

## Book Reviews

David Staines, ed. *The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1977. pp. 265. \$10.00.

This collection of nine essays owes its origins to an American context and audience, and I think it will continue to appeal largely to a readership whose knowledge of Canadian history and culture is rudimentary. Five of the essays — those by Northrop Frye, Margaret Atwood, Brian Parker, Marine Leland, and Marshall McLuhan — were originally presented to Professor Staines' Canadian Literature course at Harvard, and the other three, by Peter Buitenhuis, George Woodcock, and Douglas Bush, were contributed to this collection by invitation. The nine essays (the ninth being Staines' Introduction) are all published here for the first time (though Buitenhuis' essay on Pratt owes much to his 1968 "Introduction" to the MacMillan *Selected Poems of E. J. Pratt*), and Professor Staines is to be congratulated on managing to get such a collection of internationally famous critics to address themselves to a common topic, especially such an indefinable one as the Canadian imagination. The discipline of Canadian Studies is enjoying a remarkable growth in the United States and Europe, and Staines' enterprise here can be applauded from the market point of view as well, especially if the collection can be reissued in a less costly paper edition. Since this book contains useful surveys of developments in Canadian poetry, fiction, and drama, I suspect it will be much in demand in countries which are embarking on Canadian Studies programmes.

Staines concedes this in his own Introduction, where he states that "although [the essays] are of importance to Canadians, they are addressed primarily to a foreign audience," and he then proceeds to instruct that audience about Canadian cultural developments. Two kinds of statement in this Introduction will irritate the perceptive reader, whether Canadian or non-Canadian: one because it is obvious, and the other because it is glibly asserted without proof. Does the reader have to be told that the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Arctic, and the United States constitute the borders of Canada? Or that the Maritimes are on the East Coast and British Columbia is on the West Coast? But more irksome are statements that are intellectually conceived, or perhaps more accurately, conceived on the basis of stereotyped views of Canada, without really being examined. To argue, for example, that "the prairie farmer feels more kinship with his counterpart just south of the border than he does with a farmer on Prince Edward Island or even in Ontario" is to display an amazing disregard of Canadian history, economics, and politics. Western separatists today are not the prairie farmers who wish to join their counterparts in Montana or the Dakotas, but the oil men who feel more loyalty to Houston

than to Ottawa. On another point, Staines argues that "the sheer size [of Canada] will always deny a sense of unity to all its citizens," thus ignoring the fact that some very large countries today — China, the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. — don't appear to have unity problems, while some relatively small ones — Ireland, the Middle East nations, Spain — do. In his general remarks of this nature about Canada, Staines appears to be guilty of excessive map-gazing, which can be as distortive of reality as excessive navel-gazing. I wish he had done more in his Introduction to try to define or describe the many intangible qualities which distinguish the Canadian imagination from the American imagination, for example, or at least to try to synthesize the disparate and often conflicting statements made by the other eight essayists.

Preliminaries aren't intended to match the main event, however, and in this collection the eight major essays certainly carry the day, particularly those by Frye, Woodcock, Atwood, and Bush. As is the case with any collection of essays, regardless of how carefully the terms of reference might be set out, we are rewarded more by individual insights than by any collective consensus and, predictably, we never do learn precisely what the Canadian imagination is. We learn, however, that it involves such qualities and assumptions as the following: "an egocentric consciousness locked into a demythologized environment" (Frye); "high seriousness . . . and nineteenth century aloofness" (Buitenhuis); "a combination of mythology and ideology . . . [which presents] a countervision more real than actuality" (Woodcock); "an area of dark intimations" (Atwood); "the central Canadian myth . . . is antidramatic" (Parker); "Canada has become the anti-environment that renders the United States more acceptable and intelligible" (McLuhan). These selective quotations suggest the biases of the essayists, of course, and though Canadians, if not others, have heard them all before, their main arguments are still provocative and useful. As a bonus, too, we receive intelligent and sensitive interpretations of some of Canada's best known (and some lesser-known) works: Buitenhuis on *Brébeuf and His Brethren*, Atwood on *Tay John*, Bush on *Sunshine Sketches*, Parker on *Forever Yours, Marie-Lou*. The most disappointing piece for me was Leland's essay on Quebec literature, which is little more than a historical survey of developments. The most surprising was Bush on Leacock, because though he has written on Canadian literature in the past (and both Staines and Parker quote his 1929 argument about the necessity of Canadian writing moving "from the local and parochial to the local and universal"), he has become such a Renaissance and Milton authority that his inclusion here seemed at first glance out of place. But it is Canadian literature's gain that the fine mind that has produced such complex studies of Milton has also produced a sensitive re-evaluation of Leacock, and though all won't agree with his singling out of *Sunshine Sketches* and *Arcadian Adventures* as Leacock's masterpieces, all will be enlightened by his intelligent commentary on one of Canada's leading writers.

Four of the essays can conveniently be grouped into complementary pairs: Frye's and Buitenhuis' on poetry, Woodcock's

and Atwood's on fiction. In a sense, Buitenhuis' study of Pratt emerges as an empirical verification of Frye's thesis that Canadian poetry derived in part from the cultural importation into North America of three 17th century European forces: the revolutionary monotheism of Christianity, the Baroque sense of the power of mathematics, and the Cartesian egocentric consciousness. The process of mythologizing in Canadian literature Frye sees as "essentially the humanizing of nature," and within this perspective, Pratt's central evolutionary metaphors, his epic structures, his dialectic between man's reasoning powers and his irrational propensities, can be seen as exercises in this process. Woodcock and Atwood are closer in spirit than is at first apparent: Woodcock's rational, clear persuasiveness seems to be at an opposite pole from Atwood's somewhat whimsical approach to monsters and the supernatural in Canadian fiction. But in a very real way Atwood's thesis supports Woodcock's convincing argument that a major manifestation in Canadian fiction today is the kind of twentieth-century romanticism which makes use of fantasy, dreams, myth — in short, elements which represent the antithesis of conventional realism. Woodcock's essay may be geared to the non-Canadian audience, but his ability to cover much ground economically, to generalize intelligently, and to remind us judiciously of some of the obvious developments in Canadian fiction render this essay one of the most useful to the general reader and specialist alike.

The two remaining essays, by Parker and McLuhan, are, respectively, competent and controversial, but may disturb readers for quite different reasons. Parker asks the question: "Is There a Canadian Drama?" answers "Yes, there is," but goes on to suggest that it isn't really all that good. In a way, he gets good mileage out of taking two stances at once: though he argues that much of Canadian drama is "uneven, usually evanescent, and often quite silly," and that some of it "has become involved in a shrill, self-conscious nationalism," he devotes most of his essay to sympathetic, intelligent discussions of three important plays, Tremblay's *Marie-Lou*, Reaney's *Colours in the Dark*, and Ryga's *Ecstasy of Rita Joe*. McLuhan sees Canada as a "borderline case," the kind of ambiguous phrase that one has learned to expect from him, and from this essay we learn that this kind of subordinate position (geographical and cultural) enables us to have our cake and eat it too: we can share "the American way, without commitment to American goals or responsibilities." Being a Canadian juxtaposed against the United States is not what James described as the "complex fate" of being an American juxtaposed against Europe: Canadians and Americans have a "shared feeling for space" that creates a kind of harmony. I think, however, that this might well depend on whose space is being shared, and I am not sure that Canada is yet ready to accept what McLuhan calls a "low-profile identity," even if such a state of national grace contributes to his often-professed goal, "the ideal pattern of electronic living."

The total value of this book is not, I think, greater than the sum of its individual parts. The essayists by turns instruct, amuse, enlighten, or antagonize us, and though there are com-

plementary possibilities as I suggested above, the collection as a whole does not synthesize sufficiently the disparities of such a wide topic as the Canadian imagination. One will wish that Professor Staines had pursued more thoroughly this task in his Introduction; but one will also be grateful to him for bringing to us this rich mosaic of individual talent.

Hallvard Dahlie

Gloria G. Fromm. *Dorothy Richardson. A Biography*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977. pp. xix + 451. \$15.00.

Margot Strickland. *Angela Thirkell. Portrait of a Lady Novelist*. London: Duckworth; Don Mills: Burns and MacEachern, 1977. pp. x + 182. \$16.75.

Marlene Springer, ed. *What Manner of Woman. Essays on English and American Life and Literature*. New York: New York University Press, 1977. pp. xx + 357. \$20.00, pb. \$6.95.

Since the rise of feminist scholarship, biographies of women writers have taken on considerable interest. Biography is re-joining literary criticism. For some years, it was scarcely respectable to relate a writer's life to her or his work; it was assumed that the work should be comprehensible in its own terms and that a need to discuss the life implied some deficiency in the literature, whether that deficiency was seen as an absence of inner complexity or ordering, or as a failure on the writer's part to control distracting personal emotions. The resurgence of interest in biography (not to mention autobiography) implies different premises about the relationship between literature and life, particularly with reference to women. First of all, the autobiographical elements in a work are not only seen as real, but perhaps even as the basis of its coherence and inner energies. Second, the study of a writer's self-projections in the context of her or his life can tell us about the nature of creativity, for the desire to write itself suggests an impulse towards power or mastery. Thus, personal emotions and experiences are not somehow left in by mistake, or because of an error in judgment, but can be deliberately used and transformed, as part of the writer's process in understanding herself. In effect, a new psychology is involved, emphasizing the specific nature of a woman's need to engage with her environment and her desires for self-fulfillment. A woman writer's life is not seen in terms of her relationships with men or her success in coping with masculine art forms. Gloria Fromm's excellent study of Dorothy Richardson exemplifies these new attitudes.

Richardson herself felt that literature, fictitious or not, could not help being autobiographical; to her and to Miriam Henderson, the heroine of her novel, *Pilgrimage*, a work virtually compelled response as "a psychological study of the author". And when Miriam contemplates a story she has written, she finds that:

Coming between her and the immediate grasp of the text were stirring memories; the history of her labour

was written between the lines; and strangely, moving within the whole, was a record of the months since Christmas. On every page was a day or group of days. It was a diary. . . . Within it were incidents that for a while had dimmed the whole fabric to indifference. And passages stood out, recalling, together with the memory of overcoming their difficulty, the dissolution of annoyances, the surprised arrival on the far side of overwhelming angers (III, 143, Knopf edition).

For Miriam, this discovery that her feelings have been projected outside herself is a discovery of the impersonality of literature. Richardson's autobiographical novel (the work originally described as "stream of consciousness") was written in thirteen parts over a twenty-three year period (1915-38), even in mode of composition recalling a diary. As Fromm argues, its style and treatment developed with the aging author as well as with the consciousness of her heroine, who at any given point was about a generation younger. Richardson used the act of writing to cope with both her present conflicts (those experienced at the time of writing) and conflicts in the past:

When Dorothy was writing this portion of *Clear Horizon*, transposing and adjusting her earlier experience to the fictional shape she wanted it to have, the threat of another real collapse materialized. Did she perhaps hope that by denying the old one in fiction she might disarm the new one in fact? (Fromm, p. 290)

The novel sequence (which seems amorphous, indefinite) is shaped by phases in the growth of the author's "surrogate self". *Pilgrimage* begins when Miriam gets her first job as a teacher (the foreign setting recalls *Villette*) and ends as she thinks of writing "a long narrative, possibly a novel, but not — she has decided — 'the confessions of a modern woman', an idea put into her head long ago and keeping her until now 'on the wrong track'" (Fromm, p. 316). Each sub-novel is defined by the place Miriam is in, by her work, or by the interplay between significant relationships and her private self at a given time, unlike the conventional woman-centered novel unified by one or two sustained relationships. In *Pilgrimage*, the very discontinuity signifies freedom for a woman who openly resents the way men "shelve it on to a woman" — the task of coping with the world's emotions (II, 282-4). Miriam becomes more and more concerned with maintaining that inner sense of being which makes her life a series of epiphanies. This personal and aesthetic concern had a religious base, brought out by Fromm's discussions of Richardson's Quaker connections.

My reading of Gloria Fromm has by now merged with my reading of *Pilgrimage*, which perhaps is as it should be. I do wish to emphasize the merits of Fromm's work, which belongs in the first rank of the new feminist biographies, like Ruby Redinger on George Eliot and R. W. B. Lewis on Edith Wharton. Like Redinger, Fromm emphasizes the woman writer's emerging self; like Lewis (and also like Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of their Own*), she treats the financial aspects of the writer's career in a way that shows that the Victorian woman was not

always as helpless as we might think. For instance, Fromm's comments on Richardson's parents emphasize her father's economic incompetence (he was a retired grocer turned gentleman-patriarch) and his male dominance:

He established the rules of the household, set in motion the elaborate rituals that would govern nearly every aspect of Richardson family life, and expected his wife to maintain them religiously. If the light-hearted Mary began to feel smothered after a while, she kept it to herself — and instead gradually went mad with a sense of her own worthlessness (Fromm, pp. 7-8).

This is a paradigm of the sort of background that produces independent women. Fromm also demonstrates the sheer diversity of Richardson's writings (her bibliography is extensive and valuable). Articles on dentistry stand out — Richardson was a dental secretary for some years, she could have been editor of the *Dental Record*, and she included some of the gorier details in *Pilgrimage*, for which she was attacked.

Fromm provides extended discussions of Richard's milieu, her connections to other artists and intellectuals, and *their* connections to *Pilgrimage*. Important figures are H. G. Wells (Hypo Wilson), with whom Richardson had an affair, but who was more important as a great man willing to argue with her; the Russian Jew, Benjamin Grad (Michael Shatov), whom she decided *not* to marry:

Dorothy felt more English all the time, and she saw Grad as increasingly foreign instead of rich and compellingly strange. . . . There were disturbing signs as well of an all too familiar attitude towards women in Benjamin Grad. It was not the contempt her father had expressed openly but rather an underlying belief in the superiority of the man, with the woman more or less . . . a slave to him (p. 42);

and finally Allan Odle, the sickly and somewhat bizarre artist whom she married in 1917, when she was forty-four and he twenty-nine. She married late, to a man who could only depend on her. The scatological quality of Odle's work made it hard for *him* to gain recognition; Fromm includes two fine drawings by him, as well as portraits by Ivy de Verley and Adrian Allinson. An apparent carelessness — Fromm's random spelling of Odle's name as "Alan" or "Allan" — may be a joke, since Odle himself used one "l" from the age of thirty on, while legally remaining "Allan". Feminists often discuss the problems of changing your name without going to court. Miriam meets a "Mr. Noble", but Fromm also shows how Richardson created the character of Eleanor Dear, a sick and manipulative nurse, to express her own ambivalence about getting involved (pp. 131-2). All three figures (Dorothy, Alan, and Eleanor) combine masculine and feminine qualities, all are artists trying to act out their fantasies. This subtlety in interpretation, based on abundant factual information, is what makes Fromm's work so provocative.

*Pilgrimage* itself brings to mind older notions of feminine thought. Miriam without irony compares her girlhood to a flower, is attracted to images of light and radiance, associates women with inner space and moments of being; men, with their "thing-filled eyes", seem out of touch with reality and thus inferior to women. She is disgusted with the masculine pretense of "emancipating" women. Miriam's feminism thus grows out of her contact with inner space, for which her private room is a symbol, while Fromm's Richardson, the struggling professional, is slanted to the current image of female strength. Yet, as a biographer, Fromm does well to distinguish the writer from the novelistic creation and thus redress a balance, showing how Miriam's sensitivity is only an aspect of Dorothy. Richardson, too, wanted fame — her technique, from the start, inspired comparisons to Proust, Joyce, and Woolf, all of whom surpassed her, while *Pilgrimage* "simply petered out" (p. 312). Richardson's continued dependence on her own past, her inability to "cut the cord", is to Fromm a sign of her limits, though the artists who "were always tilting with life and the world — and with themselves in it" are worth knowing about (p. 396). Fromm compares Richardson to D. H. Lawrence in this respect, and Woolf, the "more creative" type, to Joyce: the aesthetic flaw is not sex-linked.

Margot Strickland's *Angela Thirkell* is in the conventional mode, simple entertainment, nostalgic, exploiting a familiar kind of female self-pity. Thirkell wrote imitation Trollope novels for the tweedy set, for vicars, and for Americans who cherished an image of unfading Empire between the two wars. She deliberately refused to challenge her readers — when, at the request of her American publisher, Alfred Knopf, she cut out some anti-semitic references, one is at a loss whether to deplore the anti-semitism (this on the eve of World War II) or Thirkell's willingness to go along. Her life has some dramatic interest — she was married to a homosexual alcoholic, remarried to an Australian, later rejected by her sons, one of whom was homosexual — but the dynamics of these relationships are left to speak for themselves, and remain on the level of stereotype. Thirkell, like Richardson, put herself into her novels, as Strickland shows by citing a variety of parallels, but apparently Thirkell had no other motive than to create replicas of herself. At least, further possibilities are neither suggested nor explored. In short, Strickland has not gotten inside the mind of her subject, but has given us a "type" figure — a woman who worked hard, gained a dubious success, and then was left behind by history and died alone. It is not clear whether the sympathy we are asked to feel is justified by Thirkell's feelings and ideas. If the material is there, it has not been convincingly incorporated into this book.

*What Manner of Woman* includes thirteen essays, chronologically arranged, on images of women in literature, seven on British and six on American, of which the last, by Elizabeth Schultz, is on literature by blacks. Five of the thirteen deal with nineteenth century literature, which reflects the emphasis in feminist research and the obvious fact of copious available material. I did not find this collection successful, despite the presence of



some big names (e.g., John Richetti, Gina Luria, Carolyn G. Heilbrun) among the contributors, for which I blame the plan of the collection itself. As the editor writes,

students' interest requires that professors have ready and accurate answers to questions concerning the portrayal of women in literature in fields historically and culturally removed from their own specialties. Because such answers are not now readily available, this collection of original essays is designed to provide in one volume a chronological examination of these portraits in specific historical-cultural frames by outlining, albeit briefly, the sociological, political, philosophical, and occasionally the legal climate informing the aesthetic view of women.

The contributors thus have to provide background material, to at least suggest relationships between real women and female characters or between male fantasies and female characters, and to cover the major authors or genres in their areas. In almost every case this leads to dullness or a sense of *déjà vu* (which apparently is possible even if one doesn't know a field very well); indeed, one meets several old friends among the facts provided — a definition of "hysteria" as a wandering womb, James I's question about a learned lady ("but can she spin?"), the novelty of actresses on the Restoration stage, a quotation from a pornographic diary. I read these clichés as gestures of desperation; the contributors seem paralyzed by the need to water down. Women's studies at this stage can be better served by bibliographies, sample syllabi (which are available in Canada and the United States), and by fine representative studies, like Fromm's. David Latt appends a good bibliography to his article on seventeenth century Britain, however, and from the collection in general one gets a sense of the many types of sources feminists are studying, including periodicals, diaries, marriage manuals, legal history, as well as works of imaginative literature.

Judith Sloman

Robert Pattison. *The Child Figure in English Literature*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1978. pp. xi and 190. \$10.50.

In his Preface Robert Pattison clearly outlines his thesis: "that the child figure in English literature generally appears in thematic surroundings which discuss the Fall of Man." He also marks the boundaries of his study; he limits himself to English writers, including Henry James, writing before World War I but excludes educational tracts and references to the Christ child.

Within such boundaries, Pattison cannot do justice to his subject. A chapter on Homer to Augustine provides the necessary background to his stampede through English literature from Chaucer through Spenser, Sterne, Fielding, Wordsworth, Blake — a digression on Anthony Ashley Cooper, the seventh Lord Shaftesbury — and then a slower but still superficial



exploration of Dickens, George Eliot, Edmund Gosse, and Henry James. The final chapter is a cursory survey of children's literature from James Janeway to Lewis Carroll. Anxious to demonstrate that even the Romantics except for the early Wordsworth (hence the chapter's subtitle, "Wordsworth as Heretic") subscribed to the Augustinian view of the child, Pattison rushes to point out the similarity in seemingly disparate writers such as Dickens, Eliot, and James. Yet the very rapidity gives rise to considerable doubt as to his thesis' originality and value. As an approach it is interesting but it does not prove very useful in understanding specific works.

The most intriguing and convincing aspect of his book is the first chapter when Pattison discusses the early Church debates and their influence on the figure of the child. He reviews the general Greek and Roman indifference to the child as a subject. The Platonic view that the "chaotic state of childhood contains in it the possibility of human, rational perfection," is a forerunner of the Pelagian belief in the perfectibility of man without the aid of God's grace. Pelagius and Augustine are treated as the spokesmen of extreme and opposing views, the believer in perfectibility versus the writer of the *Confessions* who sees all children as creatures of fallen will, as ready for hellfire as any adult:

Who can recall to me the sins I committed as a baby?  
For in your sight no man is free from sin, not even a  
child who has lived only one day on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Augustine's theories compel him to accept the idea of damned children; the Pelagians argue that a Limbo exists for unbaptized but innocent children.

Thus to the Church Fathers the child assumes an importance he can not have for Classical writers. Why then does it take so long before the child becomes significant in literature? Unable to give any real explanation, Pattison offers an assumption instead, "that a religious doctrine requires a substantial incubation period [in this case a thousand years] before it can translate itself into symbolism and imagery." Elsewhere in referring to the Reformation as the end of the incubation period when the child finally emerged as a literary figure, Pattison describes the Reformation "as a symptom that the dogmatic developments of the early Church had finally been accepted by the mass of the faithful not simply as belief but as metaphor and symbolism." Both statements require far more discussion than Pattison allows. In context the comment on the Reformation is particularly cryptic.

Two other assumptions are central to the development of his argument. The first is that the child is figurative in the same sense that a woman eating an apple is recognizable as Eve. Although this idea may seem obvious, Pattison runs into contradictions when he tries to explain the effectiveness of the child

<sup>1</sup>Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, I. 7. trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 27.

figure. He states initially that the reader will not readily recognize the child's figurative nature since the image is relatively new: "But the reader or viewer, coming across a child, will be tempted to say, 'Well, here is something from real life, not a figure, but just what it seems to be — a child.'" Yet the novelty can give the image of the child power only if the reader is capable of somehow recognizing its symbolic nature. And so Pattison introduces another assumption, one that contradicts his previous commentary: "A final assumption is that not only is the child figurative, but the reader or viewer instinctively understands its figurative nature." Conscious ignorance, instinctive recognition?

Pattison does offer several sound insights which enable the reader to turn with a fresh perspective to any work that includes a child figure. The difficulty lies in the crudity with which his thesis is applied to individual works, a weakness especially evident in his chapter on children's literature. Just as it is easy and unnecessary to demonstrate that James Janeway and Mrs. Sherwood fully endorse the Augustinian view of the child, it is misleading to ignore the eighteenth-century children's books that do not pursue the child's connection with Original Sin. Pattison dismissed such children's books as "satires of adult life which once again tend to confirm that man is involved in some vast and inherent folly." But even in the eighteenth century children read about other children, not just Gulliver. *Goody Two Shoes* is more than a satire of adult life, and one questions whether a recognition of the child's connection with Original Sin would really help in understanding Goody's story.

On individual interpretations Pattison is often narrow-minded, concerned more with his general thesis than a fair reading of a work. He assumes, for example, that every time a child eats, there is an allusion to Communion. Maria Edgeworth's "The Purple Jar" is not just "designed to illuminate the vain willfulness of childhood." Pattison ignores the nuance of the story, the mother's educational experiment in allowing the child to make her choice, the child's acceptance of the lesson. Instead he bluntly and erroneously summarizes: "the result of this mad assertion of will is that the perfumed water soon becomes a useless bore." More attention to the text reveals that Rosamond is attracted not by perfumed water but by the purple jar. Not aware that the jar's beauty comes from the coloured liquid inside, she throws the water out because of its foul odor, an act very different from becoming bored by its perfume. Pattison ends his brief discussion by saying that Rosamond's willfulness is punished by Nature's bad weather that keeps her inside for lack of a proper pair of shoes. Perhaps, but he misses Edgeworth's more subtle insight. At the end, having learned her lesson, Rosamond is honest enough to admit that she is still not sure whether she will be any wiser next time.

Pattison takes for granted that all Victorian children read the same books and assumes that nursery rhymes and fairy tales are written from the child's point of view, a theory that forgets the adult origins of both types of literature. He treats *Alice in Wonderland* as the high-point of the "two strains of

children's literature — that in which the child is instructed about the folly of the world and that in which the child merely observes these follies." So far so good, but when he portrays Wonderland as "a realm of Original Sin where, quite literally, everyone lies under sentence of death" the nonsense of Wonderland takes over his interpretation. No doubt Alice's fall down the Rabbit hole is a hint of the Fall of man, but when Pattison says that Alice is "reminiscent of Aeneas in her statuesque, Tory respectability" and that her foiled attempts to enter the garden are a parody of the Communion service, one is ready to cry with Alice, "Who cares for you?"

Adrienne E. Haas.

Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. pp. 445. \$17.50.

When Cleanth Brooks wrote his masterful *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (1963), in which he studied those novels placed in Faulkner's "little postage stamp" of a county, he promised a study of those novels and stories which lie outside the county limits or which deal with characters who do not belong to the central families — the Compsons, McCaslins, Stevens, Sartorises, Sutpens, or Snopses. In the present volume, Brooks makes good his word, and he studies both those works which precede and those which "go beyond" the Yoknapatawpha parameters.

Brook's new study evidences the same wide range of critical approaches as the earlier work. He moves deftly from clarifying Southern history to insights of Southern and American society during a century and thence to notices of diction and literary sources, and finally to the analysis of form and structure that has ever typified his affinities to the now ancient school of New Criticism. Further, there is a graceful control of style so that while he does all these turns, he constantly holds the reader to the question of how he comes to understand what he reads in Faulkner's works.

While the early volume had a thematic unity inherent in the topical selection of the novels (many of which are Faulkner's best), the present study includes a multiple fare. There are two chapters on Faulkner's early poetry and prose; separate chapters on five non-Yoknapatawpha novels; a chapter on the aborted novel *Flags in the Dust* (the earlier version of *Sartoris* and thus a Yoknapatawpha novel, excusable perhaps because it was published belatedly in 1973); a chapter on two short stories ("Miss Zilphia Gant" and "A Rose for Emily") that Brooks calls "First Forays into Yoknapatawpha County;" a chapter on Faulkner's notions of time and history; one-hundred sixty pages of Appendixes (two of which study the Yoknapatawpha novel *Absalom, Absalom!*); and eighty pages of notes which Brooks found difficult to place in the body of the text.

Brooks, to be sure, amply analyses these neglected aspects of Faulkner's work, and he sets them within a composed picture

of Faulkner's total career. Indeed, in the Notes, Brooks supplies an order of reading chapters of the two volumes interchangeably so that a reader might be sure of the chronology of Faulkner's development. But despite this appearance of measure and balance, it is the individual insights for which Brooks will be read, and ought to be read, and there is a good reason why Brooks's contribution can be appreciated only by those who know how difficult it is to explain the early, unformed work of any major author. Juvenalia can well fall outside the definitive assessments based primarily on the major works; further, to tie these works to novels that Brooks acknowledges to be "experiments" or "excursions beyond the bounds of Yoknapatawpha County," can be full of pitfalls, against which only worthy perceptions and conceptions are potent.

Take the poetry as a point. We know that Faulkner had ambitions as a poet before he wrote prose, and we have long suspected that he was influenced by the modes and postures of the late Victorians and Decadents — Swinburne, Wilde, the early Yeats, and the French *symbolistes*. But Faulkner, we learn now from Brooks, was more a follower of Housman and Eliot because Faulkner sought their anti-romanticism to balance out his inherent romantic idealism, which the First War had undercut but not destroyed. Faulkner, however, could not get free of the romantic attitudes in his poetry, and verse became a "dead end" so that he gave it up in the 30's. The fact is, being forced to consider a new genre, he came upon the novel when it was in a state of flux, and in working out his conflict of romantic idealism and anti-romantic realism, he was able to give the novel a personal direction that dominated American prose until the 1950's.

When treating Faulkner's early prose, Brooks points out analogues in *Mayday* (1925) of Cabell's *Jurgen*, since both are anti-romantic romances of an errant knight who withdraws from life. But Brooks goes beyond this slight comparison to show how here is the core of Faulkner's interest (and faith) in man's ability to endure and to prevail over the contingencies of life just because he has illusions of himself. This chilled romanticism touches all of his great novels and receives full treatment in the "noble failure" of *A Fable*, which is both fabulous and realistic.

In making these analyses and connections, furthermore, Brooks presents the origins in the early prose and poetry of the "epicene" women of Faulkner's later fiction: she is the unattainable androgynous woman (such as Caddy, Temple Drake, and Eula Varner) who precipitates action by men who are in the grip of "nympholepsy" — a Victorian disease of men's psyche to consider a woman as transcending the limits of life while in fact this illusion leads to death. In his 1963 study Brooks first touched upon "chivalrous love" motifs in Faulkner's fiction, but with these two recent terms he is able to unite sexual love into a larger frame of myth, history, and psychology.

Brooks' present study is full of such graceful perceptions and resourceful comparisons. But the central chapters, on the five

novels, are achievements because they are apparently necessary to treat for scholarly completeness but ostensibly will show only what one expected to call their negative values. These novels lack the repute of those which fall inside the Yoknapatawpha cycle. Included are studies of two early novels (*Soldiers' Pay* and *Mosquitoes*), two novels of the middle "great" period (*Pylon* and *The Wild Palms*), and one novel of the late years (*A Fable*). Of these, Brooks is able to call only *Soldiers' Pay* "brilliant and exciting" and to conclude that its "style is [its] strength;" but in contrast to this recovering of a good work from oblivion, Brooks judges *A Fable* as a "noble failure" because it attempts to combine allegory with history without being mindful of how great art might begin with the burden of an image upon a brooding author but not with a "great idea" which attempts to force history and experience to conform to it. No one before Brooks, however, has caught so exactly the aspiration of Faulkner, in what was to be his triumphant work, and at the same time spelled out the nature of the esthetic failure. Yet Brooks is able to make his analysis a central statement of Faulkner's philosophic, religious, and social ideas, and an intriguing summary of Faulkner's art.

As for the other novels, they are not considered to be very successful. Brooks cannot speak well of *Mosquitoes* but he can indicate with exactness why the novel "demands too much of the reader and . . . gives too little in return" (because it is "talky" despite Faulkner's growing zest for words and rhetoric). In analysing *Pylon* and *The Wild Palms*, Brooks labours to show how they are "excursions beyond the bounds of Yoknapatawpha County," and they allow us to "see what he lost . . . as well as to what he may have gained" when he decided to come back to his "little patch of land."

One of the most engaging chapters is entitled, "Faulkner on Time and History." Brooks shows that the influence of Henri Bergson has been "overestimated" if not distorted, for Bergson was a dualist while Faulkner believed that time did not exist apart from the consciousness of some human being. Thus, calendar time may be an abstraction not capable of being experienced, and yet, Brooks emphasizes, Faulkner's use of time makes "history" plausible to a person in the present. The point is, Faulkner's characters must live "history" through myths and illusions which affect how they perceive the present and the future, and yet these myths, particularly of the South, must undergo change if the individual is not to be stifled and enervated. Brooks concludes that in using the mythos of Yoknapatawpha County and the South, Faulkner was not dealing with a region full of "peculiarities" but with an instance in which he could show how tragedy and comedy occur when old myths persist or when myths cease to avail for the moment. The problem for the scholar, Brooks suggests, is to eliminate his own "fanciful myths" about the South from facts in order to see how Sutpen, for example, has the attributes of the American Yankee rather than the character of an actual Southerner of 1860.

It is a brilliant chapter and I recommend the volume for such conceptions. But one should notice how Brooks is unable to

forego reintroducing the Yoknapatawpha novels. Only this cycle can illustrate the chapter on history and time or make worthy most notices of the early writing and the five novels, and such apologies are sufficient. Yet Brooks spends forty-six pages of the Appendixes to give us a discussion of Thomas Sutpen as a non-typical Southern planter and the narrative structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* without relation to the five novels. Perhaps they fix in mind the chapter on time and history, but what is one to do with the subsequent note on the chronology of *Light in August* given as an isolated factor? Such matters are distracting and it is chiefly the overall worth of Brooks' individual insights that maintains an at times tenuous unity.

John Stephen Martin.

## Books Received

- BALAKIAN, ANNA, *The Symbolist Movement: A Critical Appraisal*. New York: New York University Press, 1977. pp. xiii, 220. \$12.00, \$5.95 pb.
- BRAUCH, ERICH, *Übersetzung, Paraphrase und Plagiat: Untersuchungen zum Schicksal englischer "Character-Books" in Frankreich im 17. Jahrhundert*. Studien zur englischen Philologie neue Folge 19. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1978. pp. x, 177. DM 44.
- DAS, G. K., *E. M. Forster's India*. Foreword by John Beer. London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1977. pp. xx, 170. \$23.95. £7.95.
- ERDMAN, DAVID V., ed., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Vols. I-III, *Essays on His Times*. Bollingen Series LXXV. Princeton: Princeton University Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. Vol. I, pp. cixix, 436; Vol. II, pp. xi, 489; Vol. III, pp. x, 526. \$75.00.
- FINNERAN, RICHARD J., ed., *The Correspondence of Robert Bridges and W. B. Yeats*. London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1977. pp. xviii, 68. \$11.95.
- HIGDON, DAVID LEON, *Time and English Fiction*. London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1977. pp. 168. \$26.95. £8.95.
- HYDE, G. M., *Vladimir Nabokov: America's Russian Novelist*. Critical Appraisals Series. London: Marion Boyars; Don Mills: Burns & MacEachern, 1977. pp. 230. \$21.00.

- JOSEPHSON, LENNART, *A Role: O'Neill's Cornelius Melody*. Stockholm Studies in History of Literature 19. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1978. pp. 166. \$23.25 pb.
- KOESTLER, ARTHUR, *Janus: A Summing Up*. London: Hutchinson; Don Mills: General Publishing Co., 1978. pp. 354. \$17.95.
- KILLORIN, JOSEPH, ed., *Selected Letters of Conrad Aiken*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978. pp. xxv, 350. \$15.00.
- MANGANYI, N. CHABANI, *Mashangu's Reverie and Other Essays*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1977. pp. 106. Rands 5.90, 4.50 pb.
- MCFADDEN, GEORGE, *Dryden: The Public Writer, 1660-1685*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. pp. xi, 305. \$16.50.
- MIYAJIMA, SUMIKO, *The Theatre of Man: Dramatic Technique and Stagecraft in the English Medieval Moral Plays*. Clevedon: Clevedon Publishing Co., 1977. pp. vi, 193. £6.00.
- MUKAROVSKY, JAN, *The Word and Verbal Art*. Tr. and Ed. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, with a Foreword by René Wellek. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. pp. xvii, 238. \$15.00.
- NIVEN, ALASTAIR, *D. H. Lawrence: The Novels*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1978. pp. x, 188. \$16.95. \$5.95 pb.
- ROSENBERG, MARVIN, *The Masks of Macbeth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. pp. 816. \$27.50.
- ZIETLOW, E. R., *Transhominal Criticism*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1978. pp. 209. \$8.75.