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Book Reviews

Shelley: A Critical Reading by Earl R. Wasserman. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971. Pp. xiii + 507. \$12.50.

In *The Subtler Language* the chapter on "Adonais" begins with a minor symposium of major critics on the subject of Shelley. The statements read today with the refreshing staleness of documentary movies about wars whose motives are long-forgotten and whose horrors only dimly resound in the memory. Foolish, contradictory, with momentary illuminations quickly obfuscated by long-held biases, they remind one of a time—not so long ago—when Shelley was more excoriated than read. Today such prejudices, if still tenaciously held by some, are infrequently articulated and, reprinting the now-famous essay on "Adonais" in *Shelley: A Critical Reading*, Earl Wasserman can dispense with the resumé. With this omission Wasserman not only respects a change in climate; he quietly acknowledges what all his readers should, that he took on the mighty in a crucial engagement and won. Shelley studies have never been the same.

That single-handed attempt to extend the sophistication and deepen the tone of Shelley criticism, enunciated in three singular essays, has been expanded over the intervening years to include a book-length study of *Prometheus Unbound*, as well as a probing analysis of Shelley's aesthetics, and has at length issued forth, much expanded, as a *summa*, encompassing Shelley's career. No previous study of Shelley has testified so amply to the plenitude of Shelley's mind, and it will be many years before an equal to Wasserman's book is published. That is not to say that Wasserman touches every conceivable issue—no critic could—but it is to recognize that a lifetime of devotion has gone into this study, along with a fund of learning, calmly marshalled and scrupulously controlled, few Romanticists can match. Furthermore, if in *The Finer Tone* Wasserman had to neglect Keats's manifest commitment to the "material sublime" in order to examine his equally intense, if somewhat contradictory, metaphysical strivings, with Shelley there is no need to distort for emphasis. Shelley's "philosophic mind" is every bit the equal of Wasserman's. Wherever this critic wishes to be led, the poet has charted the way, and with Wasserman exerting the full energies of his intellect, he never overtakes his subject. The twists, turns, and undisguised stratagems that mark this lengthy course are fascinating and, for the spectator, sometimes exhilarating. Pausing for breath at one point, Wasserman remarks with delighted admiration, "all this of course is dizzying metaphysics."

The result is the most difficult book ever published on Shelley, with a heavy emphasis on philosophical and theological problems and with a vision as complex as it is enlightening. Doubtless some shading of Shelley's human qualities must follow such an ardent pursuit of his intellectual genius, but it is hard to conceive a fuller examination of the stresses, compulsions, confusions, even contradictions involved in Shelley's post-Berkeleyan idealism. Past commentators have often either begged Shelley's ultimate questions or imposed a specious consistency, but

Wasserman is acutely aware of the poet's dual and increasingly opposing commitments to an objective world in need of reform and a mental universe demanding protection from it. For many, the significance of Wasserman's book will lie in its detailed and wide-ranging emphasis on Shelley's skepticism. Wasserman rightly insists that we revise our common notion of a poet confident in his answers and acknowledge that an idealist stance gave Shelley little cause for confidence. The conclusions of poem after poem ("Alastor," "Mont Blanc," "Julian and Maddalo," "The Sensitive Plant," etc.) are at best provisional and generally represent a stand-off between contradictory impulses. Wasserman takes "The Two Spirits: An Allegory" (whose date he helpfully revises) as representative, and he establishes the metaphysical dialogue as a prevalent mode in Shelley, from *A Refutation of Deism to Hellas*. Such an approach to "Alastor" or to "Julian and Maddalo," of course, immediately solves perplexing problems of viewpoint, but more than that, the resulting portrait of Shelley is that of a questioning, growing, undogmatic mind less concerned with abstract formulas than with the compassionate revelation of human imperatives. Self-knowledge is, after all, the only certain referent for idealist or symbolist truth.

Having firmly established the skeptical basis of Shelley's thought, Wasserman moves on to metaphysical configurations in the poetry and prose, setting Shelley within interwoven traditions of British empiricism and idealism. Considerable attention is paid to the neglected "Speculations on Metaphysics," as well as to the fragmentary essays "On Life" and "On Love," in order to determine the principles underlying both Shelley's metaphysics and his aesthetics. Those principles, as responsible scholars have long known, are not Platonic, and Wasserman presents us with a clear exposition of the differences. Quite simply, Shelley's philosophy developed from an initial inheritance of the legacy of Hume "to an objective idealism dependent upon a nontheistic and nontranscendent Absolute" (147). Skepticism, a recognition of the illusory character of all experience, links itself to an extreme idealism that denies the distinction between internal and external, mind and matter, since perception is a mode of thought. The imagination's ability to discern unity within a mental universe testifies to a unity lying beyond the phenomenal world of which the individual's is a part. Wasserman's careful articulation of the principles by which Shelley formulated his "intellectual philosophy" is a significant advance; and, though his basic argument is familiar from his earlier writings, the present elaboration adds both complexity and depth. In this long section on Shelley's metaphysics Wasserman treats "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," "Ode to the West Wind," and "The Cloud," to which he adds revised versions of the essays on *A Defence of Poetry*—originally published in the Pottle *Festschrift, From Sensibility to Romanticism*—on "The Sensitive Plant" and on "Mont Blanc" from *The Subtler Language*. Readers familiar with these pieces will find substantial differences in their new guise. Wasserman has greatly diminished the explicatory bent of the essays from *The Subtler Language* and has correspondingly enlarged their contextual relationships in Shelley's canon. In doing so, however, he has omitted as digressive commentary retaining its vigor and importance. Thus we no longer have the examination of the Spenserian milieu of "The Sensitive Plant," nor the discussion of that curious dialogue between Shelley and Byron on *Hamlet*, attributed to Medwin, which Wasserman under-

took in "Shelley's Last Poetics: A Reconsideration." The "Mont Blanc" section generally retains the cruxes of its original, but is otherwise entirely rewritten; and the dazzling attempt to resolve apparent discrepancies between the first and second stanzas of the poem is gone. That feat of explication may finally have been unsuccessful, even rigorously wrong-headed in its demands on Shelley's verse, but it is memorable precisely for making those demands and for calling attention to the pervasive sloppiness of much critical commentary on Shelley. As mentioned earlier, the new chapter on "Adonais" also has excisions. Although the revised essays are often more graceful and more coherent in presentation, it is obvious that *The Subtler Language* should not as a result of this publication be relegated solely to the domain of eighteenth-century scholars.

The third section of Wasserman's new book, entitled "The Poetry of Idealism: Utopia," is largely devoted to a revision of the study of *Prometheus Unbound*, published six years ago. Here scholars and students will find little need to consult the previous volume inasmuch as substantial alterations, few in number, take the form of additions. The principal one discusses the relevance of Milton's Satan to Act I, but it is suggestive rather than sufficiently discriminating to establish a new critical perspective. The only further value to be derived from a collation of the two studies of *Prometheus Unbound* is in watching Wasserman's sharp eye at work in revision. "The rigorously causal world of Shelley's poem" becomes "the rigorously necessitarian world" (323), an instructive change, though one that does not completely obviate the problem of applying logical terminology to a work that intentionally mingles the linear and atemporal. The virtues and deficiencies of Wasserman's study of *Prometheus Unbound* remain the same. A commanding knowledge of many traditions, both classical and Christian, synthesized by Shelley; the enlightening Virgilian context of Act II; the exposition of scientific, especially volcanic, imagery; the fine discussion of planes of time: these are major contributions to our understanding of the poem. On the other hand, the pervasive use of philosophical abstractions, sympathetic as one may be to the applicability, obscures the social significance of the drama and forces it onto a conceptual plane remote from the stunning immediacy Shelley created.

Wasserman follows his study of *Prometheus Unbound* with a lengthy commentary on *Hellas*, which shares all the virtues just cited. Traditional context fuses with shrewd historical research to produce a major statement. In particular, the study illuminates both the mode and purpose of *Hellas* through analysis of Aeschylus' *Persians* and the Italian art of the Improvisatore. And on a higher level Wasserman attacks the problem of Shelley's late cyclical view of history in order to reconcile it with the meliorism it has frequently seemed to contradict. The richness and complexity of this reading issues from a deceptively simple thesis: "If myth is the view of time from eternity, the cyclical repetitions of universal history permit a glimpse of eternity from time" (376). Thus the idealist, searching his own mind for absolute values, turns to the flow of history for intimations of those same values.

The problem with the spiraling meliorism of Shelley's social vision, as Wasserman sees it, is that it always aspires to an unattainable Absolute, and in Shelley's later years he increasingly subordinated his Utopian vision to eternal longings. The final section of this book focuses on their concentrated form in "Epipsy-

chidion" and "Adonais." A new level of sophistication enters the history of Shelley scholarship with the commentary on "Epipsychidion." Laying stress on Shelley's contexts in the Song of Songs and in Dante's minor works, Wasserman barely mentions Emilia Viviani and totally eschews the biographical referents for the Sun, Moon, and Comet that have so bedeviled readings of the poem. If ever there were verse without its feet on the ground, it is here; and critics have done it no service by insisting that it be bound to time, place, and Shelley's marital strains. Wasserman's attempt to treat it on an austere spiritual level is no distortion, but suggests a mature comprehension of the true nature of "Epipsychidion." His reading of "Adonais" follows, seeming less revisionist than it once did, probably because all modern critics have incorporated Wasserman's discoveries. Greater tribute is hardly necessary. One does wish, however, that this were not the final chapter of the study. Even as one acknowledges that no simple summary could encompass so sprawling and tightly argued a volume, one needs a synoptic view to reaffirm the organization and methodology of this capacious study.

A survey like this can only touch lightly upon the main development of a book, and though Wasserman has concentrated on Shelley's major works, he has treated dozens of minor poems and prose pieces with the same care and originality he lavishes on the masterpieces. In the process of his research he has subjected the manuscripts to a minute inspection. If his numerous emendations testify eloquently to the sad state of Shelley textual studies, they also prove how very real are the benefits to be gained from thorough familiarity with the primary materials. One would wish a comparable use of previous critics as well. Wasserman clearly knows their work, since he seldom repeats past labors; but his book would be of greater use to students and fellow-scholars if it embodied more of a critical context. Of course, there must be a terminal point with a book that stretches beyond five-hundred pages in small type.

To those Shelleys anxious to rescue the poet from an unworldly captivity or determined to reverse the critical consensus that finds him too "abstract," Wasserman's study may seem counter-revolutionary. The emphasis on transcendental values increasingly blurs their immanent manifestations, and Wasserman virtually neglects the political and social energies in Shelley. But even the most avidly committed to a more wordly view of the poet must honor so concerted an attempt to unravel the conceptual framework of Shelley's thought. And such is the power and precision of Wasserman's own intellect that there is scarcely a poem that he does not teach us to read anew. For all of Wasserman's learning, he is most impressive in his primary adherence to the literary text. Whatever disagreements Wasserman will spark, his study abounds with imaginative insights that, as before, will significantly alter the received readings of many poems.

Shelley: A Critical Reading deserves the widest possible dissemination, and the publishers should be encouraged to print it in paperback. As Carlos Baker organized subsequent studies around his admirable commentary, so the publication of Wasserman's study is a major event in Shelley scholarship and can be expected to become the focal point for a rich heritage of critical and scholarly work. Such a book comes once in a generation.

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The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf by Avrom Fleishman. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971. Pp. xix + 262. \$10.00.

"Everybody knows what a historical novel is; perhaps that is why few have volunteered to define it in print." It is one of the merits of Avrom Fleishman's study of the English historical novel that not only does its author make such an observation but also, and perhaps more importantly, he attempts a rectification of its conclusion. While this work contains individual readings similar to those in Fleishman's earlier books on Jane Austen and Conrad, it also offers the most enlightening theoretical discussion of historical fiction as a genre since Georg Lukács's work of the 1930's. Fleishman notes many of the standard criteria of historical fiction—the individual weakness of the central character, the placement of the setting at a remove at least "two generations" from the author's own time, the necessity to embody "real" events and people in the narrative; but he goes beyond these "handbook" limits to urge that the historical novel is ultimately governed by esthetic considerations. The historical novelist, like the professional historian, must discover and re-tell the truths of the past; and, while the historian can only move between the known data of the documentary and artifactual record, the novelist is able to achieve a "subjective control" over his esthetic materials because of this record. A good historical novel is, therefore, like any successful fiction, a record of an artistic vision rather than a mere rhetorical device or a simple nationalistic effusion. For Fleishman, genuine artistic vision in this genre results in a "contemplation" of eternal human conditions uniquely governed by the qualities of historical change and esthetic forms. While much of his theoretical position is grounded on the historicism of Wilhelm Dilthey, R. G. Collingwood and W. B. Gallie, Fleishman's intention of writing a "critical" account of the English historical novel forces him to select those novels which are "both historical *and* worth writing about." While every historical fiction is, by its very nature, a mental and technical amalgamation of past and present, Fleishman believes that those historical novels "worth writing about" achieve universality and rise above this temporal duality. He rejects *The Confessions of Nat Turner* because it is overly conditioned by Styron's own sense of the present and because, unlike a first rate historical novel, it thus fails to lift "the contemplation of the past above both the present and the past, to see its universal character."

The English historical novel has two distinct phases in its development, according to Fleishman. The first of these periods conventionally begins with the "phenomenon" of Sir Walter Scott, who appeared just as the moralistic historiography of the eighteenth century (Gibbon, Robertson, Hume) was being superseded by the nationalistic, organic and evolutionary tenets of historicism (Herder, Hegel). Although Scott never completely rejected the older thinking, his novels go beyond simply placing present-day characters in past trappings to a vision of the organic pervasiveness and cultural intrinsicity of the past. Scott transformed and amalgamated such diverse fictional strains as the anecdotal tone of Thomas Nashe, the Gothic exoticism of Horace Walpole, and the local colorism of Maria Edgeworth, into the initial, and perhaps still the purest, form of the English historical novel. While the immediate impact of industrialism made Scott aware of struggle as a constant in human history, his novels are the record of an esthetic development rather than the chronicle of a political stasis. Fleish-

man denies critical readings which see Scott as simply a reactionary spokesman for the British landed aristocracy and post-Napoleonic Europe; indeed, the novelist is best understood as a liberal Burkean. In his extended reading of the novels, which treats them in order of their internal chronology, Fleishman finds Scott's principal subject to be the decline of the European aristocracy and the tensions and social movements that accompanied the "death" of this European "master class." While Fleishman's interpretation of *The Heart of Midlothian* finds the novel's conclusion to be a signal of Great Britain's entry into the modern, bourgeois world, Scott is finally too much the artist to be strictly governed by thematic concerns, for there is in him "the tendency of the organic artist to resolve his themes and ravel up his plots, but there is also the tendency of the broad-viewed historian to see the . . . confrontation of new and unique elements." While these conflicting aims complemented his achievements, Scott's immediate successors, although reflective of the increasing medievalism in Romantic and early Victorian thought, failed to achieve either the dynamism or the artistry of their predecessor. For Fleishman, Bulwer-Lytton, James, Ainsworth, Kingsley and Charlotte Yonge are either antiquarian, juvenile or tentatious writers whose works mistake the paraphernalia of the past for its spirit. Dickens and Thackeray are Scott's real successors in British historical fiction. The two Victorians also advance the genre's development by the increasing sense of individual alienation which accompanies their characterizations in *Barnaby Rudge*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Henry Esmond*. While Dickens succeeds in conveying the nihilism of the Gordon rioters and the symbolic juxtaposition of the Maypole Inn and London in *Barnaby Rudge*, Fleishman feels that the resigned ending of that novel is reversed by the Carlylean notion of society's potential for renewal found in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Thackeray's anti-heroic stand on the writing of history, while thoroughly permeating his fiction, leads finally to a disengagement with history and foreshadows the next development of the genre. *Henry Esmond*, while cast as a *Bildungsroman*, presents Thackeray's scepticism in its main character who, as a rebel and a hero of the mind, presages Marlow, Strether and Marcel. Henry Esmond, like many protagonists in later Victorian historical fiction, finally transcends the past and the present as history by arriving at "a vision of the emptiness of all life in history and . . . a hint of the ideal of a life outside history."

Fleishman's final chapters deal with the increasingly subjective and overly intellectualized historical fiction of the later Victorians and the early twentieth century. History becomes merely a setting or backdrop against which the "inner" or ahistorical desires of the individual are played out. While *The Cloister and the Hearth*, *Romola* and *Marius the Epicurean* end significantly with their protagonists' withdrawals from the world, the fact that these heroes are "never fully in the historical world from the outset" reverses the basis of the historical novel of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray. The *roman à thèse*, another tendency in late Victorian historical fiction, also leads to the decline of the genre for, while Scott, Dickens and Thackeray "had been governed by general ideas of human nature, . . . it was perhaps their relative innocence of theories of history that was their making as historical novelists." Fleishman goes on to urge that Hardy, Conrad and Virginia Woolf further the demise of the genre by emphasizing their themes at the expense of attempting to perceive the

past for its own sake. Hardy's characters, despite their engagement with a symbolically presented world of time and prehistoric timelessness, retreat from history because they are victimized and naturally repulsed by it. Conrad's pessimism concerning human fate precludes any happy reconciliation within history; and even though *Nostromo* is a fictional *tour de force* which presents the "experience of historical time" among a group of individuals, the novel's effect finally derives from the "tragic vision" of irrational man confronting an inexorable universe. Virginia Woolf brings the genre of the English historical novel to an impasse, for in her works any sense of an organic and intrinsic past is submerged by characters who embody history as a decoration to their (always presently oriented) consciousnesses.

The English Historical Novel succeeds in filling the gap in critical writing that Fleishman himself finds to be surprising; however, the book has minor flaws and illustrates a major weakness in contemporary scholarship. Although I may seem pedantic in mentioning it, the lack of a formal bibliography in a work of this length, scope and price seems a notable omission. Fleishman, of course, formally eschews a comprehensive approach to the subject; but, while that may account for a diminishing of the scholarly apparatus, the question of selectivity arises in two prominent ways. If Fleishman is to include *Nostromo* as a historical novel, then why not also discuss *Middlemarch*? While the first work embodies history in a rigorous, almost methodological, manner, does its strictly fictional basis render it more worthy of attention than George Eliot's historically conditioned work? Certainly a formula can be found that includes both of these works which are "historical and worth writing about." The more important question about selectivity, and an objection that Fleishman clearly anticipates and dismisses, concerns his emphasis on major novelists and their works. While one can sympathize about the practical and critical objections to studying lesser lights, it would seem that a real understanding of the achievements of the major English historical novelists would require such an investigation. Literary scholarship, alas, all too rarely conveys a genuine sense of the artistic complexities of the periods it treats: what seems to be needed to rectify this situation are criteria and discussions of not only what makes Scott, for example, a first rate historical novelist but also, and I would urge more importantly, what differentiates a first rate novelist from his second, third, fourth and fifth class compatriots in an epoch. If only to demonstrate the "greatness" of the already "great," a serious consideration of the themes and, more particularly, the styles of fiction's second raters is in order. Avrom Fleishman is to be commended for treating the English historical novel in a serious and erudite way, and it is to be hoped that his book will serve as an impetus to further examinations of this relatively neglected area.

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A Companion to William Carlos Williams's 'Paterson' by Benjamin Sankey.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971. Pp. x + 236. \$8.50.

William Carlos Williams: The American Background by Mike Weaver. London:
Cambridge University Press, 1971. Pp. xii + 228. \$9.50.

The appearances of Benjamin Sankey's *A Companion to William Carlos Williams's 'Paterson'* and Mike Weaver's *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* within weeks of one another epitomize the current state of Williams criticism. For Sankey, *Paterson* is a national monument, and his offering reads like a tourist guidebook. The work never fails to locate for a reader the exact spot he occupies in the poem, to point out interesting landmarks, or to give brief histories of various passages. Quaintness and novelty seem the deciding factors for what is to be detailed as Sankey uses both a personal examination of the poem's manuscripts in the Yale and Buffalo libraries as well as the work of previous critics. The book remains basically a "reading"—a large piece of space which the author is mapping for future readers—and nowhere does it pretend for long that the poem harbors obscurities that it will remove or even an interesting process of creation which it will define. Neither does the work suggest a limiting, organizing general overview or explain why one should "see" *Paterson*. Throughout most of the survey, one senses that the author may be mapping the poem simply "because it's there." This feeling is heightened when, having spent two hundred pages discussing and placing *Paterson's* "ideas," Sankey concludes that "any reservations a reader may have about the ideas argued in Williams's prose will apply equally to the argument of *Paterson*." "No doubt," he continues, "many of the ideas are true enough, provided not too much weight is placed upon them. . . . Williams in a sense 'promises' to deliberate on the topics introduced and to give them as the poem moves on a fullness of meaning, an emotional resonance, that they do not have at the outset. For a time the reader is carried along by the skill and assurance Williams displays in getting the poem under way. And his expectations are fulfilled, in large part. But the principles ordering the poem lack the power available within a traditional 'plot' to gather up meanings and associations, to 'cash in' on detail, to achieve a conclusion." Except that the excursion has been interesting and informative enough, these final pages might suggest to a reader that he's been tricked into spending more time than he should in the locus Sankey chooses to regard.

Sankey's final view of the poem does not differ radically from that of Randall Jarrell, who saw the work after Book I as a downhill effort, or that of Robert Creeley, who, too, finds the poem "fabulous" in sections and who, in his division of poets into those of content and prosodists, places Williams squarely among the prosodists. A prosodist's concern for the total articulation of the poem rather than its paraphraseable content proves his skill and profundity. Sankey's book, the third devoted exclusively to *Paterson*, is by far the most expansive argument for the poem's total "content." Walter Scott Peterson's early *An Approach to 'Paterson'* (1967) had seen the work more modestly in terms of Williams' dichotomy of explorer and puritan, his preoccupation with place, and a desire to make a new kind of epic. Peterson rejected the characterization of the poem "as a poem about the failure of love and imagination. . . . Breakdown and failure are important in the poem, but this does not exclude the possibility of fulfillment.

Paterson involves a positive as well as a negative attitude toward life, a positive as well as a negative way of viewing and responding to the given 'realities' of existence." The rejection became the focus and limiting factor of the work and, within his stated concerns, the book is still extremely useful. Joel Canarroe's *William Carlos Williams' 'Paterson': Language and Landscape* (1970) sees the poem as "Williams' major achievement and . . . one of the great works of American literature." His book becomes an argument to show the coherence of the epic by way of unifying symbols, something that the views of Sankey, Jarrell, and Creeley would deny. Not that they would deny a unity of technique but that they would insist that unity of technique does not constitute either unity of intent or unity of effect. In fact, part of Sankey's argument is devoted to the changes from the original intent that Williams made as he worked.

None of these books on *Paterson* makes full use of Emily Mitchell Wallace's *A Bibliography of William Carlos Williams* (1968) to follow up on Sister Bernetta Quinn's 1955 discovery that the poem makes use of earlier published works. In Peterson's book the oversight is understandable since a lot of the unreprinted material appears in out-of-the-way journals, but the value of a study on the poem today that does not correlate the earlier works is seriously diminished. Indeed, a reader may, no should expect a new book on *Paterson* to detail as much its relation to other published works as to the manuscripts in various libraries. Moreover, he should expect by now some precision in the terminology critics employ. Words like "montage" and "collage" are commonplace in writing about the poetics of *Paterson*, yet no one has fully explored the "newness" of the poem's poetics except to indicate Williams' "plan to supplant a plan for action." The montage, a film metaphor, accurately adumbrates Williams' interest in experimental film during the thirties; yet its suggestion of various film shots—including, in silent films, the mixture of picture and titles—for the purposes of intensification, extension, and clarification must be demonstrated as applicable to the different densities of the work's prose and poetry. Similarly, the collage techniques of art, which might explain the alternating densities, do not quite fit the sense of the destroyed separation of art and life space which collages attempt. Poems always lie flatly on a page. Moreover, if Sankey and others are right about the greatness of Williams' poetry lying not in its content but in its concept of language, one ought to expect work beyond Ralph Nash's 1953 essay. One ought to be demanding more sophisticated handlings of what language is in *Paterson* and how it works. Linda Wagner's early *The Poems of William Carlos Williams* (1964) seems in retrospect to have pointed a right and brave direction toward total articulation that has been obscured by later propagandists for Williams' content.

Mike Weaver's book is an iconoclastic study, attacking the image of the modern "good grey poet" that is implicit in works like Sankey's. Marsden Hartley's comment that Williams "is perhaps more people at once than anyone I have ever known, not vague persons but he's a small town of serious citizens in himself" should warn against such simplifications. Yet, until the appearance of Mrs. Wallace's bibliography, scholars had to deal with the rather one-sided image that the poet created of himself in his final years. Now put in contact again with the earlier, uncollected pieces, readers can see the truth of Mrs. Williams' statement to Edith Heal that the *Autobiography* was hurried and care-

less. Bram Dijkstra's *The Hieroglyphics of a New Speech* (1970) had already moved to correct Williams' faulty recollection of his having read at the Armory Show and his blurred reporting of his relationship with Alfred Stieglitz. The Weaver book, relying on new letters and correspondence with people who had known the poet, goes even further in this direction. It begins by relating an incident about the quotation from Frances Densmore used as an epigraph for *Pictures from Brueghel*. Having assumed that the poet "knew the text in full, and at first hand and that he had perceived a relation between the structure of Indian music and his concept of an indigenous American measure in poetry," Weaver was to learn from Tram Combs: "In his last few years I made a point of calling on the doctor on his birthday, and as his gift in 1961 I presented him with a 3 x 5 slip of paper on which I had written a quotation from an essay by Frances Densmore; . . . he immediately said with great animation that he was going to put that in the front of the book of poems he had shipped off to Laughlin the day before; and there it sits as the foreword to *Pictures from Brueghel*." What follows is a wholesale and, at times, incorrect amending of the image of Williams that appeared in the *Autobiography* and other recent studies. If that image has hurt the poet's criticism by being too much believed, Weaver's persistent disbelief can prove equally damaging.

Among the things which Weaver's book stresses are the influence of Otto Weininger's sex theories on Williams' views of women and marriage, Williams' interests in the theory of relativity, his involvement with the Social Credit Movement, and his concern for the occult. Anyone reading Williams' several descriptions of his mother's possession by spirits will welcome an end to the rational poet that grew up to oppose the attacks on his intellectualism, but first and foremost one should keep in mind that Williams was a kind man. He was often taken advantage of as a doctor, writer, and a thinker. He seemed at various times to know this, but he was more bothered by the alternatives than by the encroachments. On occasion after his strokes, Mrs. Williams provided a protective gesture; at times, James Laughlin. Eli Siegel's *The Williams-Siegel Documentary* (1970) depicts an interesting case of both the poet's warmth and his withdrawal. Weaver is excellent at depicting how this kindness got Williams mixed up with the various socio-political movements of the thirties that led to his troubles in the late forties with the House Unamerican Activities Committee. Yet, in regard to Weininger, Weaver never points out that the poet's expressed reservations to Weininger's thought may necessitate a tempering of Weaver's view of the marriage. Nor with respect to the Williams-John Riordan discussions of Steinmetz and Whitehead's views on relativity is he willing to alter his view that they had much to do with naming the objectivist movement. This intransigence comes in the face of Louis Zukofsky's claimed ignorance of Whitehead at the time he named the movement and with no mention whatever of the possible impact of T. S. Eliot's term "objective correlative." The expression, probably derived from Jules Laforgue's "Hamlet," was framed long before Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*. Similarly Weaver's effort to rescue Williams' economic views from the influence of Ezra Pound supposes that Pound tried as late as 1933 to introduce Williams to the ideas of Major Douglas. The effort fails to note that *Contact* in 1921 carried in the same issue work by Williams and a review of Major Douglas by Pound. Another review by Pound of Douglas

appeared the year before in *The Little Review*. Weaver's date is late for suggesting the start of Pound's push for Douglas' acceptance by Williams. Nevertheless, Williams scholars will find very useful much of the book's new information, its illustrations, and its appendices. The last include a selection from Thomas Ward's *Passaic*, which Weaver believes may have helped shape the Williams' poem, and a section of "Notes to *Paterson*."

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The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy
by Bert G. Hornback. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1971. Pp. viii + 177.
\$7.00.

Bert Hornback's *The Metaphor of Chance* is, in some few ways, an admirable book on Thomas Hardy. First, the thesis: Coincidence, Hardy's convention and the chief problem for the critic of Hardy, is at the heart of the vision and the technique of Hardy's fiction and poetry. Coincidence, says Hornback, is the typically Hardyian "way of expressing, dramatically, the idea of the intensity of experience; involved with this is his denial of time passing as a valid measure of experience, and the manipulation of time-as-history to emphasize and expand the significance of the coincidental event" (*Metaphor of Chance*, p. 4). Second, Hornback's canny way of telling us how a novel by Thomas Hardy works, a way that enables us to discover something that might be called "Hardyan." This does not apply, however, to Hornback's treatment of the poetry. An illuminating thesis, a knowing treatment of the craft of fiction as practiced by Thomas Hardy, and, I might add, an awareness of Hardy's wary optimism—these are the merits of *The Metaphor of Chance*.

The shortcomings of *The Metaphor* are manifold. Hornback is too ambitious for his thesis as he here understands it, and within the space he has here allowed himself. In fact, at its present stage of development, Hornback's thesis—and I think it a valuable one—would have found more appropriate expression in an article-length study dealing with selected novels and *perhaps* poems (his treatment of the poetry is so cursory that it is difficult to guess what it could have been). The result is superficiality (as in the treatment of so-called minor novels such as *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and *The Woodlanders*) as well as violent wrenching in the discussion of novels such as *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Mr. Hornback's thesis approaches originality, but it is spread too thin, applied too inflexibly.

Chapter I, for its discussion of the use and significance of coincidence in Hardy's writings, is the single most valuable segment of the book. Chapter II, in spite of the declaration of a "generally chronological" (p. 4) approach, deals with *The Return* (whose treatment I discuss below), and anticipates the treatment in Chapter III of several minor novels written before *The Return*. In Chapters III and IV, Hornback treats in a most unsatisfactory way the development and

discovery of technique in minor novels written between 1868 and 1897. For example: *Desperate Remedies* (1871) is described as a novel in which "the past seems to be only artificially related to the present" (p. 44)—as though Miss Aldclyffe's memory and the effects of her memory upon her actions were inconsequential. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), long recognized as one of Hardy's minor triumphs, is dismissed in *one* paragraph as a story made wholly "of the antics and pleasures of [the] rustic chorus" (p. 46). Somehow—and this is an astonishing assertion on Hornback's part—neither the *Greenwood Tree* nor *The Woodlanders* (from which Hornback nonetheless takes his epigraph [p. 3] and his motto [p. 166]) develop through the interplay of past and present (p. 43). How this can be so I cannot imagine, since the *Greenwood Tree* and *The Woodlanders*, like *The Return* (which seems to play a seminal role in Hornback's scheme) are stories about the return of a native from a modern to a traditional environment. It is perhaps so because Hornback is too ruthless in applying his thesis: what does not conform is dealt with perfunctorily or, worse, forced into conformity. Thus *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), "the most significant of the ten minor novels," is described as a novel in which "Hardy's interest in coincidence and the grotesque," as well as "his representation of condensed or extended time" is turned to comic (and thereby inconsequential?) ends—as though Chapter 22 (The Great Barn) and Chapter 46 (The Gargoyle: Its Doings) are without temporal or dramatic significance (pp. 51-56).

Hornback's discussion of *A Laodicean* (1881) whose "plot is built upon that typically Hardyan argument of several plans to restore the past into the present coupled with several unwanted intrusions of the past into the present" (p. 63) reveals his failure to perceive an extremely important aspect of his approach to Hardy as a writer vitally concerned with the interaction of past and present. I refer to Hardy's interest in the question of restoration (of antique buildings, of erring men, of violated maidens), but more about this later. *Two on a Tower* (1882) is, to Hornback, significant only "as it demonstrates . . . Hardy's typical way of composing a story" (p. 65) yet it is allotted (complete with references to variants between manuscript and novel) some five pages (pp. 65-69), whereas the *Greenwood Tree* and *The Woodlanders* are allotted three pages between them. Hornback admits that *The Woodlanders* (1888) deserves fuller treatment, then proceeds to set it aside with the statement that "the past, as it is made to register in the novel, adds to its romantic tone and texture [whatever that is], not to its dramatic life" (p. 70). How this can be said about a novel whose story focuses on complications arising upon the return of a native, an action with the clash of old and new, traditional and modern, past and present is, as I say above, incomprehensible. Limitations of space do not allow me to comment further than this upon Hornback's treatment of discovery and development of technique in Hardy's minor novels, nor to say more about Chapter VIII (I discuss Chapters II, IV, VI, VII below), devoted to the poems and *The Dynasts*, than that its two dozen pages are not nearly so heavily laden with things precious and penetrating as they would need to be in order to do justice to such a large body of material. Hornback is satisfied to simply comment upon the relevance to his thesis of some two dozen poems "in which allusions to the past enrich the experience of the present, and the continuum of history is freed from the measure of time so that the past can even coexist with the present" (p. 152).

We are told, not shown, that "the whole of Hardy's art—his vision and his technique—is described again in his poetry" (p. 155), just as we are told, never shown, that Hardy's "vision of the world and the artistic techniques he invents in order to represent that vision grow and develop through the course of his career" (p. 4). Hornback's promise of a chronological approach is belied by his stuffing all the poetry into the final chapter.

Chapters II, V, VI, and VII, on *The Return*, *The Mayor*, *Tess* and *Jude* respectively, are the most ambitious chapters of Hornback's study. Upon their success must ride the success of Hornback's approach to Hardy. Unfortunately, except for isolated insights, these chapters are uneven and forced, written for the most part with "an abstracting, philosophizing sophistication" (p. 149). I will discuss first Hornback's treatment of *The Mayor* because it is connected with my remarks above about his discussion of *A Laodicean*, then go on to discuss his analysis of *Tess* and *Jude*, sibling novels whose kinships he wholly ignores. I shall conclude with Hornback's handling of *The Return*.

Hornback's discussion of *A Laodicean* in Chapter V reveals his failure to perceive an important dimension of his thesis: the relationship between Hardy's sense of the presence of the past and Hardy's concern for the restoration of the antique. *A Laodicean* is an artistic failure, as Hornback and many others have noted, but it is also Hardy's most overt exploration, before *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), of the question of restoration, a question central to *The Mayor*. The problem of restoration fascinated both Hardy the architect-antiquarian and Hardy the novelist. *A Laodicean's* conclusion upon the prospect of "a mansion of independent construction" to be erected alongside the ruined de Stancey castle prefigures the interplay between Michael Henchard (representative of the old order) and Donald Farfrae (displacer of the old) in *The Mayor*. Hornback's discussion of *The Mayor* almost totally ignores Farfrae and thereby ignores Hardy's attempt in perhaps his greatest novel to envision a new relation between past and present, a relation which admits the reality of chronometric time and of change (duration of experience) and is perhaps a departure from the view that psychological time (intensity of experience) is the definitive temporal awareness. Hornback is correct in seeing Henchard as a hero, but blinkered in not seeing that Hardy's treatment of the relation of past and present in *The Mayor* is not conducted solely or centrally in terms of "still, simple, static and intense moments of timelessness" (p. 90) associated with the Ring, Mai Dun, High Place Hall, Ten Hatches Weir and other antiquity-laden objects. Hardy no more "forces chronological time out" (p. 90) than Henchard forces Farfrae out. Hardy admits duration *and* intensity, the utilitarian Farfrae *and* the romantic Henchard: he awards Farfrae the mayoralty, the business and the woman, he awards Henchard the tragedy.

In *Tess* (1891) and *Jude* (1895), sibling novels whose kinships have yet to be explored, plucking the heroic gesture out of the chaos of change proves difficult (in *Tess*), and even impossible (in *Jude*). Surely, the question here for Hornback should be how Hardy, in this magnificent diptych with which he concludes his work in fiction, brings to *an* end (another end should have been delineated from the poetry) "his elaborate metaphorical use of time and the related motifs of coincidence and repetition" (p. 148). Instead, Hornback plows ahead chanting "Experience as to intensity, and not as to duration," seemingly blind to the

fact that for Tess and for Jude experience, cerebration, feeling are fragmented, tormented, hallucinatory. His insistence upon their heroism is equalled only by Hardy's revelation of their victimhood. And it is significant that in *Tess* and *Jude*, Hardy's protagonists, for the unbudging Hornback, begin to deceive Hardy, to live secret lives that somehow escape their author but accord with Hornback's thesis (see pp. 109, 133-34). There is little doubt that polemic intrudes upon art in both *Tess* and *Jude*. But in this event Hornback's task is not to try to second-guess Hardy, not to assert that despite "Hardy's seeming attempt to make [Tess] the victim of a ruthless, relentless society, or societal code, she becomes a tragic heroine" (p. 109), not to insist that Hardy is "mistaken in his allusion" or sententious when he has Sue say to Jude "I am not modern, either. I am more ancient than medievalism, if you only knew" (p. 133), an allusion, by the way, that is wholly intelligible within the twin streams of Hellenic and Hebraic imagery running through the novel. In this, Hornback is as guilty as Hardy of "editorial remarks and argumentative intrusions" (p. 109). He should be willing to set aside the symmetry of his thesis in order to ask the important questions: Why does Hardy become argumentative and intrusive in *Tess* and *Jude*? and how does this sudden taste for polemic affect "the thesis of dramatic intensity upon which Hardy builds his fiction" (p. 109)? I would suggest that whereas Hardy could envision the coexistence of past and present in *The Mayor* (or of durational and intensive temporalities) and thus the heroism of the departing past, he could in *Tess* and *Jude* envision only victimhood—the fragmentation of duration, the inconsequence of intensity. In *Tess* and *Jude* everything emphatically does not "fit in the way it usually fits in Hardy's fiction" (p. 111); things have changed. Hardy, having lived some fifty years, has himself realized the reality of time as duration, process, aging. Hornback does not account for change. He might have if he had proceeded chronologically as he promised he would on page four: he does not allow his avowed method to teach him what it might have.

According to Hornback, Clym Yeobright of *The Return* attains "heroic stature" by apprehending "the first principle of Hardy's vision and art" (p. 24): that the "age of a modern man is to be measured by the intensity of his history." By living intensely, Clym—also Henchard, Tess and Jude in Hornback's view—escapes "cosmic insignificance" (p. 24). I have suggested that Hardy seems to have found it increasingly difficult in his last novels to render heroism through intensity. In *The Return* there is evidence, which Hornback does not fully acknowledge, that as early as the 1870's Hardy censured the cultivation of intensity in his portrayal of Clym Yeobright. For Hornback, Clym Yeobright is "the most fully representative of Hardy's heroes" because he suffers, grows, endures. Hornback ignores the fact that Clym also causes suffering, fails to tell us what Clym learns, and fails to see that if Clym endures he endures in opposition to the novel's chief symbol for the enduring: Egdon Heath and the simple culture of the rustic heath dwellers. Hornback brushes aside the novel's imagistic portrayal of Eustacia as a misguided woman of gigantic (potentially heroic) emotional stature, just as he brushes aside the novel's imagistic association of Clym with impotency, with wintry, sterile cerebration and with the repressive, middle-class morality of Mrs. Yeobright, whose interference with the normal flow of feeling—between Thomasin and Wildeve, Thomasin and Diggory, Clym and Eustacia—is the formal cause of suffering and death throughout the novel. Clym's

attempted return to his mother, like his attempted return to Egdon Heath, must fail: the realities of chronometric time, of duration dictate it. He may live intensely, may momentarily transcend change and process, but he cannot turn back the clock, cannot become once more the precocious boy of the Heath, the pet lamb of a doting mother. Surely his invocation of his mother in the closing pages of the book is a sign not of his heroic stature, but of his estrangement from reality.

Hardy knows what Hornback's crablike adherence to his thesis will not allow him to demonstrate: that moments of hard, gemlike burning are but interludes in a process of unavoidable decay, erosion, and weathering. Men, like buildings, age; they cannot be maintained in a state of pristine wholeness. Except, perhaps, through the illusion of art; but then that is another aspect of the question that Bert Hornback, in *The Metaphor of Chance*, fails to investigate.

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A Genteel Endeavor: American Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age by John Tomsich. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1971. Pp. vi + 236. \$8.50.

The genteel tradition has been all but ignored since George Santayana, Van Wyck Brooks and H. L. Mencken among others attacked it in the early 1900's. Santayana, who named and then analyzed it as the sentimental, anemic, final gasp of American Puritanism, wrote the best-known statement on the movement which deeply affected American culture in the last half of the nineteenth century. In "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy" (1911) he called it "that one-half of the American mind, that not occupied intensely in practical affairs . . . it has floated gently in the backwater, while, alongside, in invention and industry and social organization the other half of the mind was leaping down a sort of Niagara Rapids. . . . The one all aggressive enterprise; the other all genteel tradition." Since then critics have used the term vaguely to label the prudish, puritanically repressive aspects of American culture. John Tomsich, however, attempts to get beyond these generalizations, to study the genteel tradition in detail by concentrating on the ideas and writings of eight of its representatives—Charles Eliot Norton, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, George William Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Edmund Stedman, Richard Gilder and George Boker. He divides his book into chapters on topics such as "Scholars in Politics," "Economics for an Organic Society," "The Poet's World" and "Exit Religion," concentrating on one or two figures in each chapter. Unfortunately, though, Tomsich seldom gets beyond generalizations himself, due both to his method and his subject matter. He in fact notes that "The culture began to seem amorphous even to its spokesmen. It had tendencies and attitudes, but who could find its center or point to its dominant values?" (p. 186) One encounters this same vagueness and lack of direction when reading Tomsich's own study.

Tomsich's method actually prevents him from achieving his purpose, for in attempting to generalize about ideas held in common by his eight genteel writers, he tends to oversimplify and say little specifically about any one of them, and little specifically about the genteel movement itself. For instance he concludes that "The origins of genteel literature were almost identical with the origins of American individualistic romanticism," and he links the movement with the "romantic revolt" (p. 191). Yet Paul Elmer More has clearly placed Aldrich in a classical, not a romantic, tradition of poetry beginning with Martial and Catullus and continuing through Suckling, Herrick, Prior and others. Tomsich does note that "Aldrich is a partial exception to some of these generalizations," recognizing that Aldrich avoided excessive sentimentality in his poetry, "did not exhibit the reflex of romantic alienation to any great degree," and "More than Boker and Stoddard, he represented the continuation of the established literary culture" (p. 147). On top of that, Tomsich admits that Aldrich was a better poet than the others. This exception leads one to question the value, or even the validity, of the generalization.

But even Tomsich's use of these eight men as representatives of the genteel tradition is questionable. He does defend his method by noting that "These men, all but forgotten now, were among the most eminent figures in respectable American culture in their day," and that they "comprise an inner circle of Santayana's Genteel Tradition" (pp. 7-8). And yet the movement is so amorphous and decentralized that any attempt to transfer conclusions about these men to the tradition as a whole has very limited value. For example Tomsich discovers a discrepancy between the public utterances of these writers and their private views; the smugness and complacency that marked the genteel tradition, and fed the resentment of its opponents, was a mask for the true feelings of the group. He thus concludes, "the critics . . . knew only the public face of genteel culture and did not suspect the extent to which public optimism functioned as a compensation for private pessimism" (p. 188). This statement is certainly valid for these eight figures, but for other writers who fall within the same tradition it is not. Donald Grant Mitchell, popular nineteenth century essayist and short story writer, and "Easy Chair" columnist in *Harper's* from 1851 to 1855 before Curtis took that position, is a good example. His collections of essays and sketches wallow in the sentimentality, prudishness and smugness that characterized the public face of the genteel tradition. But his private attitudes, as his biographer Waldo H. Dunn reveals, were no different. Agnes Repplier, essayist of the early 1900's, rooted the genteel conservatism expressed in her essays in an unswerving belief in Catholicism. Tomsich's generalization does not apply to these writers, and yet Mitchell and Repplier worked within the genteel tradition.

The seventh chapter, called "The Poet's World," contains faults indicative of those found throughout the entire book. Tomsich indicates that he will concentrate on Aldrich, Richard Henry Stoddard and George Boker, "primarily literary figures," with brief comment on Bayard Taylor because "he was less exclusively committed to poetry" (p. 136). But the chapter contains few specifics from their literary works. For instance, even when Tomsich does discuss a play by Boker, he merely names a critic as the basis of his judgment: "During the production of *The Bankrupt*, Boker was deeply depressed about his work and even doubted his own sanity. Bradley's judgment that *The Bankrupt* was Boker's worst play

seems fair" (p. 142). Then he says, "Boker, like Stoddard and Aldrich, wrote his best poetry when he avoided contemporary life." The only evidence he offers is a footnote citing page numbers in Aldrich's *Poems*. Even the discussion of Aldrich's style, "ironic . . . mildly pitched and carefully executed," is made without any specific textual reference. In the last half of the chapter Tomsich turns to a discussion of the genteel writers' attitudes toward women and sex, apparently forgetting his main subject. He relates Edmund Stedman's courtship and marriage, ostensibly because "If it is not obvious in the case of Aldrich, it ought to be obvious in the case of Stedman that the genteel exaltation of love was very much a compensation for emotional deprivation" (p. 153). That Stedman is dragged into a chapter purportedly about four other figures raises doubts as to how representative his personal life really is. And Tomsich never mentions Stoddard after the chapter's opening paragraph.

Not only does he say little specifically about poetry in "A Poet's World," but Tomsich says almost nothing in the book about those endeavors he considers to be the most successful for the genteel tradition. He notes in his "Introduction" that the "genteel culture did register some achievements. The occasional verse so characteristic of the period was uninteresting, but its magazine illustrations and short stories were excellent" (p. 25). Aldrich, in fact, excelled in the short story form, and his reputation as one of the leading authors of his time rested at least as much on his stories as his poems. "Marjorie Daw" was well-known and often anthologized, and Aldrich had an international reputation in the genre. Strangely, Tomsich never talks about these achievements, but instead generalizes about the group's political, social, religious and aesthetic ideas, with little indication of a direction or purpose in his study. He does state in the "Introduction" that "This book is not an attempt to defend the Genteel Tradition against its critics. It is an attempt to reconstruct and explain a part of that tradition through the lives and thought of eight men who worked within it" (p. 7). Unfortunately Tomsich does not explain what "part of that tradition" he is exploring in *A Genteel Endeavor*, and one does not find out from reading the book. This vagueness, combined with the tendency to over-generalize and the lack of careful organization, results in a confusing and often dull study of a subject that certainly deserves more consideration than has been given it to date.

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Hermogenes and the Renaissance: Seven Ideas of Style by Annabel M. Patterson.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. Pp. xv + 240. \$10.00.

This book attempts to trace the influence of the late classical rhetorician Hermogenes of Tarsus on the poets of the English Renaissance, both directly and through continental critics and humanists. Miss Patterson is interested specifically in a section of Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric* entitled *περὶ ἰδεῶν*, or "Concerning Ideas," a description of seven Platonic forms of style (and the source of her somewhat misleading subtitle). Her seven chapters set a context for revival

of Hermogenes' Ideas, describe the Ideas as they might relate to Renaissance English literature, and then attempt to prove the extent of the influence of the Ideas on five Elizabethan genres: canzone and ode; satire; sonnet; a sub-type of "speed poetry"; and finally epic, which she finds a vehicle for all seven Ideas.

Miss Patterson is aware that although few people today—literary scholars included—know much about them, classical rhetoricians like Hermogenes, Aphthonius, Demetrius of Phalereus, and Longinus helped to shape modern literary practice by serving as respected authorities for the Renaissance craftsmen of modern aesthetic theories. Most of their treatises are pedantic and impractical (*Art of Rhetoric* among them), but we ought to know something of what Renaissance humanists had in mind when they recommended schooling in these obscure men. Hermogenes, as the case in point, has never been translated into English, and Miss Patterson's is the only detailed study of him or his influence in our language. Such records are important in a time when classical scholars are disappearing from the academic scene.

The problem with this particular study is its author's bias. Forewarned by an anonymous reader of the perils of influence studies, Miss Patterson has nevertheless allowed herself to become convinced that the Ideas of Hermogenes form a primary basis of Elizabethan art, that they are more "satisfying and comprehensive" than the guidelines of Cicero and Quintilian, and that his detractors have done great harm to potential understanding of Drayton, Sidney, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton by discouraging studies such as hers. None of these convictions is warranted. In an effort to justify her attraction to Hermogenes, Miss Patterson has supposed evidence of his influence wherever she has found correspondence with his precepts. But she has promoted him beyond his desert.

Hermogenes was, of course, known to humanist scholars; but his work was never popular outside the universities, and with possible scattered exceptions in Ariosto and Tasso, no major poet in either Italy or England clearly follows his doctrine. His huge and terribly complicated treatise, intended as a further refinement of the increasingly dogmatic embellishments taught in the Roman oratorical schools, is based, like other rhetorics of the time, on a patchwork of the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. The *περὶ ἰδεῶν* forms a decadent, if interesting, palimpsest, with a few eccentric innovations such as the development of his seven functional categories of style to replace the conventional Ciceronian tripartite division and its nuances. But Hermogenes' seven Ideas and their many subdivisions ("perpetual rivers" according to one early critic; "infinite and too ambitious," said Gabriel Harvey) run from obviousness to preciosity. The chief value of Hermogenes for humanist scholars beyond the fact of his ancientness lay in his having added complexity to the question of style and in his use of the orations of Demosthenes for examples of his Ideas, both promoting and providing further glimpses of this most revered orator. Johann Sturm, Hermogenes' chief editor and commentator, himself praised Hermogenes uppermost because he "showed, in *Demosthenes*, what the true and perfect orator ought to be." We can accept Sturm's statement as indicative of knowledgeable Renaissance attitudes toward Hermogenes because we know of his edition. But other references are not so reliable. Sturm's longtime correspondent in England, Roger Ascham, makes a similar comment in *The Scholemaster* discussing Demosthenes' style: "And trow it is, that *Hermogines* writeth of *Demosthenes* that all formes of Eloquence

be perfite in him." Such a reference does not suggest any particular knowledge or acceptance of Hermogenes' concepts of style. Ascham, like most English humanists, enjoyed mentioning classical authorities whether or not he was familiar with them. We might indeed suspect Sturm's influence here before Hermogenes'; but Miss Patterson uses this very passage as a link in the spread of Hermogenes' Ideas from the continent to England. And while it is true that Ascham probably read at least some of Sturm's commentaries on Hermogenes, it is not true that he accepted the Greek's ideas: in matters of style—even Demothenes' style—Ascham was an ardent Ciceronian.

Unfortunately most of Miss Patterson's evidence of the scope of Hermogenes' influence will not bear the weight of examination. Most of her sources turn out to mention him as equivocally as Ascham does or, even more casually, to sandwich his name without elaboration among a number of other rhetoricians, as does Milton in "Of Education"; Miss Patterson bases her whole case for Hermogenic theories in Milton's work on his incidental recommendation of instruction in "a gracefull and ornate Rhetorick taught out of the rule of *Plato, Aristotle, Phalareus, Cicero, Hermogenes, Longinus*."

The bulk of Miss Patterson's historical evidence rests on the use of Hermogenic concepts by the French humanist Scaliger and the Italian critic Minturno, both of whom wrote poetical treatises near 1560. But Minturo, as Weinberg has already shown clearly, depends on Aristotle and Cicero, with some Platonic amalgam. While he refers to Hermogenes' Ideas of style, he does not use them, instead adapting the three styles of Cicero to his own basically Aristotelian justification of Italian vernacular art. Scaliger comes closer to Hermogenes in his poetic theory, but again the notion of dependence is spurious. Scaliger, like Hermogenes, is a Platonist and, like Hermogenes, sees style as a functional imitation of a perfect original. And since Scaliger recognizes the similarity, he takes about eight pages of his *Poetics Libri Septem* to explain Hermogenes' system. But at the end of his description Scaliger dismisses Hermogenes' Ideas as inappropriate for his own treatment and goes on to develop a theory of style based broadly on the Ciceronian threesome. For his own use of the word *ιδεῶν*, Scaliger acknowledges his debt to Plato. The opinion that Hermogenes' theory is interesting but finally not useful seems to be the prevalent one among all those who show any thorough knowledge of the *Art of Rhetoric*. Harvey, for example, warns his students against "that infinite and too ambitious art of Hermogenes . . . by which literature was betrayed," and Puttenham speaks of his "vaine and impertinent speeches and words."

Perhaps Miss Patterson's greatest weakness is a failure to see in her evidence and in her own statements the limitations which ought to have been set on her conclusions. She allows herself to shift too easily from "rough correspondence" to "conceptual basis." And too many speculations "seem reasonable" at first and then form the assumptions for further speculations. Drayton, for example, becomes Hermogenic because he uses the word "Idea" in his titles (!), and a misquotation allows Miss Patterson to see him confusing Petrarch's canzones with odes in a peculiarly Hermogenic fashion. She allows herself to see "truant" (or "trewand") in sonnets of both Sidney and Shakespeare as puns on "true" and hence proof of use of the Hermogenic Idea of Verity, and she appropriates the common truth-and-beauty dichotomy as evidence of Hermogenic borrowing.

The result of her eagerness and determination to prove Hermogenes' ascendancy leads her further to some astonishingly narrow, and just plain bad, readings of Sidney, Shakespeare, and Herbert.

It is a shame that Miss Patterson is so driven to exalt Hermogenes, because she displays a real talent in this book that is all but overwhelmed by her error. Seldom have I seen a surer ability to generalize complicated concepts and present them clearly to a reader. When she is describing instead of convincing, Miss Patterson is superb. Her outline of Platonism (pp. 35-40) is one I would like to require my students to read. The entire second chapter, in which she explains the seven Hermogenic Ideas, is clear, incisive, and accurate except where she is tempted to flaunt her champion. Her distinctions among the Italian critics, where not aimed at discovering the primacy of Hermogenes, are also admirable. Miss Patterson's descriptive bibliography of Renaissance editions of Hermogenes is another convenience which should be of use to students of rhetoric as well as historians. That it consists of only sixteen titles representing 150 years of publishing history ought to have suggested something more to the author than it has.

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