most difficult circumstances something that came much easier to their progenitors, the epistolary novelists? And why would this whole question of presenting the mind have arisen in a form of the novel that, by its emphasis on man as a social creature, tends to undercut the emphasis on psychological analysis we would associate more readily with the Gothic novel which, though certainly popular in America, suffered an eclipse during this very period?

So the questions arise. We are happy for the answers Mr. Taylor has given us. We only wish we had more.

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